
Philharmonia

Philharmonia Orchestra

The Philharmonia Orchestra creates thrilling performances for a global audience.

The Philharmonia was founded in 1945 by EMI producer Walter Legge, originally as a recording orchestra for the growing home audio market. The Orchestra has worked with a who's who of 20th- and 21st-century music. Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini and Riccardo Muti are just a few of the great artists to be associated with the Philharmonia, and the Orchestra has premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Errollyn Wallen, Kaija Saariaho and many others. The Philharmonia has always pioneered the use of technology to reach broader audiences for orchestral music. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the Philharmonia continued to create outstanding performances designed to experience online, playing for lifelong fans and first-time listeners in Brazil, Sudan, Indonesia, India, and high above the Arctic Circle in Norway.

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, in the heart of London, has been the Philharmonia's home since 1995. The Orchestra also has residencies at venues and festivals across England: Bedford Corn Exchange, De Montfort Hall in Leicester, The Marlowe in Canterbury, Anvil Arts in Basingstoke, the Three Choirs Festival in the West of England, and Garsington Opera. Central to all these residencies is a Learning & Engagement programme that empowers people to engage with, and participate in, orchestral music.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity. The Orchestra relies on income from a wide range of sources to deliver our programme. The Philharmonia is proud to be supported by Arts Council England, many generous supporters, and Trusts and Foundations. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the Orchestra received grants from the Cultural Recovery Fund, along with support from individual donors, corporate sponsors, and audience members. This enabled the Orchestra to support its players, and to create new online experiences for both audiences and Learning & Engagement project participants. In the US, the Orchestra's American Patrons generously support the Philharmonia Foundation, a US-registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation.

Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali is the Philharmonia's new Principal Conductor, the sixth person to hold that title in the Orchestra's history. Previously Principal Guest Conductor for four years, Santtu is known for his expressive, balletic conducting and irrepressible energy. Santtu launches his tenure as Principal Conductor with *Human/Nature: Music for a Precious Planet*, a wide-ranging series exploring music inspired by the natural world and the role of the arts in addressing environmental issues.

In January 2021 the Orchestra announced a new Artist in Residence collaboration with House of Absolute. This collective of multidisciplinary artists works in hip hop and other contemporary dance styles, spoken word, writing, music production, and visual art. Charismatic and boundary-busting musician Pekka Kuusisto is Featured Artist in the 2021/22 season. He performs as both violinist and conductor, and has programmed two concerts in the free *Music of Today* series.

The Philharmonia's international reputation derives in part from its extraordinary 77-year recording legacy, which in the last ten years has been built on by pioneering work with digital technology. Two giant audio-visual walk-through installations have introduced hundreds of thousands of people to the symphony orchestra. VR experiences, placing the viewer at the heart of the orchestra, have travelled around the world. In 2021, in a consortium led by the Royal Shakespeare Company and funded by the UK government's *Audience of the Future* programme, the Orchestra presented a new online interactive theatrical and musical experience, *Dream*. The iPad app, *The Orchestra*, has sold tens of thousands of copies, and the Philharmonia has won four Royal Philharmonic Society awards for its digital projects and audience engagement work.

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The Philharmonia releases live recordings of signature concerts with Signum Records, and its two most recent albums with Santtu-Matias Rouvali, along with the quality and breadth of our work during the pandemic, led to a Gramophone nomination for Orchestra of the Year. In 2020 Warner Classics released *Philharmonia: Birth of a Legend*, a 24-CD set of the orchestra's early recordings marking its 75th anniversary; and the Orchestra worked with the BBC and the Otto Klemperer Film Foundation to release a box set of Blu-ray discs of Klemperer's *Beethoven Symphony* cycle, filmed live at the Royal Festival Hall in 1970. The Philharmonia is the go-to orchestra for many film and videogame composers in the UK and Hollywood, and its music-making has been experienced by millions of cinema-goers and gamers. It has recorded around 150 soundtracks, with film credits stretching back to 1947.

The Philharmonia has over 1m listeners each month on Spotify, and a vibrant YouTube channel with over 125,000 subscribers. The channel features free performances specially created for online viewing; films introducing the instruments of the orchestra; interviews with artists; and in-depth documentaries accompanying landmark series. The Philharmonia is Classic FM's Orchestra on Tour and broadcasts extensively on BBC Radio 3.

Throughout its history, the Philharmonia has toured across Europe, Asia and America. In the 2021/22 season the Orchestra performs in Romania, Spain, Finland, Greece and Germany. In January 2020 a residency at Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre with Esa-Pekka Salonen featured concerts that were voted the 'Best of 2020' by Japanese music magazine *Ongaku No Tomo*, and the Orchestra's VR Sound Stage was open for free to the Tokyo public. The Orchestra's previous touring projects include a trip to the Canary Islands with Santtu-Matias Rouvali (January 2020); a major US tour (March 2019) with Salonen; and a tour to Colombia (January 2019) that included concerts, a Virtual Reality installation and education work with young musicians.

The Philharmonia's Emerging Artists programme (including the MMSF Instrumental Fellowship programme, which aims to increase diversity within the classical music industry) develops the next generation of instrumentalists, composers and conductors; and through new commissions and close associations with contemporary composers, aims to help build the classical canon of tomorrow.

A team of 80 outstanding musicians from 16 countries, the Philharmonia looks forward to bringing music into your life, through great concerts and ground-breaking projects, for the next 75 years and beyond.

philharmonia.co.uk

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