

## HELSINKI CHAMBER CHOIR & NILS SCHWECKENDIEK

The Helsinki Chamber Choir is a professional chamber choir founded in 1962 as the Finnish Radio Chamber Choir and assumed its current name in 2005.

In 2024, the choir was honoured with a Grammy for the album Kaija Saariaho *Reconnaissance* (BIS Records) in the category *Best Choral Performance*.

While its wide-ranging repertoire includes music from the Renaissance to the present day, the Helsinki Chamber Choir is particularly highly regarded for its work with new music. The choir regularly commissions new works and has given over 80 world premieres in the seasons since 2005, as well as more than 30 Finnish first performances.

The choir can demonstrate its versatility at various concerts in autumn 2024: In addition to concerts celebrating the anniversaries of the composers Bruckner-Schönberg-Martin in cooperation with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, the ensemble will perform with the Finnish Baroque Orchestra (Handel: Messiah), Sointi Jazz Orchestra, Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra of the Royal College of Music London, as well as an A Cappella programme with works by Kaija Saariaho and Helena Tulve.

The choir appears frequently at festivals in Finland and abroad and collaborates with symphony orchestras, period-instrument ensembles and contemporary music groups. Its concerts are regularly broadcast on national radio and television, and it has also appeared in productions for the Arte channel and the European Broadcasting Union, among others with Einojuhani Rautavaara's *Vigilia* in 2013.

The Helsinki Chamber Choir is a member of Tenso, the European network of professional chamber choirs. Recent touring has taken the choir to the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, Poland and around Scandinavia.

BIS Records has released various albums, including Arvo Pärt: *Passio*, Alex Freeman: *Under the Arching Heavens*, Einojuhani Rautavaara: *Vigilia*, Perttu Haapanen: Reports (Finnish Record of the Year 2019), *Spring will come* with rarities by Finnish composers, etc. Further recordings have been released by Ondine and Alba Records. The vocal ensemble has been honoured three times with the German Record Critics' Award and received three Emma and one ICMA nomination.

The chief conductors of the Finnish Radio Chamber Choir have been Harald Andersén, Kaj-Erik Gustafsson, Ilmo Riihimäki, Eric-Olof Söderström and Timo Nuoranne. The composer Kimmo Hakola became the first artistic director of the Helsinki Chamber Choir in 2005. Since 2007 Nils Schweckendiek has been Artistic Director of the Helsinki Chamber Choir.

## NILS SCHWECKENDIEK

Nils Schweckendiek has been artistic director of the Helsinki Chamber Choir since 2007. He studied music at Clare College in Cambridge as well as orchestral and choral conducting in Freiburg and Helsinki.

The German-Finnish conductor has produced a number of CDs for the BIS, Toccata Classics, Alba and ICSM labels, winning several awards.

His recent guest conducting engagements include the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Oulu Sinfonia, The Norwegian Soloists' Choir, RIAS Kammerchor, NDR Vokalensemble, Chamber Choir Ireland, Croatian Radio Choir and Coro da música in Porto.

In 2014, he was appointed Professor of Choral Conducting at the Sibelius Academy of the Helsinki University of the Arts.

He is Founder and Artistic Director of the International Einojuhani Rautavaara Composition Competition.

In 2020, the Society for Swedish Literature in Finland awarded him the Fredrik Pacius Prize for his services to Finnish music and in 2022 the Association of Finnish Choral Conductors named him Conductor of the Year.

Season 2024 / 25