

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Walnut Creek, CA – April 11, 2007



Anoushka Shankar to perform with the California Symphony on May 6 & 8

*The acclaimed sitarist to play
father Ravi Shankar's most
famous work*

The California Symphony under Music Director Barry Jekowsky will present acclaimed sitar musician **Anoushka Shankar** performing her father's most famous work, *Concerto for Sitar and Orchestra*, at its final 20th Anniversary season concerts in May. She first performed the composition in 1997 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Zubin Mehta.

The concerts are scheduled for Sunday, May 6, at 4 pm, and Tuesday, May 8, at 7:30 pm at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Tickets can be ordered online at www.dlrca.org or by calling (925) 943-SHOW (7469). For more information, visit www.CaliforniaSymphony.org.

Legendary sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar was already a respected classical artist when the Beatles guitarist, George Harrison, began studying with him in 1966 – their association ultimately making Shankar an international star. Shankar's *Concerto for Sitar and Orchestra* was first presented by the London Symphony Orchestra in 1971, conducted by André Previn with Shankar as soloist. "Ravi Shankar's music is like a fine Indian sari -- silken, swirling, exotic. It can break your heart with its beauty," noted NPR's Susan Stamberg in 2005 upon the occasion of his 85th birthday.

Born in London, Anoushka is the only artist trained entirely by her father, whom she began studying with at the age of nine. It was actually her mother who encouraged her to train on the complicated Indian stringed instrument, which had to be custom-made to accommodate her small hands. By the time she had reached her teens, Anoushka had already dazzled thousands with her accomplished musicianship.

She made her performing debut, in New Delhi, at 13. That same year, Anoushka entered the recording studio for the first time – to play on her father's album, *In Celebration*. Two years later, she made her debut as a conductor on her father's *Chants of India* album, produced by George Harrison. Soon after, she signed an exclusive contract with Angel/EMI Classics, and in the fall of 1998 her first solo recording, *Anoushka*, was released to critical acclaim. Three albums followed, two of which received Grammy nominations. Anoushka, who travels the world performing, also played sitar on her father's Grammy Award-winning album *Full Circle: Carnegie Hall 2000*, and has appeared as a sitarist on several other CD's, including Sting's *Sacred Love*. For more information about the artist, go to www.AnoushkaShankar.com.

The California Symphony's May 6 & 8 program will include a dazzling musical depiction of the ancient tale, *The Arabian Nights* (also known as *A Thousand and One Nights*). Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade, Opus 35*, which debuted in St. Petersburg in 1888, is a classical favorite that piques the imagination with stirring exploits on sea and land, heroism, and idyllic young love.

Rounding out the repertoire will be the world premiere of an historic new work – the *Young American Composers Concerto for Orchestra* – composed by four of the award-winning alumni of the California Symphony's prestigious Young American Composer-in-Residence Program. Now in its 15th year, the YACR program is the only one of its kind to nurture the next generation of American classical music by providing emerging American composers with three-year residencies to explore and develop their unique talents.

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