

MEDIENINFORMATION

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WDR Rundfunkchor has big plans: Nicolas Fink to be new chief conductor and Simon Halsey is coming for exceptional choral projects

Nicolas Fink will be the new chief conductor of the WDR Rundfunkchor (West German Radio Choir) with the start of the 2020-2021 season. He succeeds the current chief conductor **Stefan Parkman**, who directed the choir for six years. **Simon Halsey** has also been acquired for the WDR Rundfunkchor as creative director for choral music and exceptional projects. This is a newly created position.

Swiss conductor **Nicolas Fink**, born in 1978, has been an esteemed guest conductor of the WDR Rundfunkchor (e.g. for the TV film “Rachmaninov: “All-Night Vigil” and Prauliņš: “The Nightingale”) since 2011, exciting the singers as well as the audience. He also works on a regular basis with other ARD radio choirs and the Choeur de Radio France. From 2010 to 2015 he was choir assistant of the Rundfunkchor Berlin. Furthermore, he is artistic director of the Swiss Youth Choir and choirmaster of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival.

“As an innovative vocal and sound coach with unusual programme combinations and contemporary themes, Nicolas Fink is a fitting chief conductor for the profile of the WDR Rundfunkchor at this time and a guarantee for something new,” said **Valerie Weber**, Programme Director for NRW, Wissen und Kultur (North Rhine-Westphalia, Knowledge and Culture) at the WDR. Nicolas Fink is eagerly looking forward to his new duties, which he will initially take on for a period of three years. “I will position this wonderful professional choir more strongly for audiences interested in choral music and also act as cultural ambassador for great vocal artistry in NRW.”

Simon Halsey likewise will take on the newly created post of creative director for choral music with the WDR starting on 1 August 2020 for a three-year period initially. Each season he will direct a number of special projects. This new initiative of the WDR will make classical choral music in the North Rhine-Westphalia region accessible to a wider audience. “A generation is emerging that understands a great deal about computers and pop culture, but nothing about classical music. One needs to bring music to the people again – especially if in digital form,” said Simon Halsey. The chorus director, born in Great Britain in 1958, was chief conductor of the Rundfunkchor Berlin from 2001 to 2015. The first close collaboration between Simon Halsey and Nicolas Fink dates back to this time. Halsey will retain his other positions with the London Symphony, Palau de la Musica Barcelona, City of Birmingham Symphony, Rundfunkchor Berlin, Berlin Philharmonic and BBC Proms Youth Choir.



Valerie Weber is convinced that the audience in NRW will benefit from these new additions to choral music, “Fink and Halsey will anchor the WDR Rundfunkchor more strongly in NRW and in the digital world, making classical choral music come alive for everyone who enjoys it.”

Simon Halsey will introduce himself to the public at the sing-along concert “Sing with Simon” on Monday, 16 December 2019 in the WDR Funkhaus. Nicolas Fink begins his concert season with the WDR Rundfunkchor in September 2020.

Photos are available at [ARD-Foto.de](https://www.ard-foto.de)

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