

## **Biography NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra**

As Orchestra in Residence at Hamburg's new landmark Elbphilharmonie, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra plays a major role in shaping this world-famous concert hall's musical profile through its concert programme. The orchestra has widely expanded its performance since the hall's opening in January 2017, welcoming 190,000 visitors of all ages in its first year alone. Images and sounds from the Elbphilharmonie can now be seen and heard throughout Northern Germany and far beyond, thanks in part to the NDR's own programmes.

In addition to its various concert formats in Hamburg, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra holds its own concert series in Lübeck and Kiel and plays a leading role at the major festivals in Northern Germany. Its international standing is reflected by regular tours throughout Europe, to North and South America, and Asia. The orchestra also engages in education and promoting young talent. Here too, the orchestra's vision reaches beyond national borders: For example, a long-term collaboration with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra was agreed in 2015, centred on a large-scale education project in China.

The NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra was founded in 1945 as the orchestra of the NWDR (Northwest German Radio) as part of the cultural and intellectual rebuilding process after the Second World War. From 1956-2016 it was known as the NDR Symphony Orchestra (NDR Sinfonieorchester). Its first Principal Conductor was Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, who shaped the orchestra's artistic profile for more than a quarter of a century. Later on, a 20-year period of close collaboration with Günter Wand was similarly significant. Wand, who served as Principal Conductor from 1982 and was awarded the role of lifetime Honorary Conductor in 1987, cemented the orchestra's international reputation. In particular, his interpretations of the symphonies of Brahms and Bruckner set new standards and became known as the ensemble's artistic calling card. Christoph Eschenbach was appointed as Principal Conductor in 1998, and in 2004, Christoph von Dohnányi continued the line of renowned Principal Conductors. From 2011 to 2018, Principal Conductor Thomas Hengelbrock further shaped the history of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra with his unconventional programme planning and his delight in experimenting with his interpretations.

In June 2017, Alan Gilbert was appointed the new Principal Conductor. He will take up the position at the beginning of the 2019/2020 season. In the coming 2018/2019 season, he will already begin to make his mark with two major projects. Gilbert already has close ties to the orchestra, as he was the Principle Guest Conductor from 2004 to 2015 – a position now being filled by the young Polish conductor Krzysztof Urbanski.

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