

Rundfunkchor Berlin

PRESS RELEASE 30 April 2026

Sing-along concert of the Rundfunkchor Berlin on 17 May:

Mendelssohn's St. Paul with 1,200 singers, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and Simon Halsey at the Philharmonie Berlin

The 2026 sing-along concert of the Rundfunkchor Berlin will present Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's oratorio »St. Paul« at the Philharmonie Berlin on 17 May 2026. Together with around 1,200 singers from all over Germany, the oratorio will be performed for the first time under the direction of honorary conductor Simon Halsey. The concert begins at 3.30 p.m. in the Main Auditorium of the Philharmonie and will be recorded by Deutschlandfunk Kultur.

The Rundfunkchor Berlin's sing-along concert is a firmly established event in Berlin's musical life. Simon Halsey, who founded it in 2003 as the then chief conductor of the ensemble, enthuses: »For over 20 years we have been inviting singers from all over the world to the Philharmonie to sing together with the Rundfunkchor Berlin. The magic is with us every year and it's all the more important in these difficult times.«

For the first time, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's oratorio »St. Paul« is now on the programme. In two parts it tells the story of the transformation of Saul the persecutor of Christians into the apostle Paul – from a determined opponent of the early Christian community to a witness of faith who proclaims a message of goodness and charity. In doing so, the oratorio contrasts an attitude of fanatical exclusion with a perspective based on dignity, responsibility and compassion.

Musically, the oratorio clearly stands in the tradition of Bach and Handel. In the choral writing, polyphonic techniques and fugal sections are unmistakable, recalling Bach's Passion style. Already in the overture Mendelssohn quotes the chorale »Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme« (»Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying«), thereby making the reference to Lutheran chorale culture explicit. At the same time, he develops large-scale, powerful choral scenes in the spirit of Handel's oratorios.

For Simon Halsey, this combination of baroque models and Mendelssohn's own sound world is particularly appealing. The former chief conductor and now honorary conductor of the Rundfunkchor Berlin will conduct the work for the first time: »I have been studying »St. Paul« for a year now. It's fascinating to see the young Mendelssohn on the verge of maturity. And the most special thing is that his imagination is so vibrant – such wonderful colours. Also it's good for our sing-along community to experience something new.«

In the performance on 17 May, the solo parts will be sung by soprano Victoria Randem, mezzo-soprano Anna Alàs i Jové, tenor Kieran Carrel and baritone Roderick Williams. They will be joined by two members of the Rundfunkchor Berlin, René Voßkühler (bass 1) and Mathis Koch (bass 2). The instrumental accompaniment will be provided by the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB) and the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie, a German youth string orchestra under the auspices of the Verband deutscher Musikschulen (Association of German Music Schools).

An Ensemble of

 Rundfunk
Orchester
Chöre

Rundfunkchor Berlin

Deutschlandfunk Kultur will record the sing-along concert and broadcast it on 25 May 2026 at 8 p.m.

Tickets

48 € (participating singers) / 45 € (audience members)

Tickets for the concert – both singer and audience tickets – are still available online at www.rundfunkchor-berlin.de, at the Rundfunkchor Berlin Visitor Services office (Charlottenstr. 56, 10117 Berlin), by telephone on +49 (0)30 20 29 87 22 or by e-mail to tickets@rundfunkchor-berlin.de.

Online registration for the next sing-along concert of the Rundfunkchor Berlin opens for Friends and Supporters of the Rundfunkchor Berlin on 28 September 2026; general registration starts on 5 October 2026.

Sing-along Concert 2026
Sun 17 May 2026, 3.30 p.m.
Philharmonie Berlin, Main Auditorium

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
»St. Paul« op. 36
for soloists, choir and orchestra

Victoria Randem – soprano
Anna Alàs i Jové – mezzo-soprano
Kieran Carrel – tenor
Roderick Williams – baritone
René Voßkühler – bass
Mathis Koch – bass

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin
Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie (RSB's sponsor orchestra)
Rundfunkchor Berlin
Simon Halsey – conductor

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

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