



## PRESS INFORMATION

# LAEISZHALLE HAMBURG – HAMBURG’S GEM

**As everyone knows, it is not polite to ask a lady her age, but in this case we are happy to commit such a breach of etiquette in order to hear the exciting tales this fine lady has to tell from her 100-year history. The Laeiszhalle – at that time the largest and most modern concert hall in Germany – was inaugurated on June 4, 1908. In his will, the well-known Hamburg shipping company owner Carl Heinrich Laeisz stipulated that the company F. Laeisz was to donate the sum of 1.2 million German Marks to fund the construction of »a worthy site for the performance and enjoyment of high-quality art music«. This sum was subsequently increased by his widow, Sophie Christine Laeisz. Richard Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky and Paul Hindemith performed and directed their own works in the hall. Today, international stars of the music world are guests in the Laeiszhalle. At the same time, the historical hall is a meeting place for Hamburg's musical life.**

The architects Martin Haller and Emil Meerwein, who had already made a name for themselves with their design for the Hamburg Town Hall, were responsible for building the neo-baroque concert hall, which remains one of the finest in Europe. With its distinctive glass roof, the Großer Saal accommodates more than 2.000 visitors, while the Kleiner Saal seats upwards of 600. Smaller events and concerts are held in the more intimate Studio E. During the interval, concert-goers can stretch their legs in the elegant surroundings of the Brahms Foyer, where refreshments are also served. The centre-piece of the foyer is a Symbolist marble bust of Johannes Brahms, created by Max Klinger in 1909.

The Laeiszhalle made music history from the very beginning: prominent composers such as Richard Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky and Paul Hindemith played and conducted their own works here. The child prodigy violinist Yehudi Menuhin gave a widely acclaimed guest performance in 1930 at the age of twelve, while Maria Callas's concerts (in 1959 and 1962) were equally unforgettable. Following World War II, which it survived intact, the Laeiszhalle experienced an unusual intermezzo when the British occupying forces used the space temporarily as a broadcast studio for their radio station BFN, whereby 60,000 shellac jazz records were stored in the foyer. Chris Howland began his career here as a radio DJ for BFN. To this day, the Laeiszhalle continues to attract a steady stream of international stars of the classical music world, and at the same time it is a popular meeting place for Hamburg's music scene.

Due to its relatively low capacity and stage layout, the Laeiszhalle is particularly suitable for the performance of classical and early romantic repertoire, and less so for staging large-scale twentieth-century works.



## **Facts and Figures**

Concert Halls:	Grand Hall: 2.023 seats Recital Hall: 639 seats Studio E: 150 seats
Opening:	4 June 1908 (built 1904–1908)
Name:	The well-known Hamburg shipping company owner Carl Heinrich Laeisz gave the Laeiszhalle its name.
Architects:	Martin Haller and Emil Meerwein
Residential ensemble:	Hamburg Symphony Orchestra

## **Laeiszhalle Elbphilharmonie Hamburg**

The Elbphilharmonie, which opened its doors on January 11 and 12, 2017 in Hamburg's HafenCity, and the renowned Laeiszhalle are under the direction of one company. Christoph Lieben-Seutter has been General and Artistic Director since 2007. Information and tickets are available at [www.elbphilharmonie.de](http://www.elbphilharmonie.de), from the ticket office in the Elbphilharmonie (Platz der Deutschen Einheit) and from the Elbphilharmonie Kulturcafé (Am Mönckebergbrunnen/Barkhof 3). Ticket hotline: +49 40 357 666 66, [tickets@elbphilharmonie.de](mailto:tickets@elbphilharmonie.de).

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