

Biography

Thomas Hengelbrock is the founder and director of Balthasar Neumann Choir and Ensemble and Chef associé of the Orchestre de Paris. He is widely regarded as one of the outstanding conductors of our time and has left a lasting mark on the world of music with the intelligence of his interpretations. His repertory extends from the 17th century to contemporary works and includes every musical genre.

In his time as artistic director of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen from 1995 to 1998, director of the Feldkirch Festival from 2000 to 2006 and musical director of the Vienna Volksoper from 2000 to 2003, Thomas Hengelbrock was already implementing programmes that went beyond existing boundaries and questioned established interpretative norms. His Balthasar Neumann Ensembles have proved being an international sensation, not least in 2013, when he conducted a series of concert performances of Wagner's *Parsifal* and recreated the sound world of the composer's own day. As principal conductor of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra from 2011 to 2018 he has, in the words of the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, "inspired Hamburg" and "coaxed more and more new miracles from the orchestra". Together with actors of the calibre of Johanna Wokalek and Klaus Maria Brandauer, he has repeatedly devised musical, theatrical and literary programmes that have been enthusiastically acclaimed by their audiences.

Apart from concerts with the Orchestre de Paris in his position as chef associé, guest performances with the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich and the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo have been scheduled for the **2018/19 season**. Moreover, Thomas Hengelbrock will conduct the Vienna Philharmonic at the Salzburg Festival in this summer's production of Cherubini's *Médée*. In September he has opened the season in Amsterdam conducting the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra with whom he works on a regular basis. With his Balthasar Neumann Ensembles Thomas Hengelbrock will tour throughout Germany as well as Athens, Madrid, Barcelona, Brussels, Luxembourg and Paris.

Recent artistic highlights include the opening concert of Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie in January 2017, guest performances at the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris; a tour of Asia with concerts in Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, Osaka and Tokyo; and the opening of the Prague Spring festival. The internationally celebrated work with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra has also been documented in CD recordings and television productions. CD recordings so far include works of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Dvořák, Schubert and Mahler, as well as – the first recording from the Elbphilharmonie – an album of Brahms' 3rd and 4th symphonies.

Thomas Hengelbrock's **artistic development** was influenced in no small way by the period that he spent as musical assistant to Antal Doráti, Witold Lutosławski and Mauricio Kagel, all three of whom brought him into contact with contemporary music from an early date in his career. In addition to his comprehensive commitment to the music of the 19th and 20th centuries, he also takes a keen interest in historically informed performance practice, in which regard important stimuli came from his work with Nikolaus Harnoncourt's Concentus Musicus Wien. Hengelbrock has played a significant role in ensuring that the use of period instruments is now an established part of concert life in Germany. It was in this context that he founded the Balthasar Neumann Choir in 1991 and the Balthasar Neumann Ensemble in 1995. Both ensembles are now among the most successful of their kind.

As a **guest conductor** Thomas Hengelbrock enjoys an outstanding reputation both nationally and internationally: among the famous orchestras that he has conducted in this capacity are the Vienna and Munich Philharmonics, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and many more. Among the

venues where he appears on a regular basis are the Opéra de Paris, the Baden-Baden Festspielhaus, the Dortmund Konzerthaus and the Teatro Real in Madrid. He collaborates closely with eminent singers such as Plácido Domingo, Cecilia Bartoli, Anna Netrebko and Christian Gerhaher. He made his Bayreuth Festival debut in 2011, conducting Wagner's *Tannhäuser*.

In 2016 Thomas Hengelbrock received the Herbert von Karajan Music Award in recognition of his commitment to music communication.

Thomas Hengelbrock is married to actress Johanna Wokalek. The couple has a son and lives in Paris and Hamburg.

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