

120th Anniversary of the Berliner Oratorien-Chor (1904-2024)

Anniversary year with Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* in historically informed performance practice, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and a world premiere, among others

The Berliner Oratorien-Chor (BOC) is one of the oldest amateur choirs in the city, having emerged from the popular theater movement. For 120 years now, it has dedicated itself to choral symphonic music from various eras, both well-known and rarely performed works, and in this way always brings interesting finds to the stage.

To mark this year's anniversary, the choir will kick off the season on May 19, 2024 at 3 pm in the Berlin Philharmonie with **Ludwig van Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*** in a historically informed performance practice. Performers include Concerto Brandenburg orchestra, the Konzertchor Schlachtensee, and soloists Flurina Stucki (soprano), Rita Kapfhammer (alto), Ludwig Obst (tenor) and Haakon Schaub (bass). Thomas Hennig, musical director and composer of many years' standing, will be conducting. This concert is funded by the LOTTO-Stiftung Berlin.

Another highlight will follow on September 29, 2024 at 6 p.m. in the Konzerthaus Berlin with **Brahms' *Nänie*** and ***Triumphlied***, **Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*** and the **world premiere of *Ghasele* by Thomas Hennig**, a work commissioned for the anniversary. The BOC will be accompanied by the Konzerthausorchester Berlin. The choir will conclude the anniversary year with a Christmas concert on December 15, 2024 at 4 p.m. in the Evangelische Auenkirche in Wilmersdorf, featuring "Die Geburt Christi" by Heinrich von Herzogenberg.

Further information and tickets can be obtained at <http://berliner-oratorienchor.de/> as well as at [Ticketmaster](#), [Eventim](#) and at the usual advance booking offices.

120th anniversary of the Berliner Oratorien-Chor - one of the oldest amateur choirs in the city

On 8 February 1904, members of the Berliner Volksbühne founded the "Berliner Volks-Chor" (BVC), which was led by the initiator Dr. Ernst Zander. Contrary to what the name suggests, the focus was not on folk songs but on works for the stage. It was the first choir consisting of working people in Berlin to perform choral symphonies and oratorios with orchestra and soloists. A lack of previous musical knowledge was compensated for by compulsory preparatory courses.

Under the Nazi regime, the choir had to contend with numerous harassments, bans and restrictions. When the BVC's membership of the *Deutscher Arbeiter Sängerbund* was revoked in 1933, the choir *joined* the *Reichsverband der Gemischten Chöre Deutschlands* in order to be able to continue its work. Dr. Zander had to hand over the leadership to Georg Oskar Schumann in 1937, as he was not a professional musician and was probably not a member of the NSDAP. Due to the war, the choir shrank and performances became rare.

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The rebuilding of the BVC after the end of the war was characterized by the then chairman Otto Berndt and (from 1958) by the young conductor Gert Sell. Their work suffered a severe setback when the Berlin Wall was built, as 30 members were suddenly lost and contact with members in the eastern zone was broken off.

The choir was given its current name on October 1, 1974 when it merged with the Berliner Oratorien-Chor, which emerged from the Deutscher Philharmonischer Chor but only existed from 1945-1963.

In the meantime, the BOC has become a permanent fixture in the concert life of the capital and was awarded the Zelter Plaque for the cultivation of choral music in 2004. Thomas Hennig took over as artistic director in 2008. With innovatively designed programmes and high artistic standards, the choir remains a pioneering institution with regular, self-organized performances in the Berlin Philharmonie and Konzerthaus Berlin, in addition to numerous collaborations and guest appearances. The choir currently consists of 84 active members from a wide range of backgrounds and generations.

The anniversary year at a glance

Whit Sunday, 19.05.2024 / 3 p.m.

Missa solemnis in D major, op. 123 in historical performance practice

With: Berliner Oratorien-Chor, Konzertchor Schlachtensee, Concerto Brandenburg, conductor: Thomas Hennig

Soloists: Flurina Stucki (soprano), Rita Kapfhammer (alto), Ludwig Obst (tenor) and Haakon Schaub (bass)

Philharmonie Berlin, Herbert-von-Karajan-Str. 1, 10785 Berlin-Tiergarten

Admission price: €20-37 (plus additional costs if applicable), reduced tickets at €10 are available for schoolchildren, students and wheelchair users on presentation of proof in advance and at the box office. Tickets at [Ticketmaster](#), CTS [Eventim](#) and all advance booking offices operated by CTS/TM or via

www.berliner-oratorienchor.de

Sunday, 29.09.2024 / 6 p.m.

Johannes Brahms: Nänie (1880), Triumphlied, op. 55 (1872)

Thomas Hennig: Ghasele (2024) Commissioned work for the 120th anniversary of the BOC / world premiere
Leoš Janáček: Glagolitic Mass (1926)

With: Berliner Oratorien-Chor, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Conductor: Thomas Hennig

Konzerthaus Berlin, Großer Saal, Gendarmenmarkt, 10117 Berlin-Mitte

Advance ticket sales start at the end of June.

Sunday, 15.12.2024 / 4 p.m.

Christmas concert: "The Birth of Christ" by Heinrich von Herzogenberg Berlin

Oratorio Choir, conductor: Thomas Hennig

Evangelische Auenkirche Berlin, Wilhelmsaue 118a, 10715 Berlin-Wilmersdorf

Advance ticket sales start in mid-October.

Further information on the anniversary year concerts and tickets can be found at <http://berliner-oratorienchor.de/>.

Contact for media inquiries:

Ines Schilgen PR Management, pr@inesschilgen.de, Phone +49 (0)174 42 84 791