



Sebastian Fritsch (left) and Friedrich Thiele | Photos: René Gaens

IN A DOUBLE ACT: SEBASTIAN FRITSCH AND FRIEDRICH THIELE WIN AUDITIONS AS NEW CONCERTMASTERS OF CELLO OF THE SÄCHSISCHE STAATSKAPELLE DRESDEN

Together, the two cellists won the German Music Competition in 2019, and together they have now also been successful in Dresden: Weimar cello graduates Sebastian Fritsch and Friedrich Thiele both won their auditions a few days ago as the new **concertmasters of cello of the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden**.

This successful start to their careers thus follows on seamlessly from their recently completed studies in the cello class of **Prof. Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt** at the FRANZ LISZT University of Music in Weimar. "You have left us with a beautiful farewell gift," says Schmidt enthusiastically.

"I am thrilled to be the new concertmaster of cello of the fantastic Staatskapelle Dresden," says 24-year-old cellist Sebastian Fritsch. "A thousand thanks to my highly esteemed Professor Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt, who supported me a lot in the preparation!"

Ultimately, the audition was about "delivering all the required orchestral parts and concertos 100 percent on the dot," adds Fritsch's former fellow Weimar classmate Friedrich Thiele. "Preferably still with great musicality and the courage to take risks," says the musician, who is also 24.

The two cellists will take up their new positions at the beginning of the 2021/22 season. They are already looking forward to concerts under the direction of **principal conductor Christian Thielemann**, who also holds an honorary doctorate from the Weimar University of Music.

"He's really a great personality," says Friedrich Thiele, "and musically he has enormous experience and diversity - especially the opera repertoire will be very interesting." Sebastian Fritsch is similarly excited: "The Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden is definitely one of the world's leading orchestras, rich in tradition."

Sebastian Fritsch, born in Stuttgart in 1996, won the German Music Competition including the Audience Prize in 2019 as well as the 1st Prize of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy University Competition - and the 1st Prize of the TONALi Cello Competition in 2018. Here he was also awarded the Audience Prize, the Mariinsky Special Prize and the Saltarello Special Prize. He began his studies in Freiburg in 2014 and continued as a master student of Prof. Wolfgang Emanuel at the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar from 2018 to 2020.

He has already performed as a soloist with the Mariinsky Orchestra St. Petersburg, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin and the Nürnberger Symphoniker at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, the Liederhalle Stuttgart and the Konzerthaus Berlin, among others. He has made guest appearances at festivals such as the Cello Biennale Amsterdam, the Salzburg Festival and the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival.

Friedrich Thiele, a native of Dresden born in 1996, launched his career through successes at the 2015 TONALi Competition in Hamburg (3rd prize and audience award), the 2017 "Ton & Erklärung" competition in Munich (1st prize), and as a winner of the 2019 German Music Competition.

He has played as a soloist with the Bremen Chamber Philharmonic, the Munich Radio Orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar in Caracas and the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, among others. From 2016 to 2020, Thiele was a bachelor student in the class of Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt at the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar.

He has also appeared as a soloist in many major concert halls and festivals, including the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Gasteig in Munich, the Heidelberger Frühling and the Vadim Repin Trans-Siberian Art Festival.

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