



PRESS RELEASE

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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES CANCELLATION OF TOUR TO SOUTH KOREA AND VIETNAM

The Minnesota Orchestra's summer 2020 tour to South Korea and Vietnam has been cancelled due to the health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, the tour—scheduled for June 21 through July 3, 2020—was intended to celebrate the 25th anniversary of restored diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam, as well as to foster connections with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, where Vänskä was recently appointed music director.

“After careful consideration of the many implications of COVID-19 and conversations with public health authorities, we’ve arrived at the unfortunate conclusion that the Minnesota Orchestra cannot proceed with the tour,” said Minnesota Orchestra President and CEO Michelle Miller Burns. “We wish to be exceedingly cautious about the possibility of spreading the virus through our own international travel, while being mindful of the health and safety of South Korean and Vietnamese audiences and the well-being of our musicians and touring staff. It’s also clear that at a time when the Orchestra has had to cancel many weeks of concerts in our home state, we need to focus all our efforts now on re-establishing performances in Minnesota, as soon as we are able to perform here again.”

She continued, “We are deeply disappointed, and we extend our greatest appreciation to the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam and the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism for their extraordinary support, collaboration and understanding. We also offer our profound thanks to Classical Movements, our concert presenter in Vietnam and creative advisor for the Vietnam portion of the tour, Lotte Concert Hall, the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Hanoi Opera House, Vietnam National Academy of Music, Song Huong Theatre, Conservatory of Ho Chi Minh City, and the Ho Chi Minh City Opera House, as well as our partners at HarrisonParrott.”

“It is with very deep sadness that we make this announcement,” said Music Director Osmo Vänskä. “The values of this tour—uniting people with music, celebrating peace between peoples—are deeply held by this organization, and we dearly wanted to share these concerts with audiences in South Korea and Vietnam. The most important issue now is to focus on everyone’s health, and we send our many partners in South Korea and Vietnam our very best wishes.”

The tour would have included performances in Seoul, South Korea, as well as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (formerly known as Saigon) and Hue, Vietnam, several featuring South Korean pianist Sunwook Kim. Two new compositions by Vietnamese composers Do Hong Quan and Tran Manh Hung, commissioned for the tour by Classical Movements as part of the Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program, will instead be performed by the Orchestra at a later date.

“This project had been a dream of ours for years, and we are heartbroken by these circumstances,” said Classical Movements Founder and President Neeta Helms, whose company was serving as creative advisor for the Vietnam Tour, a role it played on the Orchestra’s tours to South Africa and Cuba. “The year 2020 marked the anniversary of Classical Movements’ work in Vietnam, and we were thrilled to be celebrating with one of our dearest clients and with partners in Vietnam with whom we’ve fostered relationships for decades, including musicians, teachers and composers, whose generosity we are particularly grateful for. This is a deep loss to our friends in Vietnam and Minnesota, but we send everyone good wishes for good health.”

Funding Credits

The tour is made possible in part by a generous lead gift from Kathy and Charlie Cunningham with additional support from other board members.



The Minnesota Orchestra Vietnam tour is arranged in partnership with the international tour management company Classical Movements.

The Orchestra’s performance in Seoul is presented by Lotte Concert Hall and managed by HarrisonParrott, worldwide general managers for Osmo Vänskä and the Orchestra’s international touring partner.

The Minnesota Orchestra recognizes the Douglas and Louise Leatherdale Fund for Music supporting the work of Music Director Osmo Vänskä.