

TAIPEI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

From Taipei to the World, Sounding into the Future

Based in Taiwan's capital and most culturally vibrant city, Taipei Symphony Orchestra (TSO) is the top choice among Taipei audiences and a recognised leader on the classical music scene. With exceptional artistry, forward-looking and wide-ranging programming, and an unwavering spirit of innovation, TSO stands as a prominent force in the classical music landscape across Asia. Since its founding in 1969, TSO has drawn on a deep musical heritage and earned widespread acclaim at home and abroad for its professionalism and passion.

Over the years, TSO has collaborated with leading international soloists and conductors, bringing world-class performances directly to audiences. Renowned artists such as violinists Anne-Sophie Mutter, Maxim Vengerov, Pinchas Zukerman, Christian Tetzlaff, and Leila Josefowicz; clarinettist Sabine Meyer; soprano Angela Gheorghiu; tenor Jonas Kaufmann; cellists Alban Gerhardt and Yo-Yo Ma; pianist Eric Lu; and composers Dieter Ammann, Alexandre Desplat, and Tan Dun. The orchestra has also presented Taiwan premieres of works by contemporary composers such as Thomas Adès, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Donghoon Shin, and John Adams.

Highlights for 2026 include collaborations with cellists Gautier Capuçon and Jean-Guihen Queyras, violinist Francesca Dego, soprano Chen Reiss, baritone Michael Nagy, and composers Richard Dubugnon and Nico Muhly—further testament to the orchestra's artistic stature and international profile.

Public Engagement & Shared Urban Culture

The TSO has long been committed to promoting classical music. In 1979, with the support of then-mayor Lee Teng-hui, TSO launched the Taipei City Music Festival, Taiwan's first large-scale music festival, which not only deepened public engagement with the arts but also became a major cultural focal point in the Asia-Pacific region. TSO's operatic productions have played a key role in building Taipei's reputation as a city of opera and cemented its own position at the forefront of the performing arts with 48 full productions to date, including *Pagliacci*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Eugene Onegin*.

The TSO also runs a wide range of educational initiatives: the "Arts Education for All" concert series introducing primary school students to symphonic music; open-air concerts and the "Culture in the Neighbourhood" program, which bring music into familiar streets and parks; and "One School, One Orchestra", designed to spark children's interest in music and cultivate future audiences. Rooted deeply in the fabric of the city, these programmes make music not only a stage experience but a quiet, pervasive presence in daily life, gently and meaningfully connecting people and place.

Agility and Authenticity, International Reach

During its 2025 tours of Japan and South Korea, the TSO received high praise from *Ongaku no Tomo* (Music Magazine), which described the orchestra as delivering "an almost ferociously dramatic intensity, creating an overwhelming impact as if staking all of life itself on every note." The 2019 US tour included a performance at Strathmore Music Center in Washington, D.C., and *The Washington Post* wrote, "[T]he 91-member orchestra played with a sonorous sound in its Washington Performing Arts debut, striking a warm balance between the radiant strings, majestic brass and glowing winds." The orchestra was also commended by clarinet legend Sabine Meyer for its warmly resonant musicality and international calibre.

As a vehicle of cultural diplomacy, TSO has become a key cultural ambassador for Taipei. Celebrated conductor Gilbert Varga served as principal conductor from 2013 to 2018 and invigorated the orchestra with his dynamic leadership. From 2019 to 2022, world-renowned maestro Eliahu Inbal took up the baton to bring profound interpretations and a global vision. Appointed Conductor Laureate in 2023, Inbal went on to lead TSO in performances of symphonic masterpieces by Mahler, Bruckner, and Shostakovich, expanding the orchestra's artistic horizons.

From 2026, Alexander Liebreich assumes the role of Chief Conductor. Known for his cross-cultural approach and commitment to contemporary music, Liebreich will guide TSO as it enters a new era, strengthening its ties with the global music community. From Taipei to the world, the orchestra continues to embody the spirit of the 21st-century symphony—articulating the city's voice, capturing the pulse of the times, and forging new, brilliant chapters on the international stage.

Looking Ahead

With more than 50 years' heritage and a wealth of artistic achievements, TSO looks to the future with confidence. The planned Taipei Concert Hall and Library complex, set to become the orchestra's future home, will integrate outstanding performance with digital technology and forward-thinking innovation, bringing audiences ever richer musical experiences.