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COMPANY OF MUSIC

» Company of Music – a musical undertaking. What a utopian concept in our society to have a musical undertaking that can so aptly raise its voices like Company of Music does: musical epochs, different backgrounds, space and time dissolve into audible moments.

This is not utopian; the Company of Music is magical reality. Austria's only professional vocal ensemble with its own concert series in Vienna's Konzerthaus has long been exploring this dimension of reality. The spectrum of this vocal collective's repertoire ranges from 15th century compositions to Baroque milestones and classical modern works right up through the diverse genre of contemporary music, where everything is starting over again.

There are no borders, not even with other art forms like performance, literature and film. Quite simply, it's all about the adventure of the concert experience. Its uncompromising willingness to take risk and its urgent desire to create top-notch vocal music has earned Company of Music a treasured spot just under the audience's skin – in many concert halls and at renowned festivals worldwide.

(Norbert Trawäger, 2017)

The Company of Music was founded by **Johannes Hiemetsberger** in 2002. He and the professional singers in the ensemble have developed an enormously wide-ranging repertoire ranging from 15th century compositions (Ockeghem, Lassus) to Baroque milestones such as Johann Sebastian Bach's motets, cantatas and Mass in B minor, in which the ensemble sang the solo parts as well, and classical modern (György Ligeti's *Lux aeterna*, Friedrich Cerha's *Verzeichnis*, Pierre Boulez's *Cummings ist der Dichter*), to jazz and pop, such as the street choir in Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* (complete recording by CHANDOS).

One of the Company of Music's priorities, however, remains performing contemporary music, so world and ensemble premiers are a set part of its thematically and stylistically broad programme concepts. Composers like Elisabeth Naske, Johanna Doderer, Julia Lacherstorfer, Michael Radulescu, Bernd Richard Deutsch, Gerhard E. Winkler, Pier Damiano Peretti and Christian Muthspiel regularly compose works for the 'vocal orchestra', which has also recently premiered many Austrian premiers of works by Per Norgard, David Lang, Kaja Saariaho and others.

By exploring through collaboration with other artistic forms like readings, film and performance art, the ensemble seeks to initiate an active dialogue about the role of art here and now. The concert setting is adapted dramaturgically to accentuate the content, such as by breaking the space or by staging elements. For example, this season, the ensemble is performing music for the film *Homo Sapiens* by Nikolaus Geyrhalter in Vienna's Gartenbau cinema and is participating in the artistic project "*Ganymed Nature*" (directed by Jacqueline Kornmüller) in Vienna's Art History Museum. Beyond their musical home in Vienna's Konzerthaus, the Company of Music also regularly performs throughout Austria, in the Philharmonie Luxembourg, in Italy, France and in festivals such as *Milano Musica* and *Wien Modern*, and as part of *Musikalische Jugend Österreichs* (Jeunesse).