

Rundfunkchor Berlin

PRESS RELEASE 13 October 2026

RundfunkchorLounge »Clean Water and Dirty Business«: music and conversation about the blue gold of our time on 22 October at Heimathafen Neukölln

Choral and chamber music from Brahms to Paul Simon, with conversations featuring Mika Schachenmayr of Fridays for Future and environmental lawyer Laura von Vittorelli

On Thursday, 22 October 2026 at 7.30 pm, the Rundfunkchor Berlin presents its first RundfunkchorLounge of the 2026/27 season at Heimathafen Neukölln, entitled »Clean Water and Dirty Business«. Curated by Chief Conductor Gijs Leenaars, the programme explores the theme of water through choral and chamber music spanning several centuries, including works by Brahms, Debussy, Boulanger, Paul Simon, Aoi Hasegawa and Karin Rehnqvist. Alongside the music, conversations hosted by Vivian Perkovic with environmental lawyer Laura von Vittorelli and climate activist Mika Schachenmayr of Fridays for Future examine water's growing political and economic significance and its implications for people and the environment.

The musical programme assembled by Chief Conductor Gijs Leenaars explores our fascination with water as both a life-giving and a threatening element. It ranges from emotionally charged perspectives in works by Philippe de Monte, Debussy and Brahms, through seemingly apocalyptic warnings in Karin Rehnqvist's »The Dream«, to theatrical and humorous approaches in works by Henry Purcell and Gwyneth Walker. Aoi Hasegawa's »Petrichor« provides a particular highlight: through sung and spoken passages, the choir evokes the sound of rain, creating an atmospheric soundscape in the concert hall. Commissioned by the Rundfunkchor Berlin, the work received its world premiere on 2 October 2025 as part of the choir's centenary celebrations.

Alongside these musical perspectives, the event explores questions of water protection and the equitable distribution of this vital resource. Vivian Perkovic, the new host of the RundfunkchorLounge since the start of the 2026/27 season, discusses these issues with Laura von Vittorelli and Mika Schachenmayr. The urgency of these issues is also underscored by the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) report »State of Global Water Resources 2025«, published in September 2026, which describes the effects of drought, declining water storage and glacier loss.

Laura von Vittorelli is a Senior Researcher in Environmental Law and Governance at the Oeko-Institut in Berlin. An environmental lawyer, she works on water, nature conservation and environmental law, as well as the legal frameworks for a transition compatible with climate and nature

An Ensemble of

 Rundfunk
Orchester
Chöre

Rundfunkchor Berlin

protection. Her research and advisory work connect fundamental questions about environmental law's resilience in times of crisis with specific issues such as water recirculation in industry, soil protection and European water law.

Mika Schachenmayr is the spokesperson for Fridays for Future Berlin. Mika studied environmental science and architecture, lives and works in Berlin, and campaigns as a climate activist for a phase-out of fossil fuels and for global justice. Most recently, in the run-up to the 2026 Berlin House of Representatives election, Fridays for Future Berlin called, among other things, for socially just climate policies and criticised cuts to climate protection measures in Berlin's state budget.

About the format

Established in the 2016/17 season, the RundfunkchorLounge deliberately takes place outside traditional concert halls, at Heimathafen Neukölln. In a relaxed lounge atmosphere, the event combines choral and chamber music with socially relevant topics. The evenings feature DJ sets, drinks and opportunities to talk informally with artists and guests. Admission is €30 (€17 concessions). The RundfunkchorLounge also welcomes people who have had little previous exposure to classical choral music.

The concert will be recorded by Deutschlandfunk Kultur and broadcast on 3 December at 8 pm.

RundfunkchorLounge »Clean Water and Dirty Business«

Heimathafen Neukölln

Karl-Marx-Straße 141, 12043 Berlin

22 October 2026

Thu 7.30 pm

Philippe de Monte (1521–1603)

»Super flumina Babylonis« (Psalm 137)

for eight-part unaccompanied choir

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

»La mer est plus belle«

for mezzo-soprano and piano

Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979)

»La mer est plus belle«

arranged for cello and piano

An Ensemble of

 Rundfunk
Orchester
Chöre

Rundfunkchor Berlin

Karin Rehnqvist (*1957)

»The Dream«

for mezzo-soprano and cello

Lasse Enersen (*1978)

»Agua nocturna«

for eight-part choir and cello

Aoi Hasegawa (*1995)

»Petrichor«

for eight- to fourteen-part unaccompanied choir

Gwyneth Walker (*1947)

»Ice!« from »Songs from the High Sierra«

for tenor and piano

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

»What Power art thou« from the semi-opera »King Arthur«

for bass and harpsichord

Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843–1900)

»O, ihr Wolken, gebet Wasser« from »Deutsches Liederspiel«, Op. 14 (No. 7)

for solo soprano, women's choir and piano

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

»Sehnsucht« (Es rinnen die Wasser), Op. 112 No. 1

for choir and piano

Paul Simon (*1941)

»Bridge Over Troubled Water«

arranged for choir and piano by Kirby Shaw

Eriks Ešenvalds (*1977)

»Stars«

for choir, three to four Tibetan singing bowls and six glasses

Rundfunkchor Berlin

Gijs Leenaars – conductor

Gesine Nowakowski – soprano

Sophie Catherin – mezzo-soprano

Raoul Bumiller – tenor

Georg Streuber – bass

An Ensemble of

 Rundfunk
Orchester
Chöre

Rundfunkchor Berlin

Mischa Meyer – cello

Philip Mayers – piano

Laura von Vittorelli – guest speaker

Mika Schachenmayr – guest speaker

Vivian Perkovic – presenter

Johannes Malfatti – DJ

The concert lasts approximately 100 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.

For press tickets and interview requests please contact: presse@rundfunkchor-berlin.de

Tickets: €17, €32

Tel. +49 (0)30 202 987 22

tickets@rundfunkchor-berlin.de

www.rundfunkchor-berlin.de

Press contact, Rundfunkchor Berlin

Johannes Hartmann • Press and Media Relations

Rundfunkchor Berlin, Charlottenstraße 56, 10117 Berlin

E-Mail: presse@rundfunkchor-berlin.de

Tel: +49 030 20 29 87 - 562

<https://www.rundfunkchor-berlin.de/en/>

An Ensemble of

 Rundfunk
Orchester
Chöre