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# Dresden Philharmonic

Michael Sanderling conductor

Arabella Steinbacher violin

Friday 25 May 7.30pm



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A programme of Tchaikovsky  
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**Weber** Overture to 'Euryanthe'

**Bruch** Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor,  
Op.26

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Interval

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**Beethoven** Symphony No.5 in C minor,  
Op.67

It is easy for us to forget the role German-speaking musicians played in establishing orchestras in this country during the 19th century, and not least in the northwest of England. Charles Hallé came to Manchester from Westphalia in 1853 to transform orchestral life in the city, and he was also a formative influence in Liverpool. Max Bruch, whose Violin Concerto we hear tonight, became Chief Conductor at the Liverpool Philharmonic during the early 1880's, while Hans Richter, a friend to both Wagner and Brahms, directed the Hallé at the beginning of the 20th century. And who had raised orchestral music to this level of international prestige, so that every great city wanted its own orchestra? None other than Beethoven himself, whose symphonies have been performed worldwide to great acclaim now for over 200 years.

Peter Davison  
Artistic Director  
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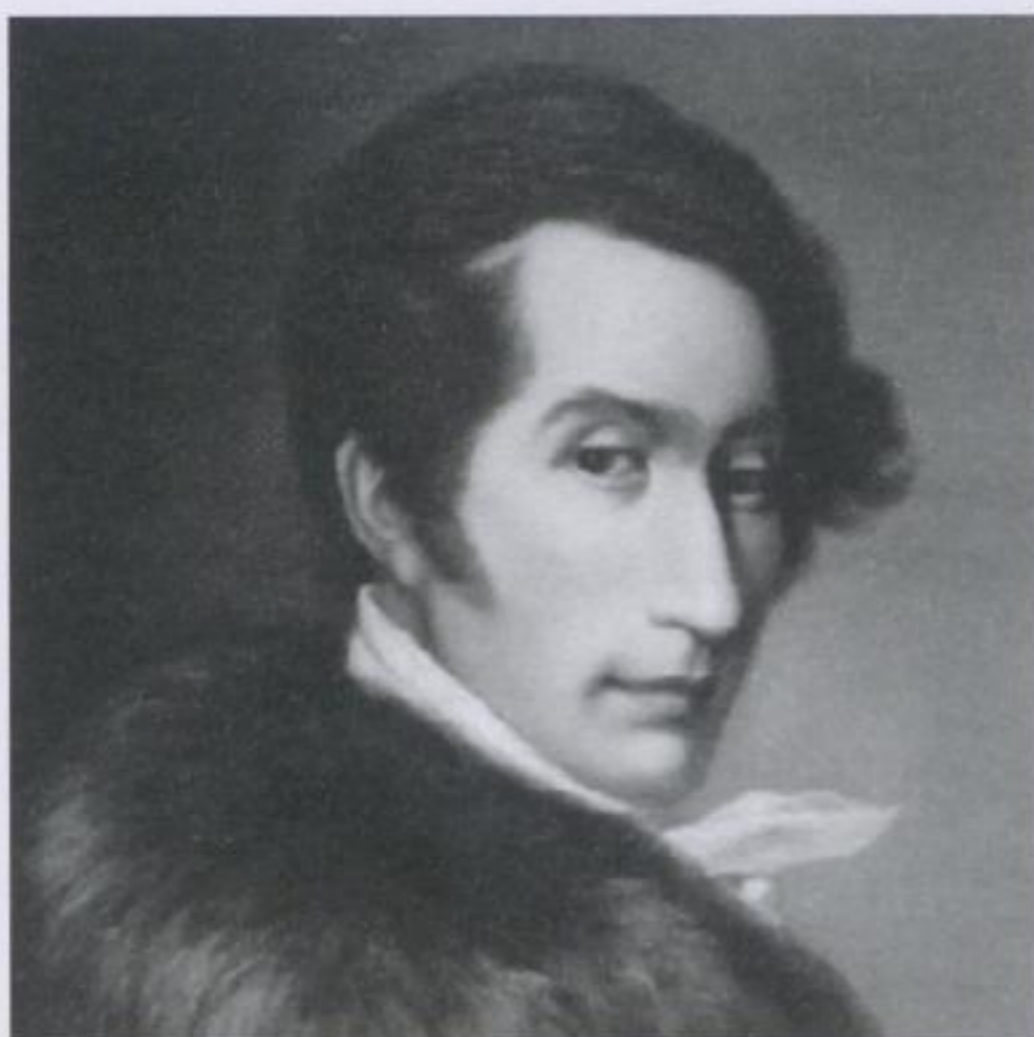
Members of the audience are politely requested to try to refrain from coughing during the performance, other than between pieces and movements; the resonant acoustic of The Bridgewater Hall means that the noise of an uncovered cough can be very disturbing for audience and performer alike. Patrons are also requested to turn off all electronic devices for the duration of the performance.



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# About the Music

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Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)

## Overture to 'Euryanthe'

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One of the first great composers of German Romantic Opera was Carl Maria von Weber. His *Der Freischütz* of 1821 proved a seminal work, evoking fairy-tale scenes of magic and horror. The opera *Euryanthe* of 1823 was cast in a similar mould, but unlike *Freischütz*, it has rarely been performed since its premiere due to the weakness of its libretto. It is perhaps no coincidence that the work's librettist, Helmina von Chézy, was, that same year, the author of another failed project; Schubert's opera *Rosamunde*, premiered in the same year as *Euryanthe*. Only the overtures of these two forgotten works are still heard in the concert hall today.

However, in terms of musical content, *Euryanthe* is arguably Weber's masterpiece, and its neglect is not entirely justified. The opera's title derives from the name of the maiden at the centre of a complex plot set in a medieval court which combines deceits, curses, supernatural goings-on and the redemptive love of an innocent woman. Various people have attempted to improve *Euryanthe's* poor dramaturgy, including Gustav Mahler in 1903. Around the time of the opera's centenary in 1922, the work was revised by the musicologist Donald Tovey in collaboration with the playwright Rolf Lauckner and conductor Fritz Busch. Despite these well-intentioned efforts, the opera has remained in limbo, although Richard Jones's 2002 Glyndebourne production conducted by Mark Elder did receive some critical acclaim.

For all that, the overture to *Euryanthe* is delightful, full of attractive melodies and fairy-tale charm. Rather than presenting an overview of the drama to come, the music focuses on the perplexed hero, Count Adolar. Passages largely taken from Act II characterise him as a heroic knight and tender lover. A central section for muted strings hints at a ghostly element in the story, before a brief fugal transition leads to a recapitulation of the opening. This culminates in a forceful statement of Adolar's formerly tender music, suggesting the plot's ultimately happy ending.

Listening to *Euryanthe* as a whole reveals its powerful influence on the young Richard Wagner, who could never have composed his opera *Lohengrin* (which has a similar plot) without Weber's example. *Euryanthe's* historical significance and the quality of its music surely argue for a revival of

this sadly neglected work. Hopefully as *Euryanthe's* bicentenary approaches in 2023, an imaginative director will be inspired to unlock its secrets once again.

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Max Bruch (1838-1920)

## Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor, Op.26

1. Vorspiel (Allegro moderato) -
  2. Adagio -
  3. Finale (Allegro energico)
- 

For five years, Bruch's Violin Concerto topped Classic FM's *Hall of Fame*, and it remains his most popular work. Indeed, it is perhaps the only piece by which he is widely known. Yet Max Bruch remains a significant figure in the history of music, and especially in the northwest of England. While Bruch spent most of his long life in his native Germany, he served as Chief Conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic from 1880-83. His daughter Margarethe was even born in the city.

Bruch was prolific from an early age, composing 200 works including symphonies, concertos and tone poems. His style was conventionally romantic

and lyrical, albeit lacking the intensity and originality of contemporaries such as Schumann, Brahms, Liszt and Wagner. He had the misfortune also to live well into an era when music had to be revolutionary, if it were to be taken seriously, and his reputation has never truly recovered.

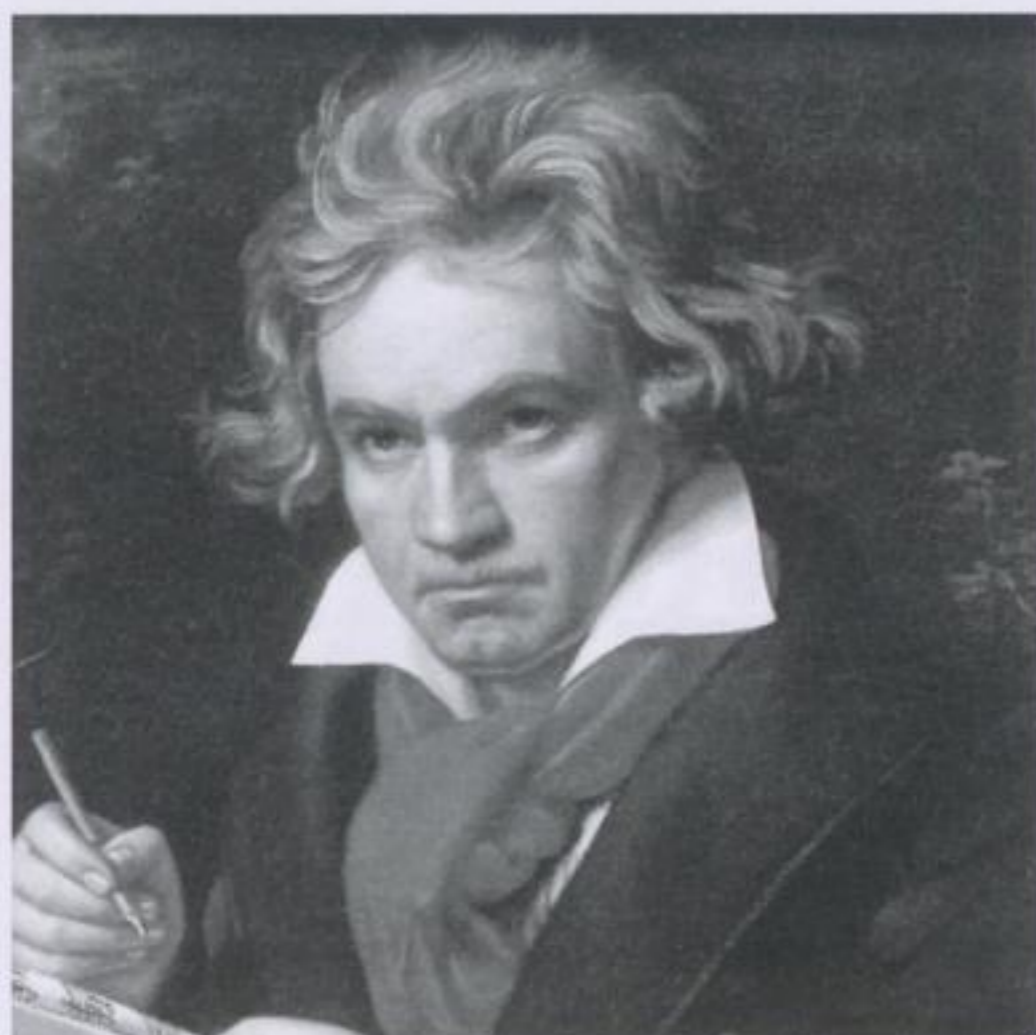
Despite the impression that Bruch's Violin Concerto was composed in the white-heat of inspiration, the work had a difficult gestation. The composer revised it thoroughly after its first performance in 1866, taking advice from the greatest violinist of the 19th century, Josef Joachim. After some six revisions (according to Bruch himself), the version we know today finally received its premiere in early 1868. Like Mendelssohn's concerto, which provided a fine model for Bruch, the soloist enters without a lengthy orchestral preamble. But, unlike the Mendelssohn, the movement is unusually titled 'Vorspiel' (*Prelude*) and it feels more like a meditative introduction than the concerto's main statement.

After the pensive opening theme, we are transported to a radiant episode in the relative major key of B-flat. An orchestral *tutti* precedes a mini-cadenza, where the soloist enters into dialogue with the woodwind. This leads directly to the central *Adagio* movement of the concerto in a warm E-flat major, surely the work's slow beating heart. It is built around three inspired themes which combine at the movement's grand climax, before the music ebbs to a peaceful close. However, it is not quite a full close, because the *Finale* follows directly, requiring a brief bridge passage back to the concerto's home key of G. There ensues a lively Hungarian dance-type tune in the major key. This alternates with a glorious second theme of Elgarian nobility. But there is no Elgarian expansiveness to be found here, and the music dances swiftly with increasing brilliance towards an exultant ending.

There have been advocates for his later concertos but, in truth, Bruch never recaptured the spontaneous

rapture of this romantic warhorse. Sadly, he sold the rights for the work cheaply early on, and its unending popularity (together with his failure to live up to the inspiration of the G minor Concerto) was a source of bitter regret during a long life. Like his close contemporary Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), Bruch remained oblivious to the radical developments in music across Europe at the turn of the 19th century, and he died, a relatively obscure figure, in Berlin in 1920.

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

## Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67

1. Allegro con brio
  2. Andante con moto
  3. Allegro - attacca -
  4. Allegro
- 

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is probably the most famous symphony of them all. Without doubt it is the most recorded and performed, with two recorded performances even dating from before the First World War. Over a century of recordings chart this stalwart work's onward march through our collective consciousness. And those opening four notes - 'da-da-da-dum' - are so instantly recognisable that they are known by nations and cultures across the globe. Yet how often do any of us listen attentively to a complete performance? And, if we do, are we not thrilled by the Fifth's dramatic transformation from

darkness to light, from fateful defiance to exuberant joy? It is work which still has yet plenty to give.

Concision is the key to the opening *Allegro con brio*. At less than seven minutes, it is the shortest opening movement to be found in Beethoven's nine symphonies, even with its exposition repeat. The significance of those four opening notes has been much discussed. His pupil Czerny reported that Beethoven told him they were inspired by the persistent call of the yellowhammer, which he heard on his daily walks around Vienna. Later his factotum, Anton Schindler, quoted Beethoven - remarking in relation to those four notes, 'thus Fate knocks at the door'. Although Schindler has been shown to be an unreliable witness on many occasions, his description fits with our impression of the symphony as a whole. Indeed, the work is sometimes subtitled 'Fate', although otherwise known solely by its number.

The key of C minor seems to have had a special significance for Beethoven, associated with strong emotions and angry defiance. Contemporaneous with his work on the Fifth, Beethoven also composed in C minor the tragic *Coriolan Overture* and also the inventive 32 variations on a theme for solo piano. In addition, two of the works premiered at the mammoth concert that launched the Fifth Symphony on 22 December 1808 also shared its journey from C minor to C major: the *Agnus Dei* from his Mass in C and the Choral Fantasy.

We are immediately struck by the remarkable intensity which Beethoven achieves from the start, although he uses the same size orchestra as his forebears, Haydn and Mozart. In fact, the orchestration of the Fifth is relatively restrained, the extra instruments (piccolo, contrabassoon and three trombones) making their first appearance only at the start of the *Finale*. It is Beethoven's dense symphonic argument that generates the fire, and the tension of the first movement is interrupted just once, by a

brief cadenza for solo oboe after the start of the recapitulation. Thereafter, the relentless motto rhythm returns, hurtling to the movement's angry conclusion.

The second movement provides contrast and respite, although some may be inclined to agree with Helen in E. M. Forster's *Howard's End* about its disconnection from the rest of the symphony:

*'For the Andante had begun - very beautiful but bearing a family likeness to all the other beautiful Andantes that Beethoven had written, and, to Helen's mind, rather disconnecting the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement from the heroes and goblins of the third.'*

But this movement remains quintessential Beethoven, simply showing the other side of his nature, just as capable of lyricism and grace as storming the heavens. In loosely arranged variation-form, the theme constantly looks upwards, with a three-note rising figure that the critic Ernest Newman highlighted as one of Beethoven's distinctive fingerprints. It is as if the composer is summoning energy for combat and a victory that will be realised in the work's *Finale*.

The third movement, a *scherzo* in all but name, opens mysteriously before *fortissimo* horns take us unmistakably back to the driving rhythm and relentless drama of the opening movement. One cannot help but smile at the furious scurrying of cellos and double basses as they dig into the central Trio section. Rarely have the basses had any such starring role in previous symphonies. A question remains about the overall form of the third movement as Beethoven clearly had doubts whether to repeat the opening two sections before the last appearance of the main *scherzo* theme. Yet the main innovation here lies in the dramatic link between this movement and the next. The *scherzo* theme returns in ghost-like fashion, *sempre pianissimo* with plucked strings and

bassoons outlining the thematic material. This peters out until a *pp* timpani beats out the rhythm beneath motivic fragments. The first violins' slowly rising arpeggios eventually lead to a short *crescendo*, paving the way for the start of the dramatic *Finale*. The music bursts through the shadowy texture like a blaze of sunlight, supported by trombones which join the symphony orchestra for the first time.

This revelation remains one of the most spine-tingling moments in music and echoes the journey to freedom undertaken in Beethoven's only opera *Fidelio*. The ideals of the French Revolution continued to be central to Beethoven's musical vision, despite his shock at Napoleon's coronation as Emperor in 1804. The *Finale's* main theme proclaims a victory celebration. However, there is a further dramatic twist as the *scherzo* material makes an unexpected return just as the *Finale's* development section reaches its climax. This regression proves temporary and leads to a triumphant symphonic coda, with the piccolo blazing through the orchestral texture, as the tempo accelerates to ensure a riotous ending.

Despite much speculation over why this symphony so dominates the musical landscape, no one has reached a convincing conclusion. That unforgettable fateful motto, imitated by so many subsequent composers and which also became the signal 'V for Victory' during the Second World War, is seared into our minds from an early age. This has no doubt rendered it a cliché. But, if one strips away the cultural moss gathered over generations, a visceral drama remains which, in the words of E.M. Forster, imparts to us feelings of 'superhuman joy'.

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**BBC Philharmonic**

**Ben Gernon** conductor | **Lucas van Woerkum** film director

**Saturday 19 January 7.30pm**

# Symphonic Cinema

**Stravinsky** The Firebird | **Ravel** Daphnis and Chloe – Suites 1 & 2

Film awaiting classification

The BBC Philharmonic in association with The Bridgewater Hall presents a very special event marrying sound with vision, bringing classic works by two of the 20th century's greatest composers to vivid musical and cinematic life. Ben Gernon conducts the orchestra in Igor Stravinsky's breathtaking ballet and two evocative suites by Maurice Ravel – with all three works accompanied by specially created dramatic films, edited live by director and 'image soloist' Lucas van Woerkum to ensure perfect harmony between the sounds of the orchestra and the pictures on the big screen.



The  
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Symphonic Cinema: Daphnis and Chloe



# About the Performers

## Dresden Philharmonic

The Dresden Philharmonic can look back on a 150-year-tradition as the orchestra of Saxony's capital Dresden. Ever since 1870, when Dresden was provided with its first large concert hall, its symphony concerts have been an integral element of the city's cultural life. The Dresden Philharmonic has remained a concert orchestra to this day, with regular excursions into concert performance and oratorio. Its home is the state-of-the-art concert hall inaugurated in April 2017 in the Kulturpalast building at the heart of the historic district. The principal conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since 2011 is Michael Sanderling. Besides Kurt Masur, principal conductor in the years 1967-72, his predecessors have also included Paul van Kempen, Carl Schuricht, Heinz Bongartz, Herbert Kegel, Marek Janowski and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, amongst others.

The musical and stylistic breadth of the Dresden Philharmonic is great. On the one side, the orchestra has managed to preserve its very own 'Dresden sound' in the romantic repertoire. And on the other, it has developed a tonal and stylistic flexibility for the music of the Baroque and First Viennese School as much as for modern works. Important composers have also taken to its conductor's desk from the earliest days, including Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Dvořák via Strauss through to Penderecki and Holliger.

World premieres continue to play an important part in the programme to this day. Guest performances around the world attest to the high esteem enjoyed by the Dresden Philharmonic in the world of classical music. And the Philharmonic's discography, accumulated since 1937, is also impressive.

A new CD cycle directed by Michael Sanderling and released by the Sony Classical label creates a dialogue between the symphonies of Shostakovich and Beethoven.

## Michael Sanderling

principal conductor

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Michael Sanderling, one of the most distinguished conductors of our time, has been the principal conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic since 2011.

In April 2017 the Dresden Philharmonic moved into the newly renovated concert hall at the Kulturpalast, with the inaugural performance conducted by Michael Sanderling.

He is also guest conductor of renowned orchestras such as the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, the Munich Philharmonic, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow, the Czech Philharmonic, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the German Radio Symphony Orchestras of WDR and SWR.

With the Dresden Philharmonic, Michael Sanderling regularly undertakes concert tours in Asia, South America, the USA, Spain, the UK, Austria, Switzerland and Germany.

With Dresden Philharmonic, Michael Sanderling is currently recording for SONY Classical all of the symphonies by Beethoven and Shostakovich, with the first four CDs of the series already released.

Born in Berlin, Michael Sanderling became solo cellist of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under Kurt Masur in 1987, and, from 1994 to 2006, he held the same position in the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. As soloist, he gave guest performances with ensembles including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the

Orchestre de Paris. As a cellist however, he stopped performing a long time ago.

Michael Sanderling first graced the conductor's stand with the Kammerorchester Berlin in 2000. Having been familiar with the art of conducting from a young age, as son of the legendary Kurt Sanderling, Michael Sanderling took on more and more conducting roles, and was named the principal conductor and artistic director of the Kammerakademie Potsdam in 2006.

As an opera conductor, he enjoyed success with Philip Glass' *The Fall of the House of Usher* in Potsdam, and with a new production of Sergei Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at the Cologne Opera. As cellist and conductor, he recorded important works by Dvořák, Schumann, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky and many others on CD.

One of Michael Sanderling's passions is working with young musicians. He teaches at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Frankfurt/Main and regularly works with the Bundesjugendorchester (National Youth Orchestra of Germany), the Young Philharmonic Orchestra Jerusalem Weimar, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie and the Schleswig-Holstein-Festivalorchester. From 2003 to 2013, he was the principal conductor for the Deutsche Streicherphilharmonie.

Michael Sanderling's musical horizons range from Bach and Handel, to Beethoven and Shostakovich, to now many world premieres.

## Arabella Steinbacher violin

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Arabella Steinbacher is celebrated as one of today's leading violinists worldwide, known for her extraordinary varied repertoire. She appears with all major orchestras such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra and performs with conductors such as the late Lorin Maazel, Christoph von Dohnányi, Riccardo Chailly, Herbert Blomstedt, Christoph Eschenbach, Charles Dutoit, Marek Janowski, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Thomas Hengelbrock.

Her debuts at the Salzburger Festspiele 2013, at the BBC Proms 2009 in London at the Royal Albert Hall and at the New York Carnegie Hall in 2011 have been praised by international press.

Recent engagements include her return to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC, the Orchestre National de France and the Spanish National Orchestra. In 2017/18, her tours lead her through Germany with Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, through the UK with Dresden Philharmonic under Michael Sanderling and through Asia with WDR Symphony Orchestra and Jukka-Pekka Saraste.

Her latest CD release is an album with Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski featuring Hindemith and Britten violin concertos. Among many international and national music prizes and nominations, she was awarded the ECHO Klassik twice. Arabella Steinbacher has been recording exclusively for Pentatone Classics since 2009.

As CARE ambassador Arabella Steinbacher continually supports people in need. In December

2011 she toured through Japan commemorating the tsunami catastrophe of the same year. The DVD *Arabella Steinbacher - Music of Hope* with her recordings of this tour was later released by the label Nightberry.

Arabella Steinbacher has played the violin since the age of three and studied with Ana Chumachenco at the Munich Academy of Music since the age of nine. A source of musical inspiration and guidance of hers is Israeli violinist Ivry Gitlis.

Arabella Steinbacher currently plays the 1716 'Booth' Stradivari, generously loaned by the Nippon Music Foundation.

# Dresden Philharmonic

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