

PA Centre Orchestra - FAQs

When was The Pennsylvania Centre Orchestra founded?

PCO was founded in 1991 to provide a professional chamber orchestra for the Centre Region of Pennsylvania.

How many concerts does PCO give?

The 2009-10 season includes three orchestral concerts, as well as a fun-fundraiser on October 2, 2009 called Oktoberfest. We also present a "Vienna Serenade," this year for the 10th year in a row, where we turn The Tavern Restaurant into a cafe in Old Vienna with food and wine and the music of Johann Strauss, Jr. We'll also have a special concert with the Hudson Vagabond Puppets in November presenting Peter and the Wolf and The Sound Mall.

Are all of your players from Penn State?

PCO is a professional orchestra not affiliated with Penn State but by virtue of our location we employ the finest players in Central Pennsylvania. This includes faculty of Penn State's School of Music (because they are the finest players in our area) and other orchestral musicians from the area. This includes local professional musicians as well as young players who are training for their future careers in professional orchestras through their study at Penn State.

Is there a particular theme to the overall season?

As you can see there is great diversity in the music for this season. The connecting theme "MORNING, NOON and NIGHT" comes from a set of three symphonies by Franz Joseph Haydn and we will perform one of these symphonies on each of our spring series of concerts. Special note should be given to our May concert because we will be celebrating the 150th birthday of Gustav Mahler with music from Des Knaben Wonderhorn (The Youth's Magic Horn).

Do you often feature guest appearances by performers from other orchestras or from musicians who are well known in the world of classical music?

In the past we have featured as guests the concertmasters of the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic as well as guest conductor Enrique Batiz (most famous Latin American conductor), Sergiu Schwartz (internationally known Israeli violinist) as well as cast members from the Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh and others.

Who are some of your featured soloists this season?

Our soloist for Mostly Mozart in January is the Italian pianist Enrico Elisi who has performed and given master classes across Europe, the U.S. and Asia. Enrico is a member of the faculty of Penn State's School of Music. Anne Sullivan, our harp soloist for the April concert is from the School of Music at the University of Delaware and mezzo-soprano Janice Wilson, a native of Hollidaysburg, now is a New Yorker, appears regularly with orchestras across the US.

For people who either don't know anything about classical music or think that they wouldn't care for it, what would you tell them to perhaps get them to at least come and experience a concert?

Why might they enjoy it?

Many people who would find pleasure and even inspiration in an orchestra concert are hesitant to attend because they think they have to know something about the music ahead of time, or they are

afraid they will applaud at the wrong time, or they think they will be dressed appropriately. The truth is you don't have to know a thing before you arrive. The orchestra is bringing you the most beautiful music and performance they can and this wonderful music speaks for itself. Our concerts have a brief talk 45 minutes before the performance for those who would like a few bits of information regarding what is about to happen and the opportunity to ask some questions of the Music Director. There are also notes about the music in the program. And finally, these days people dress to be comfortable at concerts. You'll see suits, sport coats, shirts and jeans in the audience because we entertain students, children, families, retired people and people who may have just had a full day at work. We find that once people have come to hear us we frequently make friends for life.

Are there any unusual pieces that might catch the attention of the audience?

Since all of the music this season is particularly interesting it's difficult to pick one. The times of day illustrated in our Haydn symphonies may be of particular interest to you as well as the fact that we are going to feature a number of soloists on our April concert: harp, 2 flutes and oboes and bassoon.

Are season tickets available?

Season Tickets will be available in mid-August. This will provide a 10% discount to those who order the series of three concerts and subscribers will have reserved seats in Esber Recital Hall as well as in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. The number to call is (814) 234-8313 for season tickets, Oktoberfest and Vienna Serenade reservations.

Has PCO performed in other venues?

For the past two summers the orchestra has been invited to perform at the Bedford Summer Music Festival and has also appeared in Philipsburg, Bellefonte, Boalsburg and St. Marys. As a chamber orchestra PCO is portable and available for engagements anywhere.

Have more questions? Send an email to info@centreorchestra.org and we'll do our best to answer them.