

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Walnut Creek, CA – August 29, 2007



Violinist Joyce Yang returns to California Symphony – home of her professional debut at age 13

*The Van Cliburn Silver Medalist heads a
lineup of exciting soloists to perform
with CSO during 2007-2008 season*

California Symphony's 2007-2008 season will be its boldest yet, says Music Director Barry Jekowsky – whose innovative programming over the last 21 years has been one of the key factors behind the award-winning orchestra's enduring success at a time when symphonies are struggling to survive.

While the California Symphony will still play the classics, Jekowsky has made it his mission to take audiences "Beyond the Music" by incorporating the unconventional into each concert. The first in the series, for instance, will feature Holst's *The Planets Op. 32* as the centerpiece of an out of this world multi-media presentation. Among the others, there will be an internationally-known flamenco dancer, a 14-year-old virtuoso classical guitarist, and three opera singers performing with the Contra Costa Children's Chorus and the Oakland Symphony Chorus.

"Everything throughout this new season is about immersing you in a sensory experience," Jekowsky says. "Nothing will be business as usual in the concert hall. I'm always looking for new ways to make our concerts fresh and exciting experiences, going a long way to break those barriers and preconceived ideas of what it's like to go to a symphony concert."

The first program of the season, on **October 14 and 16, 2007** – titled "**Reaching the Outer Limits**" – will feature violinist **Roy Malan** performing the West Coast premiere of *Fantasy for Violin*

and Orchestra on Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'or* by his former mentor, American composer **Efrem Zimbalist**; a soaring presentation of **Gustav Holst's *The Planets Op. 32***; and **Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*** on the 50th anniversary of its Broadway debut.

Notably the most-performed composition by an English composer, Holst's orchestral suite, which premiered in 1918, features a separate movement for each of the seven planets that were known at the time. Introduced to astrology in 1913, Holst called each piece "a series of mood pictures." The brilliant score produces unusual, complex sounds by using some unusual instruments and multiples of instruments, and will be accompanied by a new film filled with fascinating images of outer space.

Roy Malan – California Symphony's concertmaster who also serves in the same position for the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, as he has for over three decades – studied with Efrem Zimbalist at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. They became so close that it was at the request of the celebrated composer that Malan wrote his only authorized biography, published in 2004 by Amadeus Press. As a solo violinist, Malan has recorded widely and toured throughout the world.

"Efrem Zimbalist was a great violinist and a great composer who has been largely overlooked," says Jekowsky. "*Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra on Rimsky-Korsakov's Le Coq d'or* is a very important work that has been rarely performed and never recorded. So we're very excited to be the first to present it on the West Coast."

Rounding out the program, Jekowsky will honor his former mentor, Leonard Bernstein, on his 90th birthday and the 50th anniversary of his incomparable musical score for the 1957 Broadway hit, *West Side Story*, which later became the Oscar-winning film musical against which all others are now measured.

The **January 27 and 29, 2008**, program – themed "**Romance & Reunion**" – marks the return of renowned pianist **Joyce Yang** performing the romantic and exciting **Rachmaninoff *Piano Concerto No. 2*** and **Leroy Anderson's *Forgotten Dreams*** on the occasion of the American composer's 100th birthday. The California Symphony will also perform the operatic **Beethoven *Leonore Overture No. 3*** and **Kodály's extraordinary *Háry János Suite*** – both of which tell wonderful tales of adventure and passion.

Since making her professional debut with the California Symphony in November 1999, at the age of 13, Yang became the youngest recipient of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition's Silver Medal. She was also the recipient of both the Steven De Groote Memorial Award for the Best

Performance of Chamber Music and the Beverley Taylor Smith Award for the Best Performance of a New Work. Among other notable guest appearances, she is performing this season with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Aspen Symphony, and the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center. Last November, Yang made her New York Philharmonic debut with Lorin Maazel in Avery Fisher Hall.

The **March 9 and 11, 2008**, program – called “**Passion of Movement**” – will showcase **classical guitar prodigy Travis Johnson** playing **Mauro Giuliani’s *Guitar Concerto Op. 30*** and internationally-acclaimed **flamenco artist Yaelisa** dancing to **Falla’s *Three Cornered Hat Suite No. 2***. Rounding out this passionate program is **Tchaikovsky’s *Symphony No. 5*** and the haunting and moving ***Elegy, to the Memory of Calvin Simmons***, which **Lou Harrison** wrote as a tribute to the brilliant young conductor of the Oakland Symphony who died in a boating accident in 1982 and which the California Symphony recorded on their internationally-acclaimed DECCA/ARGO CD release, *Lou Harrison: A Portrait*.

Last year, 14-year-old Travis Johnson, who lives in Oregon, performed on NPR’s national show, “From the Top,” premiering a work written expressly for him by award-winning composer Bryan Johanson. The youngest of four children, all of them gifted musicians, Johnson began studying guitar at the age of eight. Only four years later, he was awarded first prize at the Guitar Foundation of America’s First Annual Youth Solo Guitar Competition. Among other honors, he received the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Young Artists Award, given to only 25 prodigies each year.

“It is very rare to have someone this young so accomplished on classical guitar, and Travis is absolutely remarkable and a virtuoso. There are adults that don’t come close to his artistry. To be able to play a work as demanding as Giuliani’s guitar concerto is simply extraordinary,” says Jekowsky.

The *Los Angeles Times* has called Yaelisa a “luminary” among flamenco dancers for her extraordinary rhythmic ability, which radiates nothing less than pure emotion infused with sensuality. Raised by her Spanish mother, also a Flamenco performer, Yaelisa was surrounded by the rhythms, gestures and vocal laments of the art form from birth. Trained by many of the great Spanish masters, she has spent extensive periods during the last 12 years living and performing in Spain, and has toured throughout the world. Yaelisa is the recipient of an Emmy Award for Choreography in 1993 for the PBS program, “Desde Cadiz a Sevilla,” and a Choreography Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1996.

The **May 4 and 6, 2008**, program – called “**Pleasures & Perils**” – will feature the spectacular choral masterpiece and audience favorite, **Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana***, and **the world premiere of**

a new composition by the California Symphony's soon-to-be-announced 2007-2010 Young American Composer-in-Residence.

Composed in 1937, Orff's *Carmina Burana* is perhaps best known for its cinematic opening and concluding movements, but the entire piece tells delightful tales of springtime, love and mystery. Performing it will be soprano **Kiera Duffy**, tenor **Tyler Nelson**, and baritone **Brian Leerhuber**, accompanied by the **Contra Costa Children's Chorus** and the **Oakland Symphony Chorus**.

Kiera Duffy, who lives in New York, was one of only 11 finalists in the Metropolitan Opera's 2007 National Council Auditions Grand Finals Concert, considered to be the most prestigious in North America, with auditions held in 45 districts and 15 regions. Tyler Nelson has been a featured soloist throughout Europe and the U.S. while touring with the University of Utah's a cappella choir. He is currently working on his doctorate in opera performance at Florida State University, and recently returned from a concert tour of Gordon Getty's opera *Plump Jack* in Mexico. Brian Leerhuber, the recipient of a 2003 Sullivan Foundation Award, was Principal Baritone for Opera San Jose for two seasons and has also performed with Festival Opera and the Santa Fe Opera companies, among others. He is a former member of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists and a former Young Artist in Residence with the Juilliard Opera Center. The Contra Costa Children's Chorus, now in its 23rd year, has performed with the California Symphony on a number of occasions over the years. The 120-member Oakland Symphony Chorus, now in its 45th year, has been recognized as one of the East Bay's finest choirs. The California Symphony's 2007 – 2008 season is being sponsored by Bank of America.

Special thanks go to California Symphony's Season Sponsor, Bank of America; Season Guest Artist sponsor, Chevron; October concert sponsor Michael Stead Porsche with additional support by Diablo Regional Arts Association; January concert sponsor John Muir Health; March concert sponsor CityNational Bank; and May concert sponsor KPMG.

DETAILS

WHAT: The 2007-2008 subscription season for the California Symphony under Music Director Barry Jekowsky:

- **October 14 & 16, 2007 - "Reaching the Outer Limits"**

Guest artist: violinist Roy Malan performing Efrem Zimbalist's *Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra on Rimsky-Korsakov's Le Coq d'or*; Holst's *The Planets Op. 32*; Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

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- January 27 & 29, 2008 - "Romance & Reunion"

Guest artist: violist Joyce Yang performing Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and Leroy Anderson's *Forgotten Dreams*; Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*; Kodály's *Háry János Suite*

- March 9 & 11, 2008 - "Passion of Movement"

Guest artists: Classical guitar prodigy Travis Johnson performing Mauro Giuliani's *Guitar Concerto Op. 30 in A*, and internationally-acclaimed flamenco dancer Yaelisa performing to Falla's *Three Cornered Hat Suite No. 2*; Lou Harrison's *Elegy*; Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*

- May 4 & 6, 2008 - "Pleasures & Perils"

Guest artists: soprano Kiera Duffy, tenor Tyler Nelson, baritone Brian Leerhuber, Contra Costa Children's Chorus and Oakland Symphony Chorus performing Orff's *Carmina Burana*; world premiere by new Young-American-Composer-in-Residence (to be announced)

WHERE: Hofmann Theater, Dean Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

TIMES: All Sunday matinees begin at 4 pm. Tuesday night performances start at 7:30 pm.

TICKETS: Subscription series (four concerts): \$144 - \$244. Individual concerts: \$39 - \$59; students \$20

TO ORDER: Subscriptions, go to www.CaliforniaSymphony.org or call (925) 280-2490. Individual events: call (925) 943-SHOW or purchase online at www.dlrca.org after September 15, 2007

MORE INFORMATION: www.CaliforniaSymphony.org

The 2007-2008 season is sponsored by Bank of America. The season guest artist sponsor is Chevron. Additional support provided by the Diablo Regional Arts Association.

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