

philharmonia orchestra

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Full 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 2013/14 the Orchestra is performing more than 160 concerts, as well as recording scores for films, CDs and computer games. Under Esa-Pekka Salonen a series of flagship, visionary projects – *City of Dreams: Vienna 1900 -1935* (2009), Bill Viola's *Tristan und Isolde* (2010), *Infernal Dance: Inside the World of Béla Bartók* (2011) and *Woven Words*, a celebration of Witold Lutosławski's centenary year – have been critically acclaimed.

For 19 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 2013/14 the Orchestra not only performs more than 35 concerts at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, but also celebrates its 17th year as Resident Orchestra of De Montfort Hall in Leicester and its 13th year as Orchestra in Partnership at The Anvil in Basingstoke; and enters the third year of its residencies at the new Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury and the Three Choirs Festival. The Orchestra's extensive touring schedule this season also includes concerts in Russia, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, France and Spain with Esa-Pekka Salonen and two weeks at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris performing Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* under Jérémie Rhorer.

During its first six decades, the Philharmonia Orchestra has collaborated with most of the great classical artists of the 20th century. Conductors associated with the Orchestra include Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Toscanini, Cantelli, Karajan and Giulini. Otto Klemperer was the first of many outstanding Principal Conductors, and other great names have included Lorin Maazel (Associate Principal Conductor), Sir Charles Mackerras (Principal Guest Conductor), Riccardo Muti (Principal Conductor and Music Director), Kurt Sanderling (Conductor Emeritus) and Giuseppe Sinopoli (Music Director). As well as Esa-Pekka Salonen, current titled conductors are Christoph von Dohnányi (Honorary Conductor for Life) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (Conductor Laureate).

The Philharmonia Orchestra continues to pride itself on its long-term collaborations with the finest musicians of our day, supporting new as well as established artists. This policy extends into the Orchestra itself, where many of the players have solo or chamber music careers alongside their work with the Orchestra. The Philharmonia's Martin Musical Scholarship Fund has for many years supported talented musicians at the start of their careers, including an Orchestral Award, which allows two young players every year to gain performing experience within the Orchestra.

The Orchestra is also recognised for its innovative programming policy, at the heart of which is a commitment to performing and commissioning new works by leading composers, among them the Artistic Director of its *Music of Today* series, Unsuk Chin.

Since 1945 the Philharmonia Orchestra has commissioned more than 100 new works from composers including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Mark-Anthony Turnage and James MacMillan.

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 2013/14 audiences can engage with the Orchestra through computer games, film scores and through its YouTube and Vimeo channels featuring the Orchestra's award-winning documentary films, which have been watched by more than 2 million people worldwide.

In May 2010 the Orchestra's digital 'virtual Philharmonia Orchestra' project, RE-RITE, won both the RPS Audience Development and Creative Communication Awards, and after appearances in London, Leicester and Lisbon, toured to Dortmund in November 2011, Tianjin in China in April/May 2012, Izmir (Turkey) in June 2012, and in 2013 to Hamburg and the Salzburg Festival. RE-RITE, devised with Esa-Pekka Salonen, secured the Philharmonia's position as a digital innovator and its follow-up audio-visual installation to RE-RITE, *Universe of Sound: The Planets*, premiered at the Science Museum from May to August 2012, receiving more than 67,000 visitors. It won the 2012 RPS Award for Audiences and Engagement. Following touring appearances in Birmingham and Canterbury in 2013, *Universe of Sound* will form part of a major new audience development and education initiative, *iOrchestra*, on the South West Peninsula in 2014 and 2015, alongside RE-RITE and Music Lab, a new mobile 'pop-up' installation.

Recording and broadcasting both continue to play a significant part in the Orchestra's activities, notably through its partnership with Signum Records, releasing new live recordings of Philharmonia performances with its key conductors. 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.

www.philharmonia.co.uk

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