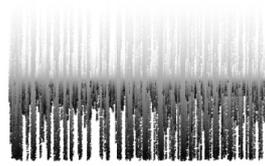


ABOUT



INTERNATIONAL MAHLER ORCHESTRA

In 2013, the International Mahler Orchestra and its founder Yoel Gamzou were awarded the prestigious »Princess Margriet Award« of the European Cultural Foundation. In their decision for the award, the very distinguished Jury wrote: »for inspiring different generations of musicians and diverse audiences across Europe ... [for] finding a new means of interpreting and engaging with classical music as a contemporary form of cultural expression. ... the International Mahler Orchestra is ... giving it new vitality relevant to contemporary times. Gamzou challenges the conventional structures of the classical music genre and in so doing uncovers its democratic potential.«

Our story:

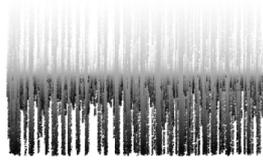
The International Mahler Orchestra was founded in 2006 by Yoel Gamzou and a number of idealistic musicians for the purpose of developing a new orchestral format which would raise the relevance of classical music in our society and regain the trust of audiences. Inspired by many of the ideals of its namesake Gustav Mahler, the idea of the IMO was conceived in order to search for an alternative to the often impersonal, commercial standards of today's mainstream music-world and as a reaction to the decreasing interest of the public in the realm of classical music. Starting out with nearly no funds or material resources, Gamzou approached musicians from all over Europe, ultimately creating a group of people united by one common denominator: excellent musicians who want to search for more, who don't believe that the routine of the current professional scene is the only way.

In its few years of existence, the IMO has grown into a rich collective of 24 core-members from 16 different nations, released two CDs and a DVD, played in some of Europe's best concert halls and collaborated with many renowned soloists. It was hailed one of the most promising and unique new ensembles in the current European scene by the international press and has drawn varied audiences all over Europe.

Our mission:

The IMO aims to develop and refine a new perspective on orchestral playing which explores a non-hierarchical approach to music-making, advocating that an orchestra is a group of individuals, rather than a mass of people, who should all be able to express their unique voice within the collective message. In a similar way, we view our audience as a rich microcosm of society, also a large group of individuals. Our performances are based on an approach of a personal dialogue between musicians and listeners, in which both partners are deeply involved and are utterly indispensable.

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Challenging many of the conventions of today's classical music world, the IMO puts emphasis on three main aspects in its activities. First, the implementation of a unique democratic, non-hierarchical structure in which all members are directly involved with and responsible for all aspects of the orchestra's activities, from substantial decision making all the way up to forming a consensus on musical choices in rehearsal. Second, the forming of a very diverse human texture of carefully selected permanent members, bringing young musicians of the highest calibre together with experienced and accomplished ones, combining tradition and innovation and assuring an extremely high level of music-making. And third, a strong commitment to challenging the status-quo within the world of classical music and questioning all the outdated habits and rituals, both in terms of content as well as form, resulting in varied programmes and orchestral formations.

How we do it:

We see the potential of the concert situation as a dynamic platform of exchange and aim to investigate new directions of programming and formats with which both new listeners and loyal audiences can identify. We believe that rather than forms and traditions, it is music and its qualities that should be in the foreground.

- We offer programmes that consist of an array of works selected not by the genre to which they belong but by their virtues and by the way they relate to one another. We always combine pieces of all formations in our concerts, including orchestral repertoire (with and without conductor), chamber music and solo, all united by one common idea.
- We are interested in allowing music to relate to the venue in which it is performed and see where this dialogue leads us: both in terms of its effect on the performers and on the music played as well as its influence on the audience's perception. We perform in all kinds of venues, from traditional concert-halls all the way to very unorthodox locations, allowing different kinds of audiences a wide palette of possible experiences.
- We seek an exchange with other arts (dance, theatre, the visual arts and literature) believing that all arts, and first and foremost the public, can benefit tremendously from the synergy between these different modes of expression. Not only can such a platform create new insights for artists of all fields, it also exposes the audience to experiences hardly attainable using one single channel, regardless of how rich and expressive it is.
- We form a personal relationship with our audience, involving our listeners in our choice of programmes and inviting them to our rehearsals where they come in contact with the most intimate aspects of our music-making. We aim to break the glass-wall between musicians and public, embracing this crucial communication and synergy.
- Most importantly, every project is a new journey rather than a repetition. We see it as a search, an invitation to jointly explore with our public the infinite dimension of music and the endless realms of sensation.

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The future:

For decades now audiences have been brought to feel that they have to »know« something or »understand« the music that is offered them in order to be worthy of the experience. This misconception compelled numerous people to feel they are not knowledgeable enough in order to appreciate classical music and caused them to avoid the experience altogether. We strongly believe that it is not essential that our listeners »understand« music; we want them above all to *experience* it. We trust each and every one of our listeners, and we know they can experience a truly meaningful, sincere performance.

The *International Mahler Orchestra* is strongly committed to turning classical music into a lively platform of exchange relevant to a substantial part of society. We believe that everybody deserves the experience this art form can offer and are convinced that every single person, regardless of background or education, can enjoy and benefit tremendously from the experience. But it is only through this attained relevance and sincere content that we will reach our audience, and it is only through the legitimacy given by the audience that art and culture will continue to evolve and remain an essential part of our identities.