

Gijs Leenaars, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director

LONG VERSION:

Gijs Leenaars has been the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Rundfunkchor Berlin since the 2015/16 season. Ever since, he has successfully collaborated with outstanding conductors such as Kirill Petrenko, Daniel Barenboim, Sir Simon Rattle and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and he also stands for new and creative ideas with concepts of his own. He has developed the RundfunkchorLounge, with its unique mixture of choral singing, chamber music and interviews, into a hallmark of the ensemble. Gijs Leenaars has conducted genre-crossing concert performances like »THE WORLD TO COME«, »human requiem« and »LUTHER dancing with the gods«, and is responsible for recordings of a cappella repertoire and choral symphonic works. In 2019, the Rundfunkchor Berlin conducted by Leenaars received the Edison Classical Music Award in the choral category for their CD recording of vocal works by Johannes Brahms. The CD – in collaboration with the ROC partner ensemble Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (DSO) – was released by Sony Classical. He also conducted the CD recording of Bruckner's Mass in E minor and Stravinsky's Mass with the Rundfunkchor Berlin and the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, which was released around the world in 2020 by PENTATONE. In 2022, also with Sony Classical, a CD was released with Verdi's »Quattro pezzi sacri«, one of the centrepieces of the Rundfunkchor Berlin's repertoire, recorded jointly with the DSO. Most recently, with »Rote Messe« (2024) and »Flying Mozart« (2025), Leenaars once again demonstrated his remarkable versatility in staged productions.

Born in 1978 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Leenaars is considered one of the most exciting choral conductors of the younger generation. He studied piano, choral and orchestral conducting, and voice in Nijmegen and Amsterdam. Directly after completing his studies, he began collaborating with the Netherlands Radio Choir in Hilversum. From 2012 to 2015, he was the ensemble's principal conductor, working in that role with Mariss Jansons, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Bernard Haitink. He is also a regular guest conductor of Collegium Vocale Gent, Cappella Amsterdam and Nederlands Kamerkoor. In addition, he has worked with orchestras including the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Residentie in The Hague and the Orchestra Filarmonica in Turin.

He is particularly passionate about performing contemporary music. For instance, Gijs Leenaars conducted the Dutch premiere of Wolfgang Rihm's »Vigilia« and prepared György Kurtág's choral works for a complete recording of Kurtág's oeuvre with the Netherlands Radio Choir under Reinbert de Leeuw. His programming combines staples of the classical repertoire with lesser-known gems of choral literature.

SHORT VERSION:

Gijs Leenaars has been the Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Rundfunkchor Berlin since the 2015/16 season. Since then, he has successfully collaborated with outstanding conductors such as Kirill Petrenko, Daniel Barenboim, Sir Simon Rattle, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and is also renowned for his own innovative and creative concepts. He developed the RundfunkchorLounge, with its unique blend of choral singing, chamber music, and interviews, into a hallmark of the ensemble. Gijs Leenaars conducts cross-genre concert performances such as »THE WORLD TO COME«, »human requiem«, and »LUTHER dancing with the gods«, and oversees recordings of both a cappella repertoire and choral symphonic works. Most recently, with the productions »Rote Messe« (2024) and »Flying Mozart« (2025), he demonstrated remarkable versatility in staged performances.

Born in 1978 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Leenaars is considered one of the most exciting choral conductors of his generation. He studied piano, choral and orchestral conducting, and voice in Nijmegen and Amsterdam. Immediately after completing his studies, he began working with the Netherlands Radio Choir in Hilversum. From 2012 to 2015, he served as the ensemble's principal conductor, collaborating with maestros such as Mariss Jansons, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and Bernard Haitink. He regularly appears as guest conductor with Collegium Vocale Gent, Cappella Amsterdam, and Nederlands Kamerkoor. Additionally, he has worked with orchestras including the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Residentie Orkest The Hague, and Orchestra Filarmonica di Torino.

We kindly ask that any cuts or changes be made only in consultation with the Rundfunkchor Berlin!

Contact: Johannes Hartmann
PR and Media
presse@rundfunkchor-berlin.de
Tel.: +49 (0) 30 20 29 87 562

An Ensemble of

