

Rundfunkchor Berlin

PRESS RELEASE 20 May 2026

Song Exchange: »Starlight and Thunder« on 12 June 2026

760 primary school students sing with the Rundfunkchor Berlin in the Grand Hall of the Berlin Philharmonie

At the 2026 Song Exchange »Starlight and Thunder«, the Rundfunkchor Berlin will join forces with sixteen school choirs for a sing-along concert for Berlin primary schools on Friday, 12 June 2026 at 3 pm in the Grand Hall of the Berlin Philharmonie. Under the direction of Anne Kohler, around 760 students will perform together with the Rundfunkchor Berlin in a programme featuring contemporary choral music by Latvian composers Ēriks Ešenvalds and Laura Jēkabsone, as well as works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Reinhard Mey and well-known evening songs and folk songs. The concert will be presented by moderator and journalist Muschda Sherzada.

Anne Kohler, Professor of Choral Conducting at Hochschule für Musik Detmold, has conceived and compiled the programme under the motto »Starlight and Thunder« – a musical arc between sparkling starlight and rumbling storms. In Ēriks Ešenvalds's »Stars«, choir, ringing water glasses and singing bowls create shimmering soundscapes, while in Laura Jēkabsone's »Father Thunder« pounding steps and body percussion unleash the energy of a thunderstorm. Alongside the contributions of the Rundfunkchor Berlin, the school choirs and the professional ensemble will perform Ludwig van Beethoven's »Signor Abbate«, Reinhard Mey's »Über den Wolken«, Norbert Rummel's »Wutlied«, the folk song »Guter Mond, du gehst so stille«, the Ukrainian song »Der Mond steht am Himmel«, as well as the »Gewitterkanon« by conductor Anne Kohler. As a contribution from the SING! education programme, the Grundschule am Koppenplatz will present »City of Stars« from the musical film »La La Land«.

For 20 years, the Rundfunkchor Berlin has been inviting school choirs from Berlin and Brandenburg to come together and sing at the Philharmonie as part of the Song Exchange. At this year's primary school concert, children from eight Berlin districts and one school from Brandenburg will join the professional ensemble in the Main Hall of the Berlin Philharmonie.

Through the Song Exchange and the SING! education programme, the Rundfunkchor Berlin accompanies children and young people over several years – at school, in the choir's rehearsal room and in the concert hall. Launched in 2011, the Rundfunkchor Berlin's SING! education programme aims to firmly anchor communal singing in everyday school life and to introduce children, adults and educators to the art form of singing and to vocal stage culture. Since 2006, more than 70 primary schools have taken part in the Song Exchange, and since 2011, 38 Berlin primary schools have participated in SING!. Many of the students later meet the Rundfunkchor Berlin again at the concerts for secondary schools.

An Ensemble of

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Rundfunkchor Berlin

»Anyone who sings regularly experiences that its effects go far beyond pure musicality: making music together strengthens a sense of community – regardless of the circumstances children and young people bring with them. SING! and the Song Exchange meet them all where they are and open a door to music – irrespective of whether there is money, time or role models for such opportunities at home,« says Rachel-Sophia Dries, Director of the Rundfunkchor Berlin. »The fact that this year we are celebrating 20 years of Song Exchange and 15 years of SING! shows that our work has long since become a firmly established element of cultural education in Berlin's schools.«

For the first time, the artistic direction of the Song Exchange concerts lies with Anne Kohler, Professor of Choral Conducting at Hochschule für Musik Detmold, among other positions, Artistic Director of Germany's Bundesjugendchor. She has been connected with the Rundfunkchor Berlin since 2015, when she prepared the choir for Arnold Schönberg's »Die Jakobsleiter« together with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under the baton of Ingo Metzmacher.

**Philharmonie Berlin
Großer Saal (Grand Hall)**

Song Exchange – Concert for Primary Schools

12 June 2026

Fr 3 pm

**Berlin school choirs
Rundfunkchor Berlin
Anne Kohler – conductor**

**Song Exchange Band
Rainer Schnös – guitar
Barbara Sadowski – violin
Markus Syperek – piano
Sascha Glintenkamp – double bass
Levin Peetz – drums**

Muschda Sherzada – presenter

Participating primary schools

Katholische Schule St. Franziskus
Paul-Lincke-Grundschule
Birger-Forell-Grundschule
Katholische Schule Herz Jesu
Schule an der Victoriastadt
Zinnowwald-Grundschule
Gustav-Falke-Grundschule
Gemeinschaftsschule auf dem Campus Rütli

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Paul-Moor-Grundschule
Grundschule Finsterwalde-Nehesdorf
Katholische Grundschule St. Mauritius
Grüner Campus Malchow
Richard-Grundschule
Evangelische Grundschule Zehlendorf
Gesundbrunnen-Schule
SING! Grundschule am Koppenplatz

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