

Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra

Founded by Karl Münchinger in 1945, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra has held a prominent position in the international orchestral world for some seven decades. Münchinger, who was principal conductor of the orchestra for over 40 years, was able to attract a small group of élite players in the early days to realise his vision of a completely new and exemplary way of interpreting works by Johann Sebastian Bach and the Viennese classicists. Dennis Russell Davies, who was principal conductor from 1995 to 2006, re-defined the orchestra's artistic priorities to enhance the orchestra's versatility. Under his directorship the orchestra was able to distinguish itself, both in the concert hall as well as in the recording studio with repertoire from the 20th and 21st centuries including specially commissioned compositions, particularly from the composers Phillip Glass and Giya Kancheli. With Davies, a complete edition of all 107 symphonies by Joseph Haydn was recorded live for Sony BMG in a unique series of concerts sponsored by Daimler-Benz, extending over an eleven-year period ending in 2009. A recording of works by Bartók and Lutosławski appeared on the ECM label in 2012 conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, who remains associated with the orchestra as conductor laureate.

Since 2006, Michael Hofstetter, the internationally renowned specialist for authentic performing practice, has been the orchestra's principal conductor. Further commissioned works by composers such as Siegfried Matthus, Helmut Oehring and Milko Kelemen have been added to the orchestra's already extensive contemporary repertoire during Hofstetter's chief conductorship. Thus continues the long, illustrious recording tradition of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, begun in Geneva in 1949 for the Decca company. Up until the present day the discography of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra comprises several hundred published recordings. From beginning with the 2013-14 season the young conductor Matthias Foremny took over the chief conductorship of the orchestra and will be followed by world-class violinist and conductor Thomas Zehetmair in 2019.

Innumerable concert performances around the globe and participation in the top international music festivals have been the hallmark of the high quality and the outstanding reputation of the ensemble. Soloists such as Jacques Thibaud, Yehudi Menuhin and Wilhelm Kempf performed with the orchestra in the 50s, Julius Katchen and Arthur Grumiaux in the 60s, Mstislav Rostropovich, Nathan Milstein, and Leonid Kogan in the 70s. After Münchinger's retirement, the orchestra invited some soloists to play and direct the orchestra. Among the first to do so were Henryk Szeryng, Trevor Pinnock and Janos Starker. Kolja Blacher, Leon Fleisher, Daniel Hope, Paul Meyer Renaud Capuçon and Steven Isserlis have all directed concerts with the orchestra. In recent years the orchestra has played with, among others, Rolando Villazón, Fazil Say, Daniel Müller-Schott, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Ian Bostridge, François Leleux, Xavier de Maistre, Emmanuel Pahud, Martin Fröst and Gautier Capuçon. In past seasons guest conductors have included Christoph Poppen, Pablo González, Ariel Zuckermann, Wolfram Christ and Günter Pichler.

The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra fulfills its function as regional ambassador with regular worldwide concert tours. After concerts in China, Nepal, India and Japan in the last years, the orchestra has also made recent appearances in South America, Italy, Austria, Netherlands and France.

Great importance is given by the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra to its engagement with local educational institutions. Besides frequent collaboration with the Stuttgart Hochschule für Musik, the orchestra is involved in educational projects with pupils and young people with impaired vision.

For its exceptional achievements, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra was awarded the 2008 European Chamber Music Prize by the European Cultural Foundation.

The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra is supported by the Land Baden-Wuerttemberg, the City of Stuttgart and the company Robert Bosch GmbH.