



Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra



FRANZ LISZT
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



„I feel that the key to the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra’s and my own artistic development is the same: to create, as Hungarian musicians, music and art programs that give the audience a lasting experience and high cultural value anywhere in the world.”



István Várdai
Artistic Director



History of Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra

The Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra has been a permanent performer of the classical music scene's international elite for 60 years; thus, they are rightly known as one of the most prestigious representatives of chamber music. The orchestra has been led by Péter Tfirst since 2016, and year after year, they perform in the most significant concert halls with first-class soloists, who delight in working with the ensemble due to their high degree of precision, versatility, and adaptability.

The orchestra was founded in 1963 by some former Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music students. During this half a century – under the leadership of Frigyes Sándor and subsequently János Rolla – the orchestra has gained international recognition: they have performed in more than fifty countries, including the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Sydney Opera House, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris.



Ilona Németh-Izsák (viola)
Bence Horváth (double bass)

György Lukácsné (cello)
Attila Pintér (violin)

Successes of recent years

The recent years abounded with outstanding concerts: the ensemble performed at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, the Tonhalle in Düsseldorf, the Musikverein in Vienna, the Victoria Hall in Geneva, the Carnegie Hall in New York and the Heydar Aliyev in Baku. They also played at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival and the Gstaad Menuhin Festival. They visited the world-famous National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing and were invited to one of the most prestigious festivals in Asia: the China-Shanghai International Arts Festival.

They opened the Liszt Year 2011 and the Hungarian EU presidency at the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, where the concert was attended by Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, and his wife Sofia. Besides the highly acclaimed German and Italian tours, the orchestra gave a series of concerts in South America in 2013 and Japan in 2014.

To name a few of the great stars of the past, the orchestra collaborated with Sviatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin and Jean-Pierre Rampal, and in recent years, with such celebrities as Martha Argerich, Julia Fischer, Vadim Repin, Emmanuel Pahud, Vadim Gluzman, Denis Matsuev, Mischa Maisky, Maxim Vengerov, Ilya Gringolts, David Fray, Denis Bouriakov and Martin Fröst. Among the renowned Hungarian star soloists, we see the names of Júlia Pusker, Gábor Boldoczki, Ödön Rácz, Emőke Baráth, Kristóf Baráti and Gábor Takács-Nagy. In 2016, Deutsche Grammophon released their album as a joint venture with Ödön Rácz, which was unanimously commended by music critics.



Artistic leadership

Since 2016 the orchestra is led by concertmaster Péter Tfirst, the ensemble continued to perform both at home and around the world with the usual high level of artistic interpretation and the unique Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra sound. At the beginning of 2020, both in Hungary and abroad, the news spread on István Várdai, the world-famous cellist joining the orchestra

as art director to form a new artistic concept and to help in professional training.

The Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra is proud to be the national orchestra of Hungary, and to represent and promote Hungarian culture throughout the world.

István Várdai Artistic Director

István Várdai grew up in a family of musicians in Pécs. He studied at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, the Vienna Academy of Music as well as the German Kronberg Academy. He was honoured with several prestigious international prizes: in 2008, he won first prize at the Geneva International Music Competition, along with three special prizes - the Audience Prize, the “Pierre Fournier” Prize and the “Coup de Cœur Breguet” Prize. In Moscow 2007, he took third prize at the 13th International Tchaikovsky Competition, one of the top-ranking classical music competitions. In 2014, he won the ARD International Cello Competition in Munich, and in 2012, he received the Prix Montblanc, awarded to the most promising young musicians in the world.

István Várdai plays a Stradivari cello, one of the less than 65 surviving cellos manufactured by the famous violin maker. The legendary instrument is also known as the “Ex du Pré-Harrell” Stradivari, referring to its former owners, the late British cellist Jacqueline du Pré and the American artist Lynn Harrell. In 2020, he joined the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra as its Artistic Director. His art concept touches on the preservation of traditions and the pursuit of continuous renewal. The orchestra aims to expand its repertoire with re-arrangements of existing and contemporary masterpieces.



Contact:

Balázs HORNYÁK
Artist manager
+36 20 429 0989
balazs.hornyak@lfkz.hu

Rita SZABÓ
Orchestra manager
+36 20 251 3835
rita.szabo@lfkz.hu



www.lfkz.hu/en
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With you, music is joy.