

MÜNCHENER KAMMERORCHESTER

Captivating audiences worldwide with its dynamic programming, which combine iconic masterpieces with New music, the Münchener Kammerorchester (MKO), founded in 1950, is famous for its distinct sound as well as for its outstanding level of interpretation. The core ensemble consists of 28 permanent string players from 16 different countries. Flexible in size, the MKO regularly expands its line-up with exceptional guest musicians from elite European orchestras to set interpretative standards in Classical and Romantic repertoire as well as in 21st-century compositions. Openness, curiosity and a passion for unusual formats further characterise the unique profile of the MKO.

The three Associated Conductors Jörg Widmann, Enrico Onofri and Bas Wiegers ideally embody the MKO's extensive artistic spectrum and the unbridled will to probe new dimensions in music from the Baroque era to the present day. Performances under the direction of concertmasters Yuki Kasai and Daniel Giglberger are also an important part of the orchestra's activities. The MKO regularly collaborates with musicians such as Isabelle Faust, Nicolas Altstaedt, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Ilya Gringolts, Anastasia Kobekina, Christian Tetzlaff, Alexander Lonquich and Piotr Anderszewski. Founded in 1950 by Christoph Stepp, the MKO was shaped for almost four decades from 1956 onwards by Hans Stadlmair, followed by the Principal Conductors Christoph Poppen, Alexander Liebreich and Clemens Schuldt. In the 2022/23 season the MKO departed from its previous organisational structure and redefined itself: over a period of several years, it works with three Associated Conductors – a one-of-a-kind model that has proven exemplary, sharpening the orchestra's sense of individual responsibility and creativity. In 2025, the collaboration with all three Associated Conductors was extended for a further three years.

The MKO places great significance on the dramaturgical conception of its programmes and on the long-term cultivation and further development of the chamber orchestra repertoire. It has commissioned and premiered numerous works: Iannis Xenakis, Wolfgang Rihm, Tan Dun, Chaya Czernowin, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Georg Friedrich Haas, Hans Abrahamsen, Pascal Dusapin, Thomas Larcher, Salvatore Sciarrino, Tigran Mansurian and Jörg Widmann have all composed music for the ensemble. In recent years alone, it has commissioned new works from Beat Furrer, Milica Djordjević, Thomas Adès, Bryce Dessner, Clara Iannotta, Mark Andre, Stefano Gervasoni, Márton Illés, Miroslav Srnka, Mithatcan Öcal, Sara Glojnarčić, Lisa Streich, Johannes Maria Staud, Dieter Ammann and others.

The MKO performs around a third of its concerts in Munich as part of its popular concert series in the Prinzregententheater and the Pinakothek der Moderne, but also in cooperation with the Bavarian State Opera and the Munich Biennale. The MKO's collaborative network in Munich forms a major emphasis in its activities, especially in the field of music education, where the ensemble works with numerous local institutions from the Jugendtheater Schauburg to the Museum Villa Stuck.

Around 50 concerts per year take the MKO to renowned concert halls in Europe, Asia and South America. The MKO has undertaken several guest performances in cooperation with the Goethe Institute; especially noteworthy was an acclaimed academy in North Korea in autumn 2012, where the orchestra had the opportunity to work with North Korean music students.

ECM Records has released recordings of the MKO performing works by Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Sofia Gubaidulina, Giacinto Scelsi, Valentin Silvestrov, Isang Yun and Joseph Haydn, Toshio Hosokawa, Tigran Mansurian and Thomas Larcher, as well as a complete recording of Beethoven's piano concertos with pianist Alexander Lonquich in 2024. A new collaboration with Enrico Onofri and Harmonia Mundi began with the release of Mozart's Serenades in early 2025. This will be followed in autumn 2026 by a multi-part CD edition in which Onofri places Beethoven's symphonies in dialogue with music by his Italian contemporaries. Sony Classical, Deutsche Grammophon, Warner Classics and NEOS have been released numerous other CDs. The MKO has won several prizes and awards such as the Deutsche Musikverleger-Verband's ›Season's Best Programme‹ a number of times, the ›Cannes International Classical Award‹, the City of Munich's Music Prize and the Bavarian State Prize for Music.