



Biography

VANCOUVER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1919, the Vancouver Symphony is the largest arts organization west of Ontario and the third largest symphony orchestra in Canada. The VSO's first performance was January 26, 1919, and the Symphony, composed of 73 full-time musicians, now performs to an annual audience attendance of more than 200,000 people and features more than 50 celebrated guest artists each season. Over 140 concerts are performed annually by the VSO in the historic Orpheum Theatre, as well as in venues throughout the Lower Mainland, including North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Surrey, South Delta, Burnaby, the Roundhouse Community Centre in Yaletown, and the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts on the campus of the University of British Columbia.

Innovators in the orchestral community, the VSO broke new ground in orchestral performances by becoming the first orchestra in Canada to use video screens in a full classical concert series. These innovations are designed to break down some of the barriers to attendance by providing a comfortable, fun environment with an exciting visual element. The tremendously successful series features an informal concert presentation with engaging dialogue about the composers and their music; the video screens are also used to show intimate, exciting close-ups of the guest artists, orchestra musicians, and conductor during performance.

During the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, the VSO presented 11 premieres of short commissioned pieces written by young, up and coming Canadian composers. These works were commissioned to celebrate the 2010 Olympics, with the support of the Province of British Columbia.

In October of 2008, the VSO toured China and South Korea with guest artist Hillary Hahn, making it the first orchestra from Canada to perform in China in 30 years. The tour ended with a performance at the Beijing Music Festival—another first for a Canadian symphony.

In February of 2008, the VSO won the 2008 GRAMMY award for “Best Instrumental Soloist(s) with Orchestra” for the CBC recording of violin concertos by Walton, Korngold and Barber, performed by violinist James Ehnes and conducted by VSO Music Director Bramwell Tovey. In April of 2008, the VSO followed up on its GRAMMY win with a 2008 JUNO award for “Classical Album of the Year: Large Ensemble or Soloist(s) with Large Ensemble Accompaniment” for the same CBC recording.

In 2004, Music Director Bramwell Tovey wrote and the VSO recorded the soundtrack for Canadian filmmaker Richard Bell's feature film “Eighteen”. A VSO recording can also be heard on the 1986 Academy Award winning soundtrack, “Platoon.” The VSO's impressive discography includes recordings with such varied and diverse artists as Jann Arden, Steven Stryk, Spirit of the West, Rita MacNeil and John McDermott.

As a cultural staple of the Lower Mainland, VSO Education Programs are experienced by over 36,000 students annually. Programs include Elementary School Concerts for students in grades K–7, Symphonic Encounters (open rehearsals for Secondary School students), Access Pass (card obtained free of charge,

entitles students to \$10 tickets for regular VSO concerts), Clinics & Masterclasses in collaboration with numerous schools, including University of British Columbia and The Vancouver Academy of Music, and Jean Coulthard Readings (opportunities for young composers to have their works read by the VSO). Symphony Musicians populate the faculties of music in numerous colleges, universities and private schools throughout the Lower Mainland. Within the VSO's concert series offerings are the "Kids Konzert" Series (for children ages 5–12 and their families) and the newly introduced "Tiny Tots" Series (for toddlers and their families).

VSO Music Director Maestro Bramwell Tovey is the consummate ambassador for music; his extraordinary artistic leadership and remarkable ability to relate to people on all levels, combined with passionate advocacy for music education makes him an ideal Music Director for an orchestra in the 21st Century. Maestro Tovey's body of work with the VSO has been multi-faceted and he has consistently delivered engaging and triumphant performances that have brought great joy and inspiration to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the Lower Mainland, and millions more via CBC Radio broadcasts. In 2003 Maestro Tovey won the JUNO award for Best Classical Composition for his "Requiem for a Charred Skull." He continues as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and as founding host and conductor of the New York Philharmonic's Summertime Classics series at Avery Fisher Hall.

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's mission is to enrich the quality of life in and bring prestige to our city, province and country through the presentation of high-quality performances of classical and popular music, and the delivery of excellent education and community programs.

For more information, please visit www.vancouversymphony.ca.