

## 2020–21 Season



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the world's preeminent orchestras. It strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust educational initiatives, and commitment to the community, the ensemble is on a path to create an expansive future for classical music, and to further the place of the arts in an open and democratic society.

### **Artistic Leadership**

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his ninth season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. He joins a remarkable list of music directors spanning the Orchestra's 120 seasons: Fritz Scheel, Carl Pohlig, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach. Under this superb guidance The Philadelphia Orchestra has represented an unwavering standard of excellence in the world of classical music—and it continues to do so today.

Yannick's connection to the musicians of the Orchestra has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

### **Your Philadelphia Orchestra**

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, from Verizon Hall to community centers, classrooms to hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with loyal patrons.

The Kimmel Center, for which the Orchestra serves as the founding resident company, has been the ensemble's home since 2001. Since 1957, The Philadelphia Orchestra Association has owned the Academy of Music, a National Historic Landmark and the oldest operating opera house in the nation. From 2002 to 2020, the Orchestra returned annually to the Academy—where it performed for 101 seasons before moving to the Kimmel Center—for the Academy Anniversary Concert and Ball, one of the city's most highly anticipated events. It also returned in January 2020 for its first subscription performances since 2001.

Beyond concerts at the Kimmel Center, the Orchestra also performs for Philadelphia audiences during the summer months at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, as well as in venues across the region, including Penn's Landing, Longwood Gardens, and the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Many of these performances are part of the ensemble's free Neighborhood Concert Series as well as its educational and community partnership programs—creating greater access and engagement with classical music.

### **Commitment to Our Communities**

The Philadelphia Orchestra continues the tradition of educational and community engagement for listeners of all ages across the Delaware Valley—a tradition dating back to 1921 when Leopold Stokowski initiated

concerts exclusively for children. With Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra launched its **HEAR** initiative in 2016 to become a major force for good in every community that it serves.

**HEAR** is a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **H**Health, champions music **E**ducation, enables broad **A**ccess to Orchestra performances, and maximizes impact through **R**esearch. These projects support those experiencing trauma such as homelessness, thousands of public-school students, citizens of Philadelphia who will have opportunities to experience the Orchestra personally, and those not connected with the Orchestra or symphonic music, bridging all ages and backgrounds.

The Orchestra inspires new generations of listeners through programs for children and adults, including Sound All Around (for children ages 3–5), Family Concerts (for children ages 6–12), School Concerts (free for School District of Philadelphia elementary schools), APPLE (**A**ppreciation **P**rogram for **P**hilaSD **L**eaders in **E**ducation, providing free tickets for employees of the Philadelphia School District), and eZseatU (full-time college students can attend an unlimited number of Orchestra concerts for a \$25 annual membership fee).

The Orchestra also engages audiences more deeply in its performances through free PreConcert Conversations and Lecture/Luncheons with guest speakers. In the 2014–15 season The Philadelphia Orchestra, in partnership with Drexel University, launched LiveNote<sup>®</sup>, an interactive concert guide for mobile devices that allows concert-goers to follow along with real-time custom musical, emotional, and historical highlights.

The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, Free Neighborhood Concerts and Free Neighborhood Chamber Concerts, School Concerts, sensory-friendly concerts, open rehearsals, the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program, All City Orchestra Fellowships, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad. The Orchestra's musicians, in their own dedicated roles as teachers, coaches, and mentors, serve a key role in growing young musician talent and a love of classical music, nurturing and celebrating the wealth of musicianship in the Philadelphia region.

### ***An Ambassador at Home and Abroad***

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in New York—a venue that was built for the Orchestra—and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival.

The Orchestra also has a rich history of touring, having first performed outside Philadelphia in the earliest days of its founding. The Philadelphia Orchestra was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China in 1973, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange. Today the Orchestra has multi-year partnerships with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, the Shanghai Media Group, ShanghaiTech University, and the Shanghai Philharmonic.

### ***A Trailblazer in Innovation***

The Philadelphia Orchestra has long pushed the boundaries of convention in the classical music realm. Signature to such a reputation are world or American premieres of such important works as Mahler's Symphony No. 8 ("Symphony of a Thousand"), Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, and Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances. The Philadelphia Orchestra also made movie history by playing the soundtrack to Walt Disney's innovative animated film *Fantasia*.

The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level and has launched new partnerships with Pennsylvania Ballet, FringeArts, Philadanco, Opera Philadelphia, the Curtis Institute of Music, Ridge Theater Company, and Brian Sanders' JUNK, among many others.

As part of its commitment to bringing classical music to audiences wherever they may be, the Orchestra returned to recording under Yannick's leadership with a CD on the Deutsche Grammophon label of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and Leopold Stokowski transcriptions of works by Bach and Stravinsky. An additional seven discs have been released, including Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini and all four piano concertos with pianist Daniil Trifonov, Bernstein's MASS, and Mahler's Symphony No. 8. These continue the Orchestra's remarkable history in this area, having made its first recording in 1917 and amassing an enormous discography in the intervening years.

The Orchestra also makes live recordings available on popular digital music services such as Apple Music, Spotify, and Amazon, among others, and as part of the Listen On Demand section of its website. Beginning in Yannick's inaugural season the Orchestra also returned to the radio airwaves, with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM. In 2017 the Orchestra launched a national radio series on SiriusXM, making it the only American orchestra to provide exclusive content to SiriusXM on a regular basis.

In March 2020, in response to the cancellation of concerts due the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Virtual Philadelphia Orchestra, a portal hosting video and audio of performances, free, on its website and social media platforms. In September 2020 the Orchestra announced Our World NOW, its reimagined fall season of concerts filmed without audiences and presented weekly on its Digital Stage. Our World NOW also includes free offerings: HearTOGETHER, a series on racial and social justice; educational activities; and small ensemble performances from locations throughout the Philadelphia region.

These recent initiatives carry on a legacy that boasts an extraordinary record of media firsts, including being 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).

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

*January 2021*

*Photo by Jessica Griffin*