

The **Ensemble Phoenix Basel** is a group of up to 25 musicians who are especially dedicated to performing contemporary music. The initiator and conductor of the ensemble, Jürg Henneberger, who is presently also president of the IGNM Basel, has for years been regarded as a specialist for contemporary music. Each of the individual members of the ensemble has accumulated experience in this branch of musical performance during the past years. During this time, these musicians were engaged as individual performers by institutions such as the IGNM Basel or the Theater Basel, where they performed in various formations, for example under the name "Ensemble der IGNM Basel". As such, the members of the Ensemble Phoenix Basel were involved in productions such as "The Unanswered Question" (Marthaler/Henneberger) or "Der mündliche Verrat" from Mauricio Kagel, etc. However, at this point in time an actual ensemble per se did not exist.

In time, the need of forming a specialized ensemble for contemporary music became evident, not only to meet the demands of the Basler Theater. The city of Basel, which with its large number of resident composers is regarded as an important center for contemporary music in and outside of Switzerland, is ideally suited to house an ensemble of this kind. In addition, an independent, self-managed ensemble significantly eases the organizational burden of concert promoters such as the IGNM and the Basler Theater, and can insure the efficiency which comes from working with a permanent team, the members being tuned-in to each other. In 1998 Jürg Henneberger and a handful of nucleus members took the initiative and founded the Ensemble Phoenix Basel, which gave its initial concert on the "Kleine Bühne" of the Basler Theater on December 12, 1998. Works from B. A. Zimmermann, Harrison Birtwistle and Christoph Delz were on the program. The concert was recorded live by Swiss Radio DRS II and received wide acclaim by the press. The Ensemble Phoenix Basel will continue to be active, performing ensemble concerts of the IGNM Basel, as well as realizing projects requiring chamber music ensembles at the Basler Theater, and organizing its own concerts.

The purpose of the Ensemble Phoenix Basel is to perform concerts in its home town, the rest of Switzerland, and also to be present in the most important contemporary music festivals outside of the country. Its primary objective is to play an integral role in the development of contemporary music through direct co-operation with not only renowned, but also young composers of our times, in order to perform their works and make them accessible to a broader public.