

The Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra

When the great American conductor, artistic mentor and patron, Leonard Bernstein, created the Orchestral Academy in 1987, it was the first of its kind in Europe. Modeled on the famous American festival, Tanglewood, Bernstein envisioned the Orchestral Academy as a center for training young orchestral musicians of the highest caliber. Today, the Orchestral Academy is at the core of the educational mission of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, one of Europe's most important classical music festivals, held annually in the north of Germany.

Each year, the Orchestral Academy assembles an international youth orchestra by vetting students from around the world. Auditions are offered each winter in 30 cities across North and South America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East to more than 1,200 young musicians. Based on these performances, a jury admits approximately 100 handpicked musicians, 26 years of age and younger, to join the Orchestral Academy. In other words, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra is comprised of the world's finest young musicians.

Participation in the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra provides an extraordinary opportunity for these students to grow musically. Stipends covering travel, room and board as well as tuition expenses are granted to all participants by the Foundation of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. While in residence at the festival, experienced teachers from the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic and the NDR Symphony Orchestra guide sectional rehearsals. Famous conductors lead two intensive rehearsals per day with the entire orchestra. Under the guidance of these mentors, the orchestra has the opportunity to read, study and perform the greatest orchestral music. Chamber music is also an important component, and lectures, seminars and an exhibition related to the music round off the summer program.

The official home of the Orchestral Academy is the Salzau Castle, the state cultural center located 100 kilometers north of Hamburg. This 19th-century building, surrounded by an expansive park in Schleswig-Holstein's most beautiful region, offers ideal conditions for intensive work and diverse recreational activities. Musicians are housed in the castle and rehearse and perform in a large barn, refitted as a concert hall.

At Salzau, young people from around the world not only grow together as an orchestra, but also form a social community. Mutual understanding, respect, tolerance and an awareness of the universality of music and life beyond it – these values lie at the heart of the Orchestral Academy.

Lübeck, February 2008

The conductors of the Festival Orchestra:

- 1987 Leonard Bernstein, Sergiu Celibidache
1988 Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Bernstein, Sergiu Celibidache
1989 Leonard Bernstein, Claus Peter Flor, Valery Gergiev,
Christoph Eschenbach, Semyon Bychkov
1990 Sir Georg Solti, Christoph Eschenbach, Jiri Belohlávek,
Paavo Berglund, Semyon Bychkov
1991 Mstislav Rostropovich, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Dmitri Kitajenko,
Christoph Eschenbach
1992 Lorin Maazel, Mstislav Rostropovich, Christoph Eschenbach
1993 Sir Georg Solti, Semyon Bychkov, Valery Gergiev, Marin Alsop, Carl St.Clair
1994 Mstislav Rostropovich, Justus Frantz, Valery Gergiev
1995 Herbert Blomstedt, Dmitri Kitajenko, Gunther Schuller, Krzysztof Penderecki
1996 Helmuth Rilling, Alfred Walter, Kurt Sanderling
1997 Hartmut Haenchen, Carl Davis, Leonard Slatkin
1998 Dmitri Kitajenko, Peter Ruzicka, Donald Runnicles, David Shallon
1999 Christoph Eschenbach, Vladimir Spivakov, Carl Davis, Mstislav Rostropovich
2000 Christoph Eschenbach, Donald Runnicles, Kurt Sanderling
2001 Christoph Eschenbach, Heinrich Schiff, Esa-Pekka Salonen
2002 Christoph Eschenbach, Cristóbal Halffter, Jukka-Pekka Saraste
2003 Christoph Eschenbach, Sir Neville Marriner, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Kurt Masur, Dennis Russell
Davies
2004 Heinrich Schiff; Valery Gergiev, Christoph Eschenbach, Lothar Zagrosek, Michael Güttler
2005 Christoph Eschenbach, Christopher Hogwood, Kent Nagano, Yutaka Sado
2006 Christoph von Dohnányi, Christoph Eschenbach, Eiji Oue, Jaap van Zweden, Semyon Bychkov
2007 Christoph Eschenbach, Iván Fischer, Zoltán Kocsis, Christopher Hogwood
2008 Christoph Eschenbach, Heinrich Schiff, Mikhail Pletnev, Herbert Blomstedt

Among the soloists, who performed with the orchestra in the last years there are names like, Sharon Kam, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Waltraud Meier, Midori, Viktoria Mullova, Tabea Zimmermann, Yuri Bashmet, Matthias Goerne, Thomas Hampson, Steven Isserlis, Nigel Kennedy, Evgeny Kissin, Gidon Kremer, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Vadim Repin, Mstislav Rostropovich and Frank Peter Zimmermann.

The Festival Orchestra delights with its concerts not only the audience in Schleswig-Holstein, but also on concert tours to Europe's musical centers.

Tours and guest performances:

- 1988 Berlin, Milan, Paris, Basle (Celibidache)
1989 St. Petersburg, Moscow, Berlin, Paris, Milan, Taormina (Bernstein)
Schwerin (Flor)
Bonn, Schwetzingen, Munich (Bychkov)
1992 Dresden, Rome, Granada, Badajoz, Sevilla, Zafra, St. Martin de Crau, Perpignan, Merida
(Maazel)
1993 Barcelona, Valencia, Granada, Ravenna, Castiglione (Solti)
Schwerin, Potsdam (Bychkov)
Vienna, Rimini, Santander (St. Clair)
1995 Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Cologne, St Petersburg (Blomstedt)
1996 Rostock (Rilling); Copenhagen (Walter)
1997 Güstrow, Amsterdam (Haenchen);
Danzig, Berlin (Slatkin)
1998 Rostock, Amsterdam (Kitajenko); Copenhagen, Freiburg (Runnicles)
1999 Amsterdam (Eschenbach); Wiesbaden (Rostropovich)
2000 Amsterdam, Rotterdam (Sanderling), Hannover/EXPO, Ingolstadt (Runnicles, Eschenbach)
2001 Berlin (Schiff); Tallinn, Riga, Helsinki, Copenhagen (Eschenbach)
2002 Berlin (Halffter)
2003 Berlin (Saraste); Greifswald, Berlin, Leipzig (Masur)
2004 Lübeck, Prague, Budapest, Győr, Bratislava (Schiff); Berlin (Zagrosek)
2005 Shizuoka, Kobe, Kanazawa, Tokyo (Eschenbach); Berlin (Sado)
2006 Amsterdam, Interlaken, Berlin (Eschenbach)
2007 Ingolstadt, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo (Eschenbach); Budapest, Győr (Hogwood)
2008 Neubrandenburg, Dresden, Eriwan, Vilnius, St. Petersburg (Eschenbach); Berlin (Schiff)