

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

History

Overview

The Los Angeles Philharmonic, which launches its 2006/07 season – its 88th – in September 2006 at Walt Disney Concert Hall, has developed steadily in artistic stature and prominence since it was founded in 1919. Today, under the dynamic leadership of Esa-Pekka Salonen, who became the orchestra's tenth music director in 1992, 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, "...[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." (*New York Times*)

This is a view shared by the more than one million Southern Californians who experience performances by the Los Angeles Philharmonic each year. There is a 30-week winter subscription season at Walt Disney Concert Hall, and a 12-week summer festival at the legendary Hollywood Bowl, where "Music Under the Stars" has been a popular 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 huge and vastly diverse community.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic owes its birth to 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 start of the 1992-93 season, Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Programming

To the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a symphony orchestra is not merely a cultural museum. This fundamental belief is evident in the Philharmonic's commitment to the presentation of music of our time in its regular subscription concerts as well as in its exhilarating Green Umbrella concerts, which feature the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group. These concerts are devoted exclusively to compositions on the cutting edge of the repertoire and attract leading composers and performers of contemporary music.

The Philharmonic has developed close, vibrant relationships with such composers as John Adams, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Oliver Knussen, György Ligeti, and Kaija Saariaho. In recognition of this dedication, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) has presented more than 18 awards to the Philharmonic, most recently in 2002. In May 1996, the New Music Group received the Laurel Leaf Award from the American Composers Alliance. Since 1981, the Los Angeles Philharmonic has had three distinguished Composers-in-Residence: William Kraft, John Harbison and Steven Stucky. Stucky currently serves as the Philharmonic's Consulting Composer for New Music.

An integral part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's repertoire, chamber music is performed each season by members of the orchestra and distinguished guest artists. In addition to its regular winter and summer orchestral concerts, chamber music and new music series, the Los Angeles Philharmonic adds even more to Southern California's cultural environment with the presentation of distinguished artists in recital, as part of the Colburn Celebrity Series.

In addition, since October 1990 the Philharmonic Association has supported an exciting new orchestra separate from the Los Angeles Philharmonic – the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. With principal conductor John Mauceri, the orchestra presents widely popular concerts at the Hollywood Bowl and has produced 14 best-selling CDs for Philips Classics. Mauceri and his orchestra celebrated their 15th anniversary together in 2005.

Touring

Since 1992, Salonen and the Philharmonic have made nine critically acclaimed international tours. In August of 1992, the Philharmonic became the first American orchestra in residence for opera and concerts at the Salzburg Festival, winning international praise for their performances of Messiaen's monumental opera, *St. François d'Assise*, in a new production directed by Peter Sellars. The critical response at Salzburg was repeated the following spring of 1993, when the Philharmonic served as resident orchestra at the Lucerne Easter Festival.

In 1994, the Philharmonic's schedule included three tours taking them to Japan and Taiwan in March, to six major European music festivals in August and September, and to Mexico City in November. The Philharmonic was in residence at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris for a highly acclaimed series of opera and concert performances in 1996 and returned to Europe for a successful visit to the Canary Islands Music Festival and to Spain in 1997, and for a European festivals tour in 1998. In 1999, the Philharmonic

performed two concerts in Mexico City. Earlier in 2002, Salonen and the Philharmonic returned Europe in for a three-week summer festival tour to festivals in Lucerne, Edinburgh, London, Brussels, and Helsinki, and returned to Edinburgh in 2003 to be the orchestra-in-residence at the festival. In March 2005, Salonen takes the Philharmonic to Cologne for a week-long residency there. During most seasons, the Philharmonic performs a series of concerts in New York and other cities on the East Coast of the United States.

The Philharmonic's distinguished touring history began in 1956 with a 10-week, 58-concert U.S. State Department-sponsored "goodwill journey" through Asia under the direction of Alfred Wallenstein. Eleven years later, Zubin Mehta led the Philharmonic on its second State Department tour, playing 39 concerts in 23 cities around the world. In 1974, the Philharmonic became the first American orchestra to perform at the famous BBC Prom Concerts at London's Royal Albert Hall. Over the past two decades, the orchestra has continued to perform frequently in Europe's major musical centers.

Community Outreach

Challenged by the unique character of Southern California, with its sprawling geography and ethnic diversity, the Los Angeles Philharmonic constantly redefines the traditional role of the symphony orchestra. Recognizing that an orchestra must be a cultural resource responsive to the whole community, it has created innovative programs whose purpose is to contribute to a more cohesive, livable community, one that serves all the cultures and nationalities calling Southern California home.

As part of this effort the Philharmonic has presented, since May 1991, Neighborhood Concerts -- often free of charge -- in churches, schools, and other venues throughout Los Angeles' multi-ethnic communities. These popular, informal concerts generate spirited interaction between musicians and audience and are programmed jointly by the Philharmonic and their hosts.

Community Concerts by the Los Angeles Philharmonic include annual concert series by the orchestra in Costa Mesa, San Diego, and Santa Barbara, as well as individual concerts in other major concert venues.

Educational Initiatives

One of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's most important goals is to attract both younger and more diverse audiences, in part by demystifying the concert ritual and making the classical music experience more accessible. To do this, the Philharmonic has created a wide-ranging series of informal and informative programs that both educate and entertain audiences of all ages.

An important initiative which began in September 2001 is the Los Angeles Philharmonic School Partners Program, an intensive residency with five Los Angeles County public elementary schools and three middle and high schools. On Saturday mornings, Toyota Symphonies for Youth concerts reach children ages six to twelve with pre-concert activities, workshops, and hands-on displays. Returning for its fifth season is the Symphonies For Schools program, for 4th through 12th graders who will have been prepared for the performances in their classrooms and bussed to the concert from school. Since 1969, the Philharmonic has also presented Open House (now SummerSounds) at the Hollywood Bowl, six weeks of multi-cultural arts performances and workshops for children, who also attend Philharmonic rehearsals at the Bowl and frequently interact with the performers.

Every subscription concert and Green Umbrella concert is preceded by Upbeat Live, a popular pre-concert event related to the program. Led by music experts – composers, educators, or members of the Philharmonic – the first program of its kind presented by a major American orchestra – consistently attracts up to 1,000 concert-goers at each session.

Recordings

Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Philharmonic recently recorded Bartok's Suite from *Miraculous Mandarin*, Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* (original version), and one of their signature works, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* for the Deutsche Grammophon label, for future release. Prior to this, the Philharmonic recorded exclusively for Sony Classical, for which the most recent release is Wynton Marsalis' *All Rise*, with Salonen leading the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and singers. Other recordings include the 1999 Grammy-nominated release of CD by Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas, which received the Diapason d'or, a 1999 release of Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 with pianist Yefim Bronfman and Thomas Stevens (trumpet) and 2000 releases of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with Plácido Domingo and Bo Skovhus, a collection of Bach transcriptions, and the 2002 disc of Esa-Pekka Salonen's compositions, including the critically hailed *LA Variations*.

Released on the Nonesuch label is John Adams' *Naive and Sentimental Music*, a Los Angeles Philharmonic co-commission, which received its highly acclaimed world premiere at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in February 1999.