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## STUTTGART CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The orchestra, founded by Karl Münchinger in 1945, quickly established a reputation for its J. S. Bach interpretations, an attempt to liberate this music from the influence of the Romantic Age. Following a triumphant Paris debut in 1949 as the first German orchestra to perform there post-war, the success of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra over the next fifty years is reflected in the frequent invitations to perform all over the world and to participate in the celebrated Salzburg-, Edinburgh-, Prague Spring-, and Colmar festivals among many others. The comprehensive discography of the ensemble includes benchmark recordings of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos and orchestral suites, the St. Matthew Passion (which was awarded the Grand Prix de Disque), and a complete recording of Mozart's later symphonies.

After Karl Münchinger's retirement, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra worked with guest conductors such as Trevor Pinnock, Frans Brüggen and Vaclav Neumann and with soloists such as Frank Peter Zimmermann, Janos Starker, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Christian Zacharias, and Jan Garbarek. The orchestra has also played regularly for Helmuth Rilling, the artistic director of the International Bach Academy Stuttgart and of the Gächinger Kantorei.

Critically acclaimed series of 22 early and middle period Haydn Symphonies performed in 8 concerts with conductor Ferdinand Leitner in 1988, and 9 concerts of early Mozart orchestral and concerted works directed by Dennis Russell Davies in 1991 at the European Music Festival Stuttgart, were landmarks in the orchestra's artistic regeneration. First performances of works, some of them specially commissioned, by composers ranging from Henri Dutilleux to Philip Glass, and recent recorded revivals of rococo opera by Niccolò Jommelli under Frieder Bernius are witness to the orchestra's versatility and readiness to venture down new paths.

Dennis Russell Davies, appointed in 1995 to the chief conductorship of this, the oldest of European chamber orchestras in succession to the Austrian Martin Sieghart, has been associated with the orchestra since 1989. This cooperation is destined to continue until at least 2009 with a projected "Haydn Decade", a cycle of all 107 Haydn Symphonies, to be performed and recorded in Stuttgart, courtesy of generous sponsorship from Daimler Benz, beginning in November 1998.

During the nineties, the ensemble has made frequent extended tours to the USA, Canada and Japan, with other guest appearances in Australia, South Korea and Greece, one of the most felicitous developments recently being the increased number of performances the orchestra has given internationally under the directorship of its own concertmaster Benjamin Hudson.

Especially with the recording label ECM, orchestra and chief conductor, have in these last years made several intercontinentally lauded CD recordings featuring major works by Giya Kancheli, Schnittke, Vasks and Shostakovich, as well as solo collaborations with violist Kim Kashkashian and pianist Keith Jarrett.