

Rundfunkchor Berlin

THE WORLD TO COME



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PRESS-INFORMATION THE WORLD TO COME

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THE WORLD TO COME

The **Rundfunkchor Berlin** is continuing its successful series of transdisciplinary projects with **THE WORLD TO COME**. The centrepiece of the 2020/21 season, this is a festive Berlin mass based on **Beethoven's "Missa solemnis"**. Working from a concept by **Tilman Hecker**, and also under his direction, contemporary musical trends will be combined with Beethoven's masterpiece in a concert installation. Together with the Rundfunkchor Berlin, artists **Birke J. Bertelsmeier**, **Colin Self**, **Mohammad Reza Mortazavi**, **Moor Mother**, and **Planningtorock** are taking the themes and music of Beethoven's mass as the starting point for an extraordinary musical journey into the world of tomorrow.

But rather than creating this or that concrete image of the "world to come" that provides the title, the Rundfunkchor Berlin first opens up the "**Missa solemnis**" to other traditions and other stories with **THE WORLD TO COME** – and so transposes Beethoven's work into a here and now in which tomorrow becomes negotiable. The central element is polyphonic sound: in the production, polyphony is representative of listening to each other, shaping things together, and treating one another with respect – the foundations of tolerance.

As a transdisciplinary sound experience and spatial installation, **THE WORLD TO COME** dissolves the boundaries of ordinary choir concerts. This extraordinary interplay of artists from highly diverse musical genres is to be **premiered** at the **Vollgutlager Berlin**. Visitors will walk through the concert installation in the large hall of the Vollgutlager and individual rooms of the adjacent club **SchwuZ**. The individual stations will be combined in many different ways to create a remarkable concert experience.

THE WORLD TO COME is also the working title for a series concept, in which the Rundfunkchor Berlin will focus on explosive contemporary issues.

The preparatory work has been supervised academically by **Jan Assmann** – a scholar of culture and religion as well as an Egyptologist. Inspired by discussions with Tilman Hecker and by the Rundfunkchor Berlin's involvement with this masterpiece by Beethoven, Assmann wrote his book *Kult und Kunst. Beethoven's Missa Solemnis als Gottesdienst*, which was published by **C.H.BECK** in late August. Jan Assmann dedicated his book to Tilman Hecker and Hans-Hermann Rehberg as well as to the Rundfunkchor Berlin – a special honour, for which we would like to express our appreciation again here.

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Vollgutlager Berlin
8th/9th October 2020
Thurs./Fri. 7 pm

THE WORLD TO COME

Festive Berlin mass based on Ludwig van Beethoven's "Missa solemnis" in D-major, op. 123
Composition and Arrangement by Birke J. Bertelsmeier
Concert installation

Tilman Hecker – Concept and set
Dominikus Müller – Dramaturgy
Birke J. Bertelsmeier – Composition
John Torres – Lighting
Jan Assmann – Academic supervision

Colin Self
Iwona Sobotka – Soprano
Mohammad Reza Mortazavi
Moor Mother
Planningtorock

Arrangement Colin Self: Justin Wong
Arrangement Mohammad Reza Mortazavi: Lea Fink

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Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin
Gijs Leenaars – Conductor

A production by the Rundfunkchor Berlin in the context of BTHVN 2020.
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Presented by Siegessäule
and tip Berlin.

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Director's Note

Tilman Hecker and Dominikus Müller

“Practices of storytelling matter”, according to anthropologist Marilyn Strathern – they have substance – real matter. Because they “make the world”, and literally determine how we see and hear, how we decode and interpret and how we act upon our insights.

The Christian narrative of salvation is just such a story, a text of world understanding and world creation – even where it has supposedly been abandoned in secular contemporary life. This story obeys a specific narrative arc with a concrete expectation of the future. At the end of the world there are the horrors of the apocalypse, the return of Christ, and heaven. Or hell. It is a regime that separates, divides, judges.

Composing the “Missa solemnis”, Beethoven dealt intensively with the Christian liturgy and its canonical text, which has been handed down and consolidated over the centuries. He set it to music, interpreting and editing the story as he did so. The focus is on the text and its message. As a consequence, the “Missa solemnis” lacks the development from a thematic cell otherwise typical of Beethoven's work. Instead, new motifs constantly emerge and rarely linger in the ear.

The starting point of the concert installation THE WORLD TO COME is Beethoven's “Missa solemnis”. Specifically, the title refers to the powerful fugue that Beethoven wrote about the four Latin words “Et vitam venturi saeculi” – the life of the world to come. No composer before or after Beethoven has ever written such a complex, extensive and highly dramatic fugue based on those words – completely different from his “Mass in C-major”, completely different from e.g. the angel's voice in Haydn's “Nelson Mass” or the setting that creates an almost fleeting impression in Bach's “Mass in B-minor”. Consequently, the message is completely different. We take this climax of polyphony as inspiration to propose a new, expanded polyphony, in which – just as with Beethoven – one must be aware of and secure in one's own voice but simultaneously listen to all the other voices.

For this installation we invited five artists from different musical traditions to explore the “Missa solemnis”: Birke J. Bertelsmeier, Colin Self, Mohammad Reza Mortazavi, Moor Mother, and Planningtorock. Rather like a string game – loosely based on Donna Haraway, who speaks of “sf”: string figures, science fiction, speculative feminism – we have placed this text and its message, as well as Beethoven's interpretation firmly into the hands of our guests.

It was important to us to extend an open invitation, and one that was kept open during the course of the work. Because we are convinced that the world to come cannot be found in an elaborated vision, a scene projected into the future, for which it is only necessary to fill certain roles. The future is a political category of the pre-

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sent in as much as it must be negotiated – here and now and under the current conditions. And often enough, it becomes clear that we rarely speak of the same future. Continuous conversation, reciprocal study, listening, awareness of one's own voice together with tolerance for other opinions and a sensitivity to other stories are vital, therefore. The present is polyphonic through and through. We need only to admit it.

THE WORLD TO COME is all about bringing together different musical voices and traditions that can merge but also – where necessary – stand side by side as equals in contradiction, sometimes also revealing power structures and hierarchies. Equally, different publics with different listening habits and sensitivities should also mix. In the end, the world to come is created in such a clash of many worlds; in the fact that no one avoids difficulties; in the fact that we “let the world come” in all of its radical worldliness – and that history and stories are told differently. In the beginning, in the words of D.H. Lawrence, there was not the word, but a chirrup.

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Thoughts on the Music

Gijs Leenaars

Today, Beethoven and his music are symbolic of longing for a new, united world in which people live peacefully and in harmony with nature. But how can such a new world, where tolerance provides the basis to social order, really be created, starting from the here and now – and how can it be lived?

The “Missa solemnis”, at least according to Beethoven himself, is the composer's most important work. The fact that the “Missa solemnis” is a monumental work rapidly becomes clear to every listener.

Nevertheless: The Missa does not disclose itself without hesitation; we must learn to love it, it must reveal itself gradually to listeners. There is a reason why the handwritten score at the beginning of the Kyrie reads, “From the heart – may it return again – to the heart”.

In order to discover what the “Missa solemnis” can tell us today and with regard to a future world, the Rundfunkchor Berlin has invited various artists to enter into dialogue with Beethoven's masterpiece. These artists have very different biographies and backgrounds. However, what they have in common is exploring the way they experience the world in the here and now, and how it might look in the future.

Musically, this means encounters with what may appear different, with what seems strange at first. Encounters like those that everyday life usually holds in store for us. The focus is not on either the union or the dissolution of opposites here, but on recognizing and hearing the voice of the other as an equal and worthy counterpart.

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Birke J. Bertelsmeier

Birke J. Bertelsmeier is one of the most acclaimed composers of the younger generation. She studied composition with Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe and Manfred Trojahn in Düsseldorf, and piano at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz (University of Music and Dance), Cologne.

As the winner of numerous composition competitions and a multiple scholarship holder – from various foundations – she has also received instruction from composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Marco Stroppa, Beat Furrer, Hanspeter Kyburz, Olga Neuwirth and Adriana Hölszky.

Birke J. Bertelsmeier's work includes oratorios, opera projects, solo and orchestral works, and chamber music. In 2018 the quintet “Al di là” was formed following a commission from the festival Ultraschall. Together with Tilman Hecker she realized “Querelle” at the Tischlerei of the Deutsche Oper. She has collaborated with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, members of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Ensemble Modern and the Ensemble of the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

In addition to her own contribution, Birke J. Bertelsmeier is responsible for the overall score of THE WORLD TO COME.

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Colin Self

Colin Self is an artist, composer and choreographer based in New York and Berlin. He creates music and performance pieces designed to trouble binaries and play with the boundaries of perception. Self works with a broad range of communities using voices, bodies, and computers as tools to interface with biological and technological software.

Self is a teacher at NYU's Clive Davis Institute in Berlin, and has presented work at The Dutch National Opera, HAU Berlin, The New Museum, The Kitchen NYC and Issue Project Room, among many international festivals and venues. He is a Rhizome Commission Grant recipient and a Queer Art Mentorship Fellow. He served as an Eyebeam Resident in 2016 and a resident fellow at Etopia for FUGA in Zaragoza, Spain in 2018. He is a co-founder of the NYC queer performance collective Chez Deep and The Radical Diva Grant. Self received his MFA in music and sound from Bard.

Self also works closely with Holly Herndon and has performed with her touring ensemble since 2015. He runs XOIR, an international non-utilitarian vocal workshop focused on alternative modalities of group singing, and releases solo music on the record label RVNG Intl.

In THE WORLD TO COME, Self is collaborating with Justin Wong on the arrangement.

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Iwona Sobotka

Soprano Iwona Sobotka studied at the Frédéric Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw and with the renowned artist and teacher Tom Krause at the Escuela Superior de Música in Madrid. She became internationally known as a Grand Prix winner of the Queen Elisabeth Music Competition in Belgium. Further prizes followed at the Polish Kunstlied Competition in Warsaw, the Paderewski Competition in Bydgoszcz, and the East & West Artists International Auditions in New York, where she also received an award for her debut concert at Carnegie Hall.

Iwona Sobotka performs in Europe, America and Japan. She has been a guest in famous concert halls such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Konzerthaus, Salle Pleyel in Paris, the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, and the Suntory Hall in Tokyo. She has also worked with orchestras such as the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, NDR Sinfonieorchester, Bayerisches Rundfunkorchester, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and Sinfonia Varsovia, and together with many of today's outstanding conductors such as Sir Colin Davies, Sir Simon Rattle, Marco Armiliato, Sylvain Cambreling, Teodor Currentzis and Massimo Zanetti.

At home both in the concert hall and on the operatic stage, Iwona Sobotka has already debuted as Violetta ("La Traviata"), Tatyana ("Eugene Onegin"), Pamina ("The Magic Flute"), Donna Anna ("Don Giovanni"), Juliet ("Romeo and Juliet"), Micaëla ("Carmen") and Liù ("Turandot").

She has been working closely with the Rundfunkchor Berlin since 2011, including in the concerts and CD production of Richard Strauss' "Eine deutsche Motette" (A German Motet) in 2015, as well as Poulenc's "Stabat mater" (adaptation by and with Cameron Carpenter for organ, soprano solo and choir) at the anniversary concert "90 years of the Rundfunkchor Berlin". Sobotka also sang the solo part in the "Verdi Requiem" (2015) at the sing-along concerts in Berlin and Barcelona (2019) and can be heard regularly in the "human requiem" since 2015.

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Mohammad Reza Mortazavi

Mohammad Reza Mortazavi was born in 1979 in Isfahan, two months after the revolution in Iran. He has been living in Germany as a musician and composer for 19 years.

Since his childhood Mortazavi has been deeply connected with music. He started playing the Tombak at the age of six and the Daf at fourteen. As a youth he often played in orchestras and won the national Tombak competition in Tehran six times in a row. He was fascinated by the multifaceted sounds of both instruments and went beyond their usual playing styles. The audience was enthusiastic about his musical ideas.

Because of this resonance he decided to play a Tombak solo concert with his own compositions in Tehran. When Mortazavi asked for a permit from the municipal cultural office, he met a jury member of the Tombak competition. Despite the awards he received, the conservative official found his application ridiculous and rejected it: Solo performances for Tombak were only intended for the old masters – so the reasoning. Disappointed by the dogmatic attitude of Iran's cultural elite, he longed for artistic freedom. He wanted to focus only on music, detached from the instrument and national cultural narratives: a global music in which something human is deeply connected.

In 2001 Mortazavi received a concert request from a promoter in Munich. The thought of being able to travel for music encouraged him greatly. However, he initially did not receive a visa from the German embassy. Only at the seventh attempt, and now with a special letter of recommendation in his hand, he received an entry permit. The first concert in Germany. A special resonance from the audience was noticeable for Mortazavi. He also received positive press reviews, which helped him from now on to travel to Germany more easily for workshops and concerts in small jazz clubs. He decided to move to Munich at the end of 2001 and turn his back on his previous success as a musician in Iran.

He soon realized that a life for music in Germany would not necessarily be easier. Although the organizers, the press and the audience were enthusiastic about his virtuosity, the microtonal and polyrhythmic levels of the music and thus the fluidity of his artistic position received less attention. Moreover, the wide sound spectrum of the instruments Tombak and Daf was unknown to many.

With time, however, Mortazavi learned a lot from musical interaction with the audience: he remarked, for example, that behind the admiration of his complex finger movements often a deeper feeling to the music itself could hide.

In order to point out a universal dimension of music, to which everyone can find an emotional connection, he emphasizes again and again that he does not see himself as a creator of music, but rather goes through it. If music finds a clear form of expression, it works for him like a spinning top, which at

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the moment of highest speed leads to a state of rest. His playing techniques appear here like tonal mirrors of the imagination. The Tombak is only one of the many possible projection surfaces. The coordinates of his rhythmic sound worlds are oriented both to the pulse, which carries a different dynamic in each moment, and to the metronome, which carries the time with it.

From today's perspective, Mortazavi describes finding a balance between concentration and letting go as the core element of his musical work: a constantly changing movement in which the boundaries of body and mind dissolve into one another. In this, a new and free music finally expresses itself as a philosophical position, which is perceived consciously or unconsciously.

In THE WORLD TO COME Mohammad Reza Mortazavi has collaborated with Lea Fink in working on the arrangement.

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Moor Mother

Moor Mother (Camae Ayewa) is a musician, poet, visual artist and activist. In 2016 her debut album “Fetish Bones” was released by Don Giovanni Records. Magazines like The Wire, Jazz Right Now and Rolling Stone praised the album as one of the best of the year. Shortly afterwards, her second album “The Motionless Present” followed, and at the end of 2019 her third album, “Analog Fluids of Sonic Black Holes”.

In recent years, Moor Mother has been a guest at numerous festivals, museums, galleries and universities. She has shared the stage with theoreticians, writers and artists such as bell hooks, Roscoe Mitchell, King Britt and Claudia Rankine. She also has a working relationship with the legendary Art Ensemble of Chicago. She is regularly involved in collaborations – her most recent publication, for example, was produced together with flautist and composer Nicole Mitchell. She is also participating in the projects Irreversible Entanglements, Moor Jewelry and 700 Bliss. Together with the artist, activist and writer Rasheedah Phillips, she forms the multidisciplinary collective Black Quantum Futurism, which works on new temporal models on the basis of Afro-Futurism.

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Planningtorock

Since their debut album “Have It All” in 2006, Planningtorock (Jam Rostron) who identifies as non binary have created queer club and pop music characterized by a personal and explicit political stance with clear and personal messages. Songs like “Patriarchy Over & Out” or “Let's Talk About Gender Baby” expand questions of gender politics into concise and meaningful slogans.

On their four studio albums – “Have It All” followed by “W” (2011), “All Love's Legal” (2013) and “Powerhouse” (2018) – Planningtorock combines rhythmic elements of club music together with pop synthesizers, classical elements and catchy queer pop melodies. The electronically modulated and often downwardly transposed vocals of Planningtorock or as they have termed it ‘queering Sonics’ are particularly striking – In addition to their studio albums, they have collaborated with many other artists and created music for films, operas and fashion shows, e.g. for Chanel.

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John Torres

John Torres lives and works in New York, as a lighting designer. His work ranges from music, theatre and dance to fashion and print media. His opera projects include, “Atlas” by Meredith Monk with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Walt Disney Concert Hall (2019), “Turandot” at the Teatro Real Madrid (2018), “Tristan and Isolde” at La Monnaie de Munt in Brussels (2019), and “The Mile Long Opera” on the High Line in NYC (2018). He has also been involved in theatre productions at The Public Theatre and St. Ann's Warehouse in New York.

Torres was responsible for the lighting for “A 24-Decade History of Popular Music”, a 24-hour theatrical event by performance artist Taylor Mac in 2016, which was hailed by the US theatre world as one of the most spectacular events of the decade. Using 248 songs, in this extraordinary show Taylor Mac tells the history of the USA from 1776 to the present day from a queer perspective, developing an alternative historiography.

In addition, John Torres has worked with musicians such as Tony Bennett, Solange Knowles, Lady Gaga and Nicki Minaj, with fashion brands such as Yeezy (the fashion label of rapper Kanye West) and traditional couture houses such as Givenchy and Hermès.

Torres has already been active for the Rundfunkchor Berlin: he designed the lighting for the transdisciplinary project “LUTHER dancing with the gods” together with its director Robert Wilson in 2017.

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Tilman Hecker

Tilman Hecker is a freelance director. In addition to the concert installation THE WORLD TO COME and a series based on Beethoven's "Missa solemnis" for the Rundfunkchor Berlin, together with Birke J. Bertelsmeier he is also developing the opera "Hé bien ! La guerre" after Laclos. From September 2020 he will also be co-curating a performance series for the Roter Salon of the Volksbühne Berlin. Past works include "Rainmaidens of Eastworld", musical theatre by David Brynjar Franzson, and "Delune" for the German Theatre in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

His radio play "Satin Island" based on Tom McCarthy was broadcast by HR in February 2019 and by SWR in March 2020. In December 2017 "Masina Apocalipsei", a premiere after Y.N. Harari, E.M. Forster and D.H. Lawrence, was shown with his own stage design at Teatrul National Iasi, Romania.

Other works include "Rochambeau", a long-term project about artificial intelligence ongoing since March 2017. Shown among other venues at the Uferstudios Berlin, "I Capuleti e i Montecchi" by Vincenzo Bellini at the Staatstheater Karlsruhe, as well as the dance performance "MIDNIGHT" at Radialsystem V, Berlin, with performances at the Nationaltheater Mannheim, Auezov Theatre, Almaty, Kazakhstan, and Alexandrinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Hecker's first radio play "Lingua Tertii Imperii" after Viktor Klemperer, produced for rbb and first broadcast in August 2016, has since been adopted by SR, HR, WDR, NDR, and DLF and repeatedly broadcast on rbb.

Other productions for the stage include the world premiere of the video opera "Querelle" after Jean Genet, also with Birke J. Bertelsmeier, at the Deutsche Oper Berlin / Tischlerei, John Cage's "Songbooks", workshop of the Staatsoper at the Schillertheater, Mozart's "La Finta Giardiniera" at Wuppertal theatres, "Narcissus" by Jay Schwartz and "Echo" at the Landestheater Salzburg in cooperation with the Salzburg Biennale and Teatros del Canal, Madrid.

Hecker's directing debut was the Mozart opera "Mandys Baby - Mandina amabile", incorporating his own stage design and spoken texts by Judith Schalansky at Radialsystem V, Berlin. Hecker is a scholarship holder of the Akademie der Künste Berlin, the Akademie Musiktheater heute / Foundation Deutsche Bank, and the Atelier Opéra en création of the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, as well as a member of the German Academy of Performing Arts.

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Dominikus Müller

Dominikus Müller is a journalist, freelance author and translator living in Berlin. He writes for daily newspapers and magazines such as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, taz - die tageszeitung or artforum, mainly about contemporary art. He is also contributing editor of the art magazine Spike. From 2011 to 2016 he was editor and later editor-in-chief of the art magazine frieze d/e.

Dominikus Müller is responsible for the dramaturgy of THE WORLD TO COME. This is his first collaboration with the Rundfunkchor Berlin.

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Gijs Leenaars – Principal Conductor

*“the choir’s impressive young principal conductor”
(The New York Times)*

As of the 2015/16 season Gijs Leenaars has taken up his post as Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Rundfunkchor Berlin. Ever since he successfully cooperated with outstanding conductors such as Kirill Petrenko, Daniel Barenboim, Sir Simon Rattle or Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Gijs Leenaars conducted genre-crossing concert performances such as “human requiem” or “LUTHER dancing with the gods” and has commissioned recordings of a-cappella and choral-symphonic repertoire.

In the year 2019 the Rundfunkchor Berlin was awarded the Edison Classical Music Award in the category choir, for their CD recording of pieces by Johannes Brahms conducted by Gijs Leenaars. The CD – a cooperation with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester – was published by Sony Classical. Additionally, a CD recording of Bruckner’s Mass in e minor and a mass by Stravinsky was released worldwide on the 5th of June 2020 by PENTATONE. Here Gijs Leenaars conducts the Rundfunkchor Berlin and the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. In the season 2020/21 Gijs Leenaars will conduct the new transdisciplinary concert installation THE WORLD TO COME – based on Beethoven’s “Missa solemnis”, which is the heart of the new Season.

Born in 1978 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Leenaars is regarded as one of the most exciting choral conductors of the younger generation. He studied the piano, choral and orchestral conducting as well as singing in Nijmegen and Amsterdam. Directly upon completing his studies he embarked on a collaboration with the Netherlands Radio Choir (Groot Omroepkoor) in Hilversum. From 2012 to 2015 he was the ensemble’s Principal Conductor, working with such leading conductors as Mariss Jansons, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, or Bernard Haitink. He is a regular guest conductor of the Collegium Vocale of Ghent, Cappella Amsterdam and Netherlands Chamber Choir and has also conducted orchestras including the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, The Hague Philharmonic and Turin Philharmonic.

One of his special interests is contemporary music: Gijs Leenaars conducted the Dutch premiere of Wolfgang Rihm’s “Vigilia” and prepared the choral works of György Kurtág with the Netherlands Radio Choir for a complete recording under Reinbert de Leeuw. His strikingly imaginative programming brings together the classics of the choral repertoire with seldom performed works from all periods.

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RUNDFUNK-SINFONIEORCHESTER BERLIN (RSB)

For many years, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB) has held an internationally recognised position in the front ranks of German radio orchestras and Berlin's top orchestras. In autumn 2017, Vladimir Jurowski took over the role as chief conductor and artistic director of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. At his side, Karina Canellakis has been acting as Principal Guest Conductor since 2019.

The history of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin goes back to the first musical hour of the German radio in October 1923. The former principal conductors, including Sergiu Celibidache, Eugen Jochum, Hermann Abendroth, Rolf Kleinert, Heinz Rögner, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, and Marek Janowski, in turn shaped an ensemble that has endured the vicissitudes of German history in the 20th century in a unique way.

The RSB has become a top address for outstanding young conductors on the international music scene: Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Vasily Petrenko, Jakub Hrůša, Alain Altinoglu, Omer Meir Wellber, Alondra de la Parra, Lahav Shani, Karina Canellakis, Thomas Søndergård, Nicholas Carter, Antonello Manacorda and Bernard Labadie. Many of them have made their Berlin debuts with the RSB and have been returning as regular guests. From the middle generation of conductors, Sylvain Cambreling and Jukka-Pekka Saraste will be coming back to conduct the RSB.

All of the RSB's symphony concerts are broadcast on radio thanks to its close ties to Deutschlandfunk and Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb). The cooperation with Deutschlandradio continues to yield fruitful results on disc. Three recordings under the baton of Vladimir Jurowski have opened a new chapter in production since 2015. For over 50 years, the RSB has been giving regular guest performances in Japan and Korea as well as at German and European festivals and in musical centres worldwide.

The Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin has a long history of collaboration with the Rundfunkchor Berlin, including the joint production of outstanding concerts and CD recordings: most recently, a CD recording of Bruckner's Mass in E Minor and Stravinsky's Mass with the Rundfunkchor Berlin, which was released worldwide by PENTATONE on June 5th, 2020.

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With round about 60 concerts per season, CD-recordings and international guest performances the Rundfunkchor Berlin is one of the world's outstanding choral ensembles. Three Grammy® Awards alone mark the success of the ensemble. The exceptional breadth of its repertoire, an unmistakable warm, richly nuanced sound, absolute precision and delight in experimentation all contribute to making it one of the chosen partners of international orchestras and conductors such as Kirill Petrenko, Daniel Barenboim, Sir Simon Rattle, or Yannick Nézet-Séguin. It is the permanent partner of the Berliner Philharmoniker as well as of Berlin's Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester and their Principal Conductors.

Rundfunkchor Berlin's experimental project series has attracted great worldwide attention. In collaboration with artists from diverse disciplines, the chorus breaks down the classical concert formation and adopts new modes of choral music for a new audience. The interactive scenic version of Brahms's "Ein deutsches Requiem" staged by Jochen Sandig and a team of Sasha Waltz & Guests – "human requiem" – became a milestone within the choir's experimental repertoire with guest performances in New York, Hongkong, Paris, Adelaide and Istanbul. In its project "LUTHER dancing with the gods" the choir cooperated with director Robert Wilson and reflected upon Luthers impact within the arts in an extraordinary concert performance with music by Bach, Nystedt and Reich in march of 2017. In the season 2020/21 the Rundfunkchor Berlin will present the transdisciplinary project THE WORLD TO COME based on Beethovens "Missa solemnis". Directed by Tilman Hecker, contemporary music genres are fusing with the masterpiece by Beethoven, guiding the audience on a musical journey into the world of tomorrow. National and international Artists including Moor Mother, Mohammad Reza Mortazavi, Planningtonrock, Colin Self and Birke J. Bertelsmeier, will come together to realize the heart of the new season in Berlin's Vollgutlager.

With its community projects for various target groups – the big *Sing-along Concert* in the Berlin Philharmonie, the *Festival of Choral Cultures* for international choirs and the *Liederbörse* (Song Exchange) for children and young people – Rundfunkchor Berlin invites people of all ages to become immersed in the world of singing. Its long-term education programme *SING!*, encourages singing in Berlin's elementary schools as an ongoing staple in everyday classes. With its *Academy* and *Schola* for young professional singers as well as the *Berlin International Masterclass* for highly qualified young choral conductors it supports the next generation.

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Rundfunkchor Berlin

Founded in 1925 the choir celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2015. Since its foundation the ensemble was shaped by conductors including Helmut Koch, Dietrich Knothe, Robin Gritton and Simon Halsey. As of season 2015/16 Gijs Leenaars has taken up his post as Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of Rundfunkchor Berlin. Simon Halsey was appointed Conductor Laureate and will retain his ties to the ensemble as regular guest conductor. Rundfunkchor Berlin is an ensemble of Rundfunk Orchester und Chöre gGmbH Berlin (Shareholders: Deutschlandradio, the Federal Republic of Germany, the State of Berlin and Radio Berlin-Brandenburg).

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