



PRODUCED BY

**ORF**

EUROPEAN TV PARTNER

**EBU**

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

PRESS CONFERENCE

# NEW YEAR'S CONCERT 2025

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2024, at 1 pm

HOTEL IMPERIAL

KÄRNTNER RING 16, 1010 VIENNA

S P E A K E R S

Daniel Froschauer, Chairman of the Vienna Philharmonic

Maestro Riccardo Muti, Conductor

Roland Weißmann, Director General ORF



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO



## 2025 New Year's Concert. Programme Notes.

### Revolution, family histories, fake news and a female debut

With its 2025 New Year's Concert, presented since 2009 by Rolex, the Vienna Philharmonic is marking the start of a year that sees the bicentenary of the birth of Johann Strauß the Younger, while at the same time it seeks to shed new light on the compositional background of the Strauß family in general. The orchestra has invited Riccardo Muti to oversee proceedings. The most experienced of all living New Year's Concert conductors, he is returning to us for the seventh time in his career.

The programme begins with a work by Johann Strauß the Father that harks back to the start of the family's musical tradition. His *Freiheits-Marsch* (*Freedom March*) was written in 1848, a year in which revolutions swept across Europe. After Naples and Paris, Vienna, too, became a focus of political and social tension, when the ordinary man in the street made demands of the powers that be. Aimed at obtaining greater freedom, the subsequent reforms included an end to censorship, the abolition of manorialism, the promulgation of the first Austrian constitution and the first elections to Parliament, leading finally to the abdication of the emperor. But as the revolution pursued its course, it remained unclear in what kind of national framework – the Habsburg monarchy or a German national state – these freedoms were to be implemented. Whatever the answer, they did not include self-determination for either Hungary or for Italy. And after writing his *Freedom March*, Johann Strauß the Father had no qualms about composing the *Radetzky March* in response to the brutal suppression of attempts to unify the Italian states. Thus ended the First Italian War of Independence.

Throughout the post-revolutionary period contemporaries continued to be exercised by often violent debates about the question of Austria's political affiliations and its cultural identity. The writer August Silberstein, a former revolutionary who served a term of imprisonment, answered this question in 1862/63 with two volumes of short stories titled *Dorfschwalben aus Österreich* (*Village Swallows from Austria*). These were used by Josef Strauß – the middle of the three brothers – as the inspiration behind one of his most beautiful waltzes. In October 1864 the Vienna *Fremden-Blatt* announced the imminent publication of the score and at the same time introduced its readers to the wider context of Austria's need for self-assurance: on the one hand there were the peace negotiations in Vienna following the Second Schleswig War between Prussia and Austria on the one side and Denmark on the other, a dispute followed by a further escalation of the "German Question"; and on the other hand there was the conflict between the Austrian and the Hungarian halves of the Habsburg Empire. The paper also reported on plans for a memorial to the victims of the 1848 revolution in the Schmelzer Cemetery. In the midst of all that was taking place Josef Strauß's *Dorfschwalben Waltz*, with its engaging writing for blithely carefree clarinets, conjures up an image of the Austrian countryside in the form of a rural idyll with its rustic inhabitants particularly vividly characterized.

In October 1864 the same issue of the *Fremden-Blatt* also reported on the daily difficulties caused by the fact that the Habsburg capital had been turned into a permanent building site: "It is enough to take a short walk through the inner city. There is demolition work in the Kärntnerstraße and repairs to the pavement in the Graben, sewers are being laid at the Lugeck, the Hoher Markt is cordoned off, work on digging a sewer has been going on at the former Armoury for over a year, building work and enormous puddles are currently blocking the way in front of the Stubentor and the Karolinentor, while excavations are going on by the Schottentor etc. etc." "Demolition" was the watchword throughout the 1860s, a decade that witnessed the biggest urban redevelopment programme in the



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



history of Vienna. The removal of the old city fortifications created vast spaces along the newly laid Ringstraße, also allowing the military easier access to the inner city in the event of further revolutionary unrest. Many of the demolition workers came from Slav parts of the monarchy – they were known popularly as the “*Demolierer*” – and it was to them that Johann Strauß dedicated a polka française in 1862, a piece in which the hammers used to demolish the existing buildings are mostly wielded so quietly that they are unlikely to cause any disruption to local residents, while the major wrecking operations are limited to the Trio.

Among the newcomers from Venice whom the *Fremden-Blatt* listed as having just arrived in Vienna, as its title – “Fremden-Blatt” means “Foreigners’ Paper” – implies, there were a number of Italians and Germans: Venice, after all, was a part of the Habsburg Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia. By 1883, conversely, visitors from Vienna who wanted to travel to Venice, had to undertake a foreign trip. This was the year in which the youngest of the Strauß brothers, Eduard, conducted the world premiere of his brother Johann’s *Lagunen-Walzer* (*Lagoon Waltz*). With the founding of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 and its war against Italy and Prussia, the Habsburg Monarchy had lost its Italian possessions in 1866, the only exceptions being Trieste and the Trentino. Audiences familiar with Johann Strauß’s operetta *Eine Nacht in Venedig* (*A Night in Venice*) on which the composer drew for his waltz may be tempted to sing along with this waltz but they need to pay closer attention to its words. In the definitive version of the operetta, the servant Caramello speaks of faithless women, of the tears of love and of gondolas and even quotes Mozart and Verdi as he sings the waltz tune. Only there is no mention here of lagoons. Yet when the work was first performed in Berlin, the waltz song began with the words “On the lagoon at night”, followed by the lines “All cats are grey at night, I trow, / and all you hear is a soft ‘Meeow!’” At this the Berlin audience felt called upon to make animal noises, so a change to the words seemed advisable with the result that the word “lagoon” was retained only in the title of the waltz.

Eduard Strauß’s fast polka *Luftig und duftig* (*Airy and Fragrant*) likewise forges a link between Vienna and Berlin. By the 1880s these two capitals – and, by implication, the Habsburg Monarchy and Prussia/Germany – had become partners in a strategic alliance following their military confrontation of 1866. As music director of Vienna’s Court Balls Eduard Strauß conducted the first performance of the present fast polka at the Musikverein in Vienna in 1882 and left immediately afterwards for an engagement in Berlin.

By contrast, Johann Strauß’s *Der Zigeunerbaron* (*The Gypsy Baron*), which received its first performances at the Theater an der Wien in 1885, points us in a different direction: in that of eastern Central Europe. The work began life as a comic opera based on a short story by the Hungarian writer Mór Jókai von Ásva before finally morphing into an operetta set in the multi-ethnic border region around Temesvár (now Timișoara) and in the imperial capital of Vienna. Both worlds are instantly recognizable in the potpourri overture: on the one hand there are minor-key contrasts, syncopated rhythms and the sound of a cymbalon, or dulcimer, and on the other hand there is the waltz “Nach dem schönen Wien / Zieht mich Herz und Sinn” (My heart and thoughts are drawn to fair Vienna), with its radiant major key-signature and tendency to revel in string sonorities. Although there is little attempt at historical exactitude, the action is set at around the time of the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740–48. It requires an unnamed enemy – possibly France or Spain – to produce a degree of concord between Austria and Hungary, a state of harmony that was extremely fragile at the time of the work’s first performances despite the political settlement that had been reached between the two halves of the Empire in 1867 and that had been triggered in part by Austria’s defeat in its war with Prussia.

---



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



As a title, the word *Accelerationen* is far more fitting as a summation of the spirit of the age than the notion of nostalgia that has often been associated with it in retrospect. This waltz was written by Johann Strauß in 1860 for the Ball of Industry and Technology in the Sofienbadsaal and, as such, it was geared to those sections of industry that were helping to accelerate the pace of change. The piece's basic idea is presented in the transition from the introduction to the first waltz theme, a theme that arises purely and simply from a sense of movement. The Technicians' Ball still takes place today, although it is now held in the Musikverein – and always on the Saturday after the previous Thursday's Philharmonic Ball, for which the Golden Hall is so memorably transformed each year.

There were several families of musicians who were active during the Strauß era. The Hellmesbergers are especially closely associated with the history of the Vienna Philharmonic since no fewer than four of them were members of the orchestra. Joseph Hellmesberger Junior began as a member of the first violin section before going on to embrace a career as a conductor. With *Fidele Brüder (Jolly Brethren)* he was not, however, recalling his own brother Ferdinand, the Philharmonic's violoncellist. Instead, his march is taken from his operetta *Das Veilchenmädchel (The Flower-Girl Selling Violets)*, which was first seen at the Carl-Theater in Vienna in 1904. In it three hungry artists book into a hotel in a town in southern Germany and promptly fall in love with three young women. They acquire a fortune that allows the work to end on a note of happiness with three weddings. According to contemporary press reports, "*Hellmesberger has at his disposal some excellent musical ideas that he is able to clothe in an agreeable orchestral garb.*" Particular praise was reserved for his marches.

For the most part the female musicians of Strauß's day are still waiting to be rediscovered. Indeed, the *Ferdinandus Waltz* that was first heard at a concert in the Sofienbadsaal in 1848 and that was written by the twelve-year-old Constanze Geiger is the first work by a woman composer ever to be performed at a New Year's Concert. Geiger began her musical career at an even earlier age than her male colleagues. The conductor at the work's first performance in 1848 – shortly before that year's revolution – was none other than Johann Strauß the Father. Other members of the Strauß family were also in contact with the composer, pianist and actress, who, like Schubert and Bruckner, studied under Simon Sechter. In 1861 she married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and the following year was ennobled as Baroness von Ruttenstein, after which she rarely performed in public. She died in Dieppe in 1890 and was buried in the Montmartre Cemetery in Paris.

Johann Strauß's fast polka *Entweder – oder! (Either – Or!)* is based on motifs from his operetta *Der lustige Krieg (The Merry War)*, which was first staged at the Theater an der Wien in 1881. Contemporaries suspected that the titles of the numbers that make up the score contained allusions to its period of composition, when the composer's second wife, Lili, began a relationship with Franz Steiner, the director of the Theater an der Wien. The couple was divorced the following year after Lili decided that she preferred the director to the composer. Strauß dedicated the polka to the Association of Journalists and Writers, Concordia, and it was conducted by Eduard Strauß at its first airing in the Sofiensaal in February 1882. It may be worth noting in passing that in order for him to be able to be married for a third time in 1886 – this time to Adele Deutsch – Johann chose to become a citizen of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

---



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO



Written in 1865, the waltz *Transactionen* is likewise bound up with a crisis in its composer's private life. Josef Strauß fell ill during the ball season but before doing so he had written his waltz *Actionen* for the Students of Jurisprudence at the University of Vienna. In August he then conducted the first performance of *Transactionen* in the Imperial and Royal Volksgarten as part of the “Celebrations with Fireworks Held as a Benefit Performance for Josef Strauß” and left straight afterwards for a holiday that would allow him to recuperate. The word “transactions” was rarely found in German at that time and tended to be reserved for political and financial negotiations so it is unlikely that the waltz's title was ever intended to be taken literally.

Family links are also present in Johann Strauß's *Annen-Polka*. Anna was the name of the mother of all three Strauß brothers, while the name day of all women called Anna fell on 26 July and was marked in Vienna with large-scale celebrations. Indeed, the name was so widespread that the attendant celebrations in the Prater attracted crowds from far and wide, turning them each summer into a popular large-scale event. By way of a preliminary celebration on 24 July 1852 Johann Strauß invited guests to *The Wild Man*, a restaurant on the Prater, where he presented his *Annen-Polka* for the first time to an enthusiastic public.

Johann Strauß's *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka (Chit-Chat Polka)* of 1858 was his way of taking the gutter press to task. He had spent the summer months conducting a series of concerts in Pavlovsk just outside St Petersburg, while the Viennese press was full of stories not just about his Russian triumphs but also about his alleged affairs. On his return, Strauß surprised his public with his musical response, which was performed for the first time in November 1858 at a hostelry known as the *Great Siskin*. It is an early example of a musical satire on fake news.

Originally scored for chorus and orchestra, the waltz *Wein, Weib und Gesang (Wine, Women and Song)* has likewise been one of Johann Strauß's most-performed works ever since it was heard for the first time in February 1869, when the Vienna Male-Voice Choir Society held one of its regular evenings when its members would let their hair down – the tradition is known locally as a *Narrenabend*, literally a “fools' evening”. The composer attended the first performance of his waltz disguised as a pilgrim, ensuring much mirth when loud applause broke out at the end and he responded by “blessing” the audience. A concert version was heard for the first time a month later at an event organized jointly by Johann, Josef and Eduard Strauß in the Redoutensaal in Pest. Within only a matter of days this version had also been premiered in Vienna in the Floral Halls of the Horticultural Society. The waltz was also performed to mark a special occasion in Bayreuth on 22 May 1875: Wagner's sixty-second birthday. Wagner was a great admirer of Strauß and the birthday celebrations included a number of Strauß waltzes. Wagner insisted on conducting *Wein, Weib und Gesang* himself. Conversely, it was the Strauß Orchestra that performed the first excerpts from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in Vienna in May 1861.

## 2025 New Year's Concert. List of Works.

**Johann Strauß I**, *Freiheits-Marsch (Freedom March)*, op. 226

**Josef Strauß**, *Dorfschwalben aus Österreich (Village Swallows of Austria)*. Waltz, op. 164

**Johann Strauß II**, *Demolierer-Polka (Demolition Men's Polka)*. Polka française, op. 269

**Johann Strauß II**, *Lagunen-Walzer (Lagoon Waltz)*, op. 411

**Eduard Strauß**, *Luftig und duftig (Airy and Fragrant)*. Fast Polka, op. 206

---

**Johann Strauß II**, Overture to the operetta *Der Zigeunerbaron (The Gypsy Baron)*

**Johann Strauß II**, *Accelerationen (Accelerations)*. Waltz, op. 234

**Joseph Hellmesberger II**, *Fidele Brüder (Jolly Brothers)*. March from *Das Veilchenmädel (The Violet Girl)*\*

**Constanze Geiger**, *Ferdinandus Waltz*. (Arrangement: Wolfgang Dörner)\*

**Johann Strauß II**, *Entweder – oder! (Either – Or!)*. Fast Polka, op. 403

**Josef Strauß**, *Transactionen*. Waltz, op. 184

**Johann Strauß II**, *Annen-Polka*, op. 117

**Johann Strauß II**, *Tritsch-Tratsch (Chit-Chat)*. Fast Polka, op. 214

**Johann Strauß II**, *Wein, Weib und Gesang (Wine, Women and Song)*. Waltz, op. 333

---

\*First performance at a New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO



## Riccardo Muti.

Riccardo Muti was born in Naples and studied the piano with Vincenzo Vitale at the city's Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella, graduating with distinction, before going on to study composition and conducting with Bruno Bettinelli and Antonino Votto at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan.

Riccardo Muti first came to the attention of critics and public alike in 1967, when he was unanimously awarded first prize at the Guido Cantelli Conducting Competition in Milan. The following year he was appointed principal conductor of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, a position he held until 1980. In 1971 he was invited by Herbert von Karajan to conduct at the Salzburg Festival, the first of many such occasions. From 1972 to 1982 he was Otto Klemperer's successor as principal conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra. In 1980 he took over from Eugene Ormandy as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, remaining in charge until 1992.

From 1986 to 2005 Riccardo Muti was music director of La Scala, Milan. During his tenure – the longest in the house's history – he oversaw several major projects, including a Mozart-Da Ponte cycle and Wagner's Ring. Alongside the classics of the repertory, including numerous operas by Verdi, he also brought rarely performed and neglected works to light, including Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, for which he won the prestigious Premio Abbiati. In December 2004 he triumphantly reopened the restored opera house with Salieri's *L'Europa riconosciuta*.

Over the course of his exceptional career, Riccardo Muti has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras, from the Berlin Philharmonic and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra to the New York Philharmonic and the Orchestre National de France.

He has particularly close ties to the Vienna Philharmonic and has appeared with the orchestra at the Salzburg Festival on a regular basis since 1971. When he conducted the orchestra's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert in 1992, he was presented with its Golden Ring, a special sign of esteem and affection, awarded only to a few select conductors. Special highlights of the 2024 season were the anniversary concerts celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony under his baton as well as the first common concerts at the Berliner Waldbühne and at the opening of the Ravenna Festival. In 2025 he will conduct the prestigious and extremely famous New Year's Concert in Vienna for the seventh time after 1993, 1997, 2000, 2004, 2018 and 2021.

In 2004 Riccardo Muti founded the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra, which is made up of young musicians selected by an international jury from more than 600 instrumentalists from all over Italy.

His social and civic conscience as an artist is reflected in the concerts he has conducted as part of his 'The Paths of Friendship' project organized by the Ravenna Festival. These concerts are given in places symbolizing our troubled past and contemporary history. Among the ensembles that he has conducted on these occasions are the Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, the Orchestra and Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Musicians of Europe United and the Cherubini Youth Orchestra.

He has received innumerable awards. He is a Cavaliere di Gran Croce of the Italian Republic, a recipient of the German Order of Merit, a Commander of the French Legion of Honour and an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire. The Salzburg Mozarteum has awarded him its Silver Medal and in Vienna he is an honorary member

---



PRODUCED BY

**ORF**

EUROPEAN TV PARTNER

**EBU**

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, the Vienna Hofmusikkapelle and the Vienna State Opera. He has also been awarded Israel's Wolf Prize for the Arts and in July 2018, on the occasion of the Friendship Concert, Muti received the Order of Merit from the former Ukrainian President Poroshenko. He has received more than 20 honorary degrees from the most important universities of the world.

In 2007 Riccardo Muti initiated a five-year project with the Cherubini Orchestra at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival devoted to the rediscovery and reassessment of the operatic and sacred music heritage of the Neapolitan school of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

From September 2010 to June 2023, Riccardo Muti was Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. At the end of his tenure, Muti was recognized with the title of Music Director Emeritus for Life by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2010 Musical America named him Musician of the Year. At the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual awards ceremony in February 2011, he was awarded two Grammy Awards, for Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance, for his live recording of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.

In 2011 Riccardo Muti not only received the coveted Birgit Nilsson Prize, the Prince of Asturias Prize for the Arts and an Opera News Award, but he was also appointed an honorary member of the Vienna Philharmonic and honorary director for life of Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. In 2012 he was awarded the highest papal honour when Pope Benedict XVI appointed him a Knight of the Grand Cross First Class of the Order of St Gregory the Great. In 2016 he was honoured by the Japanese government with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star. In October 2018 Riccardo Muti received the prestigious *Praemium Imperiale* for his life's work. In 2021 he received the Great Gold Medal of Honour for services to the Republic of Austria, presented to him during the Salzburg Festival. In October 2021 he was appointed a Foreign honorary member of the Russian Academy of Arts.

In July 2015 Muti set up a further scheme for training young musicians, when the first Riccardo Muti Opera Academy for young conductors, répétiteurs and singers attracted participants from all over the world to Ravenna and nowadays to Milan, Tokyo and China. The aim of the academy is to pass on to young musicians Riccardo Muti's experience and mastery and to familiarize audiences with the complex process that goes into performing opera.

Riccardo Muti's multi-award-winning discography ranges from classical symphonic works to operas and contemporary music. His current label is RMMUSIC.

[www.riccardomuti.com](http://www.riccardomuti.com)

---



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



## 2025 New Year's Concert. Donation Information.

The Vienna Philharmonic is donating €75,000 for renovation of a kindergarten damaged by flooding in St. Pölten.

Voluminous precipitation of over 400 liters per square meter within five days caused catastrophic flooding in St. Pölten in September 2024. Particularly hard hit was a kindergarten in the district of Harland. The basement was filled to the ceiling with water, and the flooding also severely damaged the ground floor. With the support of the Austrian Armed Forces, the building was completely cleared, and the kindergarten groups were temporarily relocated. Now, all of the building services, including the heating system, have to be replaced. The walls need to be dried and repainted, the floors renewed, the garden redone, and new furniture installed. The kindergarten is expected to be operational again by the middle of January 2025.

---

The Vienna Philharmonic is donating €25,000 for research on post-acute infection syndromes, such as ME/CFS (myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome).

This research is being carried out by the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF), which was initiated by Dr Michael Häupl over 20 years ago.

This illness affects to a heightened degree women between the ages of 14 and 22 and remains largely un-researched. Some of the affected young people can barely raise an arm to feed themselves. In Austria there exist up to 80,000 cases displaying varying degrees of severity. The majority of projects funded by the WWTF are carried out at the Medical University of Vienna, where a national reference center for ME/CFS has been established.

---



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO



## ORF.

The 85<sup>th</sup> New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: Live on ORF 2, ORF ON, and Ö1 on January 1<sup>st</sup>, also featuring a "matinee" with a making-of documentary, a ballet, and the concert film during the break.

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, the traditional live broadcast of the world's most famous classical music event will mark the first glamorous highlight of the ORF culture calendar. At 11.15 am, ORF 2, Ö1, and ORF ON will air the 85<sup>th</sup> Vienna Philharmonic New Year's Concert from the Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein, produced in amazing high-definition quality for audiences around the globe.

This year, too, the orchestra will start the year with a rich programme featuring works by the Strauß "dynasty" and its artistic universe, including two premières. This major musical event, which also marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Johann Strauß II, will be placed in the experienced hands of Italian star conductor Riccardo Muti for the seventh time.

For the ninth time, Michael Beyer will be in charge of screen direction for the television broadcast, once again setting the mood on January 1<sup>st</sup> with a making-of documentary that looks behind the scenes of this major concert and TV production. The ORF New Year's Concert Ballet and the ORF music film during the concert break are dedicated to Composer of the Year Johann Strauß II.

### Michael Beyer directs 67<sup>th</sup> ORF live broadcast with no fewer than 14 cameras

This is already the 67<sup>th</sup> time in its history that ORF television is broadcasting the New Year's Concert live from the magnificent Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein, a venue with exceptional acoustic qualities. The legendary cultural event is considered the most widely broadcast concert in the world, watched by millions of people every year in more than 100 countries. The ORF team will be guaranteeing a sensational cultural feast for the senses, with brilliant TV footage from a total of 14 HD cameras, filming under the watchful eye of Michael Beyer, an expert in classical music events. The German TV concert and opera director has already been entrusted with the live broadcast of the concert eight times – from 2014 to 2017, in 2020, and from 2022 to 2024. This year, he is also responsible for the production of the ORF New Year's Concert Ballet, already for the twelfth time. Two dance performances of the Vienna State Ballet were pre-produced in late summer, which will be broadcast during the concert and feature two very special compositions: a polka and a waltz by Johann Strauß II. The ORF film for the concert break on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025, dedicated to the Composer of the Year, was also produced in advance. This year, Teresa Vogl will be moderating the TV broadcast live for audiences in German-speaking countries for the third time.

### ORF New Year's Concert matinee and encores

As part of the New Year's matinee on Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup> at 10.35 am, ORF 2 will be setting the scene for the live TV broadcast of the most famous of all philharmonic concerts with a traditional making-of documentary titled "Auftakt zum Neujahrskonzert". For more than half a year, Barbara Pichler-Hausegger and her camera team accompanied the major preparations and stages leading up to the worldwide broadcast on New Year's Day. From

---



PRESENTED BY



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

the shooting of the ballet scenes to the rehearsals with Maestro Riccardo Muti, the film offers exciting insights into the hidden background of one of the largest television and concert productions.

The ORF film for the concert break, produced by Barbara Weissenbeck and titled "2025 – Eine Strauss-Odyssee" (around 11.50 am) will portray the Composer of the Year from an "extraterrestrial" perspective. Six selected ensembles of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra will be performing in the film, which will also feature Thomas Strauss, the great-grandnephew of the jubilarian.

Those who may miss the live broadcast of the New Year's Concert in the morning will have three more opportunities to experience the event on ORF: As a proven tradition, ORF III Culture and Information will be broadcasting the concert encore during prime time on January 1<sup>st</sup> (8.15 pm), preceded by the "Auftakt zum Neujahrskonzert". Another repetition of the classical music event will be shown on 3sat on Saturday January 4<sup>th</sup> (8.15 pm).

ORF 2 will be airing the top event again in the matinee on Epiphany, on Monday January 6<sup>th</sup> (10.00 am), preceded by the film for the concert break (9.05 am) and the making-of documentary, this time under the title "Behind the Scenes of the New Year's Concert" (9.30 am).

## Ballet premières with choreographer Cathy Marston and costume designer Patrick Kinmonth

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025, the TV broadcast of the New Year's Concert will be accompanied by another traditional opening of the new television year, the New Year's Concert Ballet, also pre-produced by the ORF. Internationally acclaimed, award-winning Briton Cathy Marston will be choreographing two very distinct ballet performances for the first time this year, and – also a première – Anglo-Irish stage designer and Renaissance man Patrick Kinmonth will be in charge of the costumes.

In the spirit of this anniversary year, the music pieces chosen for the ballet performances were written by Johann Strauß II. The fast Polka *Entweder – oder! (Either – Or!)* op. 403 and the *Accelerationen* Waltz op. 234 will be performed by both well-known soloists and very young members of the Vienna State Ballet appearing for the first time at the New Year's Concert Ballet. The waltz performers are Elena Bottaro, Davide Dato, Sonia Dvořák, Masayu Kimoto, Alice Firenze, Victor Cagnin, Rashaen Arts, and Kristián Pokorný, and the polka will be danced by Sveva Gargiulo, Sinthia Liz, Laura Cislighi, Natalya Butchko, Trevor Hayden, and Andrés Garcia Torres.

The ballet scenes were shot at very special locations never featured before in the New Year's Concert. The impressive 12.10 steam locomotive at the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology was the backdrop for the polka, while the waltz was performed in the famous Südbahnhotel Semmering, situated at the historic Südbahn railway route. Both locations represent an iconic element in the life of the entire Strauß family, since the musician dynasty's breathtaking pace of success would have been unthinkable without trains and a modern railway network, which – incidentally – also celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025.

## "2025 – Eine Strauss-Odyssee": The ORF film for the concert break

Barbara Weissenbeck produced this year's film for the concert break, which offers a unique, "extraterrestrial" perspective on the life of Composer of the Year Johann Strauß II starting from the outer depths of space, with a tongue-in-cheek reference to Stanley Kubrick's monumental science fiction epic "2001: A Space Odyssey".

---



PRESENTED BY



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

The film features a spaceship approaching earth on New Year's Day 2025. Its single crew member and captain is Thomas Strauss, the real-life great-grandnephew of Johann Strauß II. His inspiration during this solitary journey through time and space is to shed light on the life and, most of all, the music works of his ancestor. Numerous pictures, drawings, and countless sheets of music in a digital archive bear witness to the exciting private life and artistic success of Johann Strauß II. in Vienna, Paris, London, Boston, and Pavlovsk near St Petersburg. Throughout the journey, the composer's melodies fill the spaceship with life: six ensembles of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra were chosen to perform iconic Strauß pieces at historical locations.

### The New Year's Concert 2025 on Ö1: Live broadcast and "Intermezzo" in the break

Ö1 will also be broadcasting the "Vienna Philharmonic New Year's Concert" live from the Vienna Musikverein at 11.15 am as its traditional opening of the new year, moderated by Eva Teimel. The "Intermezzo" culture talk show, moderated by Sebastian Fleischer, with Ursula Wex, cellist of the Vienna Philharmonic, and Ursula Erhart-Schwertmann, cellist, arranger and composer, will air during the concert break (around 11.50 am). In the "Auftakt zum Neujahrskonzert" that precedes it (11.03 am), Irene Suchy will be talking to Constanze Geiger's biographer Raimund Lissy and the Chairman of the Vienna Philharmonic Daniel Froschauer about this year's choice of compositions, anniversaries, and dramaturgies.

### The world-famous classical music event online and in TELETEXT

As part of their ongoing cultural coverage at the turn of the year, numerous ORF.at network channels will be reporting on the concert programme, the orchestra, and its conductor. Music enthusiasts will be given plenty of opportunities to enjoy the concert online on January 1<sup>st</sup>: The video livestream will be available throughout Austria via web or app on news.ORF.at, ORF ON, and ORF Topos, and the audio livestream on ORF Sound and oe1.ORF.at. Moreover, the concert will be broadcast in Dolby Digital 5.1 quality via the Ö1 app as part of the ORF-HbbTV programme (requires a latest generation device with Internet connection). The ORF film for the concert break will also be available as video livestream throughout Austria. Both the concert and the film can be viewed later as video on demand on ORF ON as part of a dedicated video collection featuring other concert break films from previous years.

ORF TELETEXT will also be focusing on this top cultural event in its ongoing cultural coverage around the turn of the year.

## ROLEX PERPETUAL ARTS INITIATIVE

*For more than half a century, Rolex has partnered some of the world's most talented artists and leading cultural institutions to celebrate excellence and contribute to perpetuating artistic heritage, creating a link between the past, present and future.*

*Through the Rolex Perpetual Arts Initiative, a broad portfolio of arts that extends through architecture, cinema, dance, literature, music, theatre and visual arts, the company confirms its long-term commitment to global culture.*

*In all these endeavours, Rolex supports artistic excellence and the transmission of knowledge to future generations, who in turn pass on the world's cultural legacy.*

### NOTE TO THE MEDIA

## VIENNA PHILHARMONIC CELEBRATES RICH TRADITION WITH ITS 2025 NEW YEAR CONCERT, PRESENTED BY ROLEX

**Geneva, 28 December 2024** – The Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Concert, presented by Rolex since 2009, demonstrates the power of music to connect and unify people in all corners of the world. The concert, performed annually for more than 80 years, celebrates artistic heritage in its ritual of renewal.

Broadcast in over 90 countries and streamed on Rolex partner medici.tv, the event is accompanied by rich tradition. It always takes place on the morning of 1 January in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein in Vienna, with the programme concentrating on the joyous music of the Strauss dynasty and their contemporaries.

For the seventh time, Italian conductor Riccardo Muti will take up the baton in 2025. His first artistic collaboration with the orchestra was in 1971 and he has been an Honorary Member of the Vienna Philharmonic since 2011.

The Vienna Philharmonic is one of the most highly regarded orchestras in the world. Rolex became its Exclusive Partner in 2008, support that makes it possible for people in other countries to experience the finest music.



## VIENNA PHILHARMONIC CELEBRATES RICH TRADITION WITH ITS 2025 NEW YEAR CONCERT, PRESENTED BY ROLEX

### HIGHLIGHTS IN 2025

Following the New Year's Concert, the Vienna Philharmonic will take its distinctive sound to Italy, France and Korea, presented by Rolex. On 25 February, it will perform at Milan's Teatro alla Scala. On 11 May, the Opéra national de Paris, the Vienna Philharmonic and Rolex will partner to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Palais Garnier with a gala concert. Yannick Nézet-Séguin will conduct with other Rolex Testimonees – Juan Diego Flórez, Sir Bryn Terfel, Rolando Villazón, Yuja Wang and Sonya Yoncheva – joining the Philharmonic on stage for this unique performance. Proceeds will go to the ADO – Apprentissage de l'Orchestre – the youth lyric orchestra of the Opéra national de Paris. On 13 June, the Vienna Philharmonic will perform the Summer Night Concert on the grounds of Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace. Later, in November, the Philharmonic will perform in Seoul at the Seoul Arts Center.

### COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL CULTURE

By championing artistic excellence and achievement in a wide range of the arts – from music, architecture and cinema to dance, literature, theatre and visual arts – Rolex confirms its long-term engagement with global culture.

In the domain of music, Rolex is distinguished by its relationships. Over the years, the company has developed long-standing partnerships with Testimonees across the musical spectrum, from opera and classical, to jazz and world music, including singers, conductors and instrumentalists. The first music Testimonee, in 1976, was New Zealand soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. She was joined by many of the world's greatest musicians, artists and performers.

Among artists that Rolex partners through the Perpetual Arts Initiative are Italian mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli, French tenor Benjamin Bernheim, Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel, Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flórez, German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, Canadian conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Welsh bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel, Mexican tenor Rolando Villazón, Bulgarian soprano Sonya Yoncheva, pianist Yuja Wang from China, French pianist Hélène Grimaud, Canadian singer and Grammy Award-winner Michael Bubl , and British-American sitarist Anoushka Shankar.

Along with the Vienna Philharmonic, Rolex supports the Salzburg and Whitsun festivals as well as many of the world's foremost cultural institutions. They include Vienna's own Musikverein, Teatro alla Scala in Milan, London's Royal Ballet and Opera, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Opéra national de Paris, the Teatro Col n in Buenos Aires, the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing, the Opernhaus Z rich, the Op ra de Monte-Carlo and the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg.



## VIENNA PHILHARMONIC CELEBRATES RICH TRADITION WITH ITS 2025 NEW YEAR CONCERT, PRESENTED BY ROLEX

The company recognizes the importance of passing on knowledge from one generation to the next. As such, it has helped emerging musicians through associations with diverse eminent artists, such as Jessye Norman, Zakir Hussain, Gilberto Gil, Youssou N'Dour, Pinchas Zukerman, Brian Eno, Philip Glass and Dianne Reeves.

Rolex also promotes musical excellence worldwide by supporting high-quality online access to today's classical concerts, festivals, operas and performances through its partnership with medici.tv.

### UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Music is a universal language that transcends borders and cultures. Rolex celebrates the message of hope that the Vienna Philharmonic expresses through its artistry.

### ABOUT THE VIENNA PHILHARMONIC

The Vienna Philharmonic is widely acknowledged as one of the world's most revered orchestras, upholding the greatest traditions in classical music. Founded in 1842 and with more than 180 years of artistic contribution, it is known for its individuality and lustrous sound, as well as for its exacting standards, maintaining artistic integrity and communicating music's humanitarian message around the world. Today, this is carried out by way of two notable events which are broadcast in numerous countries around the world: the New Year's Concert and the open-air Summer Night Concert, where, every May or June, over 50,000 people gather in the Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn in Vienna, known as the capital city of music.

### ABOUT ROLEX

#### AN UNRIVALLED REPUTATION FOR QUALITY AND EXPERTISE

Rolex is an integrated and independent Swiss watch manufacture. Headquartered in Geneva, the brand is recognized the world over for its expertise and the quality of its products – symbols of excellence, elegance and prestige. The movements of its Oyster Perpetual and Perpetual watches are certified by COSC, then tested inhouse for their precision, performance and reliability. The Superlative Chronometer certification, symbolized by the green seal, confirms that each watch has successfully undergone tests conducted by Rolex in its own laboratories according to its own criteria. These are periodically validated by an independent external organization.



VIENNA PHILHARMONIC CELEBRATES  
RICH TRADITION WITH ITS 2025 NEW YEAR CONCERT,  
PRESENTED BY ROLEX

The word 'Perpetual' is inscribed on every Rolex Oyster watch. But more than just a word on a dial, it is a philosophy that embodies the company's vision and values. Hans Wilsdorf, the founder of the company, instilled a notion of perpetual excellence that would drive the company forward. This led Rolex to pioneer the development of the wristwatch and numerous major watchmaking innovations, such as the Oyster, the first waterproof wristwatch, launched in 1926, and the Perpetual rotor self-winding mechanism, invented in 1931. In the course of its history, Rolex has registered over 600 patents. At its four sites in Switzerland, the brand designs, develops and produces the majority of its watch components, from the casting of the gold alloys to the machining, crafting, assembly and finishing of the movement, case, dial and bracelet. Furthermore, the brand is actively involved in supporting the arts and culture, sport and exploration, as well as those who are devising solutions to preserve the planet.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ROLEX AND MUSIC, GO TO  
<https://www.rolex.com/perpetual-initiatives/perpetual-arts/music>

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Anne-Sophie de Guigné  
Rolex SA  
Press & Public Relations  
[anne-sophie.deguigne@rolex.com](mailto:anne-sophie.deguigne@rolex.com)  
T: +41 79 570 44 34

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

[rolex.com](https://www.rolex.com)  
[rolex.org](https://www.rolex.org)  
[newsroom.rolex.com](https://www.newsroom.rolex.com)  
[youtube.com/rolex](https://www.youtube.com/rolex)

#Rolex  
#PerpetualArts



PRODUCED BY



EUROPEAN TV PARTNER



## European Broadcasting Union.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is the world's leading alliance of public service media with 113 Members across 56 countries – along with 31 Associates in Asia, Australasia, Africa and the Americas.

Operating nearly 2,000 television, radio and online channels and services, our Members offer a wealth of content for an audience of more than one billion people in 153 languages.

Our vision is to make public service media the most creative, engaging and sustainable media for today and for the future by helping to deliver the stories and events that matter most to our audiences.

In that spirit – and together with ORF, our Austrian Member – we are delighted to present the Vienna Philharmonic New Year's Concert as a global tradition to welcome the new year.

This enduring partnership with the Vienna Philharmonic reflects our shared belief in the importance of public service media in delivering events that bring people together.

Thanks to the EBU's Eurovision and Euroradio networks, many of our Members and other international broadcasters will air this special start to 2025.

We invite you to be part of it and  
we wish everyone a happy and healthy new year!

<https://www.ebu.ch/>

---



**City of  
Vienna**

Parks and  
Gardens

## **New Year's Concert 2025: Floral Decorations by Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department**

The Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Concert will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> January under the baton of Maestro Riccardo Muti in the Vienna Musikverein. The concert is enhanced by the splendid decoration provided by the Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department. The Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department has enjoyed a successful partnership with the Vienna Philharmonic since 2015. The New Year's Concert is a highlight in the world of floristry and a unique opportunity to showcase the artistry of Vienna's city gardeners to a global audience.

*"Through this collaboration, a Viennese symbiosis is achieved – both florally and musically. Both institutions, the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department, are characterised by a long tradition which has shaped the image of Vienna, and is carried out into the world at the New Year's Concert",* explains Rainer Weisgram, director of the Parks and Gardens Department.

### **Main Colours of the Floral Decoration: Elegant colours and fresh accents**

The Golden Hall will shine in a sea of 30,000 flowers at the 85th New Year's Concert. Contemporary, soft colour combinations of various types of flowers will predominate, whether roses, anthuriums, carnations or amaryllis. *"Delicate shades of pink in various facets to vivid pink as well as flowers in cream will dominate the floral decorations. Subtle colour accents are set with light green and cream."* adds master florist, Edith Hopf. All plants and flowers have been cultivated sustainably and under fair working conditions.

### **Floral Master Craftsmanship at its peak**

Exceptional craftsmanship is necessary to effectively showcase the floral decorations on television. This year, the audience may look forward to a true sea of flowers in the Golden Hall, whose perfect presentation requires much experience and expertise. The florists' work will begin on 27<sup>th</sup> December to ensure everything is prepared in time for this worldwide cultural event. The Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department is supported by the florist apprentices of the non-profit organization Jugend am Werk, along with their teachers.

*"The Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department brings more than 160 years of horticultural experience,"* explains Rainer Weisgram. The organization annually plants approximately 1.5 million spring and summer flowers throughout Vienna.

### **New Year's Greetings from Vienna around the Globe**

The musicians of the Vienna Philharmonic along with the Vienna's Parks and Gardens Department will once again make this New Year's Concert a highlight for millions of television viewers around the world, delivering a special cultural New Year's greeting. The New Year's Concert will be broadcast to over 90 countries in 2025. Viewers can look forward to the broadcast of musical and floral highlights in the highest quality.



# NEW YEAR'S CONCERT 2025 VIENNA PHILHARMONIC RICCARDO MUTI



**THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS CLASSICAL MUSIC EVENT  
LIVE FROM VIENNA CELEBRATING THE 200<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY OF JOHANN STRAUß II**

The Vienna New Year's Concert is one of the most anticipated concerts in the world. On January 1st, 2025, Maestro Riccardo Muti will take the stage to conduct the New Year's Concert for the seventh time in the world-renowned Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein.

Muti has played an exceptional role in the history of the Vienna Philharmonic for over 50 years, making his return to conduct the New Year's Concert a truly special occasion. The live recording of the 2025 New Year's Concert will be available digitally from January 10, on CD from January 17, and on Vinyl, DVD and Blu-ray from January 24, and finally, as a visual album from February 7.

Additionally, the album will be released in the Dolby Atmos format, offering a 3D audio experience that can be easily enjoyed with headphones. Available on Apple Music, Amazon Music Unlimited, TIDAL and Deezer.



PRODUCED BY

**ORF**

EUROPEAN TV PARTNER

**EBU**

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

## Media Contacts:

### Vienna Philharmonic

Dr. Claudia Kapsamer

Phone +43 664 3461530, [presse@wienerphilharmoniker.at](mailto:presse@wienerphilharmoniker.at)

Dr. Annette Frank

Phone +43 664 4353844, [presse@wienerphilharmoniker.at](mailto:presse@wienerphilharmoniker.at)

Press Photos of the New Year's Concert 2025 can be downloaded at:

<https://www.wienerphilharmoniker.at/en/press/5ix4ion-8Fn5-R4cvkn8>

---

### ORF

Ruža Holzhacker

Phone +43 1 87878-14703, [ruza.holzhacker@orf.at](mailto:ruza.holzhacker@orf.at)

---