

Dresdner Philharmonie

Press Release
Dresden / 11 March 2026

Paradises - The Dresden Philharmonic presents its 2026/27 season

Frauke Roth, General Manager of the Dresden Philharmonic:

“We deliberately chose ‘**Paradises**’ as the theme for the Dresden Philharmonic’s 2026/27 season. By this we do not primarily mean idealised retreats, but rather cultural, social and individual concepts of happiness, freedom and belonging, as well as their threats or loss.

Music has always been a medium in which such ideas are negotiated as utopia, as memory or as a critical mirror of their time. This will already be audible at the season opening with Respighi’s *Pini di Roma* and Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* under the baton of our Chief Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles. But every other concert evening also moves within this field of tension: we are honoured that Kirill Gerstein as Artist in Residence and Sir James MacMillan and Tabita Berglund as Composer in Residence and Principal Guest Conductor, as well as Iveta Apkalna as Palace Organist, have embraced this as part of the dramaturgy of their concert programmes.

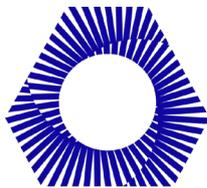
The motto ‘Paradises’ will receive special attention in the context of festivals and anniversaries: we are delighted to have Lisa Batiashvili on board as curator and artist for our **Georgia Spotlights**. We will honour the work of **Ludwig van Beethoven** in the 200th anniversary year of his death with his five piano concertos, the Choral Fantasy and his opera ‘Leonore’. In April 2027, we will celebrate **10 years of the new Kulturpalast** with an extensive anniversary programme. I am particularly pleased that, as part of the anniversary celebrations, we will also be hosting the 36th International Annual Conference of the International Artist Managers’ Association (**IAMA**), a lively meeting place for the international classical music scene with around 800 guests.

The multifaceted nature of ‘Paradise’ is also evident in numerous other programmes, featuring outstanding **guest artists** such as Dima Slobodeniouk, Vasily Petrenko, Michael Sanderling, Ádám Fischer, Cristian Măcelaru, Stéphane Denève, Dalia Stasevska and Aurel Dawidiuk. In addition to Kirill Gerstein as Artist in Residence and Lisa Batiashvili, the **outstanding soloists of the season** include Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Christian Tetzlaff, Julia Fischer, Kian Soltani, Emanuel Ax, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Fazıl Say, Daniil Trifonov, Anna Vinnitskaya, Brad Mehldau, Rudolf Buchbinder, Hayato Sumino, Thomas Hampson and Christian Gerhaher.

Last but not least, the motto also stands for the desire for beauty in our city, in our interactions with one another in a world of upheaval, for the courage to embrace the new and the hope that music will allow us to experience a little piece of paradise, at least for a moment. “

Sir Donald Runnicles, Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic:

“For composers of every era, the idea of paradise – as a place of longing, a lost home, or an elusive ideal – has been an enduring theme. What appeals to me about this season’s motto is precisely that it offers no simple answers. Music can imagine paradises, question them, or even destroy them. That, too, is part of its power.



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With Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Ottorino Respighi's *Pini di Roma* at the season's opening, as well as Strauss's *Eine Alpensinfonie*, Mahler's Ninth, and Bruckner's magnificent Seventh Symphony, I would like to invite our audience, together with the Dresden Philharmonic, to reflect on utopia, freedom, and loss. I also see Beethoven's piano concertos and the performance of Sir James MacMillan's Sixth Symphony, marking the tenth anniversary of the concert hall, as an invitation to enter musical spaces that we will explore again and again – sometimes anew, sometimes for the very first time.

In doing so, the combination of the familiar and the new, of emotional immediacy and intellectual depth, is particularly important. Together with the musicians of the Dresden Philharmonic and with our audience, I hope to open spaces in which music does not simply sound, but sets something in motion – moments that might indeed be described as paradisiacal."

Annektrin Klepsch, Mayor for Culture, Science and Tourism of the State Capital Dresden:

"The 2026/2027 season celebrates a decade of the reopened Kulturpalast with a wonderful concert hall and Chief Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles. The new Kulturpalast is a model of success because the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra brings orchestral music to life with excellence and diversity and with outstanding artists. The aspiration to convey enthusiasm for classical music as the orchestra of the state capital Dresden with international appeal will be fulfilled once again in the coming season. I congratulate the Philharmonic Choirs on 60 years of diverse choral music."

Principal Guest Conductor: Tabita Berglund

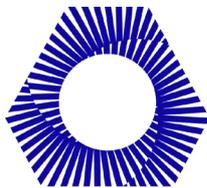
Tabita Berglund will return to the podium of the Dresden Philharmonic several times during the 2026/27 season. In her programmes featuring works by **Schubert, Beethoven, Kurtág, Nielsen, Mozart, Irgens-Jensen, Strauss and Wagner**, she combines classical repertoire with modern works and music from her Scandinavian homeland. At the same time, she is keen to create a sense of closeness between the orchestra, the conductor and the audience. With the new rehearsal format 'Mittendrin' (Right in the middle), she gives the audience an insight into the musical working process and allows them to experience the 'engine room of the orchestra' at first hand.

Artist in Residence: Kirill Gerstein

Kirill Gerstein will be at the centre of numerous projects in Beethoven Year 2027. Right at the start of the season, he will be making a strong artistic statement in a joint recital with jazz piano star **Brad Mehldau**. In January and February 2027, he will be performing all of **Beethoven's piano concertos**, partly as a soloist and partly in a leading role from the piano. He will combine the Fifth Concerto, performed under the baton of Sir Donald Runnicles, with **Thomas Adès' piano concerto**, which was composed especially for him. His residency will conclude with **Beethoven's** rarely performed **Fantasia for Piano, Soloists, Choir and Orchestra**, complemented by György Kurtág's "... quasi una fantasia ...", who will celebrate his 100th birthday in 2026.

Composer in Residence: Sir James MacMillan

A Scotsman through and through and one of the most internationally successful composers of our time, Sir James MacMillan will remain Composer in Residence at the Dresden Philharmonic for the 2026/27 season. The focus of his residency will be the **German premiere** of his **Sixth**



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Symphony, which will be performed at the gala concert marking the tenth anniversary of the new concert hall in the Kulturpalast. The work is a joint composition commission with The Hallé Manchester and will be conducted by Chief Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles. In addition, one of MacMillan's best-known works, '**Veni, Veni, Emmanuel**', will be performed. The highly virtuosic concerto for percussion and orchestra is based on a 15th-century French Advent chorale. Following the concerts in Dresden, the Dresden Philharmonic will take this programme on tour to Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover and Düsseldorf. Sir James MacMillan will also be present in the chamber music programme: his **String Quartet No. 1** will be performed by musicians from the Dresden Philharmonic in a chamber concert in January 2027.

Palace Organist: Iveta Apkalna

Whether in a sacred space or a concert hall, Iveta Apkalna understands the sound of the organ as a direct appeal to the audience. Because she succeeds in doing this in a special way with the concert hall organ in the Kulturpalast, the Latvian organist will be the Dresden Philharmonic's palace organist for the second time in the 2026/27 season.

During her residency, Iveta Apkalna will perform in several concerts. One of the highlights will be the **organ concert at the turn of the year**, which has been a fixture in the Dresden Philharmonic's programme for many years. In addition, she will present the **German premiere of Sebastian Fagerlund's Concerto for Organ and Orchestra**, a work written for her, which she will premiere in Helsinki. She can also be heard in **Leoš Janáček's 'Glagolitic Mass'**, in which the organ plays a central role.

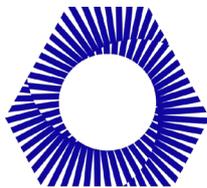
Our Guests

Numerous internationally renowned conductors will return to the podium of the Dresden Philharmonic in the 2026/27 season, including **Dima Slobodeniouk, Vasily Petrenko, Michael Sanderling, Adam Fischer, Cristian Măcelaru, Stéphane Denève**, and **Dalia Stasevska**. The orchestra will also welcome other distinguished artists such as **Aziz Shokhakov, Kerem Hasan, Gergely Madaras, Ken David Masur, Miguel Sepúlveda** (Runnicles Fellow), and **Aurel Dawidiuk, David Robertson, Marin Alsop, Fabien Gabel, Adam Hickox, Nicholas Carter**, and **Bar Avni** will make their debuts.

Outstanding soloists this season include **Kirill Gerstein** as Artist in Residence, as well as **Lisa Batiashvili, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Christian Tetzlaff, Julia Fischer, Vadim Gluzman, Guido Sant'Anna** (violin), **Diyang Mei and Antoine Tamestit** (viola), **Jean-Guihen Queyras, Kian Soltani** (cello), **Emanuel Ax, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Fazil Say, Daniil Trifonov, Anna Vinnitskaya, Brad Mehldau, Rudolf Buchbinder, Hayato Sumino** (piano), **Alexej Gerassimez** (percussion), **Pablo Sainz Villegas** (guitar) and **Ksenija Sidorova** (accordion). Top-class singers also feature in the programme, including **Thomas Hampson, Christian Gerhaher** and **Julia Kleiter**.

Georgia Spotlights

Georgian artists are known for their particularly intense art, which combines melancholy and inner strength and deals with existential themes such as home, loss, resistance and freedom. Against the backdrop of current political developments in Georgia, the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra is thus sending a deliberate programmatic signal. Violinist Lisa Batiashvili, who is of Georgian origin, is staging a concert project inspired by Charlie Chaplin's '**City Lights**' and will



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also be introducing the young pianist **Sandro Nebieridze** with a work by **Giya Kancheli**. **Nino Haratischwili** will present her new novel 'Die fremden Paradiese' (The Foreign Paradises) in an exclusive preview reading at the Kulturpalast. The musical references in the novel will be brought to life by Georgian pianist David Khrikuli.

Beethoven Year 2027

To mark the 200th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's death, the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra is dedicating a comprehensive programme to the composer. In addition to his five **piano concertos** with Kirill Gerstein, the rarely heard **Choral Fantasy** (also with Kirill Gerstein, conducted by Tabita Berglund) and a concert performance of the opera 'Leonore' (the original version of 'Fidelio') conducted by Dorothee Oberlinger, an expert in historical performance practice. Beethoven appears here as the musical conscience of Europe, a seeker of freedom, humanity and a better state of the world.

10 years of the new Kulturpalast

In April 2027, the new concert hall in the Kulturpalast will celebrate its tenth anniversary. The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra will mark this anniversary with a festive programme that honours the concert hall as the architectural, acoustic and social centre of Dresden's musical life.

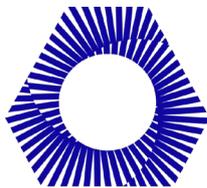
The celebrations will kick off with **symphonic concerts** featuring works by Anton Bruckner, Ludwig van Beethoven, Jean Sibelius and Richard Strauss. Conducted by **Dima Slobodeniouk**, **Tabita Berglund** and **Sir Donald Runnicles**, the concerts will focus on key works from the repertoire as well as programmatic references to the history and future of the concert hall.

A special highlight is the official **anniversary concert**, which looks to the future with the German premiere of **Sir James MacMillan's** Sixth Symphony, a joint commission with The Hallé Manchester. The programme is complemented by Benjamin Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, thus continuing the British focus with which the Runnicles era at the Dresden Philharmonic began last year.

In addition, the anniversary programme includes choir and orchestra concerts with the **Dresden Philharmonic Choir** and the **Philharmonic Children's Choir** (both of which will also celebrate their 60th anniversary in 2027), a chamber concert conducted by Natalia Ponomarchuk, with which we express our solidarity with artists from Ukraine, and readings accompanied by music in the concert hall, which we are once again organising in cooperation with the Dresden Municipal Libraries.

IAMA 2027

As part of the Kulturpalast anniversary celebrations, the 36th conference of the International Artist Managers' Association (IAMA) will take place in Dresden from 26 to 28 April 2027. It will offer around 800 concert hall, orchestra and artist managers the opportunity to exchange ideas, make contacts and conclude contracts at their meetings directly in the Kulturpalast. This will enhance the reputation and appeal of the Dresden Philharmonic, the Kulturpalast and Dresden as a city of music.



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10 years of the Kurt Masur Academy

In 2017, the first young musicians were accepted into the newly founded Kurt Masur Academy – Orchestra Academy of the Dresden Philharmonic. Since then, almost 30 academy students have completed their two-year training directly in the orchestra, giving them excellent prospects for a career as professional musicians.

We are honouring Kurt Masur, who was Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic from 1967 to 1972 and opened the Kulturpalast in 1969, on his 100th birthday with a concert conducted by his son **Ken-David Masur**. The programme 'Visions of America' is dedicated to works that Masur conducted during his years in New York. Among other things, he performed Aaron Copland's 'Old American Songs' in his debut concert with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra – with Thomas Hampson, who will also be the soloist in our concert.

Music, Memory and Society

Several programmes this season are explicitly devoted to historical and social issues. These include concerts as part of the Year of Jewish Culture in Saxony **Tacheles 2026** (Children's opera 'Brundibár' 3 October 2026, directed by Tabatha McFadyen, Victor Klemperer programme with the Philharmonic Choir, 30 October 2026) musical-literary evenings as well as the concert on Dresden Remembrance Day on 13 February, a concert entitled '**Sounds of Solidarity**' on 1 May 27 with a Ukrainian focus, and the concert performance of **Beethoven's 'Leonore'**. Music is understood here as a medium of remembrance, questioning and dialogue.

Original and premiere performances

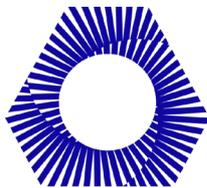
The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra is once again sending a clear signal in favour of contemporary music in the 2026/27 season. **Sir James MacMillan's** Sixth Symphony will be performed for the first time in Germany as part of the anniversary concerts marking the tenth anniversary of the new concert hall. **Sebastian Fagerlund's** Concerto for Organ and Orchestra, a joint commission with international partner orchestras, will also be heard for the first time in Germany. Another commission, together with the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, went to **Detlev Glanert**, who will orchestrate Fanny Hensel's (née Mendelssohn Bartholdy) romantic piano cycle 'Das Jahr' (The Year).

In addition, the Dresden Philharmonic Children's Choir will premiere a short new composition by Sir James MacMillan for children's choir, which complements Hans Krása's opera 'Brundibár'.

Guest performances and tours

With Chief Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles, the Dresden Philharmonic will tour **Prague, Ljubljana, Udine and Munich** in late autumn 2026. Also with Sir Donald, the orchestra will visit **Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover and Düsseldorf** in April 2027 and open the **Janáček Festival** in Dresden's twin city **Ostrava** in May.

The Dresden Philharmonic will also be performing at the Gardens of the World in **Berlin** and travelling with the Dresden Kreuzchor to the **Rheingau Music Festival**, where it will perform the festival's closing concert at Eberbach Abbey. With Lisa Batiashvili, the Dresden Philharmonic will give two concerts at the **Beethovenfest Bonn**, and with Beethoven's 'Leonore' it will be a guest at the **Potsdam Sanssouci Music Festival**.



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60 Years of Philharmonic Choirs

The Philharmonic Choirs were founded in 1967 by the then chief conductor Kurt Masur and will celebrate their 60th anniversary in 2027. To mark this anniversary, they will give a **joint gala concert** conducted by choir director Gunter Berger and the director of the Philharmonic Choir, Iris Geißler. Both choirs will also perform in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the season opening.

The Dresden Philharmonic Children's Choir will perform Hans Krása's children's opera 'Brundibár' (concert as part of Tacheles 2026, Year of Jewish Culture in Saxony) and the traditional Advent concerts 'Sind die Lichter angezündet' (Are the lights lit?).

The Dresden Philharmonic Choir invites you to a 'composed evening' on Victor Klemperer's 145th birthday (also as part of Tacheles 2026, Year of Jewish Culture in Saxony), can be heard again in 'A Christmas Carol' and will participate in the performance of Beethoven's Fantasy for Piano, Soloists, Choir and Orchestra.

The **Bürgerchor am Kulti** remains active as an open invitation to sing together and participates in community projects as well as the traditional Advent singing in the Kulturpalast.

abgeFRACKt, Mittendrin und Eins zu Eins

Always virtually sold out, the series of **abgeFRACKt** short concerts has established itself as a real magnet, especially for our new audience. Because they are so successful, we are increasing their number to seven.

For everyone who wants to experience the orchestra up close, we are creating an opportunity with '**Mittendrin**' (Right in the Middle), public rehearsals where the audience sits on stage.

And we are reviving a format that was already very popular before the coronavirus pandemic: in **Eins zu Eins** (One to One), a guest meets a musician who gives a very individual concert in a personal encounter backstage.

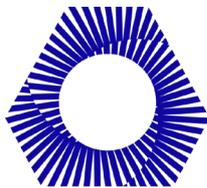
Chamber Concerts

We are continuing the "**Stars at the Piano**" series (in collaboration with DK Deutsche Klassik) and creating chamber music highlights with **Kirill Gerstein & Brad Mehldau, Fazıl Say & Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Rudolf Buchbinder** and **Daniil Trifonov**.

For the first time, there will be a **chamber music festival**. For an entire afternoon and evening, musicians from the Dresden Philharmonic will perform non-stop chamber music programmes in small ensembles, with Chief Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles and Adelle Eslinger-Runnicles also participating as a piano duo. In addition, the audience can look forward to selected programmes by our Philharmonic ensembles in our regular chamber music concerts.

School Concerts and Family Programmes

Fully booked school concerts, Sunday family programmes, rehearsal visits and the work of the Philharmonic Children's Choir – the Dresden Philharmonic reaches around 40,000 youth with its music every year. This is complemented by a wide range of offerings, including Hans Krása's



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children's opera '**Brundibár**', which addresses the value of community and solidarity, and Bach's **Christmas Oratorio for Children** (together with the Dresden Kreuzchor).

The proven partnership with the Youth Symphony Orchestra at the Heinrich Schütz Conservatory continues with '**Nils Holgersson**', a fairy tale for narrator and orchestra based on the children's and young adult classic 'The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Holgersson with the Wild Geese' by Selma Lagerlöf.

Organ Concerts at the Kulturpalast

Film music on the organ, the premiere of an organ concerto, organ solo – the Eule organ in the concert hall will once again be put to varied use in the coming season. Palace organist **Iveta Apkalna** will play it in the New Year's Eve concert, as well as in the German premiere of Sebastian Fagerlund's concerto for organ and orchestra and the grand solo part in Leoš Janáček's Glagolitic Mass. **Olivier Latry** will return as a guest soloist and present a CD he recorded on our Eule organ, as will the new star of the organ scene, **Jan Liebermann**. **Thierry Escaich** will improvise to the silent film 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,' and the new Frauenkirche organist **Niklas Jahn** will make his debut on the organ in the Kulturpalast.

Film & Live Music

Concerts are a mainstay of our programme, appealing to lovers of film music.

As part of the Dresden Silent Film Festival, we are presenting Robert Wiene's 1920 film ***The Cabinet of Dr Caligari***, accompanied on the organ by Thierry Escaich. We are celebrating **50 years of Star Wars** with a film concert in collaboration with Alegria Konzert. Our summer orchestra concerts featuring film music are also a tradition. This time, Enrico Morricone, Hans Zimmer and John Williams will compete against each other in the '**Blockbuster Battle**'.

Zahlen 2025

The occupancy rate for events at the Dresden Philharmonic Hall was 89.9 per cent in 2025 (2024: 86.9 per cent). There were 206,585 visitors, approximately 20,000 more than in the previous year. The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra offered a total of 203 events, 71 of which were in the field of education (2024: 53). The sharp rise in attendance is particularly encouraging last year; school concerts and rehearsal visits alone reached 54,492 schoolchildren (2024: 36,428).

Advance ticket sales start:

Advance sales for all season tickets, flexible season tickets and individual tickets will begin on **Wednesday, 18 March 2026 at 10 a.m.** online and on site at the ticket service.

Photos and Bios can be found in the press area, and you can access the interactive season brochure [here](#).