

Dresdner Philharmonie

Press Release
Dresden / 18. March 2025

New Worlds - The Dresden Philharmonic presents its 2025/26 season

Sir Donald Runnicles, Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic (from 25/26)

“Becoming Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic opens up a new world for me, and I’m looking forward to my first season with this outstanding orchestra. Above all, I associate our season’s theme, ‘New Worlds’, with what we are planning musically and artistically together, from the British Festival, to ‘Elektra’ in concert and the tour to Asia. The composers and works from my British homeland are particularly close to my heart, including Holst’s ‘The Planets’ and works by Ralph Vaughan Williams and William Walton, as well as the compositions of Sir James MacMillan, whom we were able to bring on as Composer in Residence. Finally, Dresden and the local audience are also a new world for me, and, from what I’ve experienced so far, a beautiful, exciting and inspiring one!”

Frauke Roth, Director of the Dresden Philharmonic:

“With the new season under the motto ‘New Worlds’, we are not only opening an artistically exciting chapter, but also sending a clear signal about the future of a modern concert orchestra. For us, ‘New Worlds’ means rethinking music - through innovative concert formats such as abFRACKt, fresh programmatic impulses with soloists such as Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Timothy Ridout, Lucienne Renaudin Vary and Anna Lapwood, and an open dialogue with our audience.

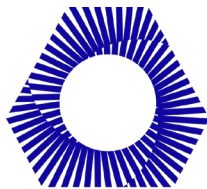
With Sir Donald Runnicles as Chief Conductor, we are bringing an outstanding artistic signature to our house. Together with our Principal Guest Conductor Tabita Berglund and other international artists, this opens up new perspectives. Our ‘British Festival’ is exemplary of our approach: we create new musical spaces that combine tradition with breaking new ground. At the same time, we add important facets to our repertoire. To be able to welcome Sir James MacMillan to Dresden as our Composer in Residence in this context fills me with great curiosity.

‘New Worlds’ also means creating new approaches - through low-threshold offers, bold dramaturgy and a clever combination of excellent musical outreach with state-of-the-art technology. Our high occupancy rate of almost 90 per cent shows that the audience appreciates our offerings; we want to build on this and continue to show ourselves as the best hosts. More than ever, our society needs places like our concert hall and energies like the power of orchestral music in order to meet at eye level and be touched by shared experiences.

For me, the Dresden Philharmonic is always associated with its home, the Kulturpalast. Together with our partners, we are continuing to develop it as a ‘third place’, a lively venue for music, education and dialogue. With a ‘Pop Up Green’ in front of the building and modern media in the entrance foyer, we are further enhancing this.”

Annekatriin Klepsch, Mayor for Culture, Science and Tourism of the state capital of Dresden:

“As the orchestra of the state capital Dresden, the Dresden Philharmonic is setting important musical and artistic accents in the new season. The range of topics is promising: European, with a focus on Great Britain; international, with a wide range of guests; and interdisciplinary, with themes such as literature and the culture of remembrance. I am looking forward to the 2025/2026 season with great anticipation and am looking forward to the numerous international artists.”



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First guest conductor: Tabita Berglund

It is rare for an orchestra to be so united: when Tabita Berglund stood on the podium for the first time, the musicians of the Dresden Philharmonic felt that they wanted to work with this artistically passionate and expressive conductor, who is also consistently approachable and communicative. From the 2025/2026 season, the Norwegian artist, who is currently experiencing a rapid international rise, will be in Dresden several times a season as Principal Guest Conductor, setting her own accents. She makes her debut with 'Peer Gynt' at the Dresden City Festival (17 AUG 25) and two weeks later with the official season opening concerts (29/30 AUG 25), then with works by Dvořák, Bartók and her fellow Norwegian, Gupta. Details of a third project in Spring 2026 will be announced later.

Artist in Residence: Boris Giltburg

Dresden audiences already love him, and after the inauguration of the new Steinway grand piano for the Kulturpalast in autumn 2024, which he helped to select, it was clear that the connection with Boris Giltburg would become a close artistic partnership. We are delighted to welcome him as Artist in Residence in the 2025/2026 season. He will present piano concertos by Beethoven (19 SEP 25), Ravel, Prokofiev (13/14 DEC 25) and Gershwin (10/11 APR 26) to his audience and give a recital with works by Rachmaninov, Prokofiev and Ravel (10 FEB 26).

Composer in Residence: Sir James MacMillan

Scottish in through and through and one of the most successful composers of our time: it was only natural for Sir Donald Runnicles to bring his close artistic friend Sir James MacMillan to Dresden as Composer in Residence and to make his works better known here as part of our British focus. MacMillan's compositions, with their great soundscapes, are ideally suited to the Dresden Philharmonic and its concert hall. In addition to his Fourth Symphony, which he dedicated to Runnicles (22 NOV 25) and chamber music works (23 NOV 25, 19 APR 26), MacMillan will also perform his own choral works with our Philharmonic Choirs (9/10 MAY 26).

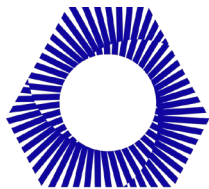
Palace organist: Anna Lapwood

Over a million followers on social media - that's quite an achievement for an organist!! No problem for the young Brit Anna Lapwood, as she combines a love of playing, unusual repertoire and a high level of artistic maturity with approachability and a natural charisma. Already an international star, she will be playing adaptations of film music (26 NOV 25) and Poulenc's organ concerto (6/7 FEB 26) as the Dresden Philharmonic's palace organist in the 2025/2026 season.

Our Guests

Kent Nagano, Dima Slobodeniouk, Vasily Petrenko, Krzysztof Urbanski, Andrew Manze, Michael Sanderling, Christoph Eschenbach and François Leleux are among those returning to the podium of the Dresden Philharmonic. In addition to Tabita Berglund, we are delighted to welcome renowned conductors such as Eun Sun Kim, Anna Handler and Anja Bihlmaier (the latter is making her debut with us). We also welcome Sakari Oramo, Vitali Alekseenok, Paolo Bortolameo, Riccardo Minasi and Miguel Sepúlveda (Runnicles Fellow) to conduct the Dresden Philharmonic for the first time. Our Composer in Residence Sir James MacMillan will also be conducting the orchestra.

Our Artist in Residence, Boris Giltburg is just one of many outstanding soloists. The new 'Stars at the Piano' series also features Grigory Sokolov, Víkingur Ólafsson and the brothers Lucas and



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Arthur Jussen, and we have invited Gabriela Montero, Yulianna Avdeeva, Alexandra Dovgan and Bertrand Chamayou to perform piano concertos. The cellists Truls Mørk and Sheku Kanneh-Mason will be our guests. Other soloists include Alina Ibragimova (violin), Timothy Ridout (viola), Lucienne Renaudin Vary (trumpet) and Jess Gillam (saxophone). We have also invited a number of outstanding singers for various programmes, notably Karita Mattila and Elisabeth Teige (in 'Elektra').

British Festival und British Spotlights

In autumn 2025, Sir Donald Runnicles's first season as Chief Conductor will be marked by a British Festival featuring British artists and works (14-26 NOV 25). Sir Donald himself will conduct 'The Planets' by Gustav Holst, works by Ralph Vaughan Williams and William Walton, as well as James MacMillan's Fourth Symphony, which he dedicated to Sir Donald. Other guests during these two weeks will be Palace organist Anna Lapwood with film music adaptations and Timothy Ridout, who will play Walton's Viola Concerto.

The festival is followed by a number of **British Spotlights** in Spring 2026. Jess Gillam features on the saxophone (17/18 APR 26), we have invited cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason (22/23 MAY 26); and Composer in Residence Sir James MacMillan will perform his own works and works by Arvo Pärt and Benjamin Britten with the Philharmonic Choirs (9/10 MAY 26). We also offer a British programme with Vasily Petrenko conducting William Walton's First Symphony (11/12 APR 26).

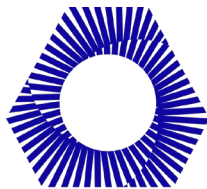
Memorable and New

Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz was a highly talented author who had to flee Nazi Germany at the age of 17. His novel '**The Passenger**' was published in 2018, more than 80 years after his death, and became a literary sensation. The main character is Otto Silbermann, a well-off merchant from Berlin. Due to his Jewish roots, after the National Socialists came to power in 1933, he goes from being an upper-class citizen to a hunted man, desperately travelling through Germany by train and trying in vain to leave the country. Jan Müller-Wieland has adapted this novel into a melodrama for two narrators, tenor, baritone, choir, soundtrack and large orchestra, which we will premiere on 9 NOV 2025, with Ulrich Noethen and Birgit Minichmayr in the speaking roles, among others.

The Dresden Remembrance Day concert on **13 February** will be an audio-visual event. Michael Sanderling will conduct Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony, while the film 'Oh To Believe in Another World' by **William Kentridge**, which the South African artist created to accompany this particular symphony, will be shown on the big screen. This ties in with the Kentridge focus of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in 2025, which is honouring the artist on the occasion of his 70th birthday with exhibitions in the Albertinum, Kupferstich-Kabinett and the Puppet Theatre Collection.

We are expanding the collaboration we have begun with DK Deutsche Klassik: in the 2025/2026 season with the '**Stars at the Piano**' series, in which Víkingur Ólafsson (15 NOV 25), Lucas and Arthur Jussen (24 MAR 26), Boris Giltburg (10 FEB 26) and Grigory Sokolov (8 MAY 26) will perform recitals.

Sir Donald Runnicles continues our series of operas in concert with '**Elektra**' by Richard Strauss, featuring Karita Mattila as Klytämnestra, Aušrinė Stundytė as Elektra, Elisabeth Teige as Chrysothemis and Albert Pesendorfer as Orest, as well as the MDR Radio Choir (12/15 MAR 26).



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An excellent cast of baroque singers led by Christina Landshamer has been invited to perform Bach's Mass in B minor under the direction of Hans-Christoph Rademann together with the Dresdner Kammerchor and the Dresdner Philharmonie (3 OCT 25).

In addition to the traditional performances of the Christmas Oratorio with the Dresden Kreuzchor, a new version of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' will be staged as a reading with music (libretto: John von Düffel), with Ulrich Noethen and Devid Striesow as narrators and the Dresden Philharmonic Choir (12 DEC 25).

We are also breaking new ground with '**Amazônia**', a project in which photographs by Brazilian star photographer **Sebastião Salgado** are shown with music by Villa-Lobos and Philipp Glass. The images are an intense artistic exploration of the threat to the Amazon rainforest and unfold a highly suggestive power in their coordinated interplay with the music (5 JUN 26).

Premieres and First Performances

On November 9, the Dresden Philharmonic will premiere the melodrama "The Passenger," by Jan Müller-Wieland commissioned by the orchestra and composed for a narrator, tenor, baritone, choir, tapes, and large orchestra, based on the novel of the same name by Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz. Ulrich Noethen and Birgit Minichmayr have been selected as the narrators.

Together with Sheku Kanneh-Mason, they will perform the European premiere of Edmund Finnis's Cello Concerto (co-commissioned with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, 22-23 MAY 2026). The Dresden Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra will perform a work by the young Georgian composer Tsofne Zedginidze for the first time (25 JAN 2026). Under the baton of Kent Nagano there will also be a new composition by Alex Nante on "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (26 OCT 2025).

Guest Performances and Tours

After 30 years, the Dresden Philharmonic will return to the Ravello Festival, where it will perform a concert with works by Wagner and Mendelssohn Bartholdy under the direction of Kent Nagano (22 AUG 2025). The orchestra, with Dima Slobodeniouk and Boris Giltburg, will appear in Merano and Verona (21/22 SEP 2025), and in June 2026, the Dresden Philharmonic will travel to Asia (Japan, among others) with Chief Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles.

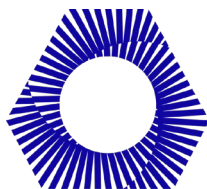
Guest Choirs and Guest Orchestras

The Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra has accepted our invitation to give a concert in the Kulturpalast under the direction of Manfred Honeck, with Renaud Capuçon as soloist (25 AUG).

We are expanding our partnership with the **Prague Philharmonic Choir**; the ensemble has been invited to perform Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on New Year's Eve under the direction of Sakari Oramo. Our collaboration with the **Dresden Chamber Choir** (Bach Mass in B Minor) and the **Dresdner Kreuzchor** (Brahms Requiem, Christmas Oratorio, St. Matthew Passion) will also continue.

Philharmonic Choirs

The Dresden Philharmonic Children's Choir kicks off its season with a program that, following a family concert in Dresden (28 September), will take with it on a European tour. With concerts in



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the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria, it will strengthen existing relationships and build new ones in the Central and Eastern European region (2-9 OCT 2025).

Of course, he will be back in his traditional Christmas concert 'When the lights are lit' (21-24 DEC 2025) and invites you to 'Dresden School Choirs Sing' (28 APR 2026).

A special highlight will be the joint performance of the Dresden Philharmonic Children's Choir and the Dresden Philharmonic Choir in two concerts at the Kulturpalast under the direction of Composer in Residence Sir James MacMillan (9-10 MAY, 2026). Works by Bach, Britten, Pärt, and MacMillan himself will be performed.

The Philharmonic Choir will also perform a tango-themed program with the Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Wolfgang Hentrich (31 OCT 2025, as part of the German-Czech Cultural Days). This program will be performed shortly thereafter at the International Festival Lipa Musica in Liberec (1 NOV 2025). The choir will also participate in the staged and musical performance of "A Christmas Carol" (12 DEC 2025).

The Bürgerchor am Kulti, under the direction of Gunter Berger, continues to serve as a platform for communal singing. It participates in community projects within the city and once again invites people to the Advent singing event at the Kulturpalast.

abgeFRACKt and Best of Classics: the short concert series

Always virtually sold out, the abgeFRACKt concert series has established itself as a real magnet, especially for our new audiences. We're continuing with six concerts featuring guests such as Anna Lapwood, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, and the Dresden siblings Charlotte and Friedrich Thiele.

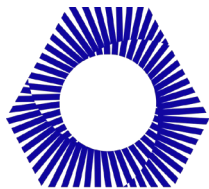
In our short concert series "Best of Classics," we offer the major highlights of the orchestral repertoire, especially for those with limited time and interested in compact formats (four concerts). The program includes masterpieces such as Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Schubert's *Symphony in C major* ('The Great'), and Brahms's *First Piano Concerto*. Afterwards, the audience has the opportunity to experience a relaxed conversation with the conductor in the café area on the first floor (hosted by Malte Arkona).

School concerts, family programs & more

Sold-out school concerts, Sunday family programs, rehearsal visits, and the work of the Philharmonic Children's Choir – the Dresden Philharmonic reaches approximately 40,000 young and very young people with its music every year. This is followed by a broad range of offerings, expanded by special projects such as '**In the Middle**,' a family concert ('Peter and the Wolf') where the audience sits in the middle of the orchestra and can experience the musicians up close. The proven partnership with the Youth Symphony Orchestra at the Heinrich Schütz Conservatory continues with '*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*,' a musical Christmas story based on the book of the same name by Barbara Robinson.

Chamber Concerts

With the "**Stars at the Piano**" series (in collaboration with DK Deutsche Klassik), we present chamber music highlights featuring Víkingur Ólafsson, Lucas and Arthur Jussen, Grigory Sokolov, and Boris Giltburg. And, as always, musicians from the Dresden Philharmonic will present themselves "up close" on the concert stage in various small ensembles. Highlights of the six concerts include the **Collenbusch Quartet**'s programme with works by Bax and MacMillan (23 NOV 2025) and a concert by our wind players with **Stefan Dohr** (2 NOV 2025).



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Organ concerts in the Kulturpalast

Film music on the organ, organ with tuba quartet, organ and timpani—in addition to its solo role in the Dresden Organ Cycle concerts: the Eule organ will once again prove itself a partner in the upcoming season. Palace organist Anna Lapwood will play adaptations of well-known film scores on it (26 NOV 2025), and Cameron Carpenter will return to improvise on Fritz Lang's silent film 'Woman in the Moon' (11 MAR 2026). The New Year's Eve organ concert will feature four tubists, the Melton Tuba Quartet, and the queen of instruments also plays a prominent role in Francis Poulenc's Concert for Organ, Timpani, and Orchestra (6-7 FEB 2026). Raphael Attila Vogl and Sebastian Heindl have been invited to perform further concerts as part of the Dresden Organ Cycle.

Film & Live Music

Concerts aimed at film music lovers are another important part of our programme. We are organising a very special project for Dresden's Memorial Day (13 FEB 2026) featuring Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony, performed live by the Dresden Philharmonic under the direction of Michael Sanderling, accompanied by the film 'Oh To Believe in Another World' by William Kentridge. With 'Woman in the Moon,' we will once again have an evening of silent film and live music. Cameron Carpenter will improvise on the organ to this well-known classic, a 1929 science fiction silent film by Fritz Lang (11 MAR 2026). Our summer orchestral concerts featuring film music have become a tradition; this time, Tokyo and Hollywood will compete in a blockbuster battle with music for anime films (4-5 JUL 2026).

Pre-sales start

Pre-sales of all subscriptions and individual tickets will begin on **Monday, March 24 2025** at 10 a.m. online and at the box office.