

**Dresdner
Philharmonie**

Sir Donald Runnicles – Chefdirigent

Sir Donald Runnicles is one of the most distinguished conductors of his generation. Over a career spanning more than 45 years, he has become particularly renowned for his interpretations of the Romantic and late-Romantic repertoire. His musical career has been shaped by long-standing artistic relationships with major opera houses and orchestras across Europe, North America and Australia.

Sir Donald has been Chief Conductor of the Dresdner Philharmonie since the 2025/26 season. His collaboration with the orchestra now forms a central part of his international career. During his first season, highlights included a concert performance of Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, a festival celebrating British music and an extensive tour of Japan and South Korea. He also continues to serve as Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming and Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

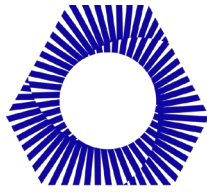
In the 2026/27 season, Sir Donald continues his work with the Dresdner Philharmonie across a broad symphonic repertoire, with particular emphasis on Beethoven, Bruckner, Mahler, Sibelius and Richard Strauss. In November 2026, he tours with the orchestra and pianist Emanuel Ax, performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 in Prague, Ljubljana, Udine and Munich. In April 2027, he conducts the gala concert celebrating the tenth anniversary of the new concert hall at Dresden's Kulturpalast, featuring the German premiere of Sir James MacMillan's Sixth Symphony. Further highlights include Mahler's Ninth Symphony and concerts with pianist Kirill Gerstein, the Artist in Residence of the Dresdner Philharmonie.

From 2009 to 2026, Sir Donald was General Music Director of Deutsche Oper Berlin. During his 16-year tenure, he played a defining role in shaping the company's artistic profile. Highlights included new productions of works by Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, Leoš Janáček and Benjamin Britten, as well as the world premieres of Detlev Glanert's *Oceane* and Aribert Reimann's *L'Invisible*. A particular milestone was Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, in Stefan Herheim's production, which Sir Donald conducted again towards the end of his tenure.

His previous appointments include Music Director of San Francisco Opera (1992–2008), Chief Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (2009–2016) and Music Director of the Orchestra of St. Luke's in New York (2001–2007). He was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for more than two decades (2001–2023). As a guest conductor, he has worked with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris. He also enjoys a long-standing relationship with the Vienna State Opera.

His extensive discography includes operatic and orchestral works by Wagner, Mozart, Britten, Humperdinck, Bellini and other composers. In 2013, his recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of Deutsche Oper Berlin received a Gramophone Award. The recording of Janáček's *Jenůfa* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin ensemble was nominated for a GRAMMY Award in 2016.

Sir Donald was born and raised in Edinburgh. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2004 and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2020. He holds honorary



Dresdner Philharmonie

doctorates from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Short Biography

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From 2009 to 2026, he served as General Music Director of Deutsche Oper Berlin, where his interpretations of works by Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss were central to his artistic leadership. His previous positions include Music Director of San Francisco Opera and Chief Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He regularly appears as a guest conductor with leading orchestras and opera houses around the world.

In the 2026/27 season, his work with the Dresdner Philharmonie focuses on composers including Beethoven, Bruckner, Mahler and Richard Strauss. In November 2026, he tours Europe with the orchestra and pianist Emanuel Ax, performing in Prague, Ljubljana, Udine and Munich. In April 2027, he conducts the gala concert marking the tenth anniversary of the new concert hall at Dresden's Kulturpalast.

Born in Scotland, Sir Donald was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2020.