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STEVEN ISSERLIS AND SERGIO AZZOLINI JOIN PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA AS ARTISTIC PARTNER OF CAMERATA BERN

CAMERATA BERN starts its 2023/24 season with two new Artistic Partners: cellist Steven Isserlis and bassoonist Sergio Azzolini will join violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja as Artistic Partners of CAMERATA BERN.

Founded in 1962, CAMERATA BERN's activities have always been dedicated to artistic diversity. They rest on three pillars: cultivation of the string ensemble tradition, engagement with historical performance practice, and an active turn towards contemporary music, including composition commissions and new concert formats.

As of the 2023/24 season, this thematic diversity is also reflected in the three Artistic Partners, each of whom represents—but is not limited to—one of these pillars. The partnerships are designed for the long term, thus enabling a deep artistic development growing over time.

Christina Merblum Bollschweiler, Ensemble Representative:

We are thrilled to welcome two new Artistic Partners to our Camerata family! Traveling amongst the orbits of Patricia, Steven and Sergio is an absolute privilege. This golden trio is in such a rare class that simply being around each of them transforms you. You begin to think more deeply, laugh with more abandon, support more fervently and take risks with more joy. I look forward to every adventure that awaits!

Patricia Kopatchinskaja:

CAMERATA Bern has become like a family to me. Our musical language has become almost telepathic; the openness and flexibility unlimited; the curiosity, enjoyment and delight in playing and experimenting – we share all this, from the bottom of our hearts. These musicians and the artistic platform of Bern are a dream, I can't imagine anything more beautiful.

Sergio Azzolini:

From the first moment, encountering CAMERATA BERN gave me an absolute sense of shared understanding. Alongside their great expertise in various styles, this ensemble has infinite passion and joy in experimentation. For me, each collaboration with CAMERATA BERN is a source of inspiration, an exchange of energies, and a shared search for music in its most natural form.

Steven Isserlis:

I am very happy to become an Artistic Partner with the wonderful CAMERATA BERN. I'm sure that it's clear to all who attend their concerts that the ensemble consists not only of very special musicians, but also of very special people. I love spending time with the group, both in and out of rehearsals; it is an ensemble that loves to work hard, to make music in a marvellously individual way – and to have fun!

The Artistic Partners' concert programs in the 2023/24 season will span music from the Baroque to the present:

Sergio Azzolini opens the new season with the program «Benvenuto Signor Händel» on historic instruments. In the middle of the season, **Patricia Kopatchinskaja** leads the program «EXILE» with music by composers who have been forced to leave their homelands. This program also includes a world premiere by Ukrainian-Russian composer Alexey Retinsky. **Steven Isserlis** will close the season with the summery, lively program «Romantic Classicists / Classical Romantics».

Three further programs in CAMERATA BERN's concert series will also be led by outstanding musicians: longtime artistic director Antje Weithaas returns to Bern, and for the first time, singer Ian Bostridge and pianist Alexander Melnikov will perform with the ensemble.

In addition, CAMERATA BERN will regularly open its doors at various venues for rehearsals open to the public, travel to social and educational institutions to give «gift» concerts, play family and school concerts beloved by young audiences, and take part in the traditional «Elfenau Kultursommer».

Furthermore, guest performances will also take the CAMERATA BERN to summer festivals in Meiringen, Gstaad, Boswil and Thun, to Neuchâtel, and internationally to Portugal, Scotland, Romania and Germany.

The full season program is available at [cameratabern.ch](https://www.cameratabern.ch) from May 10, 2023 in the afternoon.

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Supplements:

- Biographies
- Photos: Download at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yDmPFAO3DQ5u6oROWMLMSs4hC4sR_Owr?usp=sharing

BIOGRAPHIES

CAMERATA BERN

The CAMERATA BERN, founded in 1962 and consisting of 15 soloists, stands for artistic excellence, and for cultivating tradition as well as playing with curiosity and joy. It seeks continually to break new ground while inspiring its audience with multifaceted programs.

Violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, cellist Steven Isserlis and bassoonist Sergio Azzolini are affiliated with the ensemble as Artistic Partners.

CAMERATA BERN is committed to artistic diversity and moves between three pillars: cultivating the string ensemble tradition, engaging with historical performance practice, and actively turning towards new concert formats and contemporary music. This also includes commissions of new works. The three Artistic Partners each represent one of these three pillars, but are not limited to a single one.

In addition, CAMERATA BERN works with both new and established guests, such as Antje Weithaas, Ilya Gringolts, Anna Prohaska and Kristian Bezuidenhout. While CAMERATA BERN cultivates the chamber music style of ensemble playing, it calls upon additional musicians for each individual project.

Rooted in Bern with its own concert series, CAMERATA BERN also regularly performs at international festivals and leading concert halls in Switzerland, Europe and beyond. The ensemble's numerous recordings have won international awards such as the Grand Prix du Disque, the German Record Critics' Award and the Echo Klassik. Most recently, the album «Plaisirs illuminés» (2021) with Artistic Partner Patricia Kopatchinskaja won a BBC Music Magazine Award. The ensemble's latest recording, «Maria Mater Meretrix», also with Patricia Kopatchinskaja and featuring soprano Anna Prohaska, was released in April 2023.

CAMERATA BERN also regularly brings music away from the traditional concert context and directly to the people, with school concerts in the canton of Bern and performances in social and educational institutions.

PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA

Patricia Kopatchinskaja always seeks to get to the heart of music, to its meaning for us in the here and now. With a combination of depth, brilliance and humor, she brings an inimitable theatricality to her music.

Described by the *New York Times* as «a player of rare expressive energy and disarming informality», she delights her audiences around the world, whether with unusual performances of traditional classics from the violin repertoire, or with original staged projects that she presents as an experimental performance dramaturg.

In 2023, Kopatchinskaja again transcends borders, and ventures into a new musical experiment with Herbert Fritsch and visual artist Jannis Varelas in the Neo-Dada opera production *Vergeigt* at Theater Basel. Other recent highlights include her residency with the Berlin Philharmonic; European tours with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Il Giardino Armonico, and the Philharmonia Orchestra; and a return to the BBC Proms in 2022. She has also been invited to perform in the Barbican Centre London's Artist Spotlight series and as an Associated Artist of the SWR Experimental Studio, one of the most important international research centers in the field of electronic music.

Since 2018, Patricia Kopatchinskaja has been affiliated with CAMERATA BERN as Artistic Partner.

Her absolute priority is the music of the 20th and 21st centuries and collaboration with living composers such as Luca Francesconi, Michael Hersch, György Kurtág, Márton Illés and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Patricia Kopatchinskaja also appears as a vocal artist in Ligeti's *Mystères du macabre*; in Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, where she takes the role of Pierrot himself; and in her film adaptation of Kurt Schwitters' Dadaist poem *Ursonate*.

Her discography includes more than 30 recordings, including the GRAMMY Award-winning «Death and the Maiden» with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, a program that was also reissued as a semi-staged film version with CAMERATA BERN 2021. Recent CD releases include «Maria Mater Meretrix» with CAMERATA BERN and Anna Prohaska, the BBC Music Magazine award-winning «Les Plaisirs Illuminés» with Sol Gabetta and CAMERATA BERN, and «Le monde selon George Antheil» with Joonas Ahonen (all on Alpha Classics).

Patricia Kopatchinskaja is a humanitarian ambassador for Terre des Hommes and was awarded the Swiss Grand Prix Music 2017 by the Federal Office of Culture.

SERGIO AZZOLINI

In addition to his solo performances on the modern bassoon, Sergio Azzolini has, in recent years, been intensively engaged with early music on historical instruments.

Sergio Azzolini, born in 1967 in Bolzano, studied in his hometown with Romano Santi and then with Klaus Thunemann in Hanover, while already serving as principal bassoonist in the European Community Youth Orchestra. He won, among others, the International C.M. von Weber Competition, the Prague Spring Competition, and the ARD Music Competition—the latter both as a solo artist and with the Ma'alot Quintet, of which he was a member for ten years.

As a baroque bassoonist, he was a member of the continuo group of the Ensemble Baroque de Limoges and the Concentus Musicus Wien and also played as a soloist with ensembles such as the Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca, L'Aura Soave Cremona, La Stravaganza Köln, Holland Baroque Society, the Händel-Festspielorchester Halle and the Accademia Bizantina. Since 2013, a particular focus has been on collaborations with his own baroque orchestra, L'Onda Armonica. As of the 2023/24 season, Sergio Azzolini will be Artistic Partner of the CAMERATA BERN.

For five years, Azzolini was also Artistic Director of the Kammerakademie Potsdam, where he was responsible for four highly successful productions of operas by Vivaldi, Galuppi, Graun and Mozart, among others. These days, Sergio Azzolini is internationally sought-after as a conductor and soloist with ensembles and orchestras, primarily performing 18th and 19th century music on modern and historical instruments.

Numerous CD productions testify to his extraordinary stylistic diversity; he has recently finished the complete recording of Antonio Vivaldi's bassoon concertos with his own ensemble L'Onda Armonica for Naïve, which has already received awards.

Since 1998 Sergio Azzolini has been professor of bassoon and chamber music at the Hochschule für Musik FHNW in Basel. In addition, he regularly gives international master classes for historical and modern bassoon and chamber music.

STEVEN ISSERLIS

British cellist Steven Isserlis is celebrated worldwide for his stupendous technique and exceptional musicality and creativity.

As a soloist he performs with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich as well as the Munich Chamber Orchestra, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. As of the 2023/24 season, he will be Artistic Partner of CAMERATA BERN.

As a regular guest at Wigmore Hall, the 92NY in New York and the Salzburg Festival, he gives recitals and chamber music concerts with partners such as Joshua Bell, Isabelle Faust, András Schiff, Stephen Hough and Olli Mustonen. He enjoys arranging his programs around particular themes, including the cello's affinity for the human voice, music in World War I in *The Cello in Wartime*, and most recently the mutual inspiration of composers in *Composers and their Muses*.

Recent and upcoming highlights in the German-speaking world include concerts with the DSO Berlin, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, the Kammerakademie Potsdam, and the Munich Chamber Orchestra. He is a featured guest for recitals and chamber music programs at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Dresden Music Festival, the Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and the Kissinger Sommer.

Steven Isserlis' great interest is in historical performance practice. He performs with the leading baroque orchestras and often conducts chamber orchestras from the cello himself. As an equally enthusiastic interpreter of contemporary music, he has collaborated with composers such as John Tavener, Wolfgang Rihm, and György Kurtág, and has premiered numerous works.

Isserlis is also the author of several children's books and a regular guest writer for Gramophone Magazine and the BBC.

His latest book, *The Bach Cello Suites: A Companion*, published by Faber & Faber, won the Presto Music Award for «Book of the Year». Sought-after as a teacher, he gives master classes at Kronberg Academy and as artistic director of the International Musicians Seminar Prussia Cove in Cornwall.

Isserlis' award-winning discography includes Bach's solo cello suites, recordings of the great cello concertos with Paavo Järvi, Beethoven's cello sonatas with Robert Levin, *Lieux Retrouvés* with Thomas Adès, and Haydn's cello concertos with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen.

Isserlis has received the Schumann Prize of the City of Zwickau, the Piatigorsky Artist Award, the Glashütte Original MusikFestspielPreis, and the Wigmore Hall Gold Medal, among others. In 2013, he was inducted into the Gramophone Hall of Fame - one of only two cellists to receive this honor in their lifetime.