



Jörg Widmann

Curriculum vitae (long version)

Jörg Widmann was born in Munich on 19 June 1973. He studied the clarinet at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich with Gerd Starke and later with Charles Neidich at the Juilliard School in New York (1994-1995). He additionally began to take composition lessons with Kay Westermann at the age of eleven and subsequently continued his studies with Wilfried Hiller and Hans Werner Henze (1994-1996) and later Heiner Goebbels and Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe (1997-1999). Widmann's great passion as a clarinetist is chamber music and he regularly performs with partners such as Daniel Barenboim, Tabea Zimmermann, Heinz Holliger, András Schiff, Kim Kashkashian, and Hélène Grimaud. He has also achieved great success as a soloist in orchestral concerts in Germany and abroad. Several works have been dedicated to Widmann by fellow composers: in 1999, he performed the premiere of "Music for Clarinet and Orchestra" by Wolfgang Rihm in the musica viva concert series; in 2006, he performed "Cantus" by Aribert Reimann with the WDR symphony orchestra, and in 2009, at the Lucerne Festival, the world premiere of *Rechant* by Heinz Holliger. From 2001 to 2015, Widmann was professor of clarinet at the Freiburg Staatliche Hochschule für Musik where he also took up the post of professor of composition in 2009. From 2017, he holds a chair at the Barenboim-Said-Academy in Berlin. Widmann was Principal Conductor of the Irish Chamber Orchestra from 2017 to 2021. In 2023, he became Associated Conductor of the Münchner Kammerorchester and Principal Guest Conductor of the NDR Radiophilharmonie.

It is the string quartets which form the core of Widmann's oeuvre: String Quartet No. I (1997), followed by Choralquartett (2003/2006) and Jagdquartett which was premiered by the Arditti Quartet in 2003. This series was completed in 2005 by String Quartet No. IV (first performance given by the Vogler Quartet) and Quartet No. V with soprano, *Versuch über die Fuge* [Attempt at a Fugue], premiered by Juliane Banse and the Artemis Quartet. The five string quartets are intended as a large cycle, with each individual work following a traditional form of setting. Widmann's sixth quartet *Studie über Beethoven* (2019), commissioned by Anne Sophie Mutter, initiated a second five-part quartet cycle which explores Ludwig van Beethoven's art of the quartet. The Artemis Quartet launched String Quartet No. 7 (Beethoven *Studie II*) in 2020, and *Beethovenstudien III* (String Quartet No. 8) and V (*Cavatina*) were premiered by the Juilliard String Quartet in 2022.

Widmann has composed a trilogy of works for large orchestra on the transformation of vocal forms for instrumental forces consisting of the compositions *Lied* (2003/2007), *Chor* (2004) and *Messe* (2005). A second series comprises the pieces *Labyrinth* (2005), *Zweites Labyrinth* (2006) and *Drittes Labyrinth* (2013/2014) as well as the trumpet concerto *Towards Paradise* (*Labyrinth IV*) premiered in 2022 by Håkan Hardenberger and the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under Andris Nelsons. Each of these pieces relates to the experience of spatial perception and the search for orientation associated with the labyrinth. In 2007, Christian Tetzlaff and the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie gave the premiere of Widmann's first Violin Concerto. The same year, Pierre Boulez and the Vienna Philharmonic gave the first performance of *Armonica* for orchestra: Widmann combines the heavenly tonal colours of a glass harmonica above the orchestra to produce a homogeneously breathing body of sounds and sound effects. This was followed by *Con brio*, an homage to Beethoven, performed for the first time by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Mariss Jansons. It has since been performed by more than 60 conductors and became one of Widmann's most popular orchestral works. In his flute concerto *Flûte en suite* Widmann playfully confronts the solo instrument with different orchestral groups. It consists of eight short movements and was premiered by Joshua Smith and the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Franz Welser-Möst in 2011. For pianist Yefim Bronfman, Widmann wrote the piano concerto *Trauermarsch*. It was first performed in December 2014 with the Berlin Philharmonic under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Premiered in November 2015 by the Orchestre de Paris and soloist Antoine Tamestit, Widmann's Viola Concerto uniquely explores the Sound possibilities of the Instrument as does the Violin Concerto No. 2 for Carolin Widmann, written and premiered in 2018.



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Curriculum vitae
(long version)

Three music-theatre projects prove Widmann to be an outstanding composer for the stage: the opera *Das Gesicht im Spiegel* was chosen by the German magazine *Opernwelt* as the most significant first performance of the season 2003/04. *Am Anfang* (2009) is the result of a unique kind of collaboration between a visual artist and a composer; Widmann created the work together with Anselm Kiefer and conducted the world premiere on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Opéra Bastille in Paris. The subsequent stage work *Babylon* (2011/12) is a commission by the Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, the new version für 2019 was commissioned by the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin. Widmann and philosopher Peter Sloterdijk in his first venture as librettist present a new interpretation of the Babylon myth in this musicaldramatic Gesamtkunstwerk. Widmann's large-scale oratorio *ARCHE* (2016) for the opening of Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie includes scenic elements as well as a view of the human existence as a whole. It was premeired by Kent Nagano and the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg in January 2017.

Jörg Widmann has received numerous prizes for his compositions: the Belmont Prize for Contemporary Music from the Forberg-Schneider Foundation (1998), the Schneider-Schott Music Prize, the Paul Hindemith Prize (both in 2002), the Encouragement Award from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, the Achievement Award from the Munich Opera Festival (both in 2003) as well as the Arnold Schönberg Prize (2004). In 2006, Widmann received the Composition Prize from the SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden und Freiburg as well as the Claudio Abbado Composition Prize from the Orchestra Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2009, he received the Elise L. Stoecker Prize of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, New York and in 2013, he was awarded the Music Award of the Heidelberger Frühling and the GEMA German Music Authors Award, in 2018, he was awarded the Robert Schumann Award of the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz and the Bayerischer Maximiliansorden für Wissenschaft und Kunst, followed by the Music Award of the City of Munich in 2021 and the Hamburg Bach Prize 2023. He is a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin and a full member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, the Free Academy of the Arts in Hamburg, the German Academy of Dramatic Arts, the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz and the Royal Swedish Acaedmy of Music. He was composer-in-residence of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Salzburg Festival, the Lucerne Festival, the Cologne Philharmonie, the Vienna Konzerthaus and the Berlin Philharmonic.



Jörg Widmann

Curriculum vitae (short version)

Jörg Widmann is considered one of the most versatile and intriguing artists of his generation. The 2024/25 season sees him appear in all facets of his work, as a clarinetist, conductor and composer, including his second season as Principal Guest Conductor of NDR Radiophilharmonie and Creative Partner of Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Artistic Partner of Riga Sinfonietta and Associated Conductor of Münchener Kammerorchester.

Following recent important conducting projects with orchestras such as Berliner Philharmoniker and Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, in the 2024/25 season Jörg Widmann appears with Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan or the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona. Other highlights include his residency with Stavanger Symphony Orchestra and the Spanish premiere of his work *Danse macabre* performed by the National Orchestra of Spain in Madrid under his baton. 2025 sees Widmann make his debuts at the helm of BBC National Orchestra of Wales and NHK Symphony Orchestra for the orchestra's Music Tomorrow series, the programme of which includes the Japanese premieres of *Danse macabre* and the trumpet concerto *Towards Paradise* with soloist Håkan Hardenberger. Re-invitations take him to Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa amongst others.

Jörg Widmann also continues his longstanding chamber music partnerships with renowned artists such as Antoine Tamestit, Sir András Schiff, Carolin Widmann, Sarah Aristidou, Nicolas Altstaedt, Denés Varjon and Hagen Quartet and performs chamber recitals at Musikverein Wien, Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin and Alte Oper Frankfurt.

Widmann gave the world premiere of Mark Andre's *Clarinet Concerto über* at the Donaueschinger Musiktage 2015. Other clarinet concertos dedicated to and written for him include Wolfgang Rihm's *Musik für Klarinette und Orchester* (1999) and Aribert Reimann's *Cantus* (2006).

His compositions are performed regularly by conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Daniel Harding, Kent Nagano, Franz Welser-Möst, Christian Thielemann, Iván Fischer, Andris Nelsons and Sir Simon Rattle and premiered by orchestras as Wiener and Berliner Philharmoniker, New York Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, Cleveland Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony Orchestra, and many others.

Jörg Widmann studied clarinet with Gerd Starke in Munich and Charles Neidich at the Juilliard School in New York and later became himself Professor of Clarinet and Composition, first at University of Music Freiburg and since 2017 as Chair Professor for Composition at the Barenboim-Said Academy Berlin. In June 2024 Jörg Widmann was named a member of The Royal Swedish Academy of Music in consideration of his merits to musical art. He is a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin and a full member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, Free Academy of the Arts in Hamburg (2007), German Academy of Dramatic Arts and Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz (2016) and received an Honorary Doctorate from University of Limerick, Ireland in February 2023.

He studied composition with Kay Westermann, Wilfried Hiller, Hans Werner Henze and Wolfgang Rihm. His works continue to receive many awards, most recently Bach-Preis der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg, as well as Musikpreis der Landeshauptstadt München.



Jörg Widmann

Curriculum vitae
(chronological)

1973	Born in Munich on 19th June
from 1984	Studies composition with Kay Westermann in Munich
from 1986	Studies clarinet at the Munich Hochschule für Musik
1994-1995	Studies clarinet with Charles Neidich at the New York Juilliard School of Music
1994-1996	Studies composition with Hans Werner Henze and Wilfried Hiller in Munich
1996	Cultural Encouragement Award from the City of Munich
1997	Bavarian State Award for Young Artists
1997-1999	Studies composition with Heiner Goebbels and Wolfgang Rihm in Karlsruhe
1998	Belmont Prize for Contemporary Music, Forberg-Schneider Foundation
2001	Louis Spohr Medal, Seesen
from 2001	Professor of clarinet at the Freiburg Hochschule für Musik
2002	Schneider-Schott Music Award, Mainz; Hindemith Prize, Schleswig-Holstein
2003	Encouragement Award, Ernst-von-Siemens Music Foundation; Honorary Award, Munich Opera Festival Das Gesicht im Spiegel selected as the most important world premiere of the 2003/04 season by <i>Opernwelt magazine</i>
2004	Arnold Schoenberg Prize, Vienna Schoenberg Centre and the Berlin German Symphony Orchestra
2005	Full member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, Munich
2006	Composition Award, SWR Symphony Orchestra of Baden-Baden and Freiburg for "Zweites Labyrinth"; Claudio Abbado Composition Award, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy
2007	Music Award, Christoph and Stephan Kaske Foundation
2008	Residency in Dubai, supported by the Simens Arts Program
2009	Elise L. Stoecker Prize of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, New York
2010	Awarded with the Marsilius-medal of the Ruprecht-Karls-University, Heidelberg
2013	Music Prize of the "Heidelberger Frühling"; GEMA German Music Authors Award (Category: Symphonic Composition) Premio una vita nella musica giovani (Category: Composition)
2014	Composer & Artist in Residence at Rheingau Musikfestival



Jörg Widmann

Curriculum vitae
(chronological)

2015	Featured Composer at Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Mainz
2016	Member of the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz
2017	Becomes principal conductor of the Irish Chamber Orchestra Professor of Composition at the Barenboim-Said-Academy Berlin
2018	Robert Schumann Award for Music and Poetry of the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz Bayerischer Maximiliansorden für Wissenschaft und Kunst
2019	Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall OPUS KLASSIK award as "Composer of the Year" for the oratorio ARCHE
2021	Music Award of the City of Munich Würth Prize of Jeunesses Musicales Germany
2023	Honorary doctorate of the University of Limerick Hamburg Bach Prize Composer in Residence at the Berlin Philharmonic 2023/2024 Associated Conductor of Münchener Kammerorchester Principal Guest Conductor at the NDR Radio Philharmonic for three years
2024	Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm