

SHAROUN ENSEMBLE

Founded in 1983 by members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Scharoun Ensemble is one of Germany's leading chamber-music organizations. With its wide repertoire, ranging from composers of the Baroque period by way of Classical and Romantic chamber music to contemporary works, the Scharoun Ensemble has been inspiring audiences in Europe and overseas for more than a quarter of a century. Innovative programming, a refined tonal culture and spirited interpretations are hallmarks of the ensemble, which performs in a variety of instrumental combinations.

The permanent core of the Scharoun Ensemble is a classical octet (clarinet, bassoon, horn, two violins, viola, cello and double bass), made up of members of the Berlin Philharmonic except from Wolfram Brandl, who is first concertmaster of the Staatskapelle Berlin and Claudio Bohorquez, internationally performing solo- and chamber music-cellist.

When called for, the ensemble brings in additional instrumentalists as well as noted conductors. The Scharoun Ensemble has prepared and presented various programmes under the direction of Claudio Abbado, Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez. It has also performed with singers including Thomas Quasthoff, Simon Keenlyside and Barbara Hannigan, and, for interdisciplinary projects, the ensemble has engaged such artists as Fanny Ardant, Lorient and Dominique Horowitz.

Bridging the gap between tradition and the modern is the Scharoun Ensemble's principal artistic focus. It has given world premieres of many 20th- and 21st-century compositions while dedicating itself with equal passion to the interpretation of works from past centuries. Among the cornerstones of its repertoire are Franz Schubert's Octet d803, with which the ensemble made its public debut in 1983, and Ludwig van Beethoven's Septet Op.20.

Cultivating an active contact with today's composers has been a matter of special interest to the Scharoun Ensemble since its inception. György Ligeti, Hans Werner Henze, Pierre Boulez, György Kurtág and Wolfgang Rihm have accompanied the group on its artistic journey, as have composers of the younger generation including Jörg Widmann and Matthias Pintscher.

Complementing the Scharoun Ensemble's brisk international concert activity is its annual residence at and artistic directorship of the Zermatt Festival, founded in 2005. Along with concerts by major artists, each summer's festival includes musical workshops offering young musicians the chance to work with the members of the Scharoun Ensemble.

Lending his name to the Scharoun Ensemble is the architect of its musical home. In designing the Berlin Philharmonie, Hans Scharoun (1893-1972) created a concert hall that was unique in the world, undertaking a synthesis between innovation and awareness of tradition and opening up new approaches to artistic communication - ideals to which the Scharoun Ensemble is also committed.