

# BIOGRAPHY

The **Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO)** is an international ensemble dedicated to creating and sharing exceptional experiences in classical music.

The MCO musicians founded the orchestra in 1997, and they still govern it today. The unique structure of the ensemble enables it to remain independent and continually refine its performance. 25 years ago, the MCO's founding mentor Claudio Abbado inspired a philosophy in the orchestra called *The Sound of Listening*. Not only does it allow the orchestra to create captivating performances but also to work with, learn from and listen to visionary artists. These complementary collaborations have enabled the orchestra to form long-term partnerships, develop its future direction and connect with its audience.

The MCO's *Artistic Partners* – pianists Mitsuko Uchida and Leif Ove Andsnes, violinist Pekka Kuusisto, *Conductor Laureate* Daniel Harding, *Artistic Partner for Immersive Experiences* Henrik Oppermann and *Artistic Advisor* Daniele Gatti – inspire and give shape to the orchestra. These mutual relationships have also been the catalyst for close collaborations with George Benjamin, Gustavo Dudamel, Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Yuja Wang.

The orchestra brings together 27 different nationalities, with every musician living in a different part of the world, to reach live audiences across 40 countries on five continents. Its forward-facing approach enables it to connect with a global community through annual residencies at New York's Carnegie Hall, London's Southbank Centre, Berlin's Philharmonie, Lucerne Festival, Heidelberger Frühling, Salzburg's Mozartwoche, Festival de Saint-Denis and the Beijing Music Festival.

Sharing knowledge and experiences are important to the MCO, therefore it works to expand its community through diverse education and outreach initiatives. These are created to inform curious minds, enrich audiences and bring people together through the transformative power of listening. The MCO's three flagship projects include the MCO Academy, where MCO members share their passion and expertise with the next generation of orchestral musicians in collaboration with Orchesterzentrum|NRW; *Unboxing Mozart*, inviting audiences into the heart of the orchestra through the use of unique sound boxes; and *Feel the Music*, which opens the world of music to deaf and hard of hearing children, encouraging a whole-body sensory experience.

When in 2020, the orchestra was not able to carry out its usual performing activities, it focused more intensely and proactively on key themes related to community, sustainability, and digital technology. In order to develop these important themes, it gained substantial public support. Together with its *Artistic Partner for Immersive Experiences*, Henrik Oppermann, the MCO places itself at the forefront of innovation by inviting state-of-the-art digital technologies into the concert hall and beyond. Henrik Oppermann and the MCO will launch three projects, named *Future Presence*, in virtual reality designed to bring the listener deeper inside the performance and even closer to the music itself. For the first time, it allows the audience to experience *The Sound of Listening* from within the orchestra and the musician's perspective.

Inspired by its 25<sup>th</sup> season, the MCO combines its strong forward-facing vision with a deep connection to its roots. This summer, the orchestra finds itself at the finale of the *Mozart Momentum* project with Leif Ove Andsnes. Together, they take the stage at the BBC Proms. Travelling through Europe and the USA, the MCO will reunite also this season with Mitsuko Uchida for a program that combines compositions from the two Viennese schools. Innovation through exploring new concert formats and rethinking tradition will be a focal point in the orchestra's meeting with Pekka Kuusisto. New collaborations, such as with rising star Joana Mallwitz, will be alternated with longstanding connections like Daniel Harding and George Benjamin. Of the latter, the MCO previously created new works that have become standard repertoire. They will reunite for a new composition towards the end of the season. Before that, the orchestra embarks on a tour across some of the most prestigious venues of Europe with Andris Nelsons and Lang Lang.

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra's anniversary season is generously supported by the MCO Foundation.

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