

Concerto Köln Ensemble & Orchestra



Concerto Köln – 30 Years on the Cutting Edge of Early Music

Passionate performance style and an insatiable appetite for venturing into uncharted territory are the trademarks of Concerto Köln. For over 30 years, the orchestra with the distinctive sound has ranked among the leading ensembles for historically-informed performance practice. With regular appearances at renowned festivals and in the great music capitals around the world, Concerto Köln is synonymous with outstanding interpretations of early music while also maintaining deep roots in Cologne's own musical scene. Projects with the Bayerischer Rundfunk Choir and Nordeutscher Rundfunk Choir, the ChorwerkRuhr and the Swedish Radio Choir, for example, demonstrate how highly Concerto Köln is valued in collaborations with vocal ensembles.

The 2017/18 season is marked by major international tours: with Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, Concerto Köln will perform in Mexico; with Valer Sabadus, it will present the CD just recorded (by Sony Classics) in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and with Vivaldi's Four Seasons, the ensemble, together with its concertmaster and soloist, Shunske Sato, will make appearances in Luxembourg, Malta and New York. For the first time, Concerto Köln will collaborate with the Nederlands Kamerkoor under the baton of Peter Dijkstra, performing Bach's Christmas Oratorio on tour within the Netherlands, Germany and Hungary. Furthermore, the ensemble will perform in Bucharest with the violinist, Giuliano Carmignola; in Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Munich with the soprano, Julia Lezhneva; and in Cologne with the violinist, Midori Seiler. At the festival ACHT BRÜCKEN | Musik für Köln, Concerto Köln, together with the ensemble Musikfabrik, will play the premiere of one of the commissions composed by Hèctor Parra for both ensembles.

For Concerto Köln, the 2017/18 season also features the launch of the project, Wagner Readings. This project, initiated and directed by Kent Nagano, will be an ongoing process in the years ahead and will involve working through Richard Wagner's Tetralogy, The Ring of the Nibelung, from a historical performance practice perspective. Both the Kunststiftung NRW and the Strecker-Stiftung assist in supporting the ensemble with this artistic-scientific project.

Mayumi Hirasaki, Markus Hoffmann, Shunske Sato and Evgeny Sviridov as regular concertmasters and Lorenzo Alpert as Artistic Director assume the leading roles within the self-governed orchestra. With their choice of projects, the musicians manage to prove time and again that artistic standards and popular success are by no means a contradiction in terms.

Notable conductors with which Concerto Köln has recently collaborated include prominent names such as Ivor Bolton, Kent Nagano, Peter Dijkstra, Andrea Marcon and Gianluca Capuano. The long-standing collaboration with René Jacobs is documented by several award-winning CD recordings including Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Handel's *Saul* and Graun's *Cleopatra e Cesare*. By now, the ensemble is able to boast a discography of over 70 recordings, the majority of which are distinguished with awards such as the ECHO Klassik, the Grammy Award, the German Record Critics Award, the MIDEM Classic Award, the Choc du Monde de la Musique, the Diapason d'Année and the Diapason d'Or. Since 2008, Concerto Köln maintains close ties with the label, Berlin Classics, but collaborates frequently with other labels as well.

Concerto Köln is able to generate thrilling interpretations of standard repertoire as well, making the works sound as if heard for the first time. Such is the case with the recording of the Brandenburg Concertos as well as the brilliant, recently-recorded *Four Seasons* with Shunske Sato (both recordings under Berlin Classics). The latter was realized through a close collaboration with the high end specialists, MBL: In the quest to replicate a live experience, the concert was recorded without cuts and in the highest audio quality.

The acclaimed, multiple award-winning rediscovery of Vinci's *Artaserse* (Virgin) with Philippe Jaroussky, France Fagioli, Max Emanuel Cencic and Valer Sabadus in the main roles, attracted international attention. Recently-released recordings including works by Johann Sebastian Bach (with Giuliano Carmignola, the Bayerischer Rundfunk Choir and Mahan Esfahani, among others); violin concertos with Midori Seiler (Berlin Classics); as well as Mahan Esfahani's project, *Time Present and Time Past* (Deutsche Grammophon), are further testimony to Concerto Köln's wide stylistic range and high profile artistic partnerships .

As a cultural ambassador of the European Union (2012), the orchestra acts as a musical figurehead for Cologne and its province, North Rhein-Westphalia as well. To help in the realization of its ideas, the ensemble is able to rely on the support of numerous partners: The Ministry of Family, Youth, Culture and Sport of the Province of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Kunststiftung NRW and the Goethe Institute help to support the ensemble in its research and realization of musical projects.

The RheinEnergie Foundation for Culture and the Foundations of the Kreissparkasse Köln play significant supporting roles in the musical education project, "Die Hörpiraten". TÜV Rheinland aids in supporting the concert series, *AfterWorkClassix*, in which Concerto Köln presents an unusual program with rediscovered works. In addition, a close partnership with the High End Audio specialists, MBL, was established in 2009, providing the orchestra the opportunity to grapple with the topic of audio and playback of recordings.



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