

Rundfunkchor Berlin

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The Rundfunkchor Berlin Announces 26/27 Season

On Thursday, 28 May 2026, the Rundfunkchor Berlin unveiled its programme for the 26/27 season at The Ballery art gallery in Berlin-Schöneberg. Managing Director Rachel-Sophia Dries and Chief Conductor Gijs Leenaars introduced the upcoming season, which will be Leenaars' final one in the role. Highlights include »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience«, the winning project of the 2025 »Choir of the Future« ideas competition, and a revived and expanded version of »Flying Mozart« with the Flying Steps at the Tempodrom. The SING! education programme also celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. The full programme is now available online. Subscriptions can be reserved via the choir's visitor services, with single-ticket sales opening on 15 July 2026.

Across **39 concerts** and **22 programmes**, the new season will feature **16 conductors** at **11 venues** in **Berlin**, across **Germany**, and in **Austria** and **Switzerland**.

Community Project: »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience«

With »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience«, the Rundfunkchor Berlin brings to life the winning concept of its **»Choir of the Future« ideas competition**, launched as part of the 24/25 anniversary season. The initiative sought visionary concert formats that foster social participation, open up new perspectives on classical music, and rethink the concert experience. Developed by **dramaturge Tillmann Triest**, the project centres on a concert on **7 February 2027** at the Haus des Rundfunks, accompanied by **outreach formats** and an **education programme in Berlin schools**. The performance will feature **three Berlin-based queer choirs** – amaryllis_berlin, canta:re, and Classical Lesbians – alongside speaker **Alfonso Pantisano**. Focusing on queer history, empowerment, and visibility, the programme places **Jake Heggie's chamber opera »For a Look or a Touch«** at its core, complemented by works from **Michael Shaieb, Kerry Andrew, and Our Lady J**, performed jointly by the guest choirs, the Rundfunkchor Berlin, and an instrumental ensemble.

Tillmann Triest comments: »Concerts can tell far richer stories. The Rundfunkchor Berlin's openness to new impulses and its willingness to take risks send an important signal in times of change. This is about visibility and representation, but also about whose music is heard. »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience« is for anyone eager to encounter new voices, new repertoire, and the previously unheard. I'm already looking forward to setting the hall alight.«

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Mendelssohn and Mozart with the Sinfonisches Kammerorchester Berlin

On **15 May 2027**, the Rundfunkchor Berlin will present a choral-symphonic programme at the Berlin University of the Arts in collaboration with the **Sinfonisches Kammerorchester Berlin**. Under the direction of **Gijs Leenaars**, the programme features Mendelssohn's Psalm 42 («As the Hart Pants») and Mozart's Mass in C minor, K. 427.

»Flying Mozart« Reimagined@Tempodrom

A further highlight of the season is the return of «Flying Mozart», conducted by Gijs Leenaars. Following its premiere in 2025, the production will be presented in an expanded version on **5 and 6 June 2027**, with three performances in collaboration with the **Flying Steps** at the **Tempodrom**, newly adapted for a 270-degree stage. **Mozart's Requiem** is brought into dialogue with urban dance, electronic elements, and visual projections, linking the work's universal themes – mortality, guilt, and consolation – to contemporary crises such as war, climate change, and social division. The production continues the choir's long-standing commitment to innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to choral music.

RundfunkchorLounges

The Rundfunkchor Lounges return in the 26/27 season, combining vocal and chamber music with socially relevant themes in an informal setting at **Heimathafen Neukölln**. Each evening is hosted and accompanied by discussions with guests from academia, politics, and public life.

»Clean Water and Dirty Business« (22 October 2026)

Exploring water as a vital resource, commodity, and source of conflict, this programme reflects on scarcity and responsibility from both artistic and socio-political perspectives. The musical selection, curated by Gijs Leenaars, includes Brahms' setting «Es rinnen die Wasser Tag und Nacht».

»Let's Talk About Sex« (15 April 2027)

This programme focuses on physicality and desire, longstanding themes in music from love songs to contemporary explorations of identity. Featured works include Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur's twelve-part setting of the «Song of Songs».

»In Time« (1 July 2027)

The final Lounge explores perceptions of time – subjective, social, and musical – and marks **Gijs Leenaars' farewell after twelve years as Chief Conductor**.

The Rundfunkchor Lounges, curated by Chief Conductor Gijs Leenaars, combine rarely performed works with musical surprises beyond the

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Rundfunkchor Berlin

standard repertoire. Established in the 16/17 season, the format has been held at Heimathafen Neukölln since 22/23 – deliberately outside traditional concert venues. With unreserved seating, standing room, and a relaxed setting featuring a DJ and refreshments, the events create space for exchange and encounter. Tickets are priced at €32 (€17 concessions) and are designed in particular to appeal to audiences with little prior experience of classical choral music. The evenings are hosted by journalist **Vivian Perkovic**, who works as an editor and presenter for Deutschlandfunk Kultur on programmes including »Tonart am Nachmittag« and »Fazit«, and has also presented the daily 3sat magazine »Kulturzeit« since 2017.

Collaborations with Berlin Orchestras

Renowned worldwide for its artistic versatility and sonic excellence, the Rundfunkchor Berlin is a valued partner of leading orchestras and conductors.

The choir continues its close collaboration with the **Berlin Philharmonic** in the 26/27 season with three programmes – eight concerts in Berlin and two performances at the **Salzburg Easter Festival**. Highlights include Mahler's Symphony No. 2 conducted by **Daniel Harding** in September, Berlioz's »L'enfance du Christ« under **Maxime Pascal** in December, and Beethoven's »Missa solemnis« under Chief Conductor **Kirill Petrenko** in January, with choral preparation by Gijs Leenaars. The latter will also be performed in Salzburg.

With the **Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (DSO)**, the choir appears in four programmes across five concerts. These include a psalm-focused programme featuring works by Lili Boulanger, Igor Stravinsky (»Symphony of Psalms«), and Leonard Bernstein under **Ingo Metzmacher**. Conductor **Jeannette Sorrell** combines Mozart's Requiem with works by contemporary American composers. Further highlights include Mahler's Symphony No. 2 under **Susanna Mälkki** and Rufus Wainwright's »Dream Requiem« conducted by **Kazuki Yamada**.

In collaboration with the **Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB)**, four programmes with five concerts are presented. Under Chief Conductor **Vladimir Jurowski**, the choir performs Rachmaninoff's »The Bells« at **Musikfest Berlin** and John Adams' »Harmonium«. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, conducted by **Delyana Lazarova**, features in the traditional New Year's Eve concert at Konzerthaus Berlin. The collaboration concludes with a participatory performance of Mozart's Requiem at the annual **Sing-Along Concert** under Honorary Conductor **Simon Halsey** at the Berlin Philharmonie.

Together with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Rundfunkchor Berlin performs Hans Werner Henze's Symphony No. 9 at Musikfest Berlin under **Joana Mallwitz**.

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Concert Tours

The 26/27 season tours take the ensemble to **Lucerne, Cologne, Essen, and Salzburg**. The tour opens in September with Henze's Symphony No. 9 at the **Lucerne Festival**, performed with the **Konzerthausorchester Berlin** under **Joana Mallwitz**. In February, three performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 follow in Cologne and Essen, in collaboration with the **WDR Rundfunkchor, WDR Sinfonieorchester**, and conductor **Robin Ticciati**. In March, the choir appears at the Salzburg Festival's Großes Festspielhaus with Beethoven's »Missa solemnis« alongside the **Berlin Philharmonic** under **Kirill Petrenko**.

Christmas Concert

The traditional Christmas Concert takes place on **22 December 2026 at Berliner Dom**, conducted by **Florian Helgath**. The programme centres on the »Kyrie« and »Gloria« from Josef Gabriel Rheinberger's Mass in E-flat major (»Cantus Missae«), op. 109, for double choir a cappella – combining Renaissance polyphony with Romantic harmony. Sacred works by Francis Poulenc and Arvo Pärt extend the programme into the 20th and 21st centuries, complemented by Christmas pieces by Johannes Brahms, Max Reger, and Caroline Shaw. The concert will be broadcast live on Deutschlandfunk Kultur.

Sing-Along Concert

Mozart's Requiem – one of the most monumental works in music history – will be performed in March 2027 in the version by Franz Xaver Süßmayr. Around 1,300 singers will gather at the Berlin Philharmonie to rehearse and perform the work alongside the Rundfunkchor Berlin and the **Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin** under Honorary Conductor **Simon Halsey**. Since 2003, the Sing-Along Concert has become a fixture of the concert calendar, bringing together singers from Germany and abroad each year.

Song Exchange

Under the motto »**Everything okay?**«, the Rundfunkchor Berlin invites **Berlin primary and secondary school students** to its annual participatory concert, conducted by **Florian Benfer**. Up to 1,500 children and young people prepare for a year with support from choir members before performing together with the Rundfunkchor Berlin – secondary students in the Chamber Music Hall, and primary students in the Grand Hall of the Philharmonie Berlin. The latter also includes **SING! choirs** from participating schools.

Schola and Academy

In the **Schola** programme, around 20 vocal students from across Germany work intensively with the ensemble for two weeks. In autumn 2026, under

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Chöre

Rundfunkchor Berlin

the direction of **Nico Köhs**, Assistant to the Chief Conductor, they prepare an **a cappella programme** performed at Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche and recorded by Deutschlandfunk Kultur. Participants also take part in **two choral symphonic concerts** at the Philharmonie Berlin featuring Stravinsky's »Symphony of Psalms« and works by Lili Boulanger and Leonard Bernstein with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Ingo Metzmacher.

The **Academy** offers four vocal students – one per voice part – a six-month immersion in the professional life of a radio choir. Supported by mentors from the ensemble, they work on a wide-ranging repertoire and gain concert experience with leading orchestras and conductors. Two cohorts are admitted each season.

SING!

The Rundfunkchor Berlin's education programme SING! celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2026. Since 2011, SING! has reintroduced singing into everyday school life in Berlin and fosters a sustainable culture of communal singing in primary schools.

SING! is a collaborative project between Berlin primary schools, district music schools, and the Landesmusikakademie Berlin, led by the Rundfunkchor Berlin. Five primary schools from three districts currently participate; three additional schools from three further districts will join in the 26/27 school year. A total of 56 educators already work with around 1,000 children, approximately 270 of whom also sing in SING! choirs. Members of the Rundfunkchor Berlin serve as mentors, giving pupils insight into professional choral singing. The programme is funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family and the Ernsting Kunst- & Kulturstiftung.

Subscriptions

With three subscription packages, the Rundfunkchor Berlin invites audiences in the 26/27 season to experience the full breadth of its artistic work – from large-scale choral symphonic repertoire and socially engaged programmes to participatory singing experiences. Subscribers save up to 30% compared to single ticket purchases.

The **»Choir and Orchestra«** subscription includes six choral symphonic concerts with leading partners, including Rachmaninoff's »The Bells«, Stravinsky's »Symphony of Psalms« and Bernstein's »Chichester Psalms«, the Christmas Concert at Berliner Dom, Beethoven's »Missa solemnis« with the Berlin Philharmonic, »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience«, and a programme featuring Mendelssohn's Psalm 42 and Mozart's Mass in C minor.

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The »RundfunkchorLounge« subscription comprises three evenings at Heimathafen Neukölln combining music and discussion on socially relevant themes, curated by Gijs Leenaars.

For those wishing to take part, the »Sing-Along Concert Plus« subscription guarantees early access to the Mozart Requiem Sing-Along Concert under Simon Halsey, along with the Christmas Concert and »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience«.

Radio Broadcasts

The Rundfunkchor Berlin's concerts are broadcast live and recorded by Deutschlandradio and rbb Kultur, including performances with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin as well as its own productions such as the RundfunkchorLounges, the Christmas Concert, the Sing-Along Concert, »We're Not Going Anywhere – Queer Resilience«, and the May 2027 programme featuring Mozart's Mass in C minor and Mendelssohn's Psalm 42. Through the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the choir reaches a global audience; in 2025 alone, it was featured in 54 broadcasts across 23 countries

Subscriptions are available immediately. Single ticket sales for the 26/27 season begin on 15 July 2026 via the ROC Berlin visitor service.

The press kit, including the season overview, detailed programme texts, brochure, and images, is attached to this email.

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