



Press Contact:

Leslie Patterson-Tyler

(m) 609.247.2632

Ltyler@ensembleartsp Philly.org

Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada and Civic Leader David L. Cohen Elected to the Board of Trustees of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts

Ambassador Cohen's return signals a strategic commitment to bold leadership and an expanded national and global footprint for the organization.

For Immediate Release: Philadelphia, PA (January 20, 2026)—The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts is pleased to announce the election of David L. Cohen to its Board of Trustees. As a founding board member of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, and a former member of the organization's President's Leadership Council, Amb. Cohen brings institutional experience to the now combined organization. His selection follows November's appointment of leaders, including Dr. Amy Gutmann, underscoring the organization's focus on nationally recognized civic and institutional leadership at the board level.

"David brings an uncommon combination of civic leadership, strategic judgment, and an unflinching commitment to strong governance," said Board Chair Ralph Muller. "His experience reinforces the values that guide this board: accountability and disciplined stewardship in service of the institution's mission."

"I'm delighted to welcome David back to the board," said Ryan Fleur, President and Chief Executive Officer. "David's record of civic partnership and institutional leadership is exactly the kind of experience that will help guide this next chapter for The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts. As our organization continues to evolve, we are intentionally building a board that reflects the best of Philadelphia's public, private, and civic leadership, all aligned around artistic excellence, broad community impact, and strong governance."

"One of the defining strengths of Philadelphia is the way our leading institutions work together for the city's future," said Ambassador Cohen. "This organization's focus on artistic innovation and excellence, global leadership, community engagement, and sound governance models nonprofit leadership, and I look forward to contributing to that work."

Cohen's career reflects a rare breadth of leadership across public service, diplomacy, law, and civic life. He most recently served as United States Ambassador to Canada, where he advanced bilateral cooperation and fostered cultural exchange between the two nations, including championing The Philadelphia Orchestra as a cultural ambassador through high-profile performances, educational exchanges, and community engagement. Over decades of service, he has been a central figure in Philadelphia's civic life, widely respected for his sustained commitment to public institutions, education, and the cultural vitality of the city he has long called home.

Cohen's connection to the Avenue of the Arts is longstanding and foundational. As Chief of Staff to Philadelphia Mayor Edward G. Rendell, Cohen played a pivotal role in the corridor's conception and realization, helping to shape a defining center of artistic and civic life in Philadelphia. Following his service in City Hall, he assumed senior leadership roles in the private sector, including Senior Executive Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Advisor to the CEO of Comcast NBCUniversal.

Cohen's commitment to institutional stewardship is reflected in an extensive record of nonprofit leadership. In addition to his role as a founding member of the Board of Directors for the legacy Kimmel organization, he has served as Chair of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and its Executive Committee; as founding chair of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee of Penn Medicine; as a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; as Chair of the Philadelphia Theatre Company; as a member of the Board of the National Urban League; and as Chair of the Corporate Board of Advisors of UnidosUS. He currently serves as chair of the Philadelphia Citizen Media Group and formerly served as a member of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission and on the boards of PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. and PNC Bank, National Association.

Early in his ambassadorship in 2022, Cohen led the Greater Philadelphia Trade Visit to Canada, a joint initiative with the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia to expand trade opportunities between Canadian and Philadelphia minority-owned small and medium-sized enterprises. Highlighting the deep cultural and economic ties between the two countries, musicians of The Philadelphia Orchestra performed with Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra at an event Cohen hosted at the official residence in Ottawa.

Appointed by Mayor Jim Kenney as Chair of the Philadelphia Soccer 2026 Bid Committee, Cohen provided steady leadership in securing Philadelphia's selection as a FIFA World Cup 2026 host city, an effort grounded in civic pride, inclusion, and long-term benefit for the region.

[Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts Board of Trustees](#)

[About The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts](#)

[Our Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Strategies \(IDEAS\)](#)