



BALTHASAR NEUMANN CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

A deep passion for music, outstanding artistic quality, and the courage to discover – this is what the Balthasar Neumann Choir and Orchestra, founded by Thomas Hengelbrock, stand for. This visionary European artists' collective brings together the best musicians and singers in their field to engage intensively with musical works and their conceivers and to create magical moments for an international audience. In doing so, they open up new perspectives, convince with energetic interpretations and think beyond boxes and borders. Well-known works with a new take on their original sonorities are on the programme as well as forgotten musical treasures and brand-new compositions. Numerous awards, including several ECHO-Klassik prizes and a Gramophone Award, underline the international reputation of the two ensembles.

This special group of international freelance singers and instrumentalists are united by the desire to grasp compositions deeply on all levels and to clarify their relevance for today. They place themselves entirely at the service of the music and are authentic both on and off stage: colourful, courageous and full of passion. With their unique warm and pure sound, the Balthasar Neumann Choir and Orchestra have fascinated and touched audiences since their founding in 1991 and 1995 respectively. The special quality of the ensembles is also the result of a strong bond between the musicians and singers that is characterized by tolerance and respect. They take responsibility for each other and create a family space for joint development and individual growth.

In their international residencies in the city of Hamburg, the Château de Fontainebleau, the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden and the city of Havana, on concert tours or with their opera productions, the ensembles' musicians perform worldwide under the direction of Thomas Hengelbrock and work with guest conductors such as Howard Arman, Ivor Bolton, Pablo Heras-Casado, Teodor Currentzis or Antonello Manacorda. Since 2024, conductor Lionel Sow is working closely with the Balthasar Neumann Choir and Thomas Hengelbrock, leading numerous projects of the ensembles, who also cooperate in interdisciplinary and cross-border projects such as choir, orchestra or chamber ensembles performances with renowned actors, writers and dancers from all over the world.

The Balthasar Neumann Ensembles have made an international name for themselves in particular with historically informed performances on original instruments, such as Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice" by Pina Bausch, Haydn's "Creation", Beethoven's "Missa solemnis", Wagner's "Parsifal" or the specially prepared original version of Mascagni's "Cavalleria rusticana", which was heard for the first time at the Baden-Baden Autumn Festival in 2022. World premieres such as "Maria" by Jan Müller-Wieland at the Ruhrtriennale 2018 and cross-genre projects also form part of the extensive programme of the Balthasar Neumann Choir and Orchestra.

The Balthasar Neumann ensembles can be experienced not only in concert, but also as music mediators: Thomas Hengelbrock and the musicians pass on their enthusiasm and knowledge to the next generation in a variety of academy programmes. Concerts and workshops are regularly offered in schools and social institutions and education projects are realised.

At the beginning of 2025, the ensembles launched Balthasar NOVA, a new EU-funded programme for young musicians from 20 European countries. This program offers a holistic and innovative approach to musician training. As the first long-term orchestra academy for historical instruments, NOVA combines performance in diverse ensemble formats with practical experience in orchestral playing. The program emphasizes artistic excellence, fair working conditions, and preparation for a freelance career.

By nurturing a new generation of highly skilled, socially conscious musicians, NOVA contributes to the sustainability of the music sector and promotes European values of cultural exchange, unity, and peace.

During the Covid pandemic, the Balthasar Neumann Ensembles and their musicians from all over Europe continually realised projects despite the imposed restrictions to give art and culture a voice even in challenging times.

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