

Once upon a time: The programme for the 26–27 concert season

From Beethoven to the 21st century: Music Director Fabien Gabel's signature style combines diverse repertoire with French noblesse

From **Ludwig van Beethoven** to the world of legends, fairytales and myths, fables and ballads: the inspiring power of the imagination is at the heart of **Fabien Gabel's** second concert season as **Music Director** of the **Tonkünstler Orchestra**. In June 2025 the Frenchman took over from his predecessor **Yutaka Sado**, who was promptly appointed the Tonkünstler's first Honorary Conductor. In the 26–27 season, **Fabien Gabel** once again focuses on music written on the frontier between **late Romanticism and Modernism** alongside the **standard Classical-Romantic repertoire**, building **bridges from Vienna to Paris** and reaching out into many other lands. **The 200th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's death** falls on 26 March 2027, and the composer's orchestral works will play a crucial role in the next season's programme, alongside the great symphonic scores of the **fin de siècle** and key works by composers such as Franz Schreker and Erich Wolfgang Korngold – especially those whose narrative power is based on fairytales and stories of all kinds, such as **Alexander Zemlinsky's** orchestral fantasy «Die Seejungfrau» (The Mermaid). Another focus is on works **by French composers**. «Once upon a time» there was a programme for the 26–27 season that brought musical traditions together across styles, ages and origins. Gustav Mahler's «Das klagende Lied» («Song of Lamentation») meets **Claude Debussy's** concert suite «Pelléas et Mélisande», **Paul Dukas's** «Sorcerer's Apprentice» meets **Maurice Ravel's** «Shéhérazade» for soprano and orchestra, **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's** ballet music «Swan Lake» meets **Erich Wolfgang Korngold's** film music for «The Sea Hawk» and **Bedřich Smetana's** «Šárka» from «Má Vlast» meets the rhapsody «Taras Bulba» by **Leoš Janáček**.

In the second year of his work with the Tonkünstler Orchestra, Music Director Fabien Gabel will conduct no fewer than **31 concerts** in **Vienna and Lower Austria**, almost a quarter of all **133 Tonkünstler performances** in the 26–27 season. The symphonic subscription programme at the **Musikverein Wien** once again includes twelve **symphonic subscription programmes** featuring grand orchestral works, mostly for large orchestra, along with three boundary-pushing concert evenings in the symphonic world music series **Plugged-In** and three afternoons of the presenter-introduced concert format **Explained. Experienced!** and four **New Year's Concerts**. Renowned **guest soloists** present virtuoso concertos from three centuries. As befits this memorial year, these include two of Beethoven's piano concertos alongside bestsellers such as **Robert Schumann's** Cello Concerto and **Felix Mendelssohn's** Violin Concerto in E minor, as well as rarities like **Béla Bartók's** posthumously published First Violin Concerto and **Alexander Mossolov's** Harp Concerto, and contemporary works, for example **Fazıl Say's** double concerto «Anka kuşu».

Three concertos are given their Austrian premieres by the Tonkünstler Orchestra: **Magnus Lindberg's** Viola Concerto and **Thomas Larcher's** new Cello Concerto «returning into darkness», which was co-commissioned by the Tonkünstler, as well as the Saxophone Quartet Concerto by **Bernd Richard Deutsch**. In the latter two performances, the orchestra is continuing its long-standing, successful collaboration with two leading Austrian composers.

Tonkünstler Press Office

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TONKÜNSTLER ORCHESTER

Niederösterreich

In addition to the symphonic programmes, the Tonkünstler Orchestra again presents a broad stylistic palette on three evenings of the Plugged-In world music series. The orchestra will once more be **touring** Austria and Germany with the **Herbert Pixner Projekt** in October 2026. It will also offer **festival concerts** to celebrate Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and Easter Saturday. There will be no fewer than **four New Year's Concerts** around 4 January 2027 in the **Musikverein Wien**. The orchestra is booked for two ambitious **stage productions** in the **Festspielhaus St. Pölten** and participation in the **Grafenegg Festival** in summer 2026, as well as the **Domplatz Open-Air** event in the Lower Austrian state capital. The Tonkünstler Orchestra will also perform a number of concerts at its Lower Austrian residencies in **Baden** and **Wiener Neustadt**.

As part of «**Tonspiele**», its **music education programme**, the Tonkünstler Orchestra offers events for children, young people, kindergartens, schools and families, as well as for people with special needs. The educational aspect in the orchestra's portfolio is also emphasised by the three-part subscription for the presented concert format **Explained. Experienced!** with the Ö1 radio broadcaster **Albert Hosp.**

Since 2016 the orchestra's own **audio label** has released almost **30 CDs**. A recent addition to the recorded cycle of completed **Gustav Mahler symphonies** was Yutaka Sado's version of the composer's Eighth Symphony. Since the 25–26 season, selected recordings under the direction of **Fabien Gabel** have been released via the major **streaming portals**: first the ballet suite «Schlagobers» by **Richard Strauss** and the «Tales of Strauss» by **Erich Wolfgang Korngold**, soon to be followed by **Joseph Marx's** «Symphonische Nachtmusik».

The orchestra released a **world-first new development** in the autumn of 2025: **Euphonya**. This **mobile app** enables an immersive musical experience that puts users in the heart of the orchestra. Euphonya is free for iOS and Android devices and creates three-dimensional sound spaces through which users can move freely between groups of instruments. It is also used in **schools**: the **Klang.Raum.Orchester** workshop gives children a playful, virtual approach to music and the orchestral instruments. The Tonkünstler Orchestra is also enhancing its **digital expertise** as part of its online presence, which has been further developed since 2025. On the website and in the online magazine **OrchestERleben**, it presents background information and interesting facts about everyday orchestral life, details of the performances, concert reports and artist portraits.

The Tonkünstler Orchestra is the only Austrian symphony orchestra to hold five residencies, with its venues in the **Musikverein Wien** and in **Lower Austria**. After returning to **the town theatres** of **Wiener Neustadt** and **Baden**, the orchestra has been successfully expanding its presence in southern Lower Austria over the past two years. Around **half of the orchestra's members are women**. The **average age** is 43.

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Tickets and information

For further information and a complete season programme: tonkuenstler.at

Subscription brochure 26–27 for the Musikverein Wien: issuu.com/tonkuenstler

Subscriptions for the 26–27 season in Vienna and Grafenegg can be bought in the Tonkünstler box office at Herrengasse 10 in Vienna. Subscriptions for the Tonkünstler cycles in the 26–27 season at the Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Stadttheater Wiener Neustadt and Stadttheater Baden are available in the venues' respective box offices. General ticket sales for events in Vienna and Grafenegg start on 26 August 2026. Tickets are also available at all **NÖKU Tickets partner businesses**.

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