**The Baden-Baden Philharmonic**

Baden-Baden’s tradition of supporting a recognised ensemble of musicians dates back to 1460. A listing from the year 1580 allows us to appreciate today the rich collection of instruments and music scores held by the Margrave of Baden’s orchestra. The Italian composer and Kapellmeister Francesco Guami (previously a trombonist in Orlando di Lasso’s court orchestra in Munich) directed the ensemble at this time. Records from a century later also show that operas were being performed in the small palace theatre in the Neues Schloss.

The start of the 19th Century also brought with it new impulses for Baden-Baden’s concert scene. A summer orchestra, staffed mainly by visiting Bohemian musicians, offered a range of events for visitors to the town that included concerts in the halls of the Konversationshaus as well as opera performances in the town’s former theatre. Limited at first to the warmer months of the year, the musicians’ activities were extended to cover the entire year from 1854.

Today, the orchestra’s guest book reads like a Who's Who of music. Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Jacques Offenbach, Johann Strauss, Johannes Brahms, Hans von Bülow, Richard Strauss, Enrico Caruso, Pietro Mascagni, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Béla Bartók, Bruno Walter, Igor Stravinsky, Renata Tebaldi, Edita Gruberova, José Carreras, Placido Domingo (8 times), Diana Damrau and Piotr Beczala (5 times), Anna Netrebko and Thomas Hampson (4 times), Anne-Sophie Mutter, Krassimira Stoyanova, Juan Diego Flores, Vesselina Kasarova, Luca Pisaroni and many more have all shared a stage with the Philharmonic. Ballet performances with the *Hamburg Ballet* (John Neumeier), the *Zurich Ballet* (Heinz Spoerli) and the ballet ensembles of the *Vienna State Opera* and *Milan’s La Scala* have also featured in the annual programme.

Guest performances and foreign tours have brought the orchestra much international acclaim. They have performed in China, Dubai, Qatar and Bahrain, in the Ukraine, France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Renowned concert halls such as Zurich’s *Tonhalle*, the *KKL* in Lucerne, the *Victoria Hall* in Geneva and the *Alte Oper* in Frankfurt have also hosted the Philharmonic.

Radio and TV productions (for broadcasters including ARTE, ZDF and France 3), a one-hour documentary by SWR to mark their 150th anniversary and, last but not least, more than 35 CD recordings are also testament to the achievements of the orchestra.

From intimate chamber concerts to opera galas in the Festspielhaus, from classical symphony concerts to spirited open-air events in the wonderful public gardens of Baden-Baden – today, the Philharmonic provides its hometown with a wide-ranging concert offer that perfectly matches the diverse needs of the town and its festival heritage.

Worldwide renowned masterclasses for string instrumentalists are offered by the Philharmonic at the annually held *Carl Flesch Academy*. The close cooperation of the orchestra with music colleges and the *German Music Council* ensures that in-depth support is provided to the elite instrumentalists and the next generation of conductors from a variety of angles. The work of the *Philharmonic Youth Academy* sees selected young musicians from the region being integrated into the orchestra’s ranks for a short term which concludes with a special concert. The very youngest music enthusiasts are catered for by the orchestra’s *Jelly Baby Concerts*.

Pavel Baleff has held the post of principal conductor since 2007.