



Conductor
David Handel



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David Handel - Biography

Acclaimed on four continents for his passionate musical leadership and skill at energizing orchestras and audiences alike, David Handel is widely regarded as one of the most significant of emerging conductors. A multi-lingual world citizen, Handel has been described in the international press as “mesmerizing”, “decisive”, “commanding”, and “achieving a magical connection between the music, musicians and conductor.”

His sold-out Moscow debut in 2010 at Svetlanov Hall led to his immediate reengagement and was soon thereafter named Principal Guest Conductor of the **Moscow City Symphony – Russian Philharmonic**.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Handel received a Bachelor of Musical Arts Degree in violin, philosophy and composition, and a Master’s Degree in orchestral conducting. Among his mentors were Gustav Meier, Elizabeth Green, Ruggiero Ricci and Kurt Masur. Even before receiving his graduate degree in conducting, Masur took Handel under his wing as his apprentice conductor at the **Leipzig Gewandhaus** and later invited him to conduct the **New York Philharmonic** in a preview of young conducting talent at **Carnegie Hall**. Counted among his many distinguished collaborators are Schlomo Mintz, Walter Ponce, Pepe Romero, Rachel Barton Pine, Peter Donahoe, Rafael Gintoli, Alexander Ghindin and stars of Moscow’s Bolshoi Theater.

At an early age, Handel was named Music Director of the **National Symphony Orchestra of Bolivia**, a position he held for fourteen years and where his tenure was characterized by unprecedented artistic growth and a many-fold increase in the Orchestra’s public. His achievements with the National Symphony of Bolivia have made that organization a model for orchestra building in Latin America.

His imaginative programming and initiatives have been the subject of profiles on National Public Radio (USA), the BBC World Service and in Russia Today, The Washington Post, USA Today, The San Francisco Chronicle, and The Guardian of London, to mention a few.

Concurrently, Handel served as Music Director of the Mendoza Symphony Orchestra (Argentina), as Founding Artistic Director of the Guadalquivir International Orchestra Festival and as Artistic Advisor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Guatemala. He currently holds positions as Artistic Advisor of the La Serena Symphony Orchestra (Chile) and as Principal Guest Conductor of the Moscow City Symphony – Russian Philharmonic.

Extremely varied, Handel’s repertoire spans much of the symphonic and operatic literature. Having led numerous first performances and world premiers, he has personally commissioned more than seventy original scores and orchestral

arrangements, and has to his credit a considerable list of television and compact disc recordings.

Twice a Fulbright Senior Scholar, Maestro Handel is a laureate of the Chicago Artists International Program and has received numerous awards including two Rackham Center for Graduate Studies awards, the Marguerite Lapp Scholarship for Exceptional Musical Talent, two Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Illinois Arts Council awards, the Decoration of Illimani for Outstanding Community Service in the Arts (Bolivia), the UNESCO Pro-Santa Cruz National Prize in Culture (Bolivia), the Pedro D. Murillo Medal of Honor (Bolivia), the Nilo Soruco Arancibia Medal for his extraordinary contribution to the cultural life of Bolivia, and a fellowship from the Leipzig Gewandhaus (Germany). He has represented the United States around the world as a Cultural Ambassador through U.S. State Department Cultural Specialists and Public Diplomacy Programs.

As a cultural diplomat, David Handel has performed on important international stages as well as unconventional venues. In 2007, he led the combined orchestras of Baghdad, Erbil and Suleimaniya (Iraq) at the American Voices' Unity Festival, a solidarity initiative, supporting Iraqi orchestral musicians and young artists from throughout the country. He is one of the only American conductors to have performed in Cuba in recent years, was decorated by Bolivia's President with the Coat of Arms of the City of La Paz for his contribution to the cultural life of the country, and most recently conducted the annual season finale of the Malta National Philharmonic at the Girgenti Palace, hosted by Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi.

A Naxos recording artist, his current projects include recordings of works by Alberto Ginastera, Anton Rubenstein, George Gershwin and Isaac Albeniz. He has previously recorded music by American composer David Winkler for that label.

His wife Chemena is a pianist and native of the former Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan. When not occupied with his busy concert schedule, Handel, his wife and young son enjoy their time together at home on the West Coast of Florida.

David Handel – Reviews

Maestro Handel is a 'messiah' for orchestra
The Miami Herald, Florida, USA

David Handel elevates El Paso Symphony Orchestra...

Mesmerizing.... The postured Handel, who grew more animated with each movement, kept it on track, on time and on the spot ... you could sense an almost magical connection between the music, the musicians and the conductor. Not only did the crowd respond with a loud and long standing ovation, but the musicians applauded him at length, something I haven't seen in three years of covering their concerts.... By making those musicians sound as good and alive as they did, and in such convincing fashion, Handel has to have established himself as a very strong front-runner ...

El Paso Times, Texas, USA

The young maestro and envoy of American culture, David Handel - who possesses European education of the highest order (he was assistant to Kurt Masur at the Leipzig Gewandhaus) -, currently occupies a leadership role in Latin America... The debut of David Handel in Moscow forms part of the presidential mission Medvedev-Obama, as announced by the United States Ambassador... The refined conductor provoked a hurricane of emotional admiration in the hall... It was clear that Handel worked in great detail with the musicians of the Russian Philharmonic... It has been a long time since the Orchestra has demonstrated so excellent and stylized playing. Indeed, one sensed the strong hand of a truly professional conductor, ... who was not only able to bring out the form, but also filling it with every detail of its content. It is clear that in the communication with various conductors, the great creative potential of the ensemble's musicians has been awakened, above all when on the podium there is so brilliant a professional as David Handel... The orchestra sounded luxuriously and grandly 'in tutti'.

Magazine CULTURE, Moscow, Russia

An impressive personality and demanding musician... David Handel, who got a sustained ovation at the last concert... threaded the beautiful melody from the guitar (Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez) gently to keep it from being covered by the orchestra, yet allowed its strong interpretation flow through. The performance blew the audience away both nights... What a trip... Handel whipped up the orchestra in fine style... Handel lets all hell break loose (Berlioz's "Fantastic Symphony") with instruments going and blowing one moment, then shushes to solemnity before a return to heavy uproar. The audience went wild. Handel took so many bows he looked like a puppet on strings. He 'took no prisoners' keeping the orchestra in tow and in line! ...

El Paso Inc., Texas, USA

My experience with David Handel was extraordinary. During my long career, David is one of the best conductors with whom I have had the pleasure to collaborate. He possesses all the important and necessary qualities to be music director of any orchestra, even the most important. His great musicality, human touch, technical mastery and intelligence makes it possible for him to elevate the level of any orchestra.

Sir Pepe Romero, international guitar soloist and recording artist

Handel's decisive style brought cohesive, blended sounds, precise attacks, and bold dynamics from the orchestra, in a performance that was polished, expressive and full of carefully shaped phrases throughout...

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin, USA

Handel has brought the National Symphony of Bolivia to levels of public awareness and excellence heretofore unknown. **His energetic podium manner and repose in real life are fresh air in our midst.**

COSAS, International Syndicated Magazine, South America

Much more than pure joy... The capacity crowd of more than 2,000 gave a massive 'YES' to this performance... The extremely notable interpretation of this universal classic (Beethoven's Ninth Symphony), under the direction of Maestro David Handel, revealed the true vigor of the original score... Every one of the singularities of each of the four movements was indicated by Handel with mathematical precision, but was at the same time filled with enchantment... All were received with an extended standing ovation... Musicians and public alike were radiant with joy.

Diario UNO, Mendoza, Argentina

Replete with interesting variety... Emphasis was placed on rhythmic appeal. Fluid sections with ritardandi were particularly effective... Equally impressive in shape and accomplishment was the melancholy and dramatic... where Handel's attentive conducting was also remarkable for its sensitivity.

The Sunday Times, Malta

The public burst into applause.... Yes, the concert was truly great; not only for the opportunity to enjoy the musicianship of violinist Schlomo Mintz, but because the Orchestra was so solidly guided by its music director David Handel in a well balanced program, full of emotion and one intelligently delineated.

Los Andes, Mendoza, Argentina

DAVID HANDEL

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

2011- Present
Moscow, Russian Federation
Moscow City Symphony
RUSSIAN PHILHARMONIC
Principal Guest Conductor

DUTIES

- *Lead a variety of concert programs each year at the International House of Music in Moscow, corresponding rehearsals, regional concert tours and television broadcasts of major top tier and only official Municipal symphony orchestra*
- *Develop and facilitate strategic international projects and initiatives*
- *Develop programming proposals, in coordination with Orchestra CEO and Artistic Administrator*
- *Propose soloists*
- *Actively participate in the Orchestra's promotional campaigns*
- *Generate, develop and lead innovative recording and media projects*

2011- Present
La Serena, Chile
LA SERENA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - ULS
Artistic Advisor

DUTIES

- *Lead a variety of concert programs of one of Chile's leading professional orchestras, approximately eight weeks of the Orchestra's forty-two week concert season, in La Serena and on national concert tours*
- *Develop strategic initiatives for the Orchestra, including international, inter-institutional collaborations*
- *Actively participate in annual programming, planning, development and budget meetings*
- *Participate in the selection of musicians and serve as member of the jury for orchestra auditions*
- *Serve as an advocate nationally and internationally*
- *Interact with University of La Serena faculty and staff on a constant basis*

1997 – 2012
La Paz, Bolivia
NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF BOLIVIA
Music Director

DUTIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- *Conducted significant majority of rehearsals and concerts of the Orchestra's forty-two week concert season, including traditional subscription programming, educational, outreach, multi-media and pops-folk programming*
- *Achieved significant growth in the level of the ensemble's performance quality and professional protocols*
- *Significantly grew budget, from approximately 100K (1997) to approximately 1M (2012), through proactive participation in fundraising activities (Note: this figure does not reflect differences in cost of living and varying exchange rates, and therefore represents a considerably more significant growth than the approximated USD amounts cited.)*
- *Grew orchestra's concert activity, from 14 concerts to more than 40 annually, not including chamber, ensemble outreach and community performances*
- *Recruited musicians, coordinated and led orchestra auditions*
- *Grew orchestra core from 45 to 75*
- *Selected repertoire and guest artists, in coordination with Artistic Committee and Board of Directors*
- *Led the National Symphony Orchestra's institutional restructuring*
- *Grew administrative team from 2 to 12*
- *Coordinated all aspects of orchestra administration with Board President, Executive Director, Artistic Administrator and corresponding Symphony personnel*
- *Secured by Presidential Decree the transfer of an historic landmark theater building to the National Symphony Orchestra as its first ever permanent home, the National Symphony Center; raised funding and oversaw development to become a fully equipped symphony hall, complete with artistic, performance, administrative and public spaces*
- *Spearheaded creation of the National Symphony Orchestra Foundation, composed of some forty-five volunteer community, civic and corporate leaders*
- *Dramatically increased individual contributions, corporate support and government funding, resulting in an expanded concert season,*

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- increased public awareness and approximately twelve-fold growth (1997 - 2012) in audience attendance*
- *Developed, secured funding for and implemented the National Center for Orchestral Studies*
 - *Developed, secured funding for and implemented international professional exchange programs, involving the National Symphony Orchestra of Bolivia, the Mendoza (UNCuyo) Symphony Orchestra (Argentina), the National Symphony Orchestra of Argentina, the New World Symphony, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and principal players of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic - Teatro Colón (Argentina)*
 - *Designed, implemented and led the Gaudalquivir International Orchestral Festival (Tarija, Bolivia) as founding Artistic Director, involving some of the finest professional orchestral musicians and scholarship students from throughout the Americas (Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, USA and Brazil), and presenting more than forty orchestral and chamber music programs during the two-week duration of the Festival, reaching an estimated public of 40,000*
 - *Developed and implemented community outreach and engagement programs and initiatives in under-served communities of La Paz and throughout the country*
 - *Launched ongoing series promoting new works by regional composers, through commissions, composer competitions, world premiers, Symphony reading sessions, original orchestral arrangements of traditional and popular Bolivian music*
 - *Developed and conducted commercial recordings, television and radio broadcasts*
 - *Created the "Professional Exposure and Incentive Program," designed to develop National Symphony talent through international cultural exchanges, in coordination with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New World Symphony and the Queen Sofia Superior School of Music (Madrid, Spain), sponsored by the National Symphony Orchestra Foundation, American Airlines, the New World Symphony and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs*
 - *Led dramatic increase in the National Symphony Orchestra's touring activities, including more communities within Bolivia than ever before in the Orchestra's history*

2005 – 2008

Mendoza, Argentina

MENDOZA (UNCUYO) SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Music Director

DUTIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- *Conducted a significant majority of rehearsals and concerts of forty-six week concert season of major 3M plus professional orchestra, including traditional subscription programming, education and outreach*
- *Recruited musicians and led orchestra auditions*
- *Selected repertoire and guest artists in coordination with Artistic Committee, Executive Director and corresponding authority*
- *Created the OSUNCuyo "Professional Exposure and Incentive Program", designed to develop OSUNCuyo talent through an ongoing exchange program with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by American Airlines and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra*
- *Prepared, conducted and supervised editing of Orchestra's first internationally distributed compact disc for Naxos, music of composer David Winkler*
- *Interacted and coordinated with National University of Cuyo (parent institution) faculty and staff*

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

1991 - Present

ORCHESTRAS CONDUCTED

Guest Conductor

United States

Lafayette Symphony Orchestra (IN - 2015), Amherst Symphony Orchestra (NY - 2015), Owensboro Symphony Orchestra (KY), El Paso Symphony Orchestra (TX), Riverside Symphonia (NJ), La Jolla Symphony Orchestra (CA), Acadiana Symphony Orchestra (LA), Waukesha Symphony Orchestra (WI), Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (NY), New York Philharmonic (NY), *Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (IL), National Opera Association and De Paul University Symphony (IL), *Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Buffalo Civic Orchestra

International

Omsk Siberian Symphony Orchestra (Russian Federation - 2016), Bogota Symphony Orchestra (Colombia - 2015), *National Symphony Orchestra of Ecuador (2015), *National Symphony Orchestra of Guatemala (2015), Symphony Orchestra of the National Congress of Paraguay (2015), Dresden Symphony Orchestra (2015),

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Voronezh Symphony Orchestra (Russian Federation), **+Bucharest Symphony Orchestra**, **+Moscow City Symphony - Russian Philharmonic**, **+La Serena Symphony Orchestra** (Chile), **+San Juan Symphony Orchestra** (Argentina), Milan Academic Symphony Orchestra (Italy), *Espiritu Santo Symphony Orchestra (Brazil), *National Symphony Orchestra of Bolivia, *Koszalin State Philharmonic (Poland), , *National Symphony Orchestra of Malta, *Sergipe Symphony Orchestra (Brazil), *IPN Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), *Mendoza UNCuyo Symphony Orchestra (Argentina), *National Symphony Orchestra of Argentina, *Guadalquivir Festival Orchestra (Bolivia), *National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, *National Symphony Orchestra of Brazil UFF, Amazon Philharmonic (Brazil), National Symphony Orchestra of Iraq, Venezuela Symphony Orchestra, Oaxaca Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), *National Symphony Orchestra of Peru, National Symphony Orchestra of El Salvador, Baku Opera Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra (Azerbaijan), *Coyoacan Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), Matanzas Symphony Orchestra (Cuba), Michoacan Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), *Jalisco (Guadalajara) Philharmonic (Mexico), Xalapa Symphony Orchestra (Mexico)

Listed in reverse chronological order, 2013 - 1991

* refers to multiple / repeat engagements

+ refers to an ongoing affiliation and multiple annual engagements

1996 - Present
International
UNITED STATES, DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Public Diplomacy, Cultural Specialist Programs
Conductor, Clinician, Lecturer

2001 - 2007
International
AMERICAN VOICES
Principal Conductor

2004
Kharkov, Ukraine
JORDANIA INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTORS COMPETITION
Member of Competition Jury

2000 - 2001
Guatemala City, Guatemala
NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF GUATEMALA
Artistic Advisor

1993
New York, New York
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Young Conductor Preview

- *Selected by Kurt Masur as one of six young conductors to conduct the New York Philharmonic at a preview of young conducting talent in a closed session at Carnegie Hall*

1991 - 1993
Chicago, Illinois
CHICAGO YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Rehearsal Conductor

1991
Chicago, Illinois
CIVIC ORCHESTRA OF CHICAGO
Rehearsal Conductor

- *Regularly conducted rehearsals of Civic Orchestra repertoire for the 1991 concert season per the Orchestra's then conductor, Michael Morgan*

1988 - 1989
Leipzig, Germany
LEIPZIG GEWANDHAUS ORCHESTRA
Assistant Conductor

- *Responsible for conducting sectional rehearsals, assisted Music Director Kurt Masur in rehearsals, recording sessions and concerts, performed as Orchestra extra in rehearsals and concerts, served as liaison for the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and on tour in the United States and the UK and studied directly under the tutelage of Maestro Masur, covering all aspects of artistic and institutional leadership*

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DISTINCTIONS

2012 La Paz, Bolivia	REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA, "NILO SORUCO ARANCIBIA" NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR <i>Awarded by ministerial decree for "extraordinary contribution to the cultural life of Bolivia"</i>
2009 La Paz, Bolivia	SOCIALES VIP MAGAZINE, "PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR"
2008 La Paz, Bolivia	CITY OF LA PAZ, MUNICIPAL COAT OF ARMS HONOR <i>Medal awarded "for outstanding cultural contribution to the community"</i>
2008 La Paz, Bolivia	DATOS MAGAZINE, "FIFTY MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE 2008" <i>Selected as one of the fifty most influential personalities in Bolivia</i>
2007 Williamsville, NY	WILLIAMSVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT <i>Recognized as illustrious graduate in "Wall of Fame"</i>
2006 La Paz, Bolivia	RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AMBASSADORS' DISTINCTION OF HONOR <i>Vladimir Kulikov, Ambassador</i>
2004 La Paz, Bolivia	MUNICIPAL MEDAL OF HONOR "PEDRO DOMINGO MURILLO" <i>For "extraordinary contribution in the arts and life in La Paz"</i>
2002 La Paz, Bolivia	LA PAZ BUSINESS COLLEGE, "TOP MANAGEMENT AWARD" <i>"In recognition of the National Symphony of Bolivia's extraordinary growth"</i>
2001 Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia	UNESCO PRO-SANTA CRUZ NATIONAL PRIZE IN CULTURE <i>For "young leadership examples in the community"</i>
1998, 1999 United States Government	CIES, FULBRIGHT SENIOR SCHOLAR Senior Fulbright Scholar
1998 La Paz, Bolivia	PRO LA PAZ, "DECORATION OF ILLIMANI" <i>For "outstanding community service in the arts"</i>
1995, 1996, 1997 Chicago, Illinois	CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS <i>Chicago Artists International and Community Arts Promoting Chicago-based artists internationally</i>
1988 - 1999 Leipzig, Germany	LEIPZIG GEWANDHAUS ORCHESTRA / KURT MASUR <i>Assistant Conductor Fellowship</i>
1982 Buffalo, New York	MARGUERITE LAPP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR EXCEPTIONAL MUSICAL TALENT <i>Scholarship for university musical study</i>

DAVID HANDEL

EDUCATION

1990
1988
Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Master of Music Degree in Orchestral Conducting
Bachelor of Musical Arts Degree in Violin, Composition and Philosophy

1988 – 1989
Leipzig, Germany

THE LEIPZIG GEWANDHAUS ORCHESTRA
Assistant Conductor

1985
Loma Linda, California

THE HERBERT BLOMSTEDT INSTITUTE
Certificate

Principal Mentors

Gustav Meier
Kurt Masur
Elizabeth A.H. Green
Ruggiero Ricci

LANGUAGES

English - *fluent*
Spanish - *fluent*
German - *conversant*
Italian - *working knowledge*
Russian - *basic*