

GÜRZENICH ORCHESTER KÖLN

The Gürzenich-Orchester Köln stands for ground-breaking interpretations and an innovative programme. It is currently one of the leading orchestras in Germany for concerts and operatic performances. The Gürzenich-Orchester has been one of the two resident orchestras of the Cologne Philharmonie (Kölner Philharmonie) since its opening in 1986, where it welcomes more than 100,000 concert visitors to approximately fifty concerts each season. François-Xavier Roth has been Conductor of Gürzenich-Orchester and General Musical Director of the City of Cologne since the 2015/2016 season.

The roots of the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln, which currently has some 130 musicians, go back to the medieval Ratsmusiken town bands and the first permanent ensembles of Cologne Cathedral. From 1857, the orchestra gave concerts in the Gürzenich Hall, whose name it still bears today. It has been the orchestra of the City of Cologne since 1888. In its long history, it has always attracted the leading composers and interpreters of its time; important works from the Romantic repertoire of Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler celebrated their première with the Gürzenich-Orchester.

By the 200th birthday of Anton Bruckner in 2024, the Gürzenich-Orchester with its principal conductor François-Xavier Roth will record all of the Bruckner symphonies. Present-day composers also contribute to the orchestra's pulling power – new works from Georg Friedrich Haas, Márton Illés, Michael Jarrell, Malika Kishino, Vassos Nicolaou and Ayanna Witter-Johnson appear in the 2020/21 season. Outstanding compositions from the present day are the focus of the concerts time and again.

The orchestra has been shaped by its conductor laureates, Günter Wand and Dmitrij Kitajenko, and since 1986 by its chief conductors Marek Janowski, James Conlon, Markus Stenz and now François-Xavier Roth. Under his aegis, the Gürzenich-Orchester has considerably increased its offerings for children and young people as well as for older people. In September 2019, the starting signal was given for the first Citizens' Orchestra in Cologne, which is an initiative by the musicians from the Gürzenich-Orchester and their chief conductor to make music together with residents of Cologne of every age. The digital streaming platform service GO PLUS broadcasts high-quality live concert recordings from the Gürzenich-Orchester all over the world.

April 2020