

Rundfunkchor Berlin

PRESS RELEASE 10 September 2026

In Paradisum: A Cappella Concert on 4 October at Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche

Works by Purcell, Schütz, Schein, Mendelssohn, Harris and Sandström,
conducted by Nico Köhs

On Sunday, 4 October 2026 at 3 pm, the Rundfunkchor Berlin's Schola will perform the a cappella concert »In Paradisum« at Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche Berlin. Together with members of the Rundfunkchor Berlin, conductor Nico Köhs and the young singers will present a programme poised between earthly life and heavenly longing, featuring music from the early Baroque, late Romanticism and the present day by composers including Purcell, Schütz, Mendelssohn and Sandström.

»In Paradisum« brings together works by composers from Schütz to Sandström that explore earthly experience and the hope for comfort, reconciliation and life after death. Nico Köhs, Assistant to Chief Conductor Gijs Leenaars since the beginning of 2026, makes his debut as Director of the Rundfunkchor Berlin's Schola. The programme spans four centuries of choral music, from homophonic blocks of sound and intricate polyphony to Romantic harmony and sound worlds at the limits of tonality.

Four works of seventeenth-century sacred vocal music form the musical framework: motets by Henry Purcell and Heinrich Schütz, Johann Hermann Schein's »Die mit Tränen säen« (Those Who Sow with Tears), and, as the closing work, Schütz's »Selig sind die Toten« (Blessed Are the Dead). Written for changing five- and six-part vocal forces, these works are accompanied by organ, cello and theorbo.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's double-choir setting of Psalm 2, »Warum toben die Heiden« (Why Do the Nations Rage), offers a contrast, with its Romantic richness of sound and striking drama. William Harris's equally double-choir »Faire is the Heaven« leads into the colourful harmony of English late Romanticism. Herbert Howells's »Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing« goes a step further through its dense, tension-filled harmonies. The English composer wrote the work in 1964 for a memorial service for the assassinated US President John F. Kennedy. Towards the end of the concert, Sven-David Sandström's titular »In paradisum« of 2016 offers a contemporary perspective on the programme's themes of farewell, consolation and hope.

Nico Köhs, Director of the Schola:

»With »In Paradisum«, I did not want to tell only of the hope for life after death. I am also interested in how, in our earthly lives, we relate to what we find – more or less consciously – as paradise on earth right on our doorstep.«

An Ensemble of

 Rundfunk
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Chöre

Rundfunkchor Berlin

The Rundfunkchor Berlin's Schola is a programme for aspiring choral singers and an established part of the choir's work to support emerging artists. During a two-week intensive course, voice students from different German conservatoires work alongside members of the Rundfunkchor Berlin, rehearse ensemble singing at a professional level and perform their own a cappella concert.

The participants will also appear on 9 and 10 October at the Philharmonie Berlin in concerts by the Rundfunkchor Berlin and the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

The concert will be recorded by Deutschlandfunk Kultur and broadcast on 9 October at 8 pm.

Schola Concert

Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche Berlin

Zossener Straße 65, 10961 Berlin

Sun 4 October 2026

3 pm

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

»Remember Lord, Not, Our Offences«

anthem for five-part choir and basso continuo

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)

»Unser Wandel ist im Himmel«, SWV 390, from »Geistliche Chormusik«

for six-part choir and basso continuo

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

»Take Him Earth, for Cherishing«

motet for a cappella choir

Johann Hermann Schein (1586–1630)

»Die mit Tränen säen«, from »Israelsbrunnlein«

motet for five-part choir and basso continuo

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–1847)

»Warum toben die Heiden«

for soloists and two a cappella choirs

William Harris (1883–1979)

»Faire is the Heaven«

anthem for double choir a cappella

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Sven-David Sandström (1942–2019)

»In paradisum«

for six-part choir a cappella

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)

»Selig sind die Toten«, SWV 391, from »Geistliche Chormusik«

for six-part choir and basso continuo

Schola of the Rundfunkchor Berlin

Members of the Rundfunkchor Berlin

Nico Köhs – conductor

Mischa Meyer – cello

Bettina Pieck – organ

Wolfgang Katschner – theorbo

Duration: approx. 45 minutes, no interval.

Tickets: €17, €25

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