



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Philadelphia Orchestra Celebrates Charles Dutoit as He Concludes His Tenure as Chief Conductor

(Philadelphia, May 1, 2012)—The Philadelphia Orchestra's internationally renowned chief conductor, Charles Dutoit, leads the Orchestra in three weeks of concerts to mark the end of his four-year tenure with the ensemble. Beginning with the 2012-13 season, the Orchestra honors Mr. Dutoit with the title of conductor laureate.

Dutoit has been a vital part of the Orchestra family since his 1980 debut at the Robin Hood Dell West (now the Mann Center for the Performing Arts). Since that time he has held varying posts with the Orchestra: From 1990 to 1999 he served as artistic director of the Orchestra's summer series at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts; from 1990 to 2010 he was artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestra's annual residency at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center; and from 2008 to 2012 he has been chief conductor of the Orchestra. Over the years, Dutoit has been lauded for his mastery of the music of France and Russia, but he has also shown a grasp of an enormous variety of repertoire, from Mahler and Strauss to Krzysztof Penderecki and James MacMillan.

The first of the concerts honoring Dutoit's tenure, May 4 and 5, include four luminous works exemplifying two centuries of music originating from Paris, the City of Light: Mozart's universally recognized Symphony No. 31, known as the "Paris"; Saint-Saëns's Violin Concerto No. 3 featuring Concertmaster David Kim; Debussy's Symphonic Fragments from *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, originally composed as incidental music for the play by Gabriele d'Annunzio; and Scriabin's *The Poem of Ecstasy*, his most well-known piece about the most evolved human emotion.

On May 10 and 12, Dutoit will conduct a concert version of Richard Strauss's opera *Elektra* for the first time on the Verizon Hall stage. The Philadelphia Orchestra and vocalists Eva Johansson (Elektra), Melanie Diener (Chrysothemis), Jane Henschel (Klytämnestra), Ain Anger (Orest), and Siegfried Jerusalem (Aegisth), in addition to a large cast of soloists, will take the audience through the vocally demanding score. The story is an adaptation of Sophocles's classic Greek tragedy about the fall of the house of Atreus, in which Elektra seeks revenge against her mother and stepfather for the murder of her father, Agamemnon. The music for this progressive and

daunting work challenges the limits of harmony and polyphony, and yet contains passages of immense lyrical beauty. Librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal added to the musical imagery with text that creates a mesmerizing psychological exploration of a family in distress. Conducting *Elektra* will be one of the highlights of Dutoit's tenure because as he said, "Strauss's orchestral writing is some of opera's most powerful and demanding, and it deserves to be heard in its full glory."

Dutoit welcomes world-renowned pianist Maria João Pires and the Philadelphia Singers Chorale for the final concert series, May 17-19. In a rare U.S. appearance, and Orchestra debut, Pires will perform Chopin's virtuosic Piano Concerto No. 2. The Philadelphia Singers Chorale joins the Orchestra for Ravel's complete *Daphnis and Chloé*, a work originally written for the Ballets Russes, one of the composer's greatest works. The concert opens with Glinka's Overture to *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, which contains the composer's trademark mix of Western lyricism with Russian national flavoring.

"Over the past 30 years Charles Dutoit has become a boundless artistic leader and unique friend of the Orchestra," said Philadelphia Orchestra President and CEO Allison Vulgamore. "His steadfast leadership has showcased not only his own extraordinary talents, but also the outstanding musicians of our great Orchestra, and his consummate artistry and musicianship have reaped rich rewards for music lovers in Philadelphia and around the world. Our audiences, Orchestra, and Board have enjoyed these capstone years of Charles' role as chief conductor. Here's to enjoying his return as conductor laureate."

ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

Renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for an unrivaled legacy of "firsts" in music-making, The Philadelphia Orchestra remains one of the preeminent orchestras in the world.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has cultivated an extraordinary history of artistic leaders in its 112 seasons, including music directors Fritz Scheel, Carl Pohlig, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach, as well as the Orchestra's current chief conductor, Charles Dutoit. In the 2012-13 season, Yannick Nézet-Séguin becomes the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Named music director designate in 2010, Nézet-Séguin brings a vision that extends beyond symphonic music and into the vivid world of opera and choral music.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. The Orchestra also performs for Philadelphia audiences at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, Penn's Landing, and other regional venues. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association continues to own the Academy of Music—a National Historic Landmark—as it has since 1957.

The ensemble maintains an important tradition of presenting educational programs for local audiences as well. Today the Orchestra executes myriad education and community partnership programs, notably its Neighborhood Concert Series, Sound All Around and Family Concerts, eZseatU, and more.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, The Philadelphia Orchestra touches the lives of countless music lovers around the world. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying a three-week residency at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in New York and a strong partnership with the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

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

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