

GÜRZENICH ORCHESTER KÖLN

Deeply rooted in Cologne but open to the world, the Gürzenich Orchestra stands for trendsetting interpretations, innovative programmes and diverse offerings beyond the concert hall. Both in the concert and opera repertoire, it is among Germany's leading orchestras – while also looking back on a tradition of making music history that has few equals.

The orchestra was founded in 1827 by the »Concert-Gesellschaft«, but its beginnings can be traced back to medieval music practice in Cologne. Since 1888 the Gürzenich Orchestra has been the orchestra of the City of Cologne. In approximately 50 concerts per season, it welcomes more than 100,000 enthusiastic concertgoers at Cologne's Philharmonie. It also gives about 160 performances every season as the orchestra of the Cologne Opera.

Since the 2015/16 season, François-Xavier Roth has been Gürzenich-Kapellmeister and General Music Director of the City of Cologne. In this position, he has famous predecessors: suffice it to mention Ferdinand Hiller (1850–1884) and Franz Wüllner (1884–1902), conductors laureate Günter Wand and Dmitrij Kitajenko as well as its chief conductors since 1986: Marek Janowski, James Conlon and Markus Stenz.

The Gürzenich Orchestra proudly looks back on its great past, striving actively to pass on its own history as a living tradition. Outstanding works of the romantic repertoire by Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler were first performed by the Gürzenich Orchestra. Today this great heritage inspires the approximately 130 musicians of the orchestra and its conductors to interpret tradition innovatively and build bridges to music of our times, with courage and imagination. Here too, the Gürzenich Orchestra can point to an impressive list of major world premieres. It is always seeking new paths, inviting its audience to continuously explore novel musical avenues.

The Gürzenich Orchestra is an orchestra for everyone. It strikes out from the classical concert hall joyfully and without reservations, inspiring people where they are, in society's midst: this too is part of its mission. Performances in senior citizens' residences and kindergartens, workshops, school concerts and offerings such as its Family Card and the Cologne Citizens' Orchestra aim to arouse the musical enthusiasm of many different groups and enrich people's lives through music. With its livestream series GO Plus, podcasts and videos, the Gürzenich Orchestra has a strong digital presence as well. Together with multiple award-winning CDs, this allows the world to experience this unique cultural ambassador of the City of Cologne.

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