

Perry So, conductor

Chief Conductor & Artistic Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra
Music Director of the New Haven Symphony

A dynamic and transformative presence in concert halls on five continents, Perry So is currently Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra and Music Director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. Under his leadership, the Navarre Symphony Orchestra has toured to critical acclaim, widely lauded for the “artistic vitality” of its programming, and the ensemble, Spain’s oldest orchestra, recognized as currently being at “one of the finest points in its history.”

Perry So was born in Hong Kong and received his early training in piano, organ, violin, viola and composition there. He graduated from Yale University with a degree in Literature with a focus on the interaction of literature and music in Central Europe in the modernist era; as a student at Yale, he founded an orchestra and led the undergraduate opera company. He received his training as a conductor initially under James Sinclair, then under Gustav Meier at the Peabody Institute. In 2008 he received First and Special Prizes at the Prokofiev Conducting Competition in St Petersburg, Russia. He has since served as Associate Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Conducting Fellow at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Artistic Partner of the Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias in Spain and on the conducting faculty at the Manhattan School of Music.

In recent seasons Perry So made his subscription series debut with the San Francisco Symphony and his European operatic debut at the Royal Danish Opera in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte. Other highlights include a tour to Milan with the Nuremberg Symphony and a seven-week tour of South Africa with three orchestras including Verdi’s Requiem in Cape Town. He has appeared with the Cleveland and Minnesota Orchestras, the symphony orchestras of Israel, New Zealand, Shanghai, Houston, Detroit, New Jersey, Tucson, Tenerife and Málaga; the London, China, Seoul and Szezin Philharmonics; the Residentie Orkest in the Hague and the Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie in Koblenz, among others. He toured the Balkan Peninsula at the helm of the Zagreb Philharmonic in the first series of cultural exchanges established after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

His work in the recording studio encompasses a broad sampling of twentieth century British, French and Russian music with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the BBC Concert Orchestra, and his album of Barber and Korngold’s violin concertos with soloist Alexander Gilman and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra was awarded the Diapason d’Or in 2012.

His wide-ranging musical interests encompass world premieres on four continents as well as championing the reintroduction of the Renaissance and Baroque repertory into symphonic programs.

His work with young musicians has taken him to the Round Top Festival, where he serves on the board of trustees, the Australian Youth Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, the Manhattan School of Music, the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts and the Yale School of Music.