Cristian Măcelaru, Conductor

Newly appointed Chief Conductor of the WDR Sinfonieorchester, Cristian Măcelaru is one of the fast-rising stars of the conducting world. Măcelaru is Music Director and Conductor of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the world’s leading festival dedicated to contemporary symphonic repertoire. In August 2019, he led his third season in premiere-filled programs of new works by an esteemed group of composers. Among the 2019 season’s highlights are 12 composers-in-residence including Wynton Marsalis and a record-breaking 9 women, a roster of international guest artists including mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton and violinist Nicola Benedetti, the World Premiere of an orchestral tribute to Ruth Bader Ginsburg entitled When There Are Nine, a new cello concerto by Anna Clyne, and Tan Dun’s stunning symphonic documentary for harp and orchestra, Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women.

The first half of the 2019/20 season sees Măcelaru continuing to strengthen his European presence with his BBC Proms debut conducting BBC Symphony Orchestra and pianist Seong-Jin Cho in Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, and compatriot Constantin Silvestri. Following the grandeur season opening at WDR in Cologne with Mahler’s 4thSymphony and Dvořák’s Te Deum, Cristian Măcelaru collaborates internationally with the Swedish Radio Symphony, Belgian National Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Dresdner Philharmonie, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and Seattle Symphony.

As part of the 2020 Beethoven Year celebrations, Cristian Măcelaru leads the New Japan Philharmonic in all-Beethoven programme at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo with violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, cellist Daniel Müller-Schott and pianist Lambert Orkis.

The second half of the 2019/20 season amplifies Măcelaru’s international profile by collaborations with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and Kian Soltani, Orchestre National de Lyon and Beatrice Rana, Orchestre de Paris and Nicola Benedetti, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester and Sol Gabetta, and Dresdner Philharmonie and Sergey Khachatryan. Măcelaru makes his debuts with Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Gil Shaham, Xi’an Symphony Orchestra in China; his debut with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra marks the Asian premiere to the collaboratively composed Cello Concerto by composers Nico Muhly from the USA, Sven Helbig from Germany and Zhou Long from China dedicated to and performed by Jan Vogler.

Cristian Măcelaru was born in Timișoara, Romania and comes from a musical family. As the youngest of ten children, he received instrumental lessons at an early age – like all his siblings – in his case on the violin. His studies took him from Romania to the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, University of Miami in Florida and Rice University in Houston, where he studied conducting with Larry Rachleff. He then deepened his knowledge in Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival in masterclasses with David Zinman, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Oliver Knussen and Stefan Asbury.

Măcelaru was the youngest concertmaster in the history of the Miami Symphony Orchestra and made his Carnegie Hall debut with that orchestra at the age of 19. He also played in the first violin section of the Houston Symphony for two seasons.

He resides in Philadelphia with his wife Cheryl and children Beniamin and Maria.