

Rundfunkchor Berlin

PRESS RELEASE 22 April 2026

A cappella Concert »Hope« at Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche

The Rundfunkchor Berlin on 9 May under Benjamin Goodson, Principal Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Choir, with an evening spanning madness, repentance and redemption

On Saturday, 9 May 2026 at 7 pm, the Rundfunkchor Berlin invites audiences to an a cappella concert at Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Under the title »Hope«, the programme traces a path – from inner turmoil and repentance to spiritual transformation and redemption – with works by, among others, James MacMillan, Olivier Messiaen and Arvo Pärt. Conducting is Benjamin Goodson, formerly Assistant Conductor of the Rundfunkchor Berlin and, from 2028, incoming Principal Conductor of the SWR Vokalensemble.

In this a cappella programme, »Hope«, the Rundfunkchor Berlin showcases the choral artistry for which it is often heard in collaboration with major orchestras – this time focused on the choir's sound alone, complemented by organ and featuring soloists from within its own ranks. The programme begins with the idea of a human capacity for good, before this order begins to falter: James MacMillan opens the evening with »Data est mihi omnis potestas« from »The Strathclyde Motets«, a series of contemporary Communion motets. In Dieter Schnebel's »Lamento di Guerra« for voice and organ, premiered at the Berlin Festival in 1991, an initially subdued lament grows into an increasingly intense, almost wailing invocation – a two-part sonic response to the psychological devastation of war and violence, composed in the context of the Gulf War and the Yugoslav Wars. In excerpts from Alfred Schnittke's »Twelve Penitential Psalms«, confusion, guilt and the possibility of repentance condense into an intense inner dialogue.

Arvo Pärt's »The Woman with the Alabaster Box« then traces the biblical scene of the anointing of Jesus, culminating in the voice of Christ, in which his humility is reflected. Zoltán Kodály's »Missa brevis«, composed in war-torn Budapest, brings together echoes of Gregorian chant and the Baroque in a communal act of worship and humility, before further works by James MacMillan evoke images of light, consolation and renewal. Finally, Olivier Messiaen's »O sacrum convivium« completes the arc towards spiritual transformation and redemption.

With **Benjamin Goodson**, a familiar figure returns to the Rundfunkchor Berlin: from 2016 to 2020 he served as Assistant to Principal Conductor Gijs Leenaars. Since 2020 he has been Principal Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Choir. His work spans early music to advanced contemporary repertoire and has taken him to major venues across Europe, the United States, China, Japan and Australia. He places particular emphasis on 20th-century a cappella repertoire and on collaborations with composers such as Jörg Widmann, Jonathan Dove, Roxanna Panufnik and Peter-Jan Wagemans. His debut album with the Netherlands Radio Choir, released in 2023 and featuring

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motets by Mendelssohn and Rheinberger, received international acclaim and was nominated, among other honours, for the German Record Critics' Award.

The concert will be recorded and broadcast on 13 May 2026 at 8 pm on Deutschlandfunk Kultur.

Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche Berlin

9 May 2026

Sat 7 pm

Programme:

James MacMillan (*1959)

»Data est mihi omnis potestas« from **»The Strathclyde Motets«**
for eight-part choir a cappella

Dieter Schnebel (1930–2018)

»Lamento di Guerra«
for voice (mezzo-soprano) and organ

Alfred Schnittke (1934–1998)

Excerpts from »Twelve Penitential Psalms« (Nos. I, II, IV, VIII, V)
for choir a cappella

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)

Missa brevis

for choir and organ

- I. Introitus
- II. Kyrie
- III. Gloria
- IV. Credo
- V. Sanctus
- VI. Benedictus
- VII. Agnus
- VIII. Ite, Missa est

Arvo Pärt (*1935)

»The Woman with the Alabaster Box«
for choir a cappella

James MacMillan

»Factus est repente«
for eight-part choir a cappella

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»O Radiant Dawn« from »The Strathclyde Motets«

for four-part choir a cappella

Louis Vierne (1870–1937)

»Légende« from »Vingt-quatre pieces en style libre« op. 31

for solo organ

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

»O sacrum convivium!«

for choir a cappella

Performers:

Soloists of the Rundfunkchor Berlin:

Friederike Holzhausen – soprano

Gesine Nowakowski – soprano

Barbara Berg-Bretschneider – soprano

Sophie Catherin – mezzo-soprano

Roksolana Chraniuk – alto

Joohoon Shin – tenor

Sinje Kim – tenor

Georg Streuber – baritone

Peter Holder – Orgel

Rundfunkchor Berlin

Benjamin Goodson – conductor

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