

Biography | September 2024

Peter Bruns | artistic director

Audience and press are equally enthusiastic about the vivid and joyful performances of the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra Leipzig, its expressivity and homogeneity. In 2000, music students of the Leipzig Conservatory, having made a lot of experiences in Germany's leading youth orchestras, decided to bring their passion for music to a new professional chamber orchestra - the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra Leipzig was born.

In addition to concertmaster Gunnar Harms, cellist Peter Bruns, who has worked successfully with the orchestra for many years, including the outstanding debut at the Musikverein in Vienna and several highly praised CD productions, became artistic director of the Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig in 2014. He usually conducts the orchestra from his position as solo cellist, being part of the ensemble, which presumes a high level of communication between him, the concertmaster and the other musicians. As a result of this very special constellation, a common musical gesture and an extraordinarily homogeneous sound are created.

The name giving composer, conductor and pianist Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy has been one of the most important persons of the musical life in the 19th century in Europe. He revolutionised the concert business and campaigned for the musical education of the younger generations. Considering itself to be a highly specialised ambassador of Mendelssohn's music, the Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig focuses on the musical legacy of the Leipzig based composer. Besides regular concert programmes, the orchestra collaborates with renowned dramatic advisors like Folkert Uhde, actors like David Bennent or the pantomimes „Bodecker & Neander“ creating scenic programmes dealing with the life and music of Mendelssohn.

The Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig has collaborated with several renowned artist such as Michael Sanderling, Antje Weithaas, Viviane Hagner, Reinhold Friedrich, Dorothee Miels, David Orlowsky, Salome Kammer and Dorothee Oberlinger, as well as artists of non-classical genres such as the 'chansonier' Sebastian Krämer. On the occasion of Clara Schumann's 200th anniversary throughout 2019 the renowned orchestra performed with Ragna Schirmer and Lauma Skride.

Invitations have taken the Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig to the MDR Musiksommer, Leipziger Bachfest, Rheingau Musik Festival, Musikfestspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Mendelssohn-Festtage in Leipzig and Bachwoche Ansbach. The Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig is the official partner of the Mendelssohn-Festtage in Leipzig. The orchestra toured Switzerland, Turkey and Spain and has been invited to perform at the most important concert venues in Germany, amongst others at the Philharmonies in Essen and Cologne, in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and at the Liederhalle Stuttgart. Its debut at the Musikverein Wien, where it also performed again in the current season, has been crowned with success. Further concerts have taken the orchestra amongst others to Philharmonie Cologne, MDR Musiksommer, Choriner Musiksommer, Prinzregententheater Munich and to the Markgräfliche Opernhaus Bayreuth, to Bremen and Hamburg as well as to Philharmonie Essen.

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The discography of the Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig reflects the versatility of the ensemble: Hänssler classic has released a CD, which includes Haydn's Cello Concertos and Denissov's 'Death is a long sleep'. Further CDs of the orchestra are devoted to works by Mendelssohn, Ibert, Sannicandro as well as Dvořák and Tchaikovsky. Together with Peter Bruns the orchestra recorded cello works by Schumann and Volkmann. "Occident & Orient", a recording with the Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh, has been published as LP (Berliner Meisterschallplatten). After the CD entitled "Primadonna" featuring oboist Clara Dent (Coviello Classics), they recently released their latest recording "Cosmopolitan Mendelssohn" (Klanglogo) with works of Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Volkmann, Donizetti and Gade.

The Mendelssohn Kammerorchester Leipzig regularly offers educational programmes in cooperation with specialised theatre and dance teachers, as well as with the School of Music and Arts "Clara Schumann". In 2015 the orchestra has been awarded the YEAH! Young EARopean Award for its "geo-sounds" project.

Short version

Anyone who has experienced this ensemble in the more than 20 years of its existence is thrilled by its expressive will, its homogeneity and its exuberant joy in making music. Their formative experiences in the best youth orchestras in Germany led a group of graduates of the Leipzig Academy of Music to found the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra Leipzig in 2000.

The world-renowned cellist Peter Bruns has been leading the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra Leipzig from the position of solo cello since 2014, a special feature that requires strong communication between him and the other orchestra members around concertmaster Gunnar Harms. The result of this exciting musical process is a jointly shaped musical gesture and the ensemble's outstandingly homogeneous sound.

Shortly after its founding, the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra Leipzig made guest appearances at the MDR Music Summer, the Leipzig Bach Festival and the Mendelssohn Festival Days in Leipzig. Numerous concert tours and guest appearances in all of Germany's major concert halls followed. The Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra Leipzig has collaborated with numerous renowned musical personalities. On the occasion of the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of Clara Schumann, the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra performed with Ragna Schirmer and Lauma Skride.

The orchestra's extensive discography reflects its versatility.