

# PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

## History

For more than 100 years, the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** has been an essential part of Pittsburgh's cultural landscape. The PSO prides itself in artistic excellence, a rich history of the world's finest conductors and musicians, a strong commitment to the Pittsburgh region, and the cultivation of its family of constituents and households. This tradition is furthered with great anticipation this Fall, when Austrian conductor Manfred Honeck assumes the position of Music Director with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, beginning in September 2008.

---

**"The Pittsburgh Symphony's mix of American bravura with European warmth is a quality that makes them the finest orchestra in the U.S." - *The Guardian*, London**

**"Based on the strength of its last trip to Washington, the PSO must be ranked among the very best orchestras in the country."  
- *The Washington Post***

---

Heading the list of internationally recognized conductors to have led the PSO is Victor Herbert, Music Director between 1898 and 1904, who influenced the initial development of the PSO. Preceding Herbert was Frederic Archer (1896-1899), the first Pittsburgh Orchestra Conductor. Critical to the Orchestra's solidification as an American institution in the late 1930s was Maestro Otto Klemperer. Conductors prior to Klemperer were Emil Paur (1904-1910), Elias Breeskin (1926-1930) and Antonio Modarelli (1930-1937). From 1938 to 1948 the Orchestra embarked on a new phase of its history, taking its first foreign tour and making its first commercial recording under the dynamic directorship of Fritz Reiner.

The PSO's high standard of excellence was maintained and enhanced through the inspired leadership of William Steinberg during his quarter-century as Music Director between 1952 and 1976. André Previn (1976-1984) led the Orchestra to new heights through tours, recordings and television, including the PBS series "Previn and the Pittsburgh." Lorin Maazel began his relationship with the PSO in 1984 as Music Consultant but later served as Music Director from 1988-1996, molding the PSO into one of the finest orchestras in the world. As Music Director from 1997-2004, Mariss Jansons furthered the artistic growth of the orchestra, and upon his departure, the PSO created an innovative leadership model with Artistic Advisor Sir Andrew Davis, with Principal Guest Conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier and Endowed Guest Conductor Chair Marek Janowski. These three conductors were the primary artistic leadership for the Orchestra until January 2007, when the PSO selected Honeck to take the reins at the start of the 2008-2009 season.

---

**“For the musicians, the past 12 months have been a banner year. From the Proms to the Pope, they have served as cultural exporters, connecting the name of Pittsburgh to excellence overseas.”**

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* voted the Musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra its No. 1 Cultural Force in Pittsburgh for 2004, a list of Top 50 Cultural Forces in the city compiled each year by the newspaper.

---

With a long and distinguished history of touring, both domestically and overseas, the PSO has earned critical acclaim for each tour abroad beginning in the early 1900s, solidifying its ranking as a world-class orchestra. Beginning with a 1947 appearance in Mexico, the more than 30 international tours include 18 European tours, seven trips to the Far East, and two to South America. The Far East Tour in 2002 marked first-time concerts for the Orchestra in Kuala Lumpur and Australia. Reaching a global audience, the PSO was the first American orchestra to perform at the Vatican in January 2004 for the late Pope John Paul II —part of the Pontiff’s Silver Jubilee celebration, helping to spread a lifelong message of unity among all faiths. Most recently, the PSO helped mark the beginning of a year-long celebration of Pittsburgh’s 250th anniversary, completing a three-week-long Pittsburgh 250 Ambassador Tour in Europe. Touring 13 cities in six countries, the PSO was accompanied by the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, which promoted the Pittsburgh region to international corporations.

The Orchestra also enjoys an equally distinguished record of domestic tours, which over the years have showcased the orchestra in all of America’s major cities and music centers, including frequent performances at Carnegie Hall in New York and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In recent seasons, the PSO has toured Florida, the Midwest and the West Coast, as well.

The PSO has achieved a long and illustrious reputation for its recordings and radio concerts. As early as 1936, the PSO has been broadcast coast-to-coast, receiving increased national attention in 1982 through its series of network radio broadcasts by Public Radio International, produced by WQED-FM 89.3 in Pittsburgh.

---

**“Vitality, vibrancy and the most vivid, exciting sound heard in this hall in many a year were the hallmarks of this brilliant orchestra. Not for nothing is the Pittsburgh regarded among the elite of North American ensembles.”**

- *South Wales Echo*

---

Starting with the release of its first commercial recording in 1941, the PSO has made hundreds of critically acclaimed recordings. They are available on the PentaTone, EMI, Angel, CBS, Philips, MCA, New World, Nonesuch, Sony Classical and Telarc labels. The orchestra with Lorin Maazel conducting and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, won a 1992 Grammy Award for a Sony Classical disc featuring works by Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky. *Cinema Serenade*, a CD with John Williams conducting and Itzhak Perlman performing celebrated film scores, reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* crossover chart. The PSO’s newest recording is its second with Endowed Guest Conductor Chair Marek Janowski on the PentaTone label, live in 5-channel surround sound. The three-disc set includes Johannes Brahms’ four symphonies, as well as *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, and eight *Hungarian*

*Dances* (orchestrated by Brahms and Dvořák). The first of these recordings (First Symphony and *Variations of a Theme by Haydn*) was released in August 2007; the second in early 2008 (Second and Third Symphonies).

At home in historic Heinz Hall, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra offers sought-after subscription concerts including 24 weeks of classical concerts annually, a Pops series of seven weekends, and the Fiddlesticks Family Concert series. Numerous community engagement and partnership concerts are performed regularly throughout Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland. The PSO also performs free, educational concerts in Heinz Hall for students and summer concerts in Allegheny County parks. In 2007, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra became the first orchestra to receive both the Bank of America and MetLife Awards for Excellence in Orchestra Education.

---

**"It is one of the Orchestras in the U.S. and in the world most worth hearing..."**  
- *Berlingski Tidende* (Copenhagen)

---

Drawing upon musicians from five continents and music schools throughout the world, the PSO and its growing family expresses great diversity and an immense appreciation of excellent music. Today the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra remains among the world's top orchestras, and has even been named by some as the "Greatest American Orchestra."