



HOUSTON SYMPHONY FACT SHEET 2021–22 SEASON

Music Director: Andrés Orozco-Estrada
Roy and Lillie Cullen Chair

Music Director Designate: Juraj Valčuha

Principal POPS Conductor: Steven Reineke

Associate Conductor: Robert Franz

Conducting Fellow: Yue Bao
Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation

Chorus Director: Dr. Betsy Cook Weber

Houston Symphony Executive Director & CEO: John Mangum
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

Houston Symphony Society President: John Rydman

Houston Symphony Society Chairman: Steven P. Mach

Houston Symphony Society Immediate Past President: Janet F. Clark

Houston Symphony Society Chairman Emeritus: Mike S. Stude

Houston Symphony League President: Leslie Siller

Houston Symphony League President-Elect: Cheryl Byington

Budget: \$28.8 million (FY22)

About the Houston Symphony

The Grammy Award-winning Houston Symphony celebrates Andrés Orozco-Estrada's final season as Music Director in 2021–22 and continues as one of America's leading orchestras with a full complement of concert, community, education, touring, livestream, and recording activities. During the 2020–21 Season, the Symphony successfully and safely completed a full season with in-person audiences and weekly livestreams of each performance, making it one of the only orchestras in the world to do so. Today, with an operating budget of \$28.8 million, the full-time ensemble of professional musicians presents nearly 170 concerts annually, making it the largest performing arts organization in Houston and the oldest in Texas. Additionally, musicians of the orchestra and the Symphony's two Community-Embedded Musicians offer over 1,000 (FY19) community-based performances each year at various schools, community centers, hospitals, and churches reaching more than 200,000 (FY19) people in Greater Houston annually, prior to COVID-19. The Symphony is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit that relies on support from the community and generous donors for two-thirds of its operating budget.

People: The Houston Symphony is a full-time, 52-week-per-year orchestra consisting of and supported by:

- Conductors = 5
- Volunteers (including 115 Board members) = 869
- Staff = 60 (54 full-time, 6 part-time)

Touring: Regional tours were common for the Symphony in the 1940s, especially wartime visits to military bases in Texas and Louisiana. In 1950, the orchestra embarked on its first national tour to 17 cities as far north as Chicago. Its Carnegie Hall debut occurred March 11, 1965, as part of the International Festival of Visiting Orchestras. To date, the Symphony has performed 16 times at the world-famous venue; the most recent performance was in May 2012 when the Houston Symphony kicked off the second annual Spring for Music Festival. The orchestra's first overseas trip occurred in June 1990 with an appearance in Japan at the Singapore Festival of Arts. Throughout the 1990s, the Houston Symphony returned to Japan for a residence at the Pacific Music Festival and toured through Europe extensively, with appearances in England, France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. In 2000, the Houston Symphony participated in a five-concert European Festival Tour. In 1994 and 1998, the Houston Symphony toured the U.S. East Coast and Midwest.

In January 2006, the Symphony visited Carnegie Hall in a special performance featuring music by Mozart, Shostakovich, and Texas composer Pierre Jalbert. In January 2010, the Symphony performed again at Carnegie Hall, along with appearances in Florida's Kravis and Broward Centers, with the premiere of *The Planets—An HD Odyssey*. Later that year, the orchestra journeyed to the United Kingdom to perform *The Planets—An HD Odyssey* to sold-out crowds in a seven-city tour. In June 2012, the Houston Symphony became the first-ever American orchestra to perform at the Annual Festival of the World's Symphony Orchestras in Moscow, Russia, known as the highlight of the Moscow musical season.

In March 2018, Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada led the Houston Symphony on a four-country, eight-city tour through some of Europe's most prestigious concert halls and festivals. World-renowned violinist and three-time Grammy Award-winner Hilary Hahn joined the Houston Symphony for all performances. The high-profile tour, which featured concerts in Vienna, Brussels, Warsaw, Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich, was Orozco-Estrada's first international tour with the orchestra and the Houston Symphony's first major European tour in more than 20 years. This great achievement was made possible by more than 70 donors who contributed more than \$1.76 million for the tour, including 12 who traveled to Europe to support and celebrate the Symphony during the tour.

Recording: The Houston Symphony has recorded under various labels, including Naxos, Koch International Classics, Telarc, RCA Red Seal, and Virgin Classics labels. Most recently, the Houston Symphony and Andrés Orozco-Estrada recorded the last four symphonies of Dvořák on the Dutch recording label PENTATONE. Other PENTATONE recordings include a *Music of the Americas* disc (February 2018) featuring Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Revueltas' *Sensemaya*, Piazzolla's *Tangazo*, and Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*, and Haydn's *The Creation* (May 2018). The Houston Symphony's performance of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* under the direction of then Music Director Hans Graf was released in January 2017 to great acclaim. Recorded on March 1, 2013 on the Naxos label, the two-disc album earned a prestigious ECHO KLASSIK 2017 award in the category of Best Opera Recording (20th/21st Century Opera). The orchestra earned its first Grammy nomination and Grammy Award at the 60th annual ceremony for the same recording in the Best Opera Recording category in 2018. The Symphony's commitment to new music and continually expanding the symphonic repertoire saw the world premiere in 2019–2020 of a Houston Symphony commission from former Composer-in-Residence Jimmy López Bellido, in the third and final year of his residency. López's Symphony No. 2, *Ad Astra* (December 2019), took its inspiration from a subject near and dear to Houston's heart: the space program and humankind's exploration of the stars, and the PENTATONE recording of *Ad Astra* and López Bellido's *Aurora* (also premiered by the Houston Symphony) is scheduled for an early 2022 release.

Livestreaming: Select Houston Symphony concerts and repertoire are also broadcast nationally on American Public Media programs *SymphonyCast* and *Performance Today*.

The first livestreamed concert from Jones Hall was led by Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada with a performance of Stravinsky's *Firebird* ballet score on Sunday, September 22, 2019. Motivated by its commitment to reach out to new audiences

beyond Jones Hall and Houston, the Symphony made its first foray into livestreaming, little realizing how vitally important it would become within the year. During the 2019–20 Season, the Symphony launched its first post-COVID performance series, the **Living Room Series**, a series of eight live concerts streamed behind a paywall from the homes of individual musicians. Building on the success of the Living Room Series, the Symphony began a new weekly livestreamed series of live performances from the stage of Jones Hall. The **Live from Jones Hall** series opened with an hour-long concert of small ensembles of musicians performing while socially distanced onstage via livestream. On September 5, 2020, the Symphony became the **first major orchestra in the United States to resume a regular season schedule before live and livestream audiences**, opening the 2020–21 Season with *Live from Jones Hall: The Best of Broadway*, the opening concert in the 2020–21 Bank of America POPS Series under the baton of Principal POPS Conductor Steven Reineke. Throughout the 2020–21 Season, the Symphony successfully livestreamed weekly Saturday night performances for paying virtual audiences, making it the only orchestra in the world to do so. For the 2021- 22 Season, the Symphony will continue its ongoing commitment to livestreaming the full season of performances live and on a weekly basis. The livestream of Houston Symphony concerts is made possible by Barbara J. Burger.

Music: The Houston Symphony’s musical offerings include a **Classical Series** featuring major classical repertoire and soloists led by Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada and guest conductors. Each classical concert begins with a free, 30-minute “Prelude” pre-concert conversation that begins 45 minutes before the performance and, on occasion, this “Prelude” is a chamber music performance instead of a lecture. The Houston Symphony’s season also includes a nine-concert **Bank of America POPS Series** led by Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke featuring popular artists or themes, **Symphony Specials** or single performances with special guest artists, a three-concert **Family Series** held on select Saturday mornings and led by Associate Conductor Robert Franz and guest conductors, and **The Robbins Foundation Student Concerts Series**, one-hour school day matinees for grades 4–8 conducted by Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation Conducting Fellow **Yue Bao**.

Other Services: The Houston Symphony hosts a variety of other programs for all ages. Free **Neighborhood Concerts** are an annual series of concerts each June, featuring dynamic musical experiences in a relaxed atmosphere in venues throughout Houston (ex. Lilly Grove Missionary Baptist Church and Morton High School). Through its **Music & Wellness** initiative, the Symphony partners with Houston Methodist, Periwinkle Arts in Medicine Program at Texas Children’s Cancer and Hematology Centers, Purple Songs Can Fly, and The University of Texas MD Anderson Children’s Cancer Center to provide musician interactions with patients and caregivers, including bedside visits, group performances and opportunities to write and record their own songs. The **ENGIE Community Connections Program** is designed to broaden our musical contact with our diverse Houston population. It provides opportunities for musicians to perform or provide instructional coaching in close, personal settings. Each session is approximately one hour in length and includes time for discussion. Launched in July 2015, the **Community-Embedded Musicians** initiative is designed to dramatically expand and enhance the impact of the orchestra’s growing education and community engagement activities. The primary role of these two Community-Embedded Musicians is to integrate themselves in Houston schools, community centers, hospitals, and churches as teaching artists and performer, while also performing on stage with members of the Houston Symphony. The Community-Embedded Musicians offer nearly 400 community-based performances each year, both individually and as small ensembles.

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713.224.4240, main
713.224.7575, tickets
713.337.8500, donations

Website: houstonSymphony.org

Venues: The Houston Symphony performs in a variety of locations throughout the greater Houston area:

- Headquarters = Jones Hall (seating capacity 2,668; without balcony = 2,060)
- Miller Outdoor Theatre
- The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion (The Woodlands, TX)
- Stude Concert Hall at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music
- Variety of schools, community centers, hospitals, and churches