



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 14, 2006

California Symphony
to feature conductor
Barry Jekowsky in a solo
percussion performance on
January 28 and 30, 2007

Concert marks first time
the former San Francisco
Symphony principal timpanist
has played in public since 1995

The California Symphony will highlight the second concert of its 20th anniversary season with solo performances by founding music director **Barry Jekowsky** and acclaimed pianist **Norman Krieger** on **Sunday, January 28, and Tuesday, January 30, 2007**, at the Dean Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek.

The program will feature Jekowsky as soloist and conductor in American composer Michael Torke's *Rapture: Drums and Woods*, Krieger in Leonard Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety: Symphony No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*.

This concert marks the first time that Jekowsky has performed in public since leaving the San Francisco Symphony as their principal timpanist from 1977 to 1995. While there, conductors Edo de Waart and Erich Leinsdorf both selected Jekowsky to perform Darius Milhaud's *Concerto for Percussion*. Trained at Juilliard, which Jekowsky attended from the age of eight through receiving his master's degree, he studied for years with percussion masters Morris Goldenberg and Saul Goodman, among others. Jekowsky made his professional debut at the age of 14, as a substitute percussionist in the Tony Award-winning "Man of LaMancha." By the time he was 16, he was performing as a regular substitute in the New York Philharmonic, as well as keeping up a

busy schedule freelancing in the studio bands for television concerts, recording sessions for jazz albums, and national advertising spots.

One of the most successful composers of his generation, Michael Torke's work has been called "some of the most optimistic, joyful and thoroughly uplifting music to appear in recent years" by *Gramophone*. He's been hailed as a "vitaly inventive composer" by the *Financial Times of London* and as "a master orchestrator whose shimmering timbral pallette makes him the Ravel of his generation" by the *New York Times*. Torke composed *Rapture* in 2001 for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with Colin Currie on percussion, while serving as their Associate Composer.

Jekowsky has previously conducted Torke's work at the Kennedy Center and in other venues, while serving as the Associate Conductor for the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. "Michael is a very important American composer. His music is thrilling, fun and very popular with audiences world-wide," says Jekowsky. "I look forward with excitement as I will make my concerto debut with the California Symphony. With Bernstein's jazzy Second Symphony and the rhythmic drive of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, this program is one I believe Bay Area audiences won't want to miss."

Jekowsky selected Bernstein's *Symphony No. 2* to honor the man he considers his most profound musical influence. It was Bernstein's strong commitment to American music that inspired Jekowsky's decision to feature at least one American composition on each California Symphony subscription program – without exception – over the last 20 years.

"Leonard Bernstein had a strong impact on my musical soul," Jekowsky says of their friendship that began at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 1985 and continued until the legendary conductor's death in 1990. At the time, Jekowsky had just won the prestigious Leopold Stokowski Conducting Prize at Carnegie Hall and accepted an invitation to guest conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra. To help Jekowsky prepare, Bernstein sent him his personal orchestral scores, containing all of his markings, for the program. "That's the kind of teacher he was," Jekowsky recounts.

"Bernstein's Second Symphony is a monumental work of 20th century music, written by one of the greatest geniuses of the last 200 years. You don't hear the *Age of Anxiety* very often. Not many pianists will attempt to play this piece, let alone perform it at the level Norman does. Norman Krieger is one of the few pianists who tackle this work, and he plays it in a spectacular way. I'm sure his performance will be breathtaking."

To complete the program's "Rhythm and Rapture" theme, Jekowsky selected Beethoven's 7th Symphony, popularly known as the great composer's dance symphony.

As well as its 20th anniversary, the California Symphony is celebrating the 15th anniversary of its prestigious *Young American Composer-In-Residence Program* (YACR) – which has garnered international attention for its one-of-a-kind 'orchestra-as-laboratory' approach to providing emerging composers the opportunity to develop, refine and premiere a new work each season during their three-year residency. To date, two of its five alumni – Chris Theofanidis and Pierre Jalbert – have gone onto win the world's leading composing competition, The Masterprize, in London, and four of them have received the highly-regarded Rome Prize.

In recognition of the program's 15-year milestone and continued success, Jekowsky has commissioned a new composition – to be called *Concerto for Orchestra* – which will have its world premiere at the Symphony's final subscription concerts on May 6 and 8, 2007. This particular work is an unprecedented collaboration of four of the YACR's alumni who are each composing an individual movement featuring a different section of the orchestra. The first movement, by Kevin Beavers, was unveiled at the Symphony's season opener. The second and third movements – created by Chris Theofanidis and Kevin Puts – will debut on March 11 and 13, 2007. And the fourth movement, by Pierre Jalbert, will be presented on May 6 and 8, along with the suite in its entirety.

EVENT DETAILS:

- WHAT:** California Symphony 20th Anniversary Series
- GUEST PERFORMERS:** Barry Jekowsky and Norman Krieger
- PROGRAM:** Michael Torke's *Rapture: Drums and Woods*
Leonard Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety: Symphony No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra*
Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7.*
- DATES:** Sunday, January 28, 2007 at 4 pm and Tuesday, January 30, 2007 at 7:30 pm
- WHERE:** Dean Leshner Center for the Arts
1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

TICKET INFORMATION: **Call (925) 943-SHOW**

MORE INFORMATION: **Call (925) 280-2490 or visit**
www.californiasymphony.org

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Lyla Foggia
Foggia Public Relations
(503) 622-0232
lyla@foggiapr.com

Stacey Street
Executive Director
California Symphony
(925) 280-2490
sstreet@californiasymphony.org