

GERMAN RADIO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra (Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, DRP) is one of ARD's major radio symphony orchestras. It is jointly supported by Saarländischer Rundfunk (SR) and Südwestrundfunk (SWR) and is based in Saarbrücken and Kaiserslautern.

At the heart of the orchestra's work is the classical-romantic core repertoire, as well as repertoire rarities, new and rediscovered works, early and contemporary pieces. The orchestra also delves into jazz and film music. The DRP's Principal Conductor and Artistic Director is the Spanish conductor Josep Pons. Under the title "Visions of Europe", Pons has developed a multi-year artistic programme for the orchestra exploring European identity from various perspectives. This season, the focus is on Europe's cultural roots.

Since 2025, Michael Schönwandt has held the position of Principal Guest Conductor. This season, under his baton, DRP is exploring the Nordic soundscape in particular. After working with Jörg Widmann and Brett Dean, the orchestra is focusing on another prominent artistic figure: George Benjamin. A concert performance of his opera "Written on Skin", conducted by Benjamin himself, is one of the season's highlights. Guest performances in both broadcasting regions, as well as in Germany and further abroad – including a concert tour in Spain with Josep Pons and appearances at renowned festivals – complement the artistic programme.

With concert programmes aimed at classical music beginners, families and schools, the DRP reaches a wide audience. Other highlights include "Moments musicaux" at the Moderne Galerie Saarbrücken and the Pfalzalerie Kaiserslautern, as well as pub and ensemble concerts featuring DRP members performing in chamber music formations. This season sees the introduction of concerts specifically designed for people with dementia. The DRP also distinguishes itself through CD productions, radio recordings, and projects such as recording the film music for the documentary series "Travellers of the Oceans".

An integral part of the orchestra's work is the promotion of young talent: The Skrowaczewski Academy, founded in 2024, is currently preparing its second cohort for careers in leading orchestras. Projects such as the Internationale Saarbrücker Kompositionswerkstatt (Saarbrücken International Composition Workshop), which awards the Théodore-Gouvy Composition Prize, the Saarbrücker Dirigierwerkstatt (Saarbrücken Conducting Workshop), and the SWR Kultur Junge Opernstars (SWR Culture Young Opera Stars) singing competition, provide further platforms for outstanding talent and new works.

The German Radio Philharmonic was formed in 2007 from the merger of the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra and the SWR Radio Orchestra Kaiserslautern. The orchestra's founding Principal Conductor was Christoph Poppen, who was succeeded by Karel Mark Chichon and Pietari Inkinen. Since 2025, Josep Pons has been the orchestra's Principal Conductor and Artistic Director.