



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

WOMEN IN MUSIC – CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

“Classical music is undergoing a period of self-examination in which many of the assumptions that have been unquestioned for centuries are now open for re-evaluation. Musicians and orchestras everywhere are questioning what we play, where we play, who plays and even why we play music. As a major publicly-funded orchestra that reaches a wide audience, we have a responsibility to set an example that leads the way in effecting real change and improvement, but we also must always adhere to the highest artistic standards. We would like our music-making to be available to all, both in terms of the diversity and cultural richness of the people that make up the orchestra, and also in who we reach as our audience. It is a long journey towards full realization of our ideals, but we are committed to bringing non-traditional audiences into our home, the marvelous Elbphilharmonie, but also to taking our music out into the wider world, on tour, and in new venues in Hamburg. Unusual concert formats have proven very successful in reaching new audiences—we have performed in clubs, in cafes, and plan outdoor concerts in Hamburg’s parks. The music we play is of course rooted in the undisputed orchestral masterpieces of the last centuries, but we are on a constant quest to rediscover neglected voices, and to encourage and develop new ones, from any and all cultural backgrounds. Our bi-annual Visions Festival, celebrating the music of today, has been a powerful tool for building a new canon for classical music’s future, and it has been an important way for the Elbphilharmonie Orchestra to connect with significant up-and-coming composers of all backgrounds.

The challenge for us and for all orchestras will always be achieving the perfect balance between old and new, and between the established and the unknown. The long and beautiful traditions that we uphold are worth preserving, but never by ignoring the biases that have supported a culturally limited and patriarchal structure. As an orchestra that can exploit the media capacity of the NDR broadcasting network, we can reach audiences in a direct and widely diffuse way. This is a privilege, but, as stated earlier, it also carries a responsibility.

The beauty of what we do is as important as ever to preserve in our divisive society. More and more we see politicians and leaders turning to violence as the answer to conflict. An orchestra is the most shining example of successful communication and diplomacy that one can find, and we speak the only universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic differences. I believe in the power of music to bring people together, and to remind us all of our commonality. This shared belief is what drives us all at the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra to commit to our music-making with all our hearts.”

Alan Gilbert, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Chief Conductor

