

# Raphaël Merlin, Conductor



Appointed to the position of Artistic and Musical Director of the Geneva Chamber Orchestra from the 2023/2024 season, Raphaël Merlin passionately pursues an artistic path tinged with eclecticism, curiosity and commitment.

From a very young age, he displayed this innate desire for diversity in music. Cello, piano, piano-jazz, writing, composition, analysis, conducting, orchestration, chamber music, arrangement, teaching ... each of these disciplines created an intense musical activity.

He began his musical path at the conservatories of Clermont-Ferrand, Boulogne-Billancourt, at the CNSMD in Paris and then in the Haute Ecole de Musique de Genève, providing an intense and enriching activity.

Member of the Quatuor Ebène (First prize in the ARD international competition in Munich 2004), Raphael received the advices of Eberhard Feltz, from the Ysaÿe Quartet, from Gabor Takacs, Gyorgy Kurtag and performed on the biggest stages in the world with Mitsuko Ushida, Nicholas Angelich, Matthias Goerne, Natalie Dessay, Martin Fröst, Antoine Tamestit, Gautier and Renaud Capuçon, Nicolas Altstaedt...

Known for its opening over all styles (pop, jazz, world), thanks to originals arrangements and a career focused on all publics, the Quartet has been invited to play the complete Beethoven quartets in 2020 at New York's Carnegie Hall, leading to the construction of a recorded and filmed world tour (from 2019) that testifies the intellectual and emotional experience given by this summit of literature. The Quatuor Ebène is recording exclusively for Erato/ Warner Classics.

Developing a career as a conductor at the same time, in 2014 he founded "Les Forces Majeures", an ensemble including a host of constituted quartets and quintets. This project revealed Raphaël Merlin as a conductor to follow : the Rossini disc released by Aparté with mezzo Karine Deshayes was a great success, followed by an album with cellist Edgar Moreau (Offenbach-Gulda, on Erato/Warner).

Ensemble-in-residence at the Opéra de Vichy in July 2018, Les Forces Majeures, under his leadership and in just a few days, performed the stage version of *The Barber of Seville*, *Werther*, 3 symphonic programmes and numerous small ensemble concerts, offering the town a much-appreciated diversity of music.

It was on this occasion that he first took his orchestra on a 65-kilometers bicycle tour (4 concerts in a single day), that will become thanks to a huge work around raising environmental awareness, the center of the project.

Then, Les Forces Majeures created a lot of cycling tours in major cities (Paris, Grenoble, Lille) as well as in rural areas (Savoie, Seine-Saint-Denis, Tourcoing), from small orchestras (15 musicians) to large symphony orchestras, inviting musicians and audiences to join them in a great repertoire.

The ensemble's concert partners include Nicholas Angelich, Sayaka Shoji, Sarah Nemtanu, Inva Mula, Florian Sempey, Amel Brahimi-Djelloul, Marc Mauillon, Jan Lisiecki...

Invited to conduct the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Lockenhaus Festival Orchestra, the Orchestre de l'Opéra de Rouen, the Orchestre d'Auvergne, the Orchestre symphonique de Mulhouse, the Padeloup, Ut5 and Ostinato orchestras, Raphaël Merlin's work as a conductor has been intensified by an easy and enriching contact.

Composer, his works include *Eléa*, a concerto for string quartet and orchestra composed in Krakow and Munich in 2011 by the Ebène Quartet and the Klangforum Mitte Europa, *Pas de Deux* for violin and cello (2014, Concertgebouw Amsterdam), *See: Sea & Seeds. Si!* concerto for cello and strings (Lockenhaus Festival 2016) and *Passage-Eclair*, mixed octet (Paris, 2018), both recorded by Alpha, *Night bridge*, string sextet (2017) recorded by Warner, *Beans* for solo cello (2022).

Raphaël Merlin has been represented by RSB Artists since 2017.

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