



The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., to Display Maene-Viñoly Concert Grand Piano in its U.S. Debut at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Ergonomically curved keyboard is a unique 21st-century evolution of the grand piano, designed by the late architect Rafael Viñoly

(Philadelphia, June 1, 2023)—In a fitting homage to the late musician-architect Rafael Viñoly, the Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., will house the innovative, ergonomically designed Maene-Viñoly Concert Grand piano at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, one of Viñoly's most significant designs, and an anchor of Philadelphia's world-class arts and culture scene. In partnership with Rafael Viñoly Architects, the special exhibition marks the piano's first appearance in the United States.

Distinguished by its curved ergonomic keyboard that matches the natural sweep of a pianist's arms, the piano will first be available for public viewing during the Philadelphia Fall Arts Festival on September 23, 2023, and will remain on display in the Rendell Room of the Kimmel Center. The instrument will also be made available to guest pianists performing at the Kimmel Center.

Photos of the piano can be found [here](#)

Video of the piano's arrival in Philadelphia can be found [here](#)

The piano can be viewed by journalists in advance of September 23 upon request; please email Lauren Hall at lhall@kimmelculturalcampus.org

““Rafael Viñoly was a visionary with a deep love for, and an expansive view of, the role of the performing arts in our society. Whether designing the glorious sweep of the Kimmel Center's glass roof, or the beauty of Verizon Hall's interior, he always kept in mind the experience of the audience and their connection to the artistry on the stage,” said Matías Tarnopolsky, president and CEO of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc. “It is only fitting that the innovative piano he designed finds its home in one of his most iconic buildings. We look forward to sharing this extraordinary gift with our communities, both in this public display and in performances on our stages in the future.”

"The fact that the Maene-Viñoly Concert Grand piano is taking residence at the Kimmel Center is exciting, personally moving, and apt," said Román Viñoly. "Like the Kimmel Center's paradigm-shifting architecture, the Maene-Viñoly defies convention to enrich and improve human experience. Both emerged from the exuberant curiosity and passion for the arts that characterized the mind of my recently deceased father, the great architect Rafael Viñoly. This enviable platform will not only make the instrument available to the world's leading pianists, many of whom come to play with the renowned Philadelphia Orchestra, but also to the many exceptional emerging talents being cultivated at the Curtis Institute of Music, just four blocks away."

About the Maene-Viñoly Concert Grand

Master piano maker Chris Maene and renowned architect Rafael Viñoly developed the Maene-Viñoly Concert Grand over a six-year period. The instrument's ergonomically curved keyboard matches the natural sweep of a pianist's arms, rotating from the shoulders, and facilitates effortless playing across all registers. The keyboard's radial arrangement is extended to strings fanning out over a much larger soundboard that augments the instrument's capacity for nuance, clarity, and power.

An accomplished amateur pianist himself, Viñoly was encouraged to design the piano after conversations with several legendary artists, including Daniel Barenboim and Martha Argerich. His experience and close friendships with master pianists sharpened his awareness of the instrument's biomechanical demands and inspired his idea to curve the keyboard. He partnered with Maene to develop the piano, and began collaborating with noted piano kinematics researcher Renzo Pozzo, professor at the Department of Medical and Biological Sciences at the University of Udine in Italy, and German pianist and researcher Dr. Henriette Gartner to determine the keyboard's ideal arc. Some of the world's most prominent piano technicians and artists provided feedback throughout the construction process, including Emanuel Ax, Barenboim, Kirill Gerstein, and Stephen Hough. The first pianist to perform on the piano was Gerstein at Switzerland's Verbier Festival on July 19, 2022. More information available [here](#).

About Rafael Viñoly

Rafael Viñoly was an acclaimed architect and founder of Rafael Viñoly Architects, a leading international practice focused on making meaningful civic and cultural contributions while exceeding the programmatic, economic, aesthetic, and performance goals of every building project. In over a half-century of built work, he realized over 600 commissions from courthouses, concert halls, and museums to airports, stadiums, and buildings for science throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. His work is characterized by holistic attention to proportion and a sustained structural originality that transcends passing architectural fads. An accomplished amateur pianist, Viñoly began lessons in his youth. For nearly 70 years, music-making was his favorite pastime and a consistent retreat from the pressures of his professional life. His design interest in the instrument flows from his appreciation of the ergonomic and physical exigencies of achieving pianistic excellence.

About Chris Maene

Chris Maene is a piano builder who learned his craft in his parents' piano workshop. Founded in Ruiselede, Belgium, in 1938, Pianos Maene has built, restored, and collected many historical instruments. In 1973, Chris Maene formally joined his parents' company and in 1984 became the company's director. Over the years he built up Pianos Maene into a family business with six branches and became the exclusive dealer of Steinway & Sons for Belgium and the Netherlands. Since 2004, his sons, Dominique and Frederic Maene, have been active in the business. Chris Maene has made replicas of iconic pianos such as the Steinway & Sons N°1 "Kitchen" fortepiano 1836, the Ignaz Pleyel concert grand 1843, and the Erard 1803 and the John Broadwood 1817, both originals of which were owned by Ludwig van Beethoven. Maene is also an associate researcher at the Orpheus Institute and Research Centre in Ghent, Belgium.

About The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc.

On June 17, 2021, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Cultural Campus announced a pathbreaking partnership to create a brighter, more inclusive, innovative cultural future for Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc. The two organizations were united from a position of strength to bring the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs, in-person and digitally, to the diverse audiences of the city, and beyond. The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., is reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change—to uplift all Philadelphians.

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