

The Dresden Staatskapelle

Christian Thielemann Principal Conductor from 2012

Sir Colin Davis Conductor Laureate

On 22nd September 2008 the Staatskapelle Dresden celebrated its 460th jubilee. Founded by Prince Elector Moritz von Sachsen in 1548, it is one of the oldest orchestras in the world and thus steeped in tradition.

Distinguished conductors and internationally acclaimed instrumentalists have helped shape the development of this onetime court orchestra. Former music directors include Heinrich Schütz, Johann Adolf Hasse, Carl Maria von Weber and Richard Wagner, for whom the ensemble was his “miraculous harp”.

The list of prominent chief conductors of the last 100 years includes Ernst von Schuch, Fritz Reiner, Fritz Busch, Karl Böhm, Joseph Keilberth, Rudolf Kempe, Otmar Suitner, Kurt Sanderling, Herbert Blomstedt, Giuseppe Sinopoli and Bernard Haitink.

Fabio Luisi was music director of both Saxon State Opera and the Staatskapelle Dresden from 2007 to 2010. In 2012, Christian Thielemann will assume the position of principal conductor to the Staatskapelle Dresden. Sir Colin Davis has been the orchestra’s conductor laureate since 1990.

Richard Strauss and the Staatskapelle were closely linked for over 60 years. Nine of the composer’s operas were premiered in Dresden (including “Salome”, “Elektra” and “Der Rosenkavalier”) while Strauss’s “Alpine Symphony” was dedicated to the Staatskapelle.

Many other famous composers have written works for the Staatskapelle. In 2007, the orchestra reaffirmed this tradition by introducing the annual position of “Capell-Compositeur”. The first three composers to hold this title have been Isabel Mundry, Bernhard Lang and Rebecca Saunders.

Today the Staatskapelle performs around 260 operas and ballets each season in the Semper Opera House, in addition to 50 symphonic and chamber concerts. The orchestra also gives concerts in Dresden’s landmark church, the Frauenkirche, whilst a busy touring schedule regularly brings the ensemble to the world’s leading venues for classical music.

At a ceremony in Brussels in 2007, the Staatskapelle became the first – and so far only – orchestra to be awarded the “European Prize for the Preservation of the World’s Musical Heritage”. In December 2008, the British classical music magazine “Gramophone” once again voted the Dresden ensemble one of the world’s top ten orchestras.

Volkswagen’s Transparent Factory has been a Partner of the Staatskapelle Dresden since 2008.