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The
Philadelphia
Orchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music and Artistic Director

**The Philadelphia Orchestra to Rename Its Home
at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
MARIAN ANDERSON HALL
in Honor of the Legendary Contralto, Civil Rights Icon,
and Philadelphian**

First major concert venue in the world to honor Marian Anderson

*Hall rededication to take place 85 years after Anderson was barred from performing at
Constitution Hall because of her race*

Visionary \$25 million gift in Anderson's honor given by Richard Worley and Leslie Miller

*Marian Anderson Hall to open with gala and concert featuring
The Philadelphia Orchestra and Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin
with Audra McDonald, Angel Blue, and Marcus Roberts
June 8, 2024*

*Marian Anderson endowed scholarship to be awarded to performing arts students
in partnership with the United Negro College Fund*

(Philadelphia, February 28, 2024)—Philadelphia Orchestra President and CEO Matias Tarnopolsky and Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin announced today that Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts will be rededicated as **Marian Anderson Hall** in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. Announced the day after what would have been Anderson's 127th birthday, the news marks the first major concert venue in the world to honor the late performer and trailblazer. Located in the heart of her hometown of Philadelphia, Marian Anderson Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts will be a permanent monument to its namesake's artistry and achievements, a reflection of the inclusive future she helped to engender, and an active testament to the intersection of music, art, and positive social impact. The Hall—home of The Philadelphia Orchestra—will officially be rededicated on **June 8, 2024**, and celebrated during the **Great Stages Gala** and concert that evening, featuring Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra with actress and singer Audra McDonald, soprano Angel Blue, jazz pianist Marcus Roberts, and more to be announced at a later date. A complete media kit about Marian Anderson Hall can be found [here](#).

In addition to The Philadelphia Orchestra, also appearing in Marian Anderson Hall will be Resident Companies, Ensemble Arts Philly presentations, and performing arts groups from around the world.

The dedication of Marian Anderson Hall was named in her honor by a visionary **\$25 million philanthropic gift from Richard Worley and Leslie Miller**. Worley has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra's Board of Trustees since 1997 and served as chair from 2009–2019. Miller is a former Kimmel Center trustee and previous acting president of the Kimmel Center. With this commitment, they are among the largest donors in Philadelphia Orchestra history.

Additional generous support for Marian Anderson Hall was given by Sidney and Caroline Kimmel.

“The legacy of Philadelphia native Marian Anderson is inscribed in the modern history of civil rights in America, and in musical history—from the prejudiced rejection of her artistry to the knowledge that she was one of the greatest voices of the 20th century,” said Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. “Because she was denied the right to sing, Americans were denied the right to hear her extraordinary gifts. For years, The Philadelphia Orchestra and I have dedicated ourselves to creating a more representative art form through the music we perform. Now, we are proud to take this even further, to honor Marian Anderson with the first major concert venue named in her honor—and one of only a few in the world named for an artist—and we will perform with the joy of her ongoing presence in Marian Anderson Hall.”

“History cannot be rewritten, but there are many ways that music and the musical world can serve to right historic wrongs,” said President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky. “The rededication of the home of The Philadelphia Orchestra is the crescendo of one history lesson—and it will be a celebration in perpetuity of a great Black American artist. Now, this great Orchestra's musical history continues in Marian Anderson Hall, as we forge a bright, inclusive artistic future in which music is for everyone. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to Richard Worley and Leslie Miller for their leadership in this vision of the future.”

“Marian Anderson was an outstanding artist, a champion of modern civil rights, and a true Philadelphian,” said Richard Worley and Leslie Miller. “She was an inspiration, not only because of her enormous talent but also because of the courage and grace with which she battled a lifetime of discrimination. The city owes her recognition and thanks. There is no better way to celebrate and commemorate her than by dedicating the concert hall of The Philadelphia Orchestra in her honor—an act long overdue. The permanent inscription of her name on this space will ensure that she receives the ongoing appreciation and affection of Philadelphia, its citizenry, and all who visit in the years to come. We are pleased to have helped make this vision a reality.”

“Philadelphia is known as a city of firsts that have helped to shape American history,” said Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania Austin Davis. “I am honored to celebrate another important milestone as we reflect on the remarkable contributions of Marian Anderson to the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world. Her legacy and impact are immeasurable, and I applaud the Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts team for recognizing her in this most meaningful way.”

“I am deeply moved by The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts's decision to rename its concert hall after the legendary Marian Anderson,” said Mayor of Philadelphia Chelle Parker. “This is a testament to Ms. Anderson's enduring legacy, the values she stood for, and her remarkable contributions to music and the civil rights movement here in Philadelphia and the world. May Marian Anderson Hall and every performance that happens there be a constant reminder of the power of art to inspire and unite us all!”

“I am delighted that The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts are honoring Aunt Marian with the first major American concert hall in her name,” said Ginette DePreist. “This is a wonderful moment for her family, and for all those who love and admire her. To have this permanent celebration of her artistry, achievements, and positive, inclusive message in the middle of her hometown is deeply moving and encouraging.”

As part of the rededication, The Philadelphia Orchestra is partnering with the **UNCF (United Negro College Fund)** on the creation of a **Marian Anderson endowed scholarship**, to be awarded each year to two Black students from the Philadelphia region studying the performing arts or pursuing a career in performing arts administration at schools throughout the country.

“I am particularly honored to be part of this amazing partnership between The Philadelphia Orchestra and UNCF,” said Richard Lee Snow, regional development director, UNCF Mid-Atlantic region. “While UNCF has helped over 500,000 students get to and through school since its founding 80 years ago, to be able to assist students under the banner of one of this country's greatest citizens is the perfect way to celebrate our historic year. UNCF Philadelphia is privileged to have such an outstanding partner that shares its vision of helping students with their educational aspirations. This scholarship will certainly make a difference in the lives of students.”

Born in Philadelphia on February 27, 1897, Marian Anderson was an acclaimed contralto who performed a wide range of music, from opera to spirituals, with renowned orchestras in major concert and recital venues throughout the United States and Europe between 1925 and 1965. Over 20 years, between 1937 and 1957, she sang 12 times with The Philadelphia Orchestra. After her retirement from singing in 1965, she joined the Orchestra to narrate Aaron Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait* several times at the Saratoga

Performing Arts Center in Saratoga Springs, New York, and at the Robin Hood Dell in Philadelphia, the last time in 1976, with the composer conducting. An important figure in the struggle for Black artists to overcome racial prejudice, Anderson was denied the opportunity to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, in 1939. She then performed a historic open-air concert on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, singing before a crowd of more than 75,000 people and a radio audience in the millions. On January 7, 1955, she became the first Black singer to perform a lead role at the Metropolitan Opera. She served as a delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Committee and as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United States Department of State, giving concerts around the world. Anderson received the first Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, the Congressional Gold Medal in 1977, the Kennedy Center Honors in 1978, the National Medal of Arts in 1986, and a GRAMMY Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991.

For more information and to donate to the Marian Anderson Hall rededication, please visit www.ensembleartsphilly.org/marianandersonhall.

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