

Das Bundesjugendorchester – Play, Promote, Inspire!

The German National Youth Orchestra is Germany's youngest major orchestra, founded by the German Music Council in 1969 and made up of the country's finest young musicians between the ages of 14 and 19. In addition to Sir Simon Rattle, distinguished conductors such as Herbert von Karajan, Kurt Masur, Gustavo Dudamel, and Kirill Petrenko have led the orchestra; soloists have included Christian Tetzlaff, Tabea Zimmermann, and Fazil Say, as well as the rock musicians Sting and Peter Maffay. In 2016, the orchestra – together with the conductor Alexander Shelley and Campino from the group "Die Toten Hosen" – was awarded an Echo Klassik prize in the category "Classic for Children". In 2013, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra assumed an official mentoring role for the youth orchestra, which is invited each year to the Easter Festival in Baden-Baden to join members of the Berlin Philharmonic for master classes, chamber music, and concerts performed together under the direction of Sir Simon Rattle. The young musicians qualify by auditioning for a jury of professionals. During intensive work phases, they prepare significant orchestral works from all periods; contemporary music and premieres of new compositions are an integral part of the repertoire. The engagement with great musical literature, the work with professional musicians from Germany's finest orchestras and universities, as well as encounters with other like-minded young artists contribute to an unforgettable experience for the members of the orchestra.

The German National Youth Orchestra has performed around the world, often as a cultural ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany. Tours have taken the group throughout Europe, as well as to Asia, Africa, and North and South America. The orchestra has participated in numerous projects of historical significance, including a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift with Kurt Masur in New York, a tour of six Eastern European countries as part of Germany's European Council presidency, and concerts in Johannesburg and Cape Town as part of the cultural activities preceding the World Cup football games in 2010. The orchestra opened the German Year in Mexico City in 2016 with a concert in the Palacio de Bellas Artes, and in 2017 toured for the second time with the German National Youth Ballet, this time in sold-out halls in nine cities with a program called "Summit Meeting – Reformation".

When these youthful elite musicians play, they produce a sound that thrills and inspires soloists, conductors, audiences, and critics. Sir Simon Rattle wrote in the orchestra's guest book: "What an enormous pleasure to meet this wonderful next generation of colleagues! I think the future of orchestras is safe in your hands."

The members of the German National Youth Orchestra are particularly engaged in musical outreach and education activities. They themselves lead the "School Session" programs, giving the school children in the audience a direct link to the musical works and clearly demonstrating that classical music can be fun. The German National Youth Orchestra has had a lasting influence on the country's musical life: many former members now play in professional orchestras or are well-known soloists. More than 20 members of the Berlin Philharmonic are alumni of the youth orchestra. The orchestra's work is generously supported by the German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Daimler AG, the City of Bonn, GVL (German Collecting Society for Performing Rights), DOV (Union of German Orchestra Musicians), the German National Youth Orchestra Foundation, and numerous private donors.

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