



NEWS RELEASE

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Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin to Lead The Philadelphia Orchestra on 2019 Tour of China Marking 40 Years of U.S.-China Diplomatic Relations May 16-28, 2019

***Tour highlights include official 40th anniversary concerts in Beijing and Shanghai,
weeklong residency in Beijing, Orchestra debut in Nanjing,
and a performance at the first-ever China International Music Competition***

Concerts and residency activities will foster people-to-people exchange

(Philadelphia, January 29, 2019)—In a time of uncertainty in United States and China relations, The Philadelphia Orchestra will serve as a cultural bridge, fostering meaningful people-to-people exchange through music during its **2019 Tour of China, May 16-28, 2019**. Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** will lead the tour, bringing the “Philadelphia Sound” to Beijing, Tianjin, Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Shanghai, with Shanghai-born pianist **Haochen Zhang** as soloist. The 2019 visit will mark the Orchestra’s 12th tour of China—the most of any American orchestra—and will coincide with 40 years of official U.S.-China diplomatic relations.

Since becoming the first American orchestra to perform in China in 1973, The Philadelphia Orchestra has developed deep, impactful connections throughout the country as a result of concerts and residencies that serve as a bridge for people-to-people exchange in culture and education. The 2019 Tour of China will begin and end with 40th anniversary concerts and residency activities in Beijing and Shanghai, the two Chinese cities that are home to the Orchestra’s longstanding partners: the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, the Shanghai Oriental Art Center, and the Shanghai Media Group Performing Arts Division.

“It is always thrilling to return to China, especially during this special anniversary year,” said Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. “What makes our journeys truly unforgettable are the ways we immerse ourselves in cultural exchange with musicians, young people, and audiences. Our 2019 tour marks the deepening of our relationship

with China and its music-lovers. We look forward to forging ever more meaningful connections between our cultures and communities through the joy and excitement of music.”

“The Philadelphia Orchestra has enjoyed a special, warm connection with China since our historic first visit in 1973,” said President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky. “It is a privilege to contribute another chapter to the storied relationship between our two countries. Yannick and the musicians of the Orchestra remain unwavering in their commitment to sharing the transformative power of music abroad through powerful people-to-people exchange in concert halls, schools, and centers of community.”

The tour will launch with a weeklong residency in Beijing that includes two concerts, an open rehearsal, panel discussions, a side-by-side chamber performance with musicians of the National Centre for the Performing Arts Orchestra, and performances during the first-ever China International Music Competition presented by the China Conservatory of Music. The Orchestra was chosen to perform with each of the three finalists in the last round concert of this prestigious competition, which will award an unprecedented first prize of \$150,000 and representation by Opus 3 Artists in the U.S. and Armstrong Music and Arts in China. For more information about the competition, visit www.cimcompetition.org.

The Orchestra will then perform in Philadelphia’s sister city, Tianjin, before giving a performance in Hangzhou, making its debut in Nanjing, and concluding with a 40th anniversary concert and residency activities in Shanghai.

Tour Concert Schedule

Beijing May 17 at the National Centre for the Performing Arts

Beijing May 18 official anniversary concert at the National Centre for the Performing Arts

Beijing May 20 China International Music Competition at the National Centre for the Performing Arts

Tianjin May 22 at the Tianjin Grand Theatre

Hangzhou May 24 at the Hangzhou Grand Theatre

Nanjing May 25 at the Jiangsu Grand Theatre

Shanghai May 26 official anniversary concert at the Shanghai Oriental Art Center

The Orchestra will perform Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6 (“Pastoral”), famously performed during the 1973 visit; Schubert’s Symphony in C major (“Great”); Sibelius’s Symphony No. 2; Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (with Haochen Zhang); Lu Qiming’s *Hong Qi Song*; and the world premiere of a Tan Dun vocal concerto, *The Deer of Nine Colors* (with soprano Lei Jia).

“It is my honor to welcome The Philadelphia Orchestra back to China,” said United States Ambassador to China Terry Branstad. “It was the first U.S. orchestra to tour China after President Nixon’s historic visit in 1972, and it remains one of the world’s great orchestras and a guiding light among America’s cultural ambassadors. What a treat to see one of America’s great orchestras come share our love for music with the people of China.”

“I was on hand to help The Philadelphia Orchestra pioneer cultural exchange with China in 1973,” said Ambassador Nicholas Platt, who remains a senior adviser to the Orchestra. “Maestro Ormandy and the musicians made history and a lasting impression on the Chinese people. Today, when growing tension and disagreement mar other aspects of the U.S.-China relationship, the Orchestra’s 40-plus years of trusted partnership are helping to keep the two peoples together.”

Residency Activities

The Philadelphia Orchestra’s influential residency program has created a two-way exchange that showcases artistic excellence on stage in concerts and demonstrates an enduring commitment to offstage work in education and engagement. Whether through lessons in schools, performances in hospitals, master classes, events with diplomats and business leaders, or pop-up community performances, the Orchestra and its partners have connected musicians with their communities in meaningful ways.

Major education and engagement activities are being planned in Beijing and Shanghai for the Orchestra’s 2019 Tour of China, including a special event at the Jianfu Palace Garden in the Forbidden City; a partnership with the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation and the National Centre for the Performing Arts to present community activities in Beijing; and activities with the Shanghai Media Group and Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra at ShanghaiTech University. The Orchestra is working closely with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai, and the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries on these activities and others to be announced at a later date.

The Philadelphia Orchestra’s History in China

The Philadelphia Orchestra has a long and distinguished touring history throughout the world and is one of the most-traveled American symphonic ensembles. In 1973, under the direction of Eugene Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra became the first American orchestra to perform in China at the special request of President Richard Nixon. Of the musicians who participated in the historic 1973 visit, four remain in the Orchestra today: violinists Davyd Booth and Booker Rowe, violist Renard Edwards, and double bassist Michael Shahan. Twenty years after its first tour of China, the full Orchestra returned in 1993, and again in 1996, 2001, 2008, and 2010, when it helped to open the World Expo in Shanghai, prior to return visits in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017.

Supporters

The Philadelphia Orchestra’s 2019 Tour of China is made possible through the generous support of valued sponsors and partners. Morgan Lewis is the Official Legal Partner in China. Temple University is the Orchestra’s Official Education Partner in China. White & Williams, LLP is sponsoring the performance in Tianjin. United Airlines is the official airline of the Orchestra in China. The Philadelphia Convention & Visitor’s Bureau is returning for a sixth year as a Supporting Sponsor of the tour. Tour support is also provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and Team PA.

About [The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

CONTACTS:

Ashley Berke
215.893.1939
aberke@philorch.org

Amanda N. Olszewski
215.893.3136
aolszewski@philorch.org

Miao Di, Ruder Finn Asia
+86-21-53831188-6657
di.miao@rfcomms.com