

## **Biography NDR Symphony Orchestra**

The NDR symphony orchestra, the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie's orchestra in residence to-be, was founded in 1945. For more than a quarter of a century it was Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, its first Chief Conductor, who stamped his artistic profile into the orchestra, and quickly made it well known far beyond the bounds of the City-State of Hamburg. Conductors such as Wilhelm Furtwängler, Hans Knappertsbusch, Erich Kleiber, Otto Klemperer, Ferenc Fricsay, and Karl Böhm stood on the rostrum in front of the NDR Symphony Orchestra as guest conductors during the Schmidt-Isserstedt era.

After the era of Moshe Atzmon and Klaus Tennstedt, the chief conductors in the 1970s, the 20 years of intensive co-operation between the orchestra and Günter Wand gave it a significance such as it had not known since the Schmidt-Isserstedt era. He was appointed Chief Conductor in 1982 and soon afterwards, in 1987, Honorary Music Director for life. He dominated the artistic work of the NDR Symphony Orchestra until his death in 2002.

The series of chief conductors was continued in the 1990s initially with John Eliot Gardiner and Herbert Blomstedt. In 1998 Christoph Eschenbach was appointed to this position. During his five-year term he and the orchestra recorded major cycles of works such as Mahler's and Shostakovich's symphonies. He also devoted himself intensively to contemporary music. From 2004/05 Christoph von Dohnányi continued the tradition of major conductor personalities in the top position with the NDR Symphony Orchestra assuring the international reputation of the orchestra. From this time also Alan Gilbert holds the position of the Principal Guest Conductor. At the start of the 2011/2012 Thomas Hengelbrock took over the Chief Conductor position.

The NDR Symphony Orchestra holds its own concert series in Hamburg, Lübeck, Kiel, Wismar and regularly makes guest concert tours to the most important European festivals, appearing on all the major concert stages. It has also earned itself great respect from its tours to Japan, China, South America, and of course the USA.