

The **Deutsche Philharmonie Merck** is named after the Merck family of pharmacists, who in 1668 created the basis for the oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company in the world - today's Merck in Darmstadt. This family, from which Johann Heinrich Merck - the friend and patron of the poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe - also originated, has always been known for its cultural commitment. The Merck Philharmonic Orchestra feels particularly committed to this tradition.

Merck supports the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, which began as a company orchestra. As early as 1966, employees with a passion for music joined together to form an "Instrumental Group at Merck", which over the years grew into a chamber orchestra, then a chamber philharmonic orchestra, and finally in 2003 the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck. The former works orchestra became one of the most efficient independent orchestras in the German musical landscape - "an orchestra on its way to the top," according to the press.

The Deutsche Philharmonie Merck appointed Briton Ben Palmer for chief conductor in the 2017/2018 season, is home to up to 100 professional musicians, who come together for specific work phases. The orchestra's repertoire covers all styles from baroque and classical to romantic and contemporary music, as well as crossover projects such as jazz or film music. Recently, the major symphonies of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner have formed a focal point of the programme, as well as works outside the well-known, such as those by Korngold, Rott, Vaughan Williams and Elgar. More than 25,000 listeners attend the concerts in Darmstadt and the surrounding area every year. By organizing special projects for children and young people, such as seat cushion concerts or orchestra workshops, the orchestra pursues the goal of getting children excited about classical music and giving young people their first experience of orchestral music-making.

The orchestra has already worked with guest conductors such as Joana Mallwitz, Guido Johannes Rumstadt, Yoel Gamzou, Leo McFall, Joseph Bastian, Benjamin Shwartz, Johannes Klumpp and Eric Jacobsen; for baroque projects, early music specialists such as Margaret Faultless and Adrian Chandler set the tone. Among the soloists who have already performed with the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck are such renowned artists as Robert Levin, Ewa Kupiec, Lars Vogt, Jürgen and Rainer Kussmaul, Thomas Duis, Antje Weithaas, Maximilian Hornung, Matthias Kischner, Petra Lang, Gerhild Romberger and Carolyn Sampson.

The Deutsche Philharmonie Merck also enriches Darmstadt's musical life as a concert organizer. Between 1996 and 2010, top international orchestras such as the Philharmonia Orchestra London, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir and the Gabrieli Consort & Players performed in the city as part of its "Musical Autumn" festival. Outside the festival, the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck regularly invites renowned ensembles such as the European Union Baroque Orchestra or the vocal ensemble Amarcord to Darmstadt.

In the 2016/2017 season, the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck celebrated its 50th anniversary. The anniversary year was opened with a highly acclaimed and highly regarded concert at Eberbach Monastery with Vaughan Williams' "A Sea Symphony" with the participation of the Darmstadt and Frankfurt Kantorei.

In recent years and decades, the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck has also been a welcome and frequent guest on international stages. In addition to its numerous concert tours to nearly all European countries (with destinations such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Lisbon, Paris, Trondheim and Vienna), the orchestra has repeatedly performed away from the well-known metropolises of Western music. In 2001, for example, the musicians travelled to the "German Festival in India" at the invitation of the Goethe Institute. The concerts in megacities such as Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and New Delhi were so well received that the orchestra made two more trips to India in the next ten years; most recently in 2011 again in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut and the Federal Foreign Office for the "German Festival in India". Brazil and Mexico were on the tour schedule in 2005, and in 2008 the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck performed at the international music festival "The Returns" in Vilnius (Lithuania). In 2013, it gave an acclaimed concert with the "Classic meets Jazz" project "Teatime at the Savoy" at the 20th Istanbul Jazz Festival in Turkey. The orchestra performed with the jazz ensemble "Opera Swing Quartet (OS4)" and demonstrated its unusually wide stylistic range. In 2014 the orchestra was a guest in Dubai and gave a gala concert in the park of the Burj Khalifa. In 2015, concerts at the Cambridge Summer Music Festival as well as in Tel Aviv, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and in 2017 Marrakech were on the increasingly extensive travel calendar of the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck. In 2018, the orchestra gave guest performances in Saint Louis and Boston as well as Shanghai and Beijing, and in 2019 in Moscow.