

philharmonia orchestra

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Short biography

The Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies, music education and the use of new technologies in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra is at the heart of British musical life.

Today, the Philharmonia has the greatest claim of any orchestra to be the UK's National Orchestra. It is committed to presenting the same quality, live music-making in venues throughout the country as it brings to London and the great concert halls of the world. In 2008/09 the Orchestra is performing more than 200 concerts, as well as presenting chamber performances by the Soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra, and recording scores for films, CDs and computer games. For more than 13 years now the Orchestra's work has been underpinned by its much admired UK and International Residency Programme, which began in 1995 with the launch of its residencies at the Bedford Corn Exchange and London's Southbank Centre. During 2008/09 the Orchestra not only performs more than 45 concerts at Southbank Centre's refurbished Royal Festival Hall, but also celebrates its 12th year as Resident Orchestra of De Montfort Hall in Leicester, its ninth year as Orchestra in Partnership at the Anvil in Basingstoke and the second year of a new residency in Kent and the Thames Gateway, based in Canterbury. The Orchestra's extensive touring schedule this season also includes performances in more than 40 of the finest international concert halls in Europe and the Far East, many of them as part of Salonen's major project, *City of Dreams*, exploring the music and culture of Vienna between 1900 and 1935.

Throughout its history, the Philharmonia Orchestra has been committed to finding new ways to bring its top quality live performance to audiences worldwide, and to using new technologies to achieve this. Many millions of people since 1945 have enjoyed their first experience of classical music through a Philharmonia recording, and in 2008/9 audiences can engage with the Orchestra through webcasts, podcasts, downloads, computer games and film scores as well as through its unique interactive music education website launched in 2005, The Sound Exchange (www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange), which is now visited by almost 2 million people a year. In 2005 the Philharmonia became the first ever classical music organisation to be shortlisted for a BT Digital Music Award, and in the same year the Orchestra presented the first ever concert webcast. Now more than 3500 people a month download free monthly Philharmonia video podcasts, which include artist interviews and features on repertoire and projects; these films are also watched by more than 60,000 people on YouTube. Recording and broadcasting both continue to play a significant part in the Orchestra's activities: since 2003 the Philharmonia has enjoyed a major partnership with Classic FM, as The Classic FM Orchestra on Tour, as well as continuing to broadcast on BBC Radio 3.