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# Philharmonia

## Philharmonia Orchestra

### 400-word biography

Founded in 1945, the Philharmonia is a world-class symphony orchestra for the 21st century. Based in London at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, the Philharmonia creates thrilling performances for a global audience. The Orchestra is led by Finnish conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen, its Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor since 2008. Fellow Finn Santtu-Matias Rouvali takes over from Salonen as Principal Conductor in the 2021/22 season.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity that relies on funding from a wide range of sources to deliver its programme and is proud to be generously supported by Arts Council England.

The Philharmonia is resident at the Southbank Centre in London, and normally performs around 50 concerts a year there. Under Salonen and other key conductors, the Philharmonia has created a series of critically-acclaimed, visionary projects, distinctive for both their artistic scope and supporting live and digital content. In 2019, Salonen presented *Weimar Berlin: Bittersweet Metropolis*, a celebration of the Weimar Republic era through the prism of its music, drama and film.

The Philharmonia is orchestra-in-residence at venues and festivals across England: Bedford Corn Exchange, De Montfort Hall in Leicester, The Marlowe in Canterbury, Anvil Arts in Basingstoke, the Three Choirs Festival in the West of England, and Garsington Opera. At the heart of the Orchestra's residencies is an outreach and engagement programme that empowers people in every community to engage with, and participate in, orchestral music.

Internationally, the Philharmonia is normally active across Europe, Asia and the USA. A European tour in September 2019 included a return to Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie; in January 2020 Salonen led a residency at Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. The orchestra's strong digital programme has enabled it to maintain its international profile during the COVID-19 lockdown, with streamed performances and behind-the-scenes films viewed around the world.

The Philharmonia's extraordinary recording legacy has been built on in the last 10 years by its pioneering work with digital technology. Over half a million people have experienced the Philharmonia's VR installations featuring music by Sibelius, Mahler and Beethoven, placing the viewer at the heart of the orchestra.

Finnish conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen has been Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor of the Orchestra since 2008. Santtu-Matias Rouvali is Principal Conductor Designate, succeeding Salonen in 2021. Jakub Hrůša is Principal Guest Conductor; Christoph von Dohnányi is Honorary Conductor for Life and Vladimir Ashkenazy is Conductor Laureate.

*The Philharmonia's Principal International Partner is Wuliangye.*

[philharmonia.co.uk](http://philharmonia.co.uk)

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**2019/20 Season biography – lockdown version**