
Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra

Since its founding in 1957, the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra (GSO) has developed into one of China's most prestigious orchestras in its breadth of organization and standard in performance. It is the first and only Chinese symphony orchestra to have toured and performed on five continents.

Maestro Long Yu, the current music director since 2003, is a preeminent Chinese conductor with international renown. Long Yu also serves as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the China Philharmonic Orchestra, Music Director of the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Artistic Director of the Beijing Music Festival and Co-Director of the Music in the Summer Air Festival (MISA) in Shanghai.

In July 1997, the GSO marked an important milestone, having restructured its organization. Beginning in May 1998, the orchestra introduced a full "music season". In October that year, the orchestra received rave reviews and was lauded as a "shining star" at the inaugural Beijing Music Festival for its performance in the opera *La Bohème*. "It is heartening to see the GSO's meteoric rise as an artistic force in southern China, joining the ranks of other distinguished orchestras in the country's mainstream," one Beijing critic reported. For a number of years, the GSO returned annually to the Beijing Music Festival.

The GSO has sustained long-term relationships with numerous renowned musicians at home and abroad, establishing a wide international network and enjoying a high reputation among the world's music circles. In the past 17 seasons, the GSO has regularly invited the most accomplished conductors, soloists and singers to collaborate in repertoire ranging from Baroque to modern, not only broadening its appeal to the audience but also creating valuable training opportunities for the orchestra's musicians to improve their craft. "It was the best sound I ever heard from among Chinese orchestras," the famous Polish composer Mr. Krzysztof Penderecki remarked after attending a GSO concert. In 2004, IMG Artists became the GSO's international touring presenter, bringing the orchestra and its reputation to even farther shores.

Beginning in 2001, the GSO was sent on tour numerous times by the Ministry of Culture and the Guangdong Provincial Government, visiting Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Egypt, Australia, New Zealand, America, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Japan, Thailand and Singapore, among others. The GSO has graced the stages of the Goldenensaal of Vienna's Musikverein, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Cairo Opera House, Sydney Opera House, New York's Carnegie Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall, Kennedy Center in Washington, Berlin Konzerthaus, Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Verdi in Florence, Lucerne Culture and Convention Centre, Tokyo Opera City

Concert Hall and Singapore's Esplanade-Theaters on the Bay, among other world-famous venues. In 2006, the GSO was invited to perform in both the opening and closing ceremonies of the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar. The orchestra has also appeared more than twenty times at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Macao Arts Festival and Macao International Music Festival. In October 2012, the GSO made its Taiwan debut during the Guangdong City Cultural Week of the Cross-Strait City Arts Festival with concerts in Taipei's National Theater and Concert Hall and the Taichung Chung Hsing Hall. Not only does the orchestra fulfill its role as cultural ambassador abroad, but it also promotes meaningful exchange within the Pearl River Delta region as well as across the Taiwan Straits.

The GSO has also diversified its mission and programs in the past decade. Between 2005 and 2007, the orchestra organized the Canton International Summer Music Academy with Maestro Charles Dutoit as music director, inviting such distinguished artists as Martha Argerich, Gary Graffman and Claus Peter Flor as well as more than twenty principals from world-renowned orchestras as tutors, attracting young musicians from all over Asia. The GSO hosted the Canton Asian Music Festival, held at the Xinghai Concert Hall, in November 2010 on the occasion of the 16th Asian Games. The 13-day festival featured six of the best Asian orchestras and 17 distinguished Asian musicians including Yo-Yo Ma, Lang Lang, Myung-Whun Chung, Tan Dun, Cho-Liang Lin, Midori, Wang Jian and Sarah Chang with a total in 10 concerts. The GSO has also collaborated with the world's leading ballet and opera companies, appearing in the pit as well as in concert renditions. The orchestra regularly commissions new works from China's prominent composers, and presents chamber music, education, pops, outdoor and festival concerts. In December 2011, the GSO established the Guangzhou Youth Orchestra, the first amateur youth orchestra administered by a professional orchestra in China. All of these programs reflect the orchestra's overall strategy in achieving all-around development.

The inauguration of the GSO's headquarters equipped with the most up-to-date technology has provided the orchestra with the best conditions to advance both artistically and as an institution. While adhering to its own heritage, the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra continues to forge ahead, always keeping apace with the times.

For more information, visit www.gso.org.cn