

# Biography Mahler Chamber Orchestra, English, 533 words

Since its creation in 1997, the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra (MCO)** has continuously kept shaping its distinct sound, independent artistic identity, and agile and democratic structure. To this day, the MCO is still governed by its musicians in collaboration with its managing office.

Claudio Abbado, the founding mentor of the Orchestra, inspired the ensemble to develop a philosophy that is based on the power of listening and communication – both as a structure and musically. This philosophy is called, *The Sound of Listening*. Through the transformative power of listening, the MCO goes beyond the conventional expectations of what an orchestra can do, pushing the boundaries of its artistry and exploring new realms of musical expression.

This synergetic approach to music-making is enriched by engaging with *Artistic Partners*, creating multiyear projects that explore diverse artistic themes. Pianists Mitsuko Uchida and Yuja Wang, violinist Pekka Kuusisto, *Conductor Laureate* Daniel Harding, *Artistic Advisor* Daniele Gatti and *Artistic Partner for Immersive Experiences* Henrik Oppermann/Schallgeber – inspire and give shape to the Orchestra. Further close collaborations are undertaken with prominent musicians including George Benjamin, Andris Nelsons, and Patricia Kopatchinskaja.

The Orchestra brings together 27 different nationalities and has reached live audiences across 40 countries on five continents. It connects with a global community through residencies at New York's Carnegie Hall, London's Southbank Centre, Lucerne Festival, Salzburg's Mozartwoche, and Festival de Saint-Denis. The MCO is a frequent guest at Philharmonie Berlin, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, Musikverein Vienna, and Beethovenfest Bonn, and regularly tours Iberian and Asian regions.

In the field of *Outreach and Education*, the MCO's flagship projects include: *MCO Academy*, where MCO members share their passion and expertise with the next generation of orchestral musicians in collaboration with Orchesterzentrum|NRW and undertake concert residencies at Konzerthaus Dortmund, Kölner Philharmonie and the Philharmonie Essen; *Feel the Music*, which opens the world of music to deaf and hard-of-hearing children, encouraging a whole-body sensory experience; and *Welcome Home: a concert about finding the place where you belong*, in which school groups are invited on a multicultural journey, fostering introspection and contemplation on the theme of "Belonging". These endeavours highlight the MCO's commitment to enriching lives through music and promoting inclusivity.

In collaboration with *Artistic Partner for Immersive Experiences* Henrik Oppermann/Schallgeber, the MCO has introduced three virtual reality concert experiences. These immersive installations transport listeners into the heart of diverse musical styles and orchestral arrangements, creating an intimate connection with the music. Starting in the 2023/2024 season, these installations will venture out on independent journeys, making appearances at Beethovenfest Bonn, Museumsnacht Dortmund, Fratopia Frankfurt, and Princeton University.

Each summer, the MCO forms the core group of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra. Collaborations with *Conductor Laureate* Daniel Harding and *Artistic Advisor* Daniele Gatti bring the MCO to numerous prestigious festivals and concert halls in Europe. This season, the partnership with Mitsuko Uchida spans three continents and includes a residency at Ojai Music Festival in California. The first project with the MCO's newest *Artistic Partner* Yuja Wang took place in January. In 2024, the Orchestra will fulfil its inaugural year as *Artistic Director* of Musikwoche Hitzacker, in the company of violinist Alina Ibragimova. MCO debuts are made by conductors Maxim Emelyanychev, Anja Bihlmair and Sir Simon Rattle, and cellist Kian Soltani.

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