



THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

A Historical Timeline

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- 1900 *November 16*: Fritz Scheel conducts the **first concert** of The Philadelphia Orchestra, at the Academy of Music.
- 1902 The Philadelphia Orchestra makes its first appearance at **Carnegie Hall**.
- 1904 **Richard Strauss** guest conducts The Philadelphia Orchestra in a program of his own works.
- The **Women's Committee** of The Philadelphia Orchestra (later known as the Volunteer Committees) is formed as the first women's auxiliary group to help promote and support an American orchestra.
- 1906 The young Polish **pianist Arthur Rubinstein** makes his United States debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra; he will continue appearing with the Orchestra for more than seven decades.
- The Philadelphia Orchestra performs a special concert at the **White House**.
- 1907 Fritz Scheel dies; **Carl Pohlig** is appointed the Orchestra's second conductor.
- 1909 **Sergei Rachmaninoff** is invited to guest conduct the Orchestra; his appearance at the Academy of Music signals the beginning of a long association between The Philadelphia Orchestra and one of the century's most beloved composer/pianists.
- 1912 **Leopold Stokowski** is appointed the Orchestra's third conductor.
- 1916 Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra make music history by presenting the **American premiere of Mahler's Eighth Symphony** ("Symphony of a Thousand").
- 1917 The Philadelphia Orchestra crosses the Delaware River to make its **first sound recording** (at 78 r.p.m. for the Victor Talking Machine Co. of Camden, New Jersey).
- 1919 Citizens from throughout the Delaware Valley contribute to a "Save the Orchestra" effort, establishing **an endowment fund** for The Philadelphia Orchestra.
- 1921 Stokowski initiates **concerts for children**.
- 1925 Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra become **pioneers in electrical recording**, supplanting the previous acoustical method and becoming the first orchestra recorded electrically.

- 1929 The Philadelphia Orchestra takes to the airwaves on the **first commercially-sponsored national radio broadcast**, on the NBC network.
- 1930 The Philadelphia Orchestra gives the **American premiere of Berg's *Wozzeck***.

Philadelphia Orchestra members play a series of **outdoor summer concerts** at Philadelphia's Robin Hood Dell in Fairmount Park, beginning a long Philadelphia tradition.
- 1931 In conjunction with the Bell System, Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra experiment with **stereophonic sound recording** and become the first orchestra to make a long playing recording, issued by RCA.
- 1933 The Philadelphia Orchestra begins an **annual student music competition**; in the years ahead, its winners will include soprano Judith Blegen, mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, pianist André Watts, violinists Jaime Laredo and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and many musicians who later join the Orchestra as members.
- 1936 The Orchestra embarks on its **first major tour**—a transcontinental United States tour.

Eugene Ormandy is appointed co-conductor with Stokowski; he is given the title of music director two years later.
- 1939 The Philadelphia Orchestra makes movie history by playing the soundtrack to Disney's innovative **animated film *Fantasia***; this is the third film for which the Orchestra supplied the soundtrack (others are *Big Broadcast of 1937* and *100 Men and a Girl*).
- 1948 The Philadelphia Orchestra is the **first orchestra to appear on nationwide television**, on CBS, edging out Toscanini and the NBC Symphony by 90 minutes.
- 1949 The Philadelphia Orchestra makes its **first transatlantic tour**, to Great Britain.
- 1955 The Philadelphia Orchestra's **first continental European tour** is highlighted by a special trip by Ormandy and the entire Orchestra to visit Finnish composer Jean Sibelius at his country home.
- 1957 The Philadelphia Orchestra **purchases the Academy of Music** in the historic building's centennial year and establishes the annual Academy of Music Anniversary Concert and Ball to fund restoration and improvement projects.
- 1958 The Philadelphia Orchestra makes its **first tour of the Soviet Union** and to Eastern bloc countries.
- 1959 **Dmitri Shostakovich** visits Philadelphia for a conference of Russian composers. During his stay, Eugene Ormandy leads The Philadelphia Orchestra and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich in the U.S. premiere—and premiere recording—of the composer's Cello Concerto No. 1.
- 1962 The Orchestra receives the first of **three Gold Records**, in recognition of record sales of over \$1 million of Columbia's *The Glorious Sound of Christmas*.
- 1963 The Orchestra becomes the **first American orchestra to have a 52-week contract**.

- 1966 The Philadelphia Orchestra's **first tour of Central and South America**.
The Philadelphia Orchestra begins an annual summer residency at the **Saratoga Performing Arts Center** in Saratoga Springs, New York.
- 1967 The Philadelphia Orchestra undertakes its **first tour of Asia**.
- 1973 The Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy's direction becomes the **first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China**.
- 1976 The Philadelphia Orchestra's **summer concerts** move to the newly constructed Robin Hood Dell West in Fairmount Park; the center is renamed in 1979 to honor Fredric R. Mann.
- 1980 Upon the retirement of Eugene Ormandy, **Riccardo Muti** becomes the fifth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra.
- 1983 Muti and The Philadelphia Orchestra present the first in an annual series of **concert operas** during his tenure, with performances of Verdi's *Macbeth*.
- 1986 The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates the **50th anniversary of its transcontinental trips** by touring once more across the United States.
- 1987 The Orchestra performs **six Constitutional Commissions** in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the United States Constitution.
- 1988 The Philadelphia Orchestra under Muti's direction becomes the **first American orchestra to record all nine Beethoven symphonies on compact disc**.
- 1991 Muti conducts the Orchestra in its first **Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert**, televised locally on KYW-TV and nationally on A&E cable.
- 1993 **Wolfgang Sawallisch** becomes The Philadelphia Orchestra's sixth music director.
The Orchestra **returns to mainland China** 20 years after its historic first visit, this time led by Sawallisch.
The Orchestra becomes the **first major orchestra to play at a World Series game**, performing the national anthem.
The Orchestra receives its **largest gift from an individual**—\$12 million from Sidney Kimmel for the campaign to build a new concert hall; he will increase his gift by an additional \$3 million five years later.
- 1994 The Orchestra initiates a new program for pre-school age children entitled "**Sound All Around**."
- 1996 The Philadelphia Orchestra under Sawallisch's direction becomes the **first orchestra to appear in an IMAX film: *Symphony Philadelphia*** at the Franklin Institute.

1997 Sawallisch and The Philadelphia Orchestra perform in closing ceremonies of the **Presidents' Summit for America's Future**, in front of Independence Hall.

The Philadelphia Orchestra becomes the **first major American orchestra to give a live cybercast** of a concert on the internet; people from more than 40 nations log on to hear the concert as the Orchestra introduces its own website, www.philorch.org.

1999 The Philadelphia Orchestra becomes the **first American orchestra to visit Vietnam**.

The **Philadelphia Orchestra Media Institute**, with Water Lily Acoustics, releases its first self-produced recording, a disc of music by Dvořák and Liszt.

The Philadelphia Orchestra announces a special season to commemorate its 100th anniversary—performing only music written during the ensemble's first century, in addition to **eight Centennial Commissions**.

Marking its **100th anniversary**, The Philadelphia Orchestra releases a commemorative 12-CD set (*The Centennial Collection: Historic Broadcasts and Recordings 1917-1998*) and publishes, with Temple University Press, a 250-page celebratory coffee table sized history book (*The Philadelphia Orchestra—A Century of Music*).

2000 *June*: As part of its Centennial events, The Philadelphia Orchestra introduces a new series of free **Neighborhood Concerts**, performing concerts in three neighborhoods of Greater Philadelphia. Neighborhood Concerts become an annual tradition.

November 16: The Philadelphia Orchestra marks its **100th Birthday** with a live concert and telecast from the Academy of Music; the program is seen live in the United States and Japan, and via tape-delay in Europe and other major America cities. The gala concert is but one of six concerts in seven days marking the milestone occasion.

2001 *January*: **Christoph Eschenbach** is announced as the Orchestra's seventh music director; his tenure begins with the 2003–04 season.

December 14-15: The Philadelphia Orchestra performs inaugural concerts in its new home at **The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**.

2002 *June*: The Orchestra and Sawallisch premiere the last of eight Centennial Commissions, **Jennifer Higdon's Concerto for Orchestra**, as hosts of the annual American Symphony Orchestra League Conference.

September: **Wolfgang Sawallisch** begins his tenth and final year as music director with the 2002-03 concert season, which includes a five-week Schumann Festival under Sawallisch's direction.

October 17-19: **Sawallisch** and Music Director-Designate **Christoph Eschenbach** collaborate in **performances of Beethoven's First Piano Concerto** with Sawallisch conducting and Eschenbach as soloist.

November 7: The Orchestra marks the **completion of the Academy of Music Project for the 21st Century**—a decade-long, \$40-million restoration effort—with the reopening of the National Historic Landmark.

- 2003 *May 7-10: Wolfgang Sawallisch's* tenure as music director culminates in performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and publication of *The Philadelphia Orchestra Celebrates Sawallisch: Music Director, 1993-2003*.
- May:* The Orchestra **releases a three-disc set of Schumann recordings**, featuring Wolfgang Sawallisch as both conductor and pianist. A tribute to Sawallisch's decade as music director, these are **the first recordings made in Verizon Hall** at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.
- September:* **Christoph Eschenbach** becomes the Orchestra's seventh music director; **Wolfgang Sawallisch** takes on the title of conductor laureate.
- September:* The Philadelphia Orchestra announces the launch of a **\$125-million endowment campaign**, with over \$75 million of the goal already pledged. Commitments to the campaign, entitled **A Sound, A City, A Civilization**, include a lead gift of **\$50 million from the Annenberg Foundation**, along with other major leadership gifts totaling \$26 million.
- 2004 *January:* The Annenberg Foundation gives **\$15 million to the Academy of Music**. The gift significantly strengthens the portion of the Academy's endowment currently earmarked for the long-term preservation of the treasured Historic Landmark.
- February-March:* Music Director Christoph Eschenbach launches a four-week **Mahler Festival** entitled **"Mahler's World,"** beginning The Philadelphia Orchestra's first complete cycle of Mahler symphonies.
- March:* **The Volunteer Committees for The Philadelphia Orchestra** celebrate the **100th anniversary** of their founding. The volunteers' distinguished history of service to the organization was honored with the presentation of the Philadelphia Orchestra Award.
- October:* **The Philadelphia Orchestra opens Carnegie Hall's 114th season**, featuring Christoph Eschenbach, soprano Renée Fleming, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Later that month the performance is broadcast on PBS' *Great Performances*.
- 2005 *January:* The Philadelphia Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach present a **Late Great Works Festival**, which examines the late works of Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Mahler, Strauss, and Berio.
- February:* Former Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director **Riccardo Muti** returns to lead the Orchestra in a special benefit concert at the specific request of the musicians.
- May:* The Philadelphia Orchestra signs an historic recording agreement with **Ondine Records**. The three-year agreement, which includes a yearly renewable option for an extension, calls for a minimum of three recordings per year, to be taken from live concerts. The first CD is released in November 2005.
- 2006 *April:* The Philadelphia Orchestra returns to national airwaves on a regular basis with a series of **broadcasts airing on SymphonyCast and Performance Today on NPR**.
- May:* The Philadelphia Orchestra inaugurates the Kimmel Center's new **Fred J. Cooper Memorial Pipe Organ**, America's largest concert hall organ. The sold-out inaugural concert features the Orchestra performing Saint-Saëns's "Organ" Symphony with Notre Dame organist Olivier Latry.

September: The Philadelphia Orchestra becomes the first major American orchestra to offer downloads of recent and archival music through its own **Online Music Store**, www.thephiladelphiaorchestra.com.

2007 *January:* The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates the **150th Anniversary of the Academy of Music** with a performance led by Christoph Eschenbach. Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall attend. The concert also features rock icon Rod Stewart.

April: The Philadelphia Orchestra becomes the first major orchestra to multi-cast a concert to large-screen venues through the **Internet2** network.

July: The Philadelphia Orchestra participates in its first residency at the **Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival** in Colorado, performing six concerts in seven days.

October: The Philadelphia Orchestra officially launches its Global Concert Series, multi-casting live concerts to large-screen venues through the **Internet2** network, with an all-Beethoven concert.

2008 *January-February:* The Philadelphia Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach present a month-long **Leonard Bernstein Festival**, celebrating what would have been the 90th birthday of the iconic American composer and conductor. In addition to works by Bernstein, the Festival includes two world premieres by Jennifer Higdon, co-commissioned by the Orchestra.

May-June: The Philadelphia Orchestra returns to China to celebrate the 35th anniversary of its historic 1973 tour. Christoph Eschenbach conducts the tour, which also includes concerts in Japan and Korea.

August: The Philadelphia Orchestra successfully completes its endowment campaign, exceeding its original goal of \$125 million by more than \$5 million.

September: Charles Dutoit begins a four-year tenure as chief conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

2009 *March:* The Philadelphia Orchestra and Charles Dutoit participate in Carnegie Hall's Honor! A Celebration of the African American Cultural Legacy festival, curated by Jessye Norman.

September: The Philadelphia Orchestra performs a Fallen Heroes Tribute Concert at The Mann Center for the Performing Arts, honoring police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The concert raises \$170,000 for the Fraternal Order of Police Survivors' Fund.