

STIFTERS DINGE By Heiner Goebbels Makes U.S. Premiere 12/16-20 At Park Avenue Armory

by BWW News Desk

Stifters Dinge, created by the innovative German composer/director Heiner Goebbels, is the latest of his works to stretch the boundaries of live performance. The 70-minute-long sonic performance landscape was inspired by the writings of 19th-century Austrian romantic novelist Adalbert Stifter extended and minutely-detailed descriptions of nature. The title translates as "Stifters Things."

The work will have its U.S. premiere as part of Great Performers "New Visions" series with eight performances, December 16-20, in a specially-constructed theater in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall at Park Avenue Armory. (...).

Stifters Dinge had its world premiere in 2007 at Lausanne's Théâtre Vidy, followed by performances in Frankfurt, Berlin, Luxemburg and Munich, and was presented to wide critical acclaim in April 2008 by London's Artangel. "A sculptural installation, a performance composition, a piano piece without pianists, a play with no players, a no-man show," is how The Guardian (London) described this work of "contemplative beauty." Time Out London called it "startlingly imaginative." The Daily Telegraph (London) critic called it, "one of the most haunting arts events I've seen in some time."

Tickets for Stifters Dinge are priced at \$55 and are available online at www.LincolnCenter.org, by calling CenterCharge, 212-721-6500, or at the Alice Tully and Avery Fisher Hall Box Office, Broadway at West 65th Street.

Stifters Dinge unfolds on a set of bare trees surrounded by industrial construction. Five pianos, stripped of their covers, are suspended sideways above the stage. Across this bizarre landscape, the pianos play by themselves, fog rises, rain falls, water bubbles, objects move mysteriously, or are set in motion by robot-like apparatuses which create sound effects. Idealized paintings of nature are projected. The score, performed in real-time and recorded, has original music by Goebbels, selections from classical music, jazz works, and traditional chants from South America and Papua New Guinea. Recorded fragments of texts from Stifter's novels, excerpts from an interview with 20th-century anthropologist/social philosopher Claude Lévi-Strauss, and quotations from speeches and writings of other modern writers and thinkers, are woven throughout. Goebbels' intention is for the individual audience member to encounter these disparate elements ("dinge" or "things") and for the "accumulation" of all the visual and aural experiences to shape the meaning each person "composes." In an interview in TIP Berlin, Goebbels discussed the absence of live performers in Stifters Dinge:

"I'm interested in how far you can take absence and still-or perhaps precisely for that reason-to be able to appeal to the imagination....My pieces do need people-people to create them and people to experience them. My work can only function when the audience is there and **E**mmunes' with the elements of the piece. The work is then probably much more individual and richly imaginative than we could have planned it to be. Stifters Dinge definitely needs an audience. Only the watchful eye can make a play out of it."

Stifters Dinge was originally produced by Théâtre de Vidy, Spielzeit/europa/Berliner Festspiele, Grand Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg, schauspiel/frankfurt, T & M-Théâtre de Genevilliers/CDN, and Pour-cent. Co-commissioned by Artangel London.

Stifters Dinge is presented in association with Park Avenue Armory.

Heiner Goebbels has been a leading figure in contemporary music and theater in Germany since the 1980s. Starting out as a composer, arranger and saxophonist with jazz and art-rock groups in the mid-1970s, he turned to serious composing after discovering the work of noted German composer Hans Eisler, a pupil of Schoenberg and long-time collaborator of Bertolt Brecht. Goebbels' work with German playwright Heiner Müller in the late 1970s became the jumping off point for making his staged music works. A self-styled "theatrical architect," he works consciously to re-shape the theater experience. *Le Temps* described him as "a theatrical alchemist" and "visionary."

A critically-acclaimed composer, Goebbels has written for chamber ensembles, ballet, symphonies, theater and film. His "music-theater" productions have been presented at the world's most prominent international festivals including Paris' Festival d'Automne, the Salzburg Festival, and festivals in Istanbul, Sydney, Tokyo and New York. Goebbels' *Surrogate Cities* for full orchestra received the 2001 Grammy Award for best contemporary classical composition and was recently performed by the London Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle. A twenty-year association with the new-music group Ensemble Modern has produced a number of critically-acclaimed works, including two that had their U.S. premieres at Lincoln Center Festival: *Black on White* (2001) and *Eislermaterial* (2003). *Eraritjaritjaka*, a third work, developed with the Mondrian Quartet, had its U.S. premiere at Festival 2006. *I went to the house but did not enter*, composed for the Hilliard Ensemble, was premiered by the group at the Edinburgh Festival in 2008. For more information on Heiner Goebbels visit www.heinergoebbels.com

Part of Great Performers' 44th season, "New Visions" continues to break new ground with innovative productions by artists from diverse disciplines. *Stifters Dinge* is the concluding production of this season's series. "New Visions" opened with the world premiere of *Pictures Reframed*, a re-imagining of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, created by pianist Leif Ove Andsnes and visual artist Robin Rhode, followed by companion music-theater pieces staged by English director Katie Mitchell: *One Evening* and *Four Quartets*.

"New Visions" is made possible in part by The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation.

Support for Great Performers is provided by Suzie and Bruce Kovner, Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser, The Florence Gould Foundation, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc., The Shubert Foundation, Robert and Anne Essner, Mitsubishi International Corporation, The Winston Foundation, EMC², Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, Great Performers Circle, Chairman's Council, and Friends of Lincoln Center.

Great Performers is a presentation of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. (LCPA), which serves three primary roles: presenter of superb artistic programming, national leader in arts and education, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. As a presenter of more than 400 events annually, LCPA's programs include *American Songbook*, *Great Performers*, *Lincoln Center Festival*, *Lincoln Center Out of Doors*, *Midsummer Night Swing*, the *Mostly Mozart Festival*, and *Live From Lincoln Center*. In addition, LCPA is leading a series of major capital projects on behalf of the resident organizations across the campus.

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Park Avenue Armory

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory was listed in 2000 by World Monuments Fund as one of the 100 Most Endangered Historic Sites in the world. Today, it is being given new life as a center for performing and visual art that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000 square foot drill hall and its array of its exuberant period rooms, the Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of the city by enabling artists to create-and the public to experience-unconventional work that could not otherwise be experienced in New York City. Since the first production in September 2007-AaRon Young's motorcycle-created Greeting Card with Art Production Fund-the Armory has partnered with New York institutions, including Lincoln Center to present extraordinary works, among them, the 2008 Whitney Biennial with site-specific installations and performances by 37 artists; and an evening of Stravinsky's Sacred Masterpieces presented in association with Columbia University's Miller Theatre. In May and June 2009, the Armory launched its first commission, anthropodino, a site specific installation by artist Ernesto Neto described as a "spectacular ...a magical destination" by the New York Times.

Great Performers 2009-2010 presents

"New Visions"

Wednesday, December 16, 2009 at 8 p.m.

Thursday, December 17, 2009 at 8 p.m.

Friday, December 18, 2009 at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Saturday, December 19, 2009 at 3 p.m., 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Sunday, December 20, 2009 at 2 p.m.

Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Avenue, between 66th and 67th Streets

Stifters Dinge (U.S. premiere)

Heiner Goebbels, conception, music, and direction

Klaus Grünberg, set design, lighting, and video

Hubert Machnik, programming

Willi Bopp, sound design

Matthias Mohr, assistant

Presented in association with Park Avenue Armory

Originally produced by Théâtre de Vidy, Spielzeit'europa/Berliner Festspiele, Grand Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg, schauspielFrankfurt, T & M-Théâtre de Genevilliers/CDN, and Pour-cent culturel Migros. Co-commissioned by Artangel London.

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