

## **ICMA 2025 THE WINNERS**

### **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Gidon Kremer

For six decades, Gidon Kremer has been one of the most influential personalities on the international classical music scene. The Latvian violinist's art, which has always been characterized by high energy levels, remarkable craftsmanship, a unique sound and original exegesis, is reflected not only in well over a hundred recordings, but also in guest performances worldwide. Kremer's status as a solitaire on the scene is rounded off by his commitment to contemporary music and his role as a music promoter, festival and ensemble founder.

### **ARTIST OF THE YEAR**

Leonardo García Alarcón

Although born near the River Plate, in Buenos Aires, Leonardo García Alarcón's artistic career has shown a special affinity with the music composed in southern Europe from the end of the Renaissance to the dawn of Classicism - to the point of having christened his extraordinary Cappella Mediterranea. With this ensemble he has demonstrated over the last decade a versatility and fertile imagination that, programme after programme, never ceases to surprise and captivate his audiences.

### **YOUNG ARTIST OF THE YEAR**

Benjamin Kruithof, cello

The Cellist Benjamin Kruithof, one of Luxembourg's most promising young talents, has captured the attention of audiences with his charismatic stage presence and energetic interpretations. After winning the prestigious Georges Enescu International Competition, releasing his debut album with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, and being accepted into the ECHO Rising Stars series, the jury wishes to honour these accomplishments and hopes that this award will help him further cement his international career.

### **DISCOVERY AWARD**

Can Saraç, piano

The young Turkish pianist Can Saraç, born in 2007, started his education at the age of five in the Piano Department of Istanbul University State Conservatory and for the last three years has been continuing his career at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich. As a scholarship student of the Liechtenstein International Music Academy, he regularly participated in the intensive training and concerts of the academy. He is one of those rare natural talents on the piano and he looks up to his compatriot Can Çakmur, whom we honour again this year at the ICMA Awards, as his role model. In addition to continuing his studies, Can Saraç still performs solo and chamber music concerts both in Turkey and abroad and supports underprivileged young children with piano lessons as part of Care-to-Share, a social responsibility project.

### **ICMA CLASSEEK AWARD**

Ettore Pagano, cello

The young Roman cellist Ettore Pagano is one of the most sought-after talents of his generation: a winner of prestigious competitions from an early age, Pagano combines an adamant technique with a singular ability to make the instrument sing, with a stylistic awareness and musical maturity that is absolutely out of the ordinary. Moreover, Pagano also studied with David Geringas, ICMA Lifetime Achievement Award winner in 2023: rewarding him today also gives us a sense of musical continuity.

### **COMPOSER AWARD**

Christoph Ehrenfellner

Christoph Ehrenfellner - who will turn 50 this year - is a natural born musician. Not only a composer, he is a conductor and violinist. But here we celebrate his musical works, which are full of attention-grabbing effects. The overwhelming success of his four operas stand out even in an outstanding catalogue. His music seeks out people and addresses their basic need for art. A classic in the modern era, he is a rebel against intolerance.

### **LABEL OF THE YEAR**

BR Klassik

Founded in 2009, BR Klassik has long since become one of the most influential labels of classical music in Germany and beyond. Not only does it present recordings with the conductors-in-chief of the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Münchner Rundfunkorchester and Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks, such as Mariss Jansons, Simon Rattle, Ivan Repušić and Howard Arman.

It also offers CDs with famous guests such as Herbert Blomstedt, Edita Gruberová, Martha Argerich and Julian Prégardien, thus eternising concerts that would otherwise be ephemeral something permanent.

### **SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Adam Fischer, conductor

Since his complete recording of all Haydn symphonies with the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra, Adam Fischer has been considered a renowned Haydn expert. Yet, in his new Naxos recording of the late symphonies with the Danish Chamber Orchestra he surpasses all expectations. With an exceptional degree of rhetoric and a refined sense of humour, Adam Fischer pushes Haydn's mischievousness to its peak now and then, and produces some aftershocks. This is exactly what one would ideally imagine a Haydn performance, indescribably well done, and absolutely essential!

### **SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Oliver Triendl, piano

Oliver Triendl is one of the most questioning pianists of our time. He constantly searches the archives for neglected compositions of great value and has thus enriched the catalogs of various labels with unmissable recordings. Over 150 recordings prove his commitment as an advocate for rarely performed classical and romantic repertoire as well as his support of contemporary composers.

### **SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Düsseldorfer Symphoniker

With this award, the ICMA Jury honours the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker for its continuous social and humanitarian commitment, its highly innovative concert series and its recent Schubert-Dvořák album, which is characterized by musical quality as well as an original programme.

### **EARLY MUSIC**

Il Concerto Caccini

Strozzi - Caccini - Philips - de Cavalieri - Anonymous

Scherzi Musicali, Nicolas Achten

Ricercar

RIC 463

Over the past fifteen years, Nicolas Achten and his ensemble Scherzi Musicali have established themselves as major Belgian interpreters of early and baroque music. With this recording, Il Concerto Caccini, they take us back to the birth of the solo madrigal around Giulio Caccini and his two daughters Francesca and Settimia. It's a musical and family discovery!

### **BAROQUE INSTRUMENTAL**

Johann Sebastian Bach: Partitas Nos. 1-6 BWV 825-830

Martin Helmchen

Alpha  
994

Bach's Six Partitas are much-played masterpieces of the keyboard repertoire, and have been interpreted by countless outstanding performers. The listener assumes that a musician will only take the courage to make this two-and-a-half hour recording if he or she not only has a complete command of the music, but also has something unique to say about it. And Martin Helmchen, famously at home on modern pianos and in 19th century German piano literature, fulfils this expectation and plays the historic instrument and Bach's music with impressive confidence and sensitivity.

### **BAROQUE VOCAL**

Invocazioni Mariane

Porpora - Vinci - Anfossi - Pergolesi - Vivaldi - Ragazzi  
Andreas Scholl, Accademia Bizantina, Alessandro Tampieri

Naïve  
V5474

Andreas Scholl lends his still extremely agile voice to the Blessed Virgin Mary and effortlessly manages to project an essential purity. With the appropriate modesty, he sings the cantatas from baroque Italy: with gripping drama and melancholy in Porpora, with great sympathy in Vivaldi's Stabat Mater. A central role is played by the virtuoso violin of Alessandro Tampieri, who leads the Accademia Bizantina as its concertmaster.

### **VOCAL MUSIC**

Urlicht

Mahler - Zemlinsky - Humperdinck - Korngold - Pfitzner - Braunfels - Berg

Samuel Hasselhorn, Julia Grüter  
The Poznań Nightingales Boys' Choir,  
Poznań Philharmonic Orchestra

Łukasz Borowicz  
Harmonia Mundi  
HMM902384

This is a remarkable CD, not only because of Samuel Hasselhorn's outstanding singing, grippingly dramatic and movingly sensitive throughout the programme, but also because of the conductor Łukasz Borowicz and the highly evocative "sound theatre" he gets from the Poznań Philharmonic Orchestra. The symbiosis of voice and orchestra is just perfect.

### **CHORAL MUSIC**

Bruckners Welt

Anton Bruckner: Mass No. 2, Sacred works  
Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Münchner Rundfunkorchester

Peter Dijkstra  
BR Klassik  
900940

Anton Bruckner was a great genius - as even his great adversary Johannes Brahms once admitted. This CD by the Bavarian Radio Choir, which has been working with conductor Peter Dijkstra again since 2022 after a six-year break, is further proof of this. May Bruckner's sacred choral music be a guiding star for all those who love Bruckner - or are still discovering the great master for themselves - in this recording that is matchless both for its sound and content.

### **OPERA**

Richard Wagner: Parsifal

Jonas Kaufmann, Ludovic Tézier, Elina Garanča  
Georg Zeppenfeld, Wolfgang Koch, Stefan Cerny,  
Chor und Orchester der Wiener Staatsoper  
Philippe Jordan

Sony Classical  
19439947742

The recording of Parsifal from the Vienna State Opera is one of the best audio recordings of this opera to appear for some time. Both the conductor Philippe Jordan and the orchestra - which plays with great intensity, fluidity and beauty - ensure that the tension and meaning of the drama are never sacrificed to generalized mysticism. The soloists are magnificent. Georg Zeppenfeld's youthful and actively articulated Gurnemanz is not a mere narrator but a participant who reveals the secrets of events. Jonas Kaufmann's mature and nuanced Parsifal, Ludovic Tézier's anxious Amfortas and Wolfgang Koch's biting Klingsor are top performances, but Elina Garanča's Kundry rises above all, illuminating the duality of seducer and repentant in a brilliant way.

### **SOLO INSTRUMENT**

Schubert: Piano Sonata D 840 + Hungarian Melody D 817 + Allegretto D 915  
Krenek: Piano Sonata No. 2  
Can Çakmur  
BIS  
2690

The young Turkish pianist Can Çakmur has been awarded in the Solo Instrument category of this year's ICMA Awards for his successful BIS-labelled CD recording of Schubert's and Krenek's solo pieces. In addition to giving concerts from China and Japan to England, Can Çakmur, who has been running from success to success in his career recently, has released Schubert recordings with BIS, all of which have made a great impression. He thus achieves a rare success in the history of ICMA: having received the Young Artist of the Year Award in 2021 and the Solo Instrument of the Year Award for his first CD recording in 2020, Çakmur now wins the ICMA Awards jury's appreciation for the third time in five years with his third recording from the Schubert+ series.

### **CHAMBER MUSIC**

Shostakovich: String Quartets Nos. 1-15, Quartet movement in E flat major, Two Pieces for String Quartet op. 22 & Op. 29  
Quatuor Danel  
Accentus Music  
ACC80585

Few cycles match Shostakovich's fifteen quartets for being such a mirror of the 20th century, its tragedies and its musical greatness: by taking on the arduous challenge of a complete recording, derived from live concerts, the Quatuor Danel achieves a feat worthy of the highest comparisons, for the instrumental brilliance of the performances and the sense of total commitment, and offers admirers of this music a reference point that everyone will have to take note of from now on.

### **CONCERTOS**

Edward Elgar: Violin Concerto in B minor, Carissima, The Gardens at Eastwell  
Vilde Frang, violin  
Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin  
Robin Ticciati  
Warner Classic  
5021732409423

With her second ICMA award, Vilde Frang proves that she firmly stands among today's top-notch musicians. Her performance is brilliantly shaped with sophisticated, deep colours and a real feeling of epic story-telling. Under the baton of Robin Ticciati, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin has the drama of Elgar's concerto as well as communication with the soloist constantly in focus, which makes this interpretation a new reference recording.

### **SYMPHONIC MUSIC**

George Enescu: Symphonies Nos. 1-3, Romanian Rhapsodies op. 11

Choeur de Radio France, Orchestre National de France  
Christian Măcelaru  
Deutsche Grammophon  
4865505

A few of the best-known symphonic works by George Enescu, in the best performances available nowadays - this album from L'Orchestre National de France and Chœur de Radio France, conducted by Cristian Măcelaru, is an exceptional achievement. He searched the archives for Enescu's original manuscripts; first, the Romanian rhapsodies, which reveal to us the conductor's Romanian soul ... then, the first three symphonies, with the sound and inventiveness required by those pieces and a touch of French sensibility. A true discovery, both as far as the works and the performances are concerned!

### **CONTEMPORARY MUSIC**

Unsuk Chin: Violin Concerto No. 1, Cello Concerto, Le Silence des sirènes  
Rocaná, Chorós Chordón, Piano Concerto  
Christian Tetzlaff, Alban Gerhardt, Sun-Wook Kim, Barbara Hannigan  
Berliner Philharmoniker  
Myung-Whun Chung, Daniel Harding, Sakari Oramo, Simon Rattle  
Berliner Philharmoniker Recordings  
230411

This extraordinary two-CD and Blu-Ray box documents in the best possible way the close and fertile relationship between the Korean composer Unsuk Chin and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. With six large-scale works spanning two decades of her output, this edition is also the most comprehensive and faithful portrait of one of the essential musical authors of the first quarter of the 21st century.

Ex aequo

John Adams: City Noir, Fearful Symmetries, Girls of the Golden West, Lola Montez Does the Spider Dance  
ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien  
Marin Alsop  
Naxos  
8.559935

John Adams masterfully connected his interest in composing for large symphonic forces with the American culture of the mid-20th century. The jazzy inspiration for City Noir comes from Kevin Starr's books, and for Fearful Symmetries from the poem The Tyger by William Blake. Lola Montez Does the Spider Dance was created for and dedicated to Marin Alsop to celebrate her 25 years of activity at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz. The music is most effective in Marin Alsop's outstanding interpretations, and the Vienna RSO once again does its best to play this music brilliantly and excitingly.

### **ASSORTED PROGRAMMES**

Alfred Schnittke: Piano Concerto - Paul Hindemith: Mathis der Maler, The Four Temperaments  
Anna Gourari, piano  
Orchestra della Svizzera italiana  
Markus Poschner  
ECM  
2752

By juxtaposing Schnittke's Piano Concerto with two scores by Hindemith, conductor Markus Poschner with pianist Anna Gourari and the Orchestra della Svizzera italiana take an acute look at a very particular side of the 20th century, made up of a nostalgic glance at the past and also an acute analysis of the miseries of the present, hovering between polystylism and irony. And they do so with an absolutely impeccable instrumental and musical quality.

## **HISTORICAL RECORDINGS**

Brahms & Mozart: Geza Anda Live 1963 & 1974

Johannes Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1 - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 18  
Géza Anda, piano

Wiener Philharmoniker, Philharmonia Orchestra

Karl Böhm

Prospero Classical

PROSP0100

It may be hard to say of the always highly respected Géza Anda that he was ever underestimated, but the live recordings of him unearthed from the archives place him among the greatest giants of the 20th century — giants not only in terms of technique, but also in the poetic quality of his piano playing. This set of works, featuring a phenomenal interpretation of the Brahms Concerto No. 1, rare in the pianist's repertoire, supported by Karl Böhm's extraordinarily lively baton, is a unique testament to Géza Anda's enduring art.

## **PREMIERE RECORDINGS**

Saint-Saëns: Déjanire

Kate Aldrich, Julien Dran, Anaïs Constans,

Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo

Kazuki Yamada

Bru Zane

BZ1055

Camille Saint-Saëns's opera Déjanire rightly returns to the musical landscape with a production that convinces through both its sensitivity and musical power. This dramatic and emotionally intense album, with its outstanding soloists and a well-balanced Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, delivers a compelling interpretation that brings this rarely performed work vividly to life.

## **VIDEO: OPERA**

Johann Strauß: Die Fledermaus

Diana Damrau, Georg Nigl, Katharina Konradi, Martin Winkler

Chor der Bayerischen Staatsoper, Orchester der Bayerischen Staatsoper

Vladimir Jurowski,

Barrie Kosky

Bayerische Staatsoper Recordings

BSOREC 1005

It's never easy to revisit the approach to great musical masterpieces marked by so many scenic and musical traditions! But this video of the Bavarian State Opera's production of Johann Strauß's famous Die Fledermaus does exactly that, both scenically and musically. Barrie Kosky's staging is great operetta fun, with great design ideas that cannot be surpassed in opulence and color. Vladimir Jurowski unfolds the full splendor of the music. And so stage and orchestra, acting and singing merge into pure operetta bliss at the highest level.

## **VIDEO: PERFORMANCE & DOCUMENTARIES**

Living Bach

Bach players and singers around the world, Michael Maul, Anna Schmidt

Weltkino

4061229402200

Johann Sebastian Bach is alive. He is thriving thanks to the enthusiasm of his fans all over the world. In her documentary 'Living Bach', Anna Schmidt introduces the worldwide Bach Family. People from Europe, South Africa and the Australian Outback share their love for Bach's music, even if they are no musicians themselves. 'Living Bach' documents how one man, the charismatic Bach nerd Michael Maul, succeeded in uniting them all in his huge Bachfest in Leipzig.