

MCO Academy

Through the MCO Academy, the musicians of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra pass on their passion and expertise to the next generation of orchestral musicians. The Academy was founded in 2009 in collaboration with the Orchesterzentrum I NRW in Germany and has grown to include partner institutions from five countries. The project is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia. Partnering concert halls are the Konzerthaus Dortmund, Kölner Philharmonie and Philharmonie Essen. The MCO Academy offers a high quality orchestra experience, fosters creative and independent thinking and provides a comprehensive and modern approach to musicianship in the 21st century.

Focus Areas

Orchestral Playing: With an annual orchestra project in Germany at its core, the Academy includes instrumental coaching and sectional rehearsals with MCO tutors, as well as orchestra rehearsals and concerts under renowned conductors (which have included Pierre Boulez, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Daniel Harding). Apart from the 10-day orchestra project, the Academy includes audition training and coaching at the partner institutions as well as sit-in rehearsals during regular MCO projects. Highly qualified alumni are offered a scholarship to play with the MCO on a regular tour project.

Chamber Music: Chamber music is an essential part of the MCO's identity, as the collaborative music making found in chamber music defines the orchestra's way of playing. As part of the Academy programme, the musicians pass on this approach to the students in chamber music workshops and concerts. The focus on chamber music is integrated into the larger orchestra project and may be complemented by smaller projects throughout the year.

Career Planning and Creative Skills: In the 21st century, musical careers are becoming more diverse and young musicians are facing new challenges at the start of their professional careers. The MCO Academy aims to broaden students' minds and assist them in finding their individual paths and goals. The Academy includes career talks and creative workshops with MCO musicians and external guests. A one-on-one mentoring programme offers students the opportunity to discuss their specific questions and challenges with an individual MCO mentor.

Networking and International Exchange: The Academy fosters international exchange through an extensive curricular and extra-curricular programme. In addition to the sectional and orchestra rehearsals and concerts, students have the opportunity to play chamber music in internationally mixed groups, preparing and performing pieces within a few days. The exchange among students is complemented by the exchange with MCO players, who are a live example of bringing international and individual backgrounds into a group and to joint music-making.



Partner Institutions

With the cooperation with its founding partner Orchesterzentrum|NRW in Dortmund as its base, the Academy has expanded to include further international partners over the years. The Academy students are selected by the MCO through yearly auditions. Current partner institutions are:

- × **Orchesterzentrum | NRW** (including conservatories in Cologne, Detmold, Düsseldorf and Essen)
- × **JONC** Jove Orquestra Nacional de Catalunya
- × **RNCM**, Royal Northern College of Music
- × **ANAM**, Australian National Academy of Music
- × **FJC**, Filarmónica Joven de Colombia



What students, musicians and partners say

“The MCO Academy has been one of the most valuable musical experiences I have ever had the opportunity to receive. I had the chance to watch and learn from incredibly talented and lovely musicians and play some fantastic music with them.” Laura, trumpet (RNCM)

“Through the Academy and through our work with the Academy, we constantly recharge and remember why we got together and why the orchestra started. It’s very healthy for us to stay in touch with that, because one of the most common experiences for a professional musician is that they forget precisely why they started and the fun behind simply playing music together.” Mark Hampson (MCO trombone)

“The MCO Academy is both catalyst and inspiration for a new generation of professional musicians, students who gain insight into the different facets of Mahler Chamber Orchestra through their work with the orchestra’s musicians. With its innovative structure, international identity and joyful music making at the highest level, the MCO – together with Orchesterzentrum | NRW and further partners – enriches the creative and diverse cultural landscape of North Rhine-Westphalia through this unique and forward-looking educational model.” Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen (Minister of Culture and Science, German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia)

Links and further information

- × *On Becoming a Musician*, a video on the MCO Academy: <https://youtu.be/0eZC36yckvY>
- × Mahler Chamber Orchestra: <http://www.mahlerchamber.com>
- × Orchesterzentrum | NRW: <http://www.orchesterzentrum.de>
- × *Schwarm / Intelligenz*, VAN Magazin’s feature on the MCO Academy: <https://van.atavist.com/mco-academy>

Contact the MCO

If you have a specific question or would like to know more about the MCO Academy, please contact Miriam Hoffmann, Education and Outreach Manager, at +49 30 41 71 79 18 / miriam@mahlerchamber.com.

