

Biography

Irish Chamber Orchestra Ensemble

www.irishchamberorchestra.com



The Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) is Ireland's finest chamber orchestra, combining high quality performances with an expansive artistic vision. Virtuoso, innovative and creative, the ICO blazes a trail with its unique collaborative approach and its rich relationships with an array of creative partners. The ICO continues to work with Jörg Widmann (Principal Conductor/Artistic Partner) who continues to expand audiences, at home and abroad, with his vision. Under the leadership of Katherine Hunka, the orchestra is one of Ireland's busiest touring ensembles, both nationally and internationally.

In 2018/19 Jean-Christophe Spinosi will conduct Beethoven's *Symphonies Nos. 1 & 5*, along with ICO's Christmas extravaganza. Making its music accessible to all, the ICO performs at one of Ireland's most lauded rock festivals *Feile Classical*, collaborating with some of the country's most iconic bands, including *The Hot House Flowers* and *The Stunning*. Straight after, the orchestra joins forces with Chamber Choir Ireland for the Irish premiere of James McMillan's *Stabat Mater*, conducted by the composer (as part of the New Music Dublin Festival). Thomas Zehetmair will perform Mozart's *Violin Concerto No. 3* in March, followed by Jörg Widmann conducting Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*. The sopranos Genia Kühmeier and Anna Devin as well as tenor Colin Balzer will join the Chamber Choir Ireland for these performances. Furthermore, the orchestra is looking forward to collaborating once again with the Irish National Opera on its upcoming production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

As ever, Irish composers are very much to the fore, and this season the orchestra performs newly commissioned compositions by Cork-born composer Sam Perkin and viola player/composer Sebastian Adams, while jazz flautist Michael Buckley performs a recent concerto *Pipe Dreams* by Ronan Guilfoyle. The orchestra enjoys fruitful relationships with an array of Irish composers including Elaine Agnew, Linda Buckley, Frank Corcoran, John Kinsella, Garrett Sholdice, Michael Ó Súilleabháin, Ian Wilson, and with UK composer Tariq O'Regan.

The orchestra's trail-blazing approach continues to attract the world's finest musicians, both international and national. Recent and present collaborators include Stephen Barlow, Jonathan Cohen, Mojca Erdmann, James Galway, Pekka Kuusisto, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Igor Levit, Claron McFadden, Sergeij Nakariakov, Gloria Rehm, Ailish Tynan, István Várdai, Gilles Vonsattel, Carolin Widmann and Tabea Zimmermann.

The orchestra has successfully toured across Europe, Australia, South Korea, China and the US. Since his first appearance with the orchestra (Berlin 2007), Jörg Widmann has injected unprecedented energy which has seen the orchestra appear at prestigious festivals and venues throughout Europe. In 2018, the ICO performed in Leverkusen and Essen, before returning to Heidelberg to complete its 3-year residency at the Heidelberger Frühling Festival and to Würzburg Mozart Festival. In 2019, the orchestra will tour South America and the USA. Closer to home, the ICO is orchestra-in-residence at the Kilkenny Arts Festival.

Adding to the orchestra's already numerous CD recordings, the label Orfeo released in 2017 the second of a series of three CDs of Mendelssohn's Symphonies combined with works by Jörg Widmann, as directed by him.

Outside the concert hall, the Irish Chamber Orchestra inspires and supports communities with a vitality unmatched by other ensembles. Its *Sing Out with Strings* initiative provides free tuition in singing, song writing, violin, viola, cello and bass to 300 children throughout Limerick city – developing key life skills by using music as a tool for tangible social change.

The Irish Chamber Orchestra is resident at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. The orchestra is generously funded by *The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon*. Additional support from *Culture Ireland* contributes significantly towards the ICO's international touring initiatives.

2018/ 2019

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