For immediate release: Monday, July 28, 2025
Digital Assets



Photos by George Lange and Alexis Wary

Pittsburgh Symphony Announces 25/26 Schooltime Season

- **The 88th Season of PSO's Free Schooltime Series Celebrates Richness of American Orchestral Music and Follows on Recent Success and Growth of Schooltime**
- **PSO Embarks on Ambitious Campaign to Reach All Allegheny County Districts Through Schooltime Program in Coming Years**
- **PSO Introduces Increased Bus Transportation Funding to Reach Schools with Low-Income Enrollment**
- **Call for Scores from Pennsylvania Composers Underway; Winning Selection Featured on Schooltime March 2026**

PITTSBURGH, PA—Today, the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO) announced the 25/26 **Schooltime** season alongside recent successes of the series, celebrating significant growth in the 24/25 season with an 8.5% increase in participating districts and a 5.6% rise in schools. The PSO has set a goal of reaching 100% of Allegheny County school districts, beginning by introducing a new bus fund for schools with low-income enrollment.

Schooltime is a beloved Pittsburgh tradition that brings K–12 students into the world of orchestral music—free for all schools, in person and online. Throughout the 24/25 season, Schooltime uses music to explore what it means to be American in programs featuring works like Peter Boyer's multimedia *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*, and Pittsburgh native Hannah Ishizaki's *City of Bridges*.

In the 25/26 season, Schooltime will explore what American music is, including an "All-American Edition" of the popular Meet the Orchestra program and an open call for music scores from Pennsylvania composers. Registration for the 25/26 Schooltime season will be available starting on Friday, August 1 at www.pittsburghsymphony.org/schooltime.

"Our Learning & Engagement programs exemplify our vision of bringing great music into every life," said **Melia Tourangeau, President & CEO.** "Expanding access to music and music learning has been a consistent mission of these programs, which reached over 30,000 students last season. We're forging ahead with that commitment by setting an audacious goal of reaching all Allegheny County school districts through Schooltime in the coming years and expanding the PSO's impact on music learning in the region."

"Through the new bus fund, we're looking to overcome a significant barrier to the program—the cost of bussing students to Heinz Hall—with priority to low-income schools," said **Suzanne Perrino, Senior Vice President of Learning & Engagement**. "This is a continuation of significant efforts to remove barriers and increase access to music learning. In 24/25, we launched Digital Schooltime and Schooltime on the Road; in 25/26 we'll add new content to Digital Schooltime and visit two new counties, Washington and Indiana. In addition to the variety of regular Sensory Friendly accommodations at all Schooltime concerts, we've also committed to offering ASL interpretation at one concert in each series. I'm excited to see the growth from our efforts and to continue to work for increased access to our music learning programs."

24/25 Schooltime Series Success

Over the 24/25 school year, Schooltime reached 22,041 students from 169 schools in Southwestern PA, and a handful of schools from Ohio (two counties), exceeding pre-pandemic attendance levels. The program reached all school types: public, private, charter, cyber, and homeschool, across 16 counties.

Schooltime Growth Year-Over-Year

	23/24	**24/25**	**% change**
All school districts	47	51	+8.5%

All public schools	127	137	+7.8%
All schools (public/private/charter)	160	169	+5.6%
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	21,568	22,041	+2.2%

25/26 Expansion and Future Goals

The PSO is setting higher goals for Schooltime to build on recent success and increase the Pittsburgh region's access to music education. They include an ambitious campaign to reach all Allegheny County school districts and to preserve the current Pittsburgh Public Schools participation of 100% among K-5 grades.

To help meet these goals, effective during the 25/26 season, the PSO will be making new funding available to schools with significant low-income student populations (defined as districts with a low-income enrollment above the Allegheny County median of 42%) to cover the cost of roundtrip bus transportation to attend Schooltime concerts at Heinz Hall. This marks the first time bus funding is available to schools beyond Pittsburgh Public Schools, and more than double the funding that was available in the 24/25 season.

Schools can request transportation funding through the registration process. Funding will be available on a first-come, first-served basis until the bus transportation fund is fully utilized. The PSO will also continue to provide bus funding for all Pittsburgh Public School (PPS) schools to attend the PPS Meet the Orchestra Day in May. This annual event brings all PPS second-grade students to Heinz Hall and is part of a long-term partnership between the PSO and PPS to promote curiosity about the orchestra and spur interest in studying a musical instrument.

Pennsylvania Composers Open Call for Scores

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra is hosting an open call for scores for its 25/26 Schooltime at Heinz Hall series from composers currently living or studying in Pennsylvania. The composer chosen will be awarded a $1,000 prize, along with travel and accommodations to hear their piece performed by the PSO during Schooltime concerts at Heinz Hall in Pittsburgh March 18-20, 2026. The selected composer will also receive an archival recording of the live performance of their work for their portfolio and personal use. A panel of three judges, led by Nancy Galbraith, Vira I. Heinz Professor of Composition at CMU, and including PSO Associate Conductor Jacob Joyce and GRAMMY-award winning composer Lucas Richman, will select the winning composition through an anonymous review process.

The call for scores is open to Pennsylvania composers of any age with a submission deadline of September 15, 2025. For complete information and submission form, visit the American Composers Forum website.

25/26 Schooltime at Heinz Hall Full Schedule

Registration opens August 1, 2025 at pittsburghsymphony.org/schooltime.

Tallulah Plays the Tuba (Grades K–2)
November 19 & 20, 2025 | Moon Doh, Conductor
What do you need to play an instrument? Join Tallulah as she dreams of playing the tuba – despite its size – in this story of determination, teamwork, and creativity told through music. This performance brings Tiffany Stone's delightful book to life on stage with live narration and full orchestral accompaniment, featuring PSO Principal Tuba Craig Knox and Principal Piccolo Rhian Kenny.

Tallulah Plays the Tuba © 2019 by Tiffany Stone (text), Sandy Nichols (art) published by Annick Press. Reproduced by permission.

The Orchestra at Work (Grades 6–12)
January 28 & 29, 2026 | Moon Doh, Conductor
How does an orchestra work? From lighting and sound to instrument repair and artistic planning, go behind the scenes with the many talents, both onstage and off, that power a symphony. PSO employees from across the organization demonstrate a variety of responsibilities in this fast-paced look at the orchestra as a living, working team.

Music in the Making (Grades 4–6)
March 18–20, 2026 | Jacob Joyce, Conductor
How is new music made? This program showcases the creative process behind orchestral composition through the works of four living American composers, including the animated, multimedia work *Philharmonia Fantastique* by Mason Bates, and the winning selection of the PSO's Pennsylvania Composer Competition.

Meet the Orchestra: All-American Edition (Grades 2–4)
April 29–May 6, 2026 | Moon Doh, Conductor
What is an American orchestra? Students will meet each instrument family, explore how they work together, and hear music by American composers in this engaging introduction to orchestral instruments and the symphony orchestra.

Each Schooltime unit includes a PSO concert and classroom resources developed by the PSO Learning & Engagement team. Sensory-friendly, hearing, and mobility accommodations are available at all Schooltime concerts. ASL interpretation will be provided from the stage on Nov. 20, Jan. 29, March 19, May 5, & May 6. Additional accommodations are available upon request.

With Gratitude

Schooltime is made possible by generous support from the Jack Buncher Foundation, the Henry C. Frick Educational Fund of The Buhl Foundation, David R. and Frances F. Levin Charitable Foundation, EQT Foundation, and S&T Bank. Schooltime is also supported in part by Educational Improvement funders: Firewater Response LLC; Kurt J. Lesker Company; Dollar Bank; Oil Services, Inc.; Miller McCurry; Baird; PPG Industries Foundation; Williams Coulson LLC; NexTier Bank; PJ Dick - Trumbull - The Lindy Group; Aspire Grant and Development; Frank B. Fuhrer Holdings, Inc.; Printfly; Ninja Transfer LLC; Steven Voudouris/Turn 5; and Friends of Education; Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Helfrich; Nancy N. & Maurice A. Nernberg; Angela & Mike DeVanney; Mr. & Mrs. Keith A. Impink; Susan Silversmith & Larry Leventon; and Mr. Robert H. Wyche.

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra is grateful for overall support provided by local and state government entities: the Allegheny Regional Asset District, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

About the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Now entering its 130th season, the internationally acclaimed Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO) engages audiences of all ages through unparalleled live musical experiences, community collaborations, and educational programming that enrich every life with great music. The GRAMMY® Award-winning symphony has been led by globally acclaimed Music Director Manfred Honeck since 2008. Past music directors have included many of the greatest conductors of the twentieth century, including Fritz Reiner, William Steinberg, André Previn, Lorin Maazel, and Mariss Jansons. The Pittsburgh Symphony has a long and illustrious history in the areas of recordings and live radio broadcasts dating back to the 1930s. Lauded as the Pittsburgh region's international cultural ambassador, the orchestra began touring in 1896 and has embarked on scores of domestic and international tours. Heinz Hall, PSO's home located at 600 Penn Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh, is also owned and operated by the Pittsburgh Symphony. Follow the Pittsburgh Symphony online at pittsburghsymphony.org, on Facebook, on Instagram, and on YouTube.

Media Contact:
Keene Carter, Communications Manager, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
kcarter@pittsburghsymphony.org, (434) 987-7921

# # #