

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra announces new Music Director Manfred Honeck

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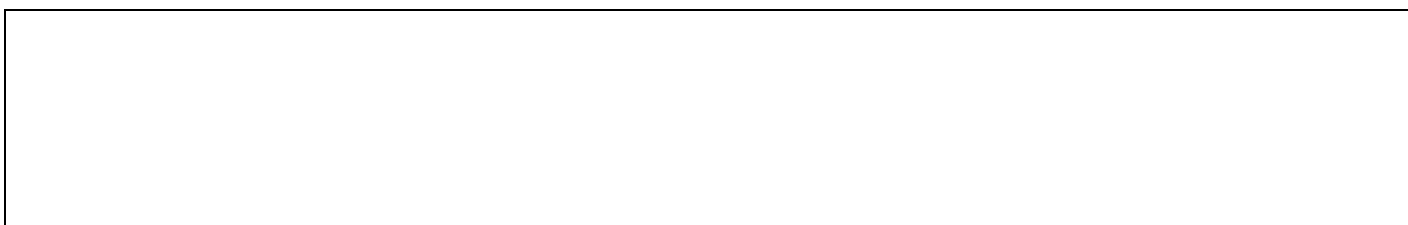
The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra announced the appointment of Manfred Honeck as its new Music Director. Marking the beginning of a new period in the orchestra's storied history, Manfred Honeck will begin his initial three-year contract in September 2008, conducting 8 weeks in the first season and 10 weeks in subsequent seasons, with additional weeks for touring. Tours are already planned, including a return to Vienna's Musikverein in 2010.

Larry Tamburri, Pittsburgh Symphony President and CEO, remarked, "The current artistic leadership model, comprised of Artistic Advisor Sir Andrew Davis, Principal Guest Conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier, and Endowed Guest Conductor Chair Marek Janowski, has taught us much over the last two seasons. From our three respected conductor colleagues, we have gained a great deal, and our orchestra has remained vibrant, secure and committed to excellence. In taking our time to assess the needs of the PSO, we have concluded that a strong, central leader is important to enhancing the artistic excellence of this orchestra. We have found that leader in Manfred Honeck, and we are exceedingly happy to welcome him."



Manfred Honeck
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Honeck's unveiling as Music Director designate

Dick Simmons, PSO Board of Trustees' Chairman, stated, "On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank our search committee, led by Tom Todd and comprised of musicians, board and staff, for all its hard work and effort. They took this responsibility seriously, searching far and wide. Their excellent judgment and considerable time brought us to the unanimous conclusion that the best outcome for this orchestra was Manfred Honeck. It became clear, watching Manfred over an extended period of time, that the PSO would benefit greatly from him."

Of his new position, Maestro Honeck said, "It is with great joy that I assume the post of Music Director of one of the world's finest orchestras. I am aware that this wonderful task is accompanied by great responsibility with regard to maintaining and enhancing the high level of performance developed by my predecessors and the orchestra together. It is no exaggeration to say that the orchestra and I got on like a house on fire. Right from our first encounter I realized that with these highly professional and motivated musicians, it would be possible to convey a vivid message much needed in today's world of classical music. These excellent and experienced musicians have managed to maintain a freshness and ardor which is highly contagious and, with the support of orchestra and management alike, I will do everything to ensure that these ripples of enthusiasm continuously inspire our audience."

PSO Concertmaster Andrés Cárdenes commented, "The Pittsburgh Symphony musicians and I are grateful for the artistic leadership that was shared over the past several years. We are thrilled with the appointment of Manfred Honeck as new Music Director and excited about the next chapter in the long, rich history of the PSO."

Former Pittsburgh Symphony Music Director Mariss Jansons remarked, "Manfred Honeck

is a profound musician and a wonderful human being. He is a superb choice by the Pittsburgh Symphony. Together they will be a great combination.”

Honeck began his career as a musician with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 1983 as a violist over a ten year period. It was there, while performing under some of the world's most important and respected conductors, that he chose to begin his career on the podium. Honeck recently concluded his tenure as Music Director of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, a position he held from 2000 to 2006. In addition to his new position with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Honeck is also Music Director Designate of the Staatsoper Stuttgart and Principal Guest Conductor Designate of the Czech Philharmonic. His guest engagements have included the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks in Munich, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Staatskapelle Dresden, Vienna Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Manfred Honeck

Manfred Honeck was born in 1958 in Nensing, Austria, into a family of 9 children. His parents encouraged each of the children to learn an instrument. Rainer, Manfred's brother, is concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic. Manfred Honeck, his wife Christiane, and their six children, ages 5 to 25, live in Altsch, Austria, near the town where he grew up.

Manfred Honeck studied music at the Academy of Music in Vienna. Several years of experience as a member of the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra as well as in his capacity as conductor of Vienna's Jeunesse Orchestra have given his conducting a distinctive stamp.

Manfred Honeck commenced his career as assistant to Claudio Abbado at the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra in Vienna. From 1991 to 1996 Manfred Honeck was engaged by the Zurich Opera House, where he was bestowed the prestigious European Conductor's Award in 1993. In 1997, he took over the post of Music Director at the Norwegian National Opera in Oslo for a year.

From 1996 to 1999 Manfred Honeck served as one of three main conductors of the MDR Symphony Orchestra Leipzig. A highly successful tour of Europe with the Oslo Philharmonic in 1996 marked the beginning of a close collaboration with this orchestra which consequently appointed him Principal Guest Conductor in 1998.

From 2000 to December 2006 he was Music Director of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He took his orchestra to a tour of the USA including an enormously successful New York debut and a concert at the Kennedy Centre in Washington which the Washington Post praised as Single Best Orchestral Concert in Washington in the year 2001. In 2007/2008 Manfred Honeck will commence his position as the Music Director of the Staatsoper Stuttgart. In December 2006, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague appointed him Principal Guest Conductor, a position which he will assume in 2008/2009.

As a guest conductor Manfred Honeck has worked with major international orchestras such as BR Symphony Orchestra in Munich, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Staatskapelle Dresden, Wiener Philharmoniker, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. He is a welcome guest of the Salzburg Festival where, in 2006, he conducted Mozart's *Così fan tutte* as well as the premiere of a work by Moritz Eggert which was specially commissioned by the festival for the inauguration ceremony.

Operatic engagements have led him to the Semperoper in Dresden for *Fledermaus* and to the Komische Oper Berlin for *Wozzeck*. On the occasion of the inauguration of the new opera house in Copenhagen, he conducted a new staging of *Aida* early in 2005 and returned there for performances of *Fledermaus* at the beginning of 2006. In St. Petersburg he conducted Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the White Nights Festival.

Manfred Honeck commenced 2006/2007 with concerts at the Baltic Sea Festival followed by a journey to Japan. There, he did not only conduct performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro* but also concerts of his own setting of Mozart's Requiem "Mozart and Death in Word and Music" which has also recently been released on CD by German label querstand. Guest engagements include working with the City of Birmingham Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra and BBC Symphony in the UK, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and WDR Symphony Cologne as well as Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague. After highly successful appearances with the Boston, Toronto and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras in 2006, US engagements this season include the New World Symphony Orchestra in Miami, a return visit to the Pittsburgh Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington.

Apart from his numerous tasks as conductor, Manfred Honeck is Artistic Director of the "International Concerts Wolfegg" in Germany.