BIOGRAPHY

Christoph Poppen

As a conductor, soloist, chamber musician and teacher, Christoph Poppen has made a name for himself in many roles on the international music scene. Since the 2023/24 season he has been Music Director of the Hong Kong Sinfonietta. His 2025/26 season with the orchestra features collaborations with distinguished artists such as Nicolas Altstaedt, Martin Helmchen, Denis Kozhukhin and Alexander Gadjiev.

As Principal Guest Conductor of the Hong Kong Sinfonietta from 2015 to 2023, Poppen presented Hong Kong audiences with a rich repertoire ranging from Austro-German masterpieces to contemporary works. This season he gives the world premieres of three works commissioned by the orchestra. Beyond Hong Kong he continues his highly successful collaborations with the Cologne Chamber Orchestra as Principal Conductor and with the Israel Chamber Orchestra as Principal Guest Conductor. Highlights of the 2025/26 season include engagements with the Korean National Symphony Orchestra in Seoul and at the Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival, as well as conducting the China National Symphony Orchestra in Beijing.

His discography continues to grow with the ongoing cycle of Mozart's complete masses with the Cologne Chamber Orchestra for Naxos. The most recent release (Vol. 4, February 2025) was highly praised by the international press.

From 1995 to 2006 Poppen was artistic director of the Munich Chamber Orchestra, quickly establishing the ensemble's new profile. His distinctive programmes, often contrasting classical and contemporary styles with numerous commissions, were exceptionally successful. In 2006 he was appointed Music Director of the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra, and from 2007 to 2011 he was chief conductor of the newly founded Deutsche Radio Philharmonie. He has appeared with orchestras such as the Vienna Symphony, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Bamberg Symphony, the Camerata Salzburg, the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest, the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Japan Philharmonic and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. As an opera conductor he has led acclaimed productions at the Stuttgart State Opera, Oper Frankfurt, Oper Köln, the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, the Aalto Theatre in Essen and the Ruhrtriennale, among others.

The Marvão International Music Festival, which Poppen founded in 2014, has become a highly successful, award-winning event with soloists such as Veronika Eberle, Jörg Widmann, Augustin Hadelich, Javier Perianes and Clara-Jumi Kang. In 2019 he also founded the Academy for Music, Art and Science in Marvão, and from 2020 to 2022 he was artistic director of the Classic Revolution Festival in Seoul, South Korea.

An award-winning violinist, Poppen co-founded the Cherubini Quartet in 1978. He was appointed professor of violin and chamber music at the Detmold University of Music and later at the Hanns Eisler School of Music in Berlin, where he was rector from 1996 to 2000. From 2001 to 2005 he was artistic director of the renowned ARD International Music Competition. From 2003 to 2023 he was professor of violin and chamber music at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich. Since the 2021/22 academic year he has been professor of violin at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid.