



2008-2009 Season Activities

Classical Season Highlights

- The highest grossing classical concert was “Rachmaninoff”’s Second Piano Concerto,” yielding \$79,000 in single ticket sales and 1,700 tickets.
- In September 2008, the orchestra invited Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko to recite his poem, *Babi Yar*, preceding the orchestra’s performance of Shostakovich’s 13th Symphony.
- October 2008 brought “Sounds of Recovery,” a concert tribute to first responders, volunteers and the victims of Hurricane Ike. This brought more than 3,000 people to Grace Community Church.
- In January 2009, Hans Graf led the world premiere of a Houston Symphony-commissioned work, Augusta Read Thomas’ double concerto, *Absolute Ocean for Soprano, Harp and Orchestra*. It featured Houston Symphony Principal Harpist Paula Page and guest Soprano Twyla Robinson.
- March of 2009 featured the Houston Symphony in The Bach vs. Vivaldi Experience, a two day music festival celebrating two of the greatest Baroque composers. It featured a variety of in-depth presentations, recitals, lecture-performances, a family concert and a full-length symphony concert. The festival was held at Houston Baptist University’s Joella & Stewart Morris Cultural Arts Center, attracting more than 2,000 people and yielding more than \$45,000 in revenue.
- In April 2009, the Houston Symphony presented a sold-out and dramatic Houston debut of the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, led by its prodigiously talented young conductor, Gustavo Dudamel. The concert grossed \$186,000 in sales and attracted a diverse audience of South American classical music fans, largely new to the Houston Symphony.
- In May of 2009, the Houston Symphony released their second commercial album on the NAXOS label for public sale. The recording is from their November 2007 performance of Alexander von Zemlinsky’s *Lyric Symphony* and Alban Berg’s *Three Pieces from the Lyric Suite*.
- Outstanding guest conductors who took the podium in 2008-2009 included James Gaffigan, Alexander Mickelthwate, Jean-Marie Zeitouni, Hannu Lintu, Christian Zacharias who conducted while performing Mozart Piano Concerto No. 18, Peter Oundjian, Thomas Dausgaard, Leonard Slatkin, and Kirill Karabits who made his North American debut with the orchestra.
- The season included performances by some of the music world’s recognized stars, including the opening night performance with Violinist Jennifer Koh, Cellist Sophie Shao, and Pianist Jeremy Denk. Featured were Cellist Alisa Weilerstein, local Houston Pianist and university professor Jon Kimura Parker, Pianist Yuja Wang, Violinist Leonidas Kavakos, Soprano Twyla Robinson, Pianist H el ene Grimaud,

Pianist Yefim Bronfman, Cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and Violinists Christian Tetzlaff, Leila Josefowicz, and Eugene Ugorski.

- The Houston Symphony Chorus partnered with the orchestra in such grand programs as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13, *Babi Yar*, Schubert's Mass No. 6, Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Bach's *Magnificat* during the Bach vs. Vivaldi Experience and in Roberto Sierra's *Missa Latina*.

Pops Season Highlights

- The highest grossing pops concert was the "Star Wars and More John Williams" concert, yielding a new record of \$195,000 in single ticket sales and 3,200 tickets.
- Other innovative guest artists debuting on the Houston Symphony stage included Wayne Brady, Peter Cetera, popular swing band Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and a comedic evening with the legendary Bill Cosby.
- March of 2009 brought a special tribute to the Music of the Beatles, featuring the music group "Classical Mystery Tour," grossing \$150,000 in single ticket sales and 2,400 tickets.
- Other pops 'Symphony Special' concerts included successful tributes to other iconic music groups, including that of The Eagles and Pink Floyd.
- A special Pops concert with Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons was successful in garnering \$225,000 in single ticket sales and 2,500 in tickets.

Summer

- The orchestra's concerts and annual Independence Day celebrations at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion and Miller Outdoor Theatre once again drew large crowds. These summer events have become a Houston tradition, with a combined audience of more than 55,000.
- The popular "Summer in the City" series had another successful year in 2008, selling more than 13,000 tickets and grossing more than \$425,000 in revenue.
- The Symphony has enjoyed continued success with this popular Jones Hall summer series. "Video Games Live," a multi-media event combining the music of video games with rock concert lighting and video game footage, once again brought out its dedicated fans. The Music of Pink Floyd, an appearance by the irrepressible and irreverent Eric Idle in "Not the Messiah (He's a Very Naughty Boy)", and a concert of "The von Trapp Children" rounded out the summer.

Family Concerts

Each year, the Symphony's outreach programming also features four family concerts, led by Associate Conductor Robert Franz and Assistant Conductor/American Conducting Fellow Brett Mitchell. The themes for last year's fun-filled concerts, attended by 11,186 children and their families, were Dr. Seuss' Green Eggs and Ham, Polar Express, Aaron Copland's *Rodeo* and Aladdin and the Arabian Nights.

Serving Houston

To honor its longstanding commitment to community service, the Houston Symphony offers free or low-cost concerts to thousands of people each year through its *Music*

Matters! education and outreach programs. Venues include Jones Hall, Miller Outdoor Theatre and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands, as well as schools, churches, nursing homes, community centers and shelters for the homeless. The Symphony's outreach activities also feature master classes, instrumental instruction, student competitions, small ensemble performances and lectures. These initiatives are designed to ensure that Houstonians of all ages and backgrounds, including the underserved, the economically disadvantaged and those with physical or mental disabilities, have an opportunity to learn about and enjoy outstanding orchestral music.