
Ford Made in America

General Project Description

In 2001, an entrepreneurial group of smaller-budget orchestras banded together and pooled their resources to commission a renowned American composer. Through this unique initiative, the Ford Made in America program was formed. Ford Made in America is the largest orchestral commissioning consortium in the country's history and has created a national network through which participating orchestras have access to resources normally not available to orchestras of their size. In addition to giving participating orchestras the opportunity to commission and premiere a new work, the resources offered to the orchestras enhance their engagement with their communities, deepen their involvement with young people, and further their mastery of the music of our time. The program exemplifies the spirit of partnership, commitment to creativity, and the true vitality of America's orchestras and composers.

Ford Made in America is made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company.

Major support is also provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional funding from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, and The Amphion Foundation.

In September 2008, the second round of Ford Made in America begins, with the premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Joseph Schwantner's new work *Chasing Light*.... Receiving its world premiere by the Reno Chamber Orchestra in Reno, Nevada, *Chasing Light*... will be performed by 58 orchestras representing all 50 states over the course of the 2008–09 and 2009–10 concert seasons. Based upon an original poem by the composer and inspired by the colors of rural New England where the composer now lives, *Chasing Light*... promises to evoke a vivid landscape of color and texture, as wondrous and diverse as America itself.

The new round of Ford Made in America promises to build upon the success of the first round, which featured a commissioned piece by composer Joan Tower. Her work, entitled *Made in America*, used "America the Beautiful" as the departure point for a unique musical journey that is at once original and familiar. *Made in America* had its world premiere in October 2005 in Glens Falls, New York, and was performed by a group of 65 orchestras representing all 50 states. Over the course of the 2005–06 and 2006–07 concert seasons, *Made in America* received more than 80 performances and was heard by more than 75,000 audience members across the nation, an unprecedented accomplishment for a brand-new work. The Nashville Symphony's recording of Joan Tower's *Made in America* won two Grammy® awards in 2008, and Joan Tower won a Grammy® in the Best Classical Composition category for *Made in America*.

Ford Made in America is more than just a performance of one piece. Each participating orchestra is also equipped with a “tool kit” which aids them in maximizing local fund-raising, marketing, and promotion efforts that specifically address new music. Education lesson plans in the tool kit serve as the basis for developing distinctive community-based programs. Technical support is available from Ford Made in America project managers, and orchestras have the opportunity to learn from each other and share collective wisdom about their experiences, forging new connections within the industry.

In the end, Ford Made in America achieves two major goals: First, it encourages the performance and commissioning of new music by orchestras nationwide. Second, new music becomes the catalyst for effecting institutional growth in each orchestra through the collective efforts of the consortium.

Ford Made in America is spearheaded by two national music service organizations: the League of American Orchestras and Meet The Composer, whose combined national expertise guide consortium members throughout the duration of the program. Each participating orchestra contributes to the commissioning fund and, in turn, performs the new work during the two-year program cycle.

For up-to-date information on Ford Made in America performances and activities across the country, visit **www.FordMadeinAmerica.org**.