

Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra

Since its foundation in 1945 by Karl Münchinger, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra (SKO) has developed its own unmistakable sound and thus become a foundation model for many other ensembles. Under Dennis Russell Davies, the SKO's honorary conductor, the orchestra also purposefully expanded its range to include contemporary music. His successor, Michael Hofstetter, strengthened the orchestra's expertise in the field of historical performance practice.

Today, more than 75 years after its foundation, the SKO sees itself as a cultural institution with a dual role. The vision of the musicians together with their Principal Conductor Thomas Zehetmair, Artistic Partner Jörg Widmann and Managing Director and Artistic Director Markus Korselt is to preserve tradition while also setting standards for the future in terms of sound and programming. A rich repertoire spanning the centuries, from Baroque to composition commissions, includes bold genre cross-overs with jazz and electronic music in exciting formats and projects close to the audience. This range makes it one of the most accomplished ensembles of its kind. The SKO is closely connected to Stuttgart and its home region through concerts, collaborations and projects and, as a musical ambassador, inspires audiences all over the world on tours and with guest appearances. Its extensive discography, featuring top-class soloists and hand-picked programmes, is a testament to the ensemble's international standing.

The orchestra presents itself both as “pure SKO” in its regular line-up of 17 strings as well as in its larger ensemble with woodwind, brass and percussion for masterworks from the Classical and Romantic periods, including Haydn's complete symphonic works, symphonies and concertos by Mozart and Beethoven, as well as large-scale works by, among others, Schumann, Weber, Mendelssohn and Saint-Saëns.

The concert plan for the 2023 season features guest players from all over Germany, Europe and China. Joining the SKO on stage are top-class artists such as Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Sunhae Im, Alexander Melnikov, Midori Seiler and Lera Auerbach. Principal Conductor Thomas Zehetmair and Artistic Partner Jörg Widmann, the ensemble's musical leadership duo, drive the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra to new heights in the interpretation of the wide-ranging repertoire from the early Baroque to the 21st century and also appear as soloists themselves.

The “Sternstunden”, the SKO's own concert series, relishes the opportunity to transcend genre boundaries and experiment with the programme. 2023 will see the wild musical liaison “Iron Maiden in love with Vivaldi”, the Australian keyboard artist Anthony Romaniuk hosting a Hungarian birthday party with the SKO to celebrate the 100th birthday of Ligeti, a meeting of Bowie, Pärt and Beethoven in “Moonlight on Mars”, the percussionist Johannes Fischer playing extremely “Danceable!” inspirational music by Purcell featuring electronics and the violinist

Benjamin Schmid, at home in both jazz and classical genres, tracing the “Austrian Groove” on a journey through Austria’s jazz scene.

The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra is constantly discovering new creative fields in the ever-changing area of digitisation. Since 2018 innovative projects featuring virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and hologram concerts have been created which broaden the classical foundation of the orchestra and offer the audience new artistic experiences.

Pursuing a desire to be more sustainable, in 2022 the SKO became the first climate-neutral orchestra in Germany and pledges to maintain this standard in the future. The transition from sheet music to tablets came at the same time, also a first in Germany.

Since 2015 the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra has been developing participatory formats for children and young people from a wide variety of backgrounds with its “SKOhr-Labor” music education programme. Through tailor-made projects, the SKO demonstrates social responsibility and makes a vital contribution to the musical culture of future generations. For example, in 2022 a “RAPsody” was developed with juvenile offenders from the JVA Adelsheim, for which the SKO was awarded the prize "The Power of the Arts".

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