

TONHALLE ORCHESTER ZÜRICH

Melanie Kollbrunner
Press Officer
+41 44 206 34 63
+41 76 576 60 06
melanie.kollbrunner@tonhalle.ch

—
Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich AG
Gotthardstrasse 5
CH-8002 Zurich
+41 44 206 34 40

—
info@tonhalle.ch
tonhalle-orchester.ch

Media release, 07.06.2023

Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich continues to consolidate its local presence and carry its reputation out into the world

A new main sponsor, a wider range of affordable subscriptions, further expansion of local collaborations, plus exciting débuts: in the 2023/24 season, the Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich will continue to set store by the world-class reputation of its orchestra and its Music Director, Paavo Järvi. It will also continue to carry its reputation out into the world – with new recording projects and guest performances in Europe and Asia.

“The goal is to enhance the orchestra’s world-class status,” said Music Director Paavo Järvi when he took up his post four years ago. “Well, the orchestra *is* world class,” he says today. “But the beauty of music is that it always goes one step further.” The aim is to realise the orchestra’s full potential. Martin Vollenwyder, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich AG, is delighted that both Paavo Järvi and Ilona Schmiel have extended their contracts until 2029: “This is just the right team to explore the ensemble’s enormous potential.” For Ilona Schmiel, Artistic Director of the Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich, the ideal starting position to achieve this has now been reached: “Our Music Director and the orchestra have now gained a great deal of shared experience, and the renovated Tonhalle Zürich offers excellent conditions. To move forward from this point, extra energy will be needed, but also continuity and trust,” she says, adding that this will depend on the interaction of many factors.

A touch of rock

One factor is the orchestra’s guest performers, strong personalities – and unique approaches. In 2023/24, our Focus Artist will be Latvian organist Iveta Apkalna, who often moves beyond the realms of the mainstream. Both orchestral concerts and chamber music performances are planned. This is also the case with cellist Kian Soltani, next season’s second Focus Artist: Soltani grew up in Vorarlberg, Austria, and his family hails from Iran. He will be performing not only the great Schumann, Elgar and Shostakovich cello concertos, but also Persian music – together with his father, among other artists.

Our Creative Chair for the next season will be Bryce Dessner, who has made a name for himself in the United States as an electric guitarist and rock musician, especially with the band *The National*. Paavo Järvi will conduct Dessner’s orchestral work entitled *Mari*. The composer himself will take the stage for *St. Carolyn by the Sea*. He will then present an audio-visual project entitled *Electric Fields*, which will feature David Chalmin, the Labèque sisters and singer Barbara Hannigan, among others. Alice Sara Ott will première a piano concerto that Dessner wrote for her. And Pekka Kuusisto will be performing the composer’s Violin Concerto.

TONHALLE ORCHESTER ZÜRICH

In addition to these and other reunions – with Zurich conductor Philippe Jordan, for example – there will be début performances by artists such as Canadian pianist Bruce Liu, British pianist and organist Wayne Marshall, Norwegian soprano Mari Eriksmoen and German-Italian soprano Anja Kampe. Among the conductors, there will be first encounters with Joana Mallwitz, Dima Slobodeniouk and Simone Young, as well as the Latvian cellist and conductor Margarita Balanas, who will be Paavo Järvi's new Assistant Conductor.

Another factor is the shared repertoire: at the start of the new season, the orchestra will continue its Bruckner cycle with the Ninth Symphony. In addition, the Eighth will be released on CD – again on the Alpha label – to coincide with the new season. In February 2024, the orchestra will begin work on a Mahler cycle. For Paavo Järvi, this is a logical continuation: “Mahler's work is the apogee of German symphonic music.” He recognises a clear development in this – a line that extends from Haydn via Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Bruckner all the way to Mahler. “With him, everything has been said; thereafter, composers had to look in other directions.”

A place for all

For Ilona Schmiel, establishing firm roots by expanding collaboration is also essential. In other words, local networking: “In this way, we can open doors between the arts – into the visual field, for example.” The Museum für Gestaltung and art gallery Hauser & Wirth are now collaboratively involved in the programmes of the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich. Networking in the field of education also remains a concern: “Together with Superar Suisse, the Musikschule Konservatorium Zürich and Zurich University of the Arts, we are creating very different approaches,” adds Ilona Schmiel. Members of the orchestra will continue to make music in Zurich's community centres so as to ensure that classical music remains accessible throughout the city.

The first-ever collaboration with Zurich Opera House – the Rachmaninoff cycle – will climax with the exchange of conductors in November 2023. Gianandrea Noseda, General Music Director at the Opera House, will conduct the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich; conversely, Paavo Järvi will direct the Philharmonia Zurich. Joining them on each occasion will be Swiss pianist Francesco Piemontesi, who will be performing Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* as well as his Piano Concerto No. 4 within one week.

In the coming season, the Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich will also be expanding these tried and tested collaborations with the addition of new formats, such as rehearsal visits for special education schools. “In the best case, the Tonhalle Zürich will become a kind of ‘home’ for children and young people, their friends and families,” Schmiel continues.

Various Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich projects are aimed at young people and, in addition to the school programme, intended to provide access to music for all. New on the programme: “Beethoven // Opus 360,” a virtual reality game that, for the first time, combines gaming, virtual reality (VR), rap and classical music in a unique learning experience by bringing the young Beethoven to life and into our time. The project was developed by “agon e.V.,” a young, Bonn-based non-profit initiative, in order to overcome the hurdles of classical cultural content, especially for young people, in a sustainable, playful way. The multimedia experience is free of charge for schoolchildren and is to be made available to around 1,000 upper school pupils in the City and Canton of Zurich. In addition to the gaming experience, a total of 18 workshops are planned. Among other prizes, the game has received the 2023 German Computer Game Award.

Ambassador for Zurich and Switzerland

“It all belongs together,” says Paavo Järvi: “The concerts in Zurich and our success in the world, the live performances where we can win over audiences, the CDs and the streamings with which we are remembered.” As an ambassador for Zurich and Switzerland, the orchestra will once again be taking its music on a world tour in 2023/24. Residencies are planned: Trips to the Proms in London, the Beethovenfest Bonn, the George Enescu Festival in Bucharest, the Dvořák Festival in Prague and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. A tour of Asia will take

TONHALLE ORCHESTER ZÜRICH

the orchestra to South Korea and Japan, with a total of eight concerts (including residencies in Seoul and Tokyo). Guest performances in Switzerland are also on the programme – in Locarno and Basel.

On the ground in Zurich, the Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich is delighted with the increased interest in subscriptions: with 566 sales, the newly introduced trial subscription exceeded all expectations, and remains on offer. An adapted form of the entry-level subscription at attractive prices will be introduced as a follow-up solution.

Last but not least, the Tonhalle-Gesellschaft Zürich has a new main sponsor for two seasons to bridge the gap left by the loss of Credit Suisse: the orchestra's new partner will be Bank LGT Private Banking. For Heinrich Henckel, CEO of LGT Bank Switzerland, the new commitment dovetails perfectly with the institution's portfolio: "We have been committed to art and music for years – be it as a partner of the Princely Collections or the LGT Young Soloists. We are delighted that we are now also accompanying the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich on its musical journey."