

Rundfunkchor Berlin

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Rundfunkchor Berlin at Musikfest Berlin 2026

Henze's Ninth Symphony on 4 September with Joana Mallwitz and the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, and Rachmaninoff's »The Bells« on 13 September with Vladimir Jurowski and the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

The Rundfunkchor Berlin will appear in two Musikfest Berlin 2026 concerts in the Main Hall of the Berlin Philharmonie, on 4 and 13 September. On 4 September at 8 pm, the choir will perform Hans Werner Henze's Symphony No. 9 with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin under Joana Mallwitz. On 13 September at 8 pm, it will join the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin under Vladimir Jurowski for, among other works, Sergei Rachmaninoff's »The Bells«, Op. 35.

4 September 2026: Hans Werner Henze – Symphony No. 9

Henze's Ninth Symphony holds a special place for the Rundfunkchor Berlin. Together with the Berliner Philharmoniker and Ingo Metzmacher, the choir gave the work its world premiere on 11 September 1997. It has remained a core part of the choir's repertoire ever since and has featured in guest performances in London, Monte Carlo, New York, Geneva, Zurich, Frankfurt, Munich, Leipzig, Dresden and Cologne.

The performance at Musikfest Berlin takes place in the 75th anniversary year of the Berliner Festspiele and coincides with the centenary of the composer, who died in 2012. Henze, whose youth was shaped by National Socialism, war and captivity, regarded his Ninth Symphony as a statement against fascism and war. Based on Anna Seghers' novel »The Seventh Cross«, the symphony unfolds in seven movements as a musical commemoration of those who resisted National Socialist terror and risked their lives for their convictions. Henze himself described the work as an »apotheosis of the terrible and the painful«.

A further performance of the work with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin and Joana Mallwitz follows on 7 September at the Lucerne Festival, in the Concert Hall of the Lucerne Culture and Congress Centre (KKL).

13 September 2026: Sergei Rachmaninoff – »The Bells«

Together with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, a fellow ensemble of the Rundfunk Orchester und Chöre gGmbH (ROC), the Rundfunkchor Berlin will perform Sergei Rachmaninoff's choral symphony »The Bells«, Op. 35 under Vladimir Jurowski. The choir will be prepared by Gijs Leenaars, Chief Conductor of the Rundfunkchor Berlin.

An Ensemble of

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Rundfunkchor Berlin

In this work for soprano, tenor, baritone, chorus and large orchestra, Rachmaninoff sets Konstantin Balmont's free Russian adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's »The Bells«. He translates the symbolism of bells into shifting orchestral colours, tracing the course of a human life: from the silvery, flickering sounds of childhood and festive wedding bells to the weightier tones of fate and death. Rachmaninoff himself counted the work among his most important compositions.

The programme is complemented by Edison Denisov's rarely performed orchestral work »Peinture« (1970) and Anatol Vieru's Symphony No. 2, composed during the Romanian composer's stay in West Berlin in 1973/74.

The concert will be recorded by Deutschlandfunk Kultur and broadcast on 15 September 2026 at 8 pm.

Musikfest Berlin

From 28 August to 23 September 2026, Musikfest Berlin opens Berlin's new concert season. Organised by the Berliner Festspiele in cooperation with the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation, the festival comprises 36 concerts and events at several venues across Berlin. Alongside Berlin's orchestras and choirs, international soloists as well as instrumental and vocal ensembles will perform. The 2026 edition also marks the 75th anniversary of the Berliner Festspiele.

Musikfest Berlin 2026

Berlin Philharmonie, Main Hall

4 September 2026

8 pm

Hans Werner Henze (1926–2012)

Symphony No. 9

for chorus and orchestra

Konzerthausorchester Berlin

Joana Mallwitz – conductor

Rundfunkchor Berlin

Florian Helgath – chorus master

Tickets: €30, €37, €48, €59, €69, €81

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www.konzerthaus.de/en/

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Press tickets

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Berlin Philharmonie, Main Hall
13 September 2026
8 pm

Edison Denissow (1929–1996)
»Peinture«
for large orchestra

Anatol Vieru (1926–1998)
Symphony No. 2

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)
»The Bells«, Op. 35
Symphonic poem for soloists, chorus and orchestra

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin
Vladimir Jurowski – conductor

Galina Cheplakova – soprano
Anton Rositskii – tenor
Vladislav Sulimsky – baritone

Rundfunkchor Berlin
Gijs Leenaars – chorus master

Tickets: €18, €28, €38, €48, €58, €68
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Press tickets

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