

# LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

## Short History

The Los Angeles Philharmonic is defining the concept of a "21<sup>st</sup> century orchestra" with innovation and exuberance under the dynamic leadership of Esa-Pekka Salonen, music director since 1992 and a distinguished composer in his own right. Now in its 88<sup>th</sup> season, the Philharmonic is recognized as one of the world's outstanding orchestras, and is received enthusiastically by audiences and critics alike. Both at home and abroad, journalists agree that, "...in 2006, [it] tops the list of America's premier orchestras and serves as a lesson in how to update an august cultural institution without cheapening its work." (*The New York Times*)

This view is shared by more than one million listeners who experience live performances by the Philharmonic each year. The Philharmonic demonstrates a breadth and depth of programming unrivaled by other orchestras and cultural institutions, performing or presenting nearly 300 concerts throughout the year at its two iconic venues: Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl, a popular summer tradition since 1922. The orchestra's involvement with Los Angeles also extends far beyond regular symphony concerts in a concert hall, embracing schools, churches, and neighborhood centers of a vastly diverse community.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic was founded by William Andrews Clark, Jr., a multi-millionaire and amateur musician, who established the city's first permanent symphony orchestra in 1919. Walter Henry Rothwell became its first music director, serving until 1927 and, since then, nine renowned conductors have served in that capacity: Georg Schnéevoigt (1927-29); Artur Rodzinski (1929-33); Otto Klemperer (1933-39); Alfred Wallenstein (1943-56); Eduard van Beinum (1956-59); Zubin Mehta (1962-78); Carlo Maria Giulini (1978-84); André Previn (1985-89); and, since the 1992-93 season, Esa-Pekka Salonen.

In October 2003, the doors to one of the world's most celebrated venues - the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall - were opened and the Los Angeles Philharmonic took the stage in its new home, which has become known not only as a local cultural landmark, but also as "...a sensational place to hear music... In richness of sound, it has few rivals on the international scene, and in terms of visual drama it may have no rival at all." (*The New Yorker*) Praise for both the design and acoustics of the hall has been effusive, and the glistening curved steel exterior of the 293,000-square-foot Walt Disney Concert Hall embodies the energy, imagination, and creative spirit of the city of Los Angeles and its orchestra.

Inspired to consider new directions, Salonen and the Philharmonic aim to find programming that remains faithful to tradition, yet also seeks new ground, new audiences, and ways to enhance the symphonic music experience. During its 30-week winter subscription season of 110 performances at Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Philharmonic creates festivals, artist residencies, and other thematic programs designed to delve further into certain artists' or composers' work. Recent projects such as *Minimalist Jukebox*, the *Tristan Project*, and the upcoming *Shadow of Stalin*, as well as the annual *On Location* artist residencies, are representative of the originality that defines this orchestra.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic's commitment to the presentation of music of our time is evident in its subscription concerts, in its exhilarating Green Umbrella series, and through its extensive commissioning initiatives. Celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this season (2006-07), the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group is devoted exclusively to performing compositions on the cutting edge of the repertoire, and attracts leading composers and performers of contemporary music.

LAPhil Presents, the presentation arm of the Association, expands the cultural offerings by producing concert series by distinguished visiting artists in recital, jazz, world music, special holiday concerts, organ recitals, baroque variations, songbook, and visiting orchestra performances.

Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonic have led the way into the digital age, being the first orchestra to offer live concerts for download exclusively online within a week of the performance. Through a partnership with Deutsche Grammophon, DG Concerts has brought Philharmonic concerts of music by Beethoven, Anders Hillborg, and Lutoslawski, as well as Reich, Pärt, and Andriessen to iTunes in 2006, with additional concerts scheduled during future seasons. In addition, DG recently (October 2006) released Salonen and the orchestra's first live recording in Walt Disney Concert Hall, featuring music of Bartók, Mussorgsky, and one of its signature works, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.