

Simone Menezes, Conductor

Biography

"Simone Menezes once again caught our attention, shaping the musical scenario to her own hand: risky virtuosity and a strikingly texture-rich rendering of tutti fragments versus solo passages, revealing score details that in the usual orchestral setting barely have a chance to surface." – De Standaard, 2023

Confidently and captivatingly, Simone Menezes designs programs of high curatorial quality and musical coherence. The Italian-Brazilian conductor, who has been based in France for many years, sees herself as a bridge-builder between different musical traditions and artistic disciplines. Her repertoire spans from composers of the classical European canon such as Beethoven and Brahms to Tchaikovsky and the French Impressionists and easily combines them with works from the Latin American repertoire.

Engagements in recent years have taken her, among others, to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, hr-Sinfonieorchester, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Osaka Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris. She has performed in leading international concert halls such as the Philharmonie de Paris, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Pierre Boulez Hall in Berlin, and the Cologne Philharmonic. As a conductor, Simone Menezes has premiered numerous works by contemporary composers, including new pieces by John Adams, Thomas Adès, Philip Glass, Arvo Pärt, Toru Takemitsu, and Gabriela Ortiz. She maintains close collaborations with Fazıl Say, Gautier Capuçon, Thomas Adès, Kaija Saariaho, Philippe Hersant, and Paavo Järvi. In 2025, she commissioned the world premiere of Fazıl Say's piano concerto *Mother Earth*.

A key focus of Simone Menezes' work lies in the curatorial conception and artistic realization of interdisciplinary programs. With her Ensemble K, which she founded and leads, she developed the documentary concert project *Metanoia* featuring works by Puccini, Bach, and Pärt in 2022 and was awarded at the International Classical Music Awards 2023 with the prize for "Best Video in Performance & Documentaries." In 2020, she created the *Amazônia* project in collaboration with the acclaimed photographer Sebastião Salgado and the Philharmonie de Paris, which combines Salgado's photographs with compositions by his compatriot Heitor Villa-Lobos as well as works by Philip Glass. As a conductor, Simone Menezes has so far performed *Amazônia* with more than 15 orchestras around the world, including in November 2025 with the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne.

Other engagements for the 2025/26 season have so far taken her to, among others, the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, and in the coming months will bring her to the Philharmonie de Paris, the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra, the National Orchestra of Chile, as well as on concert tours through France and South America with her own Ensemble K. As part of the Crescendo Summer Institute 2026 in Tokaj, she imparts her knowledge to young emerging artists in the field of chamber music.

Her CD and concert projects of recent years have repeatedly received great acclaim in the international specialist press. For example, her 2023 Ravel project – including a recording with pianist François-Xavier Poizat and the London Philharmonia Orchestra – was awarded the "Editor's Choice" by Gramophone Magazine. In 2024, *Scheherazade, a Tale* was nominated for the German Critics' Prize.

Simone Menezes studied in São Paulo and Paris, as well as at the Royal Academy of Music in London under Colin Metters. At the beginning of her career, she was mentored by Paavo Järvi. Initially, she built a successful career as a chief conductor and guest conductor in Latin America before ultimately settling in Europe. Since then, she has been active internationally on a regular basis. At major international events such as the World Expositions in Dubai and Osaka, as well as in collaborations with brands such as Cartier and Zurich Insurance, she was invited to create large-scale concert formats with wide-reaching impact.

Season 2025/26

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