



The Philadelphia Orchestra

A History

Founded in 1900, **The Philadelphia Orchestra** has distinguished itself as one of the leading orchestras in the world through over a century of acclaimed performances, historic international tours, best-selling recordings, and its unprecedented record of innovation in recording technologies and outreach. The Orchestra has maintained unity in artistic leadership with only seven music directors throughout its history: Fritz Scheel (1900-07), Carl Pohlig (1907-12), Leopold Stokowski (1912-41), Eugene Ormandy (1936-80), Riccardo Muti (1980-92), Wolfgang Sawallisch (1993-2003), and Christoph Eschenbach (2003-08).

This rich tradition is carried on by Chief Conductor Charles Dutoit. Mr. Dutoit has a long-standing relationship with the Orchestra, having made his debut with the ensemble in 1980. As chief conductor, he will lead the Orchestra in Philadelphia as well as at Carnegie Hall and on tour. He will continue his role as artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestra's annual three-week residency at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center and will lead concerts when the Orchestra is in residence at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

Highlights of Mr. Dutoit's first season as chief conductor include the Opening Night Concert, featuring pianist Martha Argerich; performances of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* and Requiem, part of Mr. Dutoit's four-year focus on the works of that composer; the U.S. premiere of Krzysztof Penderecki's Concerto grosso No. 1 for three cellos, part of the Orchestra's celebration of Mr. Penderecki's 75th birthday; and Honegger's Symphony No. 3 ("Liturgical"). During his tenure, Mr. Dutoit will also focus on the music of the Ballets Russes, beginning in the 2008-09 season with performances of Stravinsky's complete music to *The Firebird*.

Throughout its history, The Philadelphia Orchestra has introduced an unprecedented number of important works as world or American premieres, including Barber's Violin Concerto, Mahler's "Symphony of a Thousand," Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Its illustrious tour history includes a number of landmarks events. In 1936 the Orchestra became the first American orchestra to undertake a transcontinental tour, in 1949 it toured Great Britain as the first American orchestra to cross the Atlantic after World War II, in 1973 it became the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, and in 1999 it became the first American orchestra to visit Vietnam.

The Orchestra also boasts an extraordinary record of media firsts. It was the first symphonic orchestra to make electrical recordings (in 1925), the first to perform its own commercially sponsored radio broadcast (in 1929, on NBC), the first to perform on the soundtrack of a feature film (Paramount's *The Big Broadcast of 1937*), the first to appear on a national television broadcast (in 1948, on CBS), and the first major orchestra to give a live cybercast of a concert on the internet (in 1997).

Recent successes and innovations with electronic media carry on this legacy. The Orchestra became the first major orchestra to multi-cast a concert to large-screen venues through the Internet2 network. The Orchestra also became the first major American orchestra to offer consumers the opportunity to download recent and archival music directly through its own Online Music Store, www.thephiladelphiaorchestra.com. The Orchestra is broadcast regularly on National Public Radio's *SymphonyCast* and *Performance Today*, as part of an annual agreement with NPR. In addition, Mr. Eschenbach and the Orchestra announced a recording partnership with Ondine Records. To date seven critically acclaimed recordings taken from live concerts have been released.

Another highlight of the Orchestra's recent past is a \$125 million endowment campaign, A Sound, A City, A Civilization. Commitments to the campaign include a lead gift of \$50 million from the Annenberg Foundation, along

with other major gifts from friends throughout the community, which have helped build a solid foundation for the institution.

The Philadelphia Orchestra annually touches the lives of more than one million music lovers worldwide through its performances (more than 300 concerts and other presentations each year), publications, recordings, and broadcasts. A major winter subscription season is presented in Philadelphia each year from September to May, in addition to education and community partnership programs. The Orchestra presents a series of concerts each year at New York's Carnegie Hall, in addition to an annual appearance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The Orchestra also reaches audiences around the world during its yearly three-week tour. Its summer schedule includes an outdoor season in Philadelphia at The Mann Center for the Performing Arts, free concerts in local neighborhoods, an annual residency at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, and a three-week residency at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in upstate New York.

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts hosts the Orchestra's home subscription concerts. The Center includes two performance spaces, the 2,500-seat Verizon Hall, designed and built especially for the Orchestra, and the 650-seat Perelman Theater for chamber music concerts. Designed by architect Rafael Viñoly along with acoustician Russell Johnson of Artec Consultants Inc., the Kimmel Center provides the Orchestra with a state-of-the-art facility for concerts, recordings, and education activities.

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and the historic Academy of Music (where the Orchestra performed for 101 seasons) are operated together as a single cultural facility by Kimmel Center, Inc. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association continues to own the Academy of Music, as it has since 1957, and the Orchestra performs at the highly anticipated Academy Anniversary Concert and Ball there every January.

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit www.philorch.org.

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