

Christian Benning Percussion Group

BEAThoven

BEAThoven - Tradition. Transformation. Future.

The artistic principle of the *Christian Benning Percussion Group* could hardly be better described. Together with his congenial colleagues Patrick Stapleton, Marcel Morikawa, Felix Kolb and Godwin Schmid, Christian Benning has made it his mission to take up the works of groundbreaking composers of the past centuries such as Bach, Beethoven, Ravel, Rachmaninoff or Strauss alongside the classics of modern percussion literature and literally transform them for a purely percussive chamber music ensemble.

Ludwig van Beethoven had been the focus of the now internationally aspiring and innovative quintet in 2020, when the music world celebrated its 250th anniversary. During his lifetime, percussion instruments in their current form did not even exist.

How would Beethoven or Bach have composed if a marimba, a vibraphone or even a drum kit in their current forms had existed during their lifetimes? In their *BEAThoven* programme, the ensemble wants to get to the bottom of precisely this certainly highly hypothetical question and answers it in its own way with its own arrangements, exemplified by Beethoven's famous "Moonlight Sonata" in all three movements.

In addition to the illumination of well-known melodies in completely new sound colours of the various percussion instruments, another unique feature of these transcriptions is the careful and tasteful processing of grooves and rhythms from various musical styles that have emerged since then, particularly on the American continent.

With *BEAThoven*, Benning and his colleagues not only make the timelessness of the musical legacy of the great masters of European music history audible, but also connect with them the musical achievements of America through a unique artistic transatlantic bridge - a real departure from tradition into the future!

The first common international concerts of the young musicians, who met during their studies with the German percussion luminary and pioneer Peter Sadlo (1962-2016) in Munich, took place in Egypt and Oman. This pure percussion formation was originally founded in 2015 by Christian Benning as *Christian Benning & Percussion No. 1* and performed in its early days at venues including the *Laeiszhalle* in Hamburg, the *Munich Philharmonic Hall* or the *Castello* in Brenzone sul Garda (Italy).

Since 2020 as the *Christian Benning Percussion Group*, the ensemble has recently made its debuts at the *Glocke* in Bremen, the *Elbphilharmonie* in Hamburg, the *Hercules Hall* in Munich, the *Kraftwerk* in Berlin, the *Church of the Redeemer* in Jerusalem (Israel), the *George Enescu Hall* in Bucharest (Romania), the *Théâtre de la Ville* in Paris (France) or - as its first ever percussion concert - at the *Sagrada Família* in Barcelona (Spain). In 2024, they presented various repertoires for the first time in the USA and at the *Biennale Musica* in Venice (Italy), among others. This year, they will play concerts in Japan (including at the *Expo* in Osaka) and South America for the first time. The ensemble has recently been strongly influenced by collaborations with composers such as Paul Lansky, Steve Reich, Wolfgang Rihm and Samir Odeh-Tamimi.