

Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra *Season 2020-21 Biography*

Lahav Shani, *Principal Conductor*

The **Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra** distinguishes itself with its intensely energetic performances, its acclaimed recordings, and its innovative audience approach. Founded in 1918, it has claimed its own position among Europe's most foremost orchestras.

After the first pioneering years, the Rotterdam Philharmonic developed into one of the foremost orchestras of the Netherlands under Eduard Flipse, *Principal Conductor* from 1930. In the 1970s, under Jean Fournet and Edo de Waart, the orchestra gained international recognition. Valery Gergiev's appointment heralded a new period of bloom, which continued with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and **Lahav Shani**, *Principal Conductor* since 2018.

Home of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra is De Doelen Concert Hall, but the orchestra can frequently be heard in other locations – from the local venues to the most prestigious halls at home and abroad. Since 2010, the Rotterdam Philharmonic has been a resident orchestra of Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. With performances from the local venues to concert halls worldwide, educational performances and community projects, the orchestra reaches an annual audience of 150,000 to 200,000, among which a considerable amount of young people.

Since the groundbreaking Mahler recordings with Eduard Flipse in the 1950s, the Rotterdam Philharmonic has made a large number of critically lauded recordings. The orchestra currently has contracts with Deutsche Grammophon and BIS Records, having also recorded for EMI and Virgin Classics in recent years. For the re-releasing of historical recordings, the orchestra formed its own label - **Rotterdam Philharmonic Vintage Recordings**. Live streams of concerts can be seen regularly via Medici.tv. During the outbreak of the pandemic, the orchestra reached its audience with digital content: most notably the stay-at-home rendition of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, which garnered 3 million views and became world news.

In June 2016, **Lahav Shani** made his debut with the Rotterdam Philharmonic as both conductor and piano soloist. He assumed his position as *Principal Conductor* of the Rotterdam Philharmonic in September 2018, succeeding Yannick Nézet-Séguin and becoming the youngest Principal Conductor in the orchestra's history. During his first season in the role, Shani led the Rotterdam Philharmonic on a tour of Asia with violinist Renaud Capuçon and in concerts across Europe. In the 2020-21 season, Shani will succeed Zubin Mehta as *Music Director* of the Israel Philharmonic. He also serves as *Principal Guest Conductor* of the Vienna Symphony.