



# N E W S R E L E A S E

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2012

### **The Philadelphia Orchestra Joins with Play On, Philly!**

**Internationally renowned guest conductor Sir Simon Rattle to lead students from St. Francis de Sales School in performance to open Orchestra concert on Saturday, April 28**

*(Philadelphia, April 24, 2012)*—The Philadelphia Orchestra partners with Play On, Philly! (POP), an El Sistema-inspired education and social initiative, to provide young West Philadelphia musicians with their debut Verizon Hall performance on Saturday, April 28. Under the direction of internationally renowned guest conductor Sir Simon Rattle, the POP Symphony Orchestra will give a brief performance of themes from the fourth movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 1 to open the concert, after which the Orchestra's regular subscription concert will begin with Brahms's Symphony No. 3. The students, and their parents, will become acquainted with Verizon Hall, Mr. Rattle, and Philadelphia Orchestra musicians at a regular Orchestra rehearsal earlier in the week.

Play on Philly! was inspired by Venezuela's nationwide El Sistema program, which seeks to use music as a vehicle for social innovation for children who would not otherwise have access to music education.

Founded by Curtis graduate Stanford Thompson in 2011 at St. Francis de Sales School, POP provides 110 students a tuition-free opportunity to master a standard orchestra instrument during daily three-hour practice sessions taught by some of the region's most talented teaching artists. Mr. Thompson believes that through the collective practice of music, an orchestra can be a powerful model for an environment of opportunity, academic and life skills development, social organization, and community building.

As chief conductor and artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic, Mr. Rattle has participated in creative educational programming and with the Philharmonic has had close ties to the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, playing an active role in the development of the El Sistema program. By working together with The Philadelphia Orchestra and POP, he is helping both organizations fulfill their

commitment to the Philadelphia community and highlight the importance of music education in the lives of young people.

For more information about Play On, Philly! please visit <http://www.playonphilly.org/>.

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## **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 will become 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 Philadelphia Orchestra also has an important tradition of presenting educational programs for local audiences—a tradition dating back to 1921 when Leopold Stokowski initiated concerts exclusively for children. Today the Orchestra reaches Philadelphia-area families, teachers, students, and children through a multitude of education and community partnership programs. From Sound All Around (designed for children ages 3-5) to Family Concerts (aimed at children ages 6-12 and their families) to eZseatU (a membership program for full-time college students), The Philadelphia Orchestra seeks to introduce orchestral music to a new generation of listeners through these special programs. Further, the Orchestra aims to engage adult audiences more deeply in its performances through learning programs, including free PreConcert Conversations, which occur before every subscription concert, and Lecture/Luncheons with guest speakers.

In an effort to connect more directly with the youth of Philadelphia, the Orchestra has implemented the Billy Joel School Concert Program, which improves access to the Orchestra’s School Concerts for underserved city schoolchildren and serves approximately 90 elementary and middle schools chosen from within the School District of Philadelphia. The Orchestra’s School Partnership Program also offers students incomparable exposure and access to The Philadelphia Orchestra and its musicians inside the classrooms of five selected schools in the Philadelphia region. The program’s teaching artists work side by side with classroom teachers using curriculum and materials created by the Orchestra’s education department. Finally, The Philadelphia Orchestra collaborates with schools interested in having Orchestra musicians work with their students through the Musicians in the Schools program. These school visits take

the form of assembly programs, performances or demonstrations, clinics, and master classes or sectionals, and generally involve a solo musician.

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](http://www.philorch.org).

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