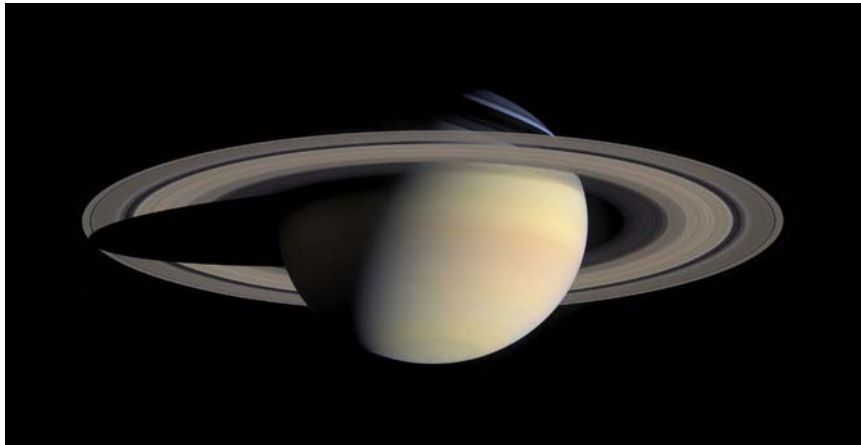


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 24, 2007 – Walnut Creek, CA

California Symphony to present 'out of this world' season debut on October 14 & 16



Unique program to include HD video suite from the Adler Planetarium and narration by award-winning Bay Area astronomer Dr. Andrew Fraknoi

Calling its October 14 and 16 season debut program “Reaching the Outer Limits,” Music Director Barry Jekowsky and the California Symphony will be going where few orchestras have ever ventured before: taking concert-goers on an awe-inspiring journey into outer space, piloted by the artistic vision of Adler Planetarium astronomer and graphics artist Dr. José Francisco Salgado and narrated by award-winning Bay Area science educator and author Dr. Andrew Fraknoi.

The unprecedented classical music event will feature a soaring presentation of Gustav Holst’s *The Planets Op. 32* performed live to the critically-acclaimed “Gustav Holst's The Planets” suite of seven high-definition videos conceived and directed by Salgado of the nation’s oldest planetarium, located in Chicago.

Each video contains mesmerizing images of the featured planet, consisting of actual footage taken by space probes; animations created by NASA, the European Space Agency, and Salgado; and historical illustrations from the Adler Collection of Works on Paper (some of them hundreds of years old) – all seamlessly edited together in sync with the seven individual movements written by the great English composer between 1914 and 1916. “Everything you see was based on successful missions. It’s a great summary of the things we have achieved in planetary exploration,” says Salgado.

The California Symphony’s concerts in October mark the first time the video suite – which took over a year to research and produce – has been accompanied by a live orchestra since its world premiere in May 2006 by the Chicago Sinfonietta, which commissioned the new digital work from the Adler in association with Vectors & Pixels Unlimited. Otherwise, Salgado’s piece has only been seen publicly twice: by the staff at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena and at the biennial meeting of the International Planetarium Society in Melbourne, Australia.

From the beginning, Salgado says, his intention was that the videos “would not be seen as documentaries but as art pieces designed to inspire audiences and encourage them to learn more about our solar system and the universe.” The *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Wednesday Journal* have both called the images “captivating,” with the *Journal* describing the work’s debut as a “mind-grabbing concert.” “Salgado assembled everything from meticulously detailed 17th century charts and maps on aged, sepia-tinted paper to contemporary photos of impossibly round, color-striped orbs floating against the black sky like austere modern art objects,” notes the *Sun-Times*. The *Journal* added that it was “a fascinating parade of images.”

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Salgado wanted to be an astronomer since the third grade and earned his doctorate from the University of Michigan. He began seriously listening to classical music while in college studying physics, and Holst’s *The Planets* was only the second recording that he acquired. Salgado currently works as an astronomer and data visualizer at the Adler and is also the Emmy-nominated host of the “Nuestra Galaxia” astronomy news segment that airs weekly on Univision Chicago.

Award-winning science educator and prolific author Andrew Fraknoi is the Chair of the Astronomy Program at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills; former Executive Director of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific; lead author of one of the most widely-used astronomy textbooks in the world, *Voyages through the Universe*; author of the just-published Disney children’s book on astronomy, *Wonderful World of Space*; and a frequent television and radio guest (*The Today Show*, *CBS Morning News*, *Larry King Live*, NPR’s *Science Friday* and *Weekend All Things Considered*, KQED’s *Forum with Michael Krasney*, the syndicated *Mark & Brian Show*, and KGO-AM.) To honor his work in sharing the

excitement of modern astronomy, Asteroid 4859 was named *Asteroid Fraknoi* by the International Astronomical Union.

Gustav Holst, one of the finest English composers of the first half of the 20th century, let nature and history and even astrology inspire his writing of music. Introduced to astrology in 1913 by a friend, it was astrology, not astronomy that attracted him to this subject. "Holst was very into religion and mythology. It was the personalities of these figures and what they represented, not scientific fact, that influenced his composition. As an example, Venus is the goddess of love and this particular movement is peaceful. In reality, though, Venus is an inferno! Although it's not the closest planet to the sun, it's actually hotter than Mercury because of greenhouse gases in its thick atmosphere," Salgado explains.

Notably, *The Planets Op. 32* is the most-performed classical work by an English composer. The orchestral suite, which premiered in 1918, features a separate movement for each of the seven planets (other than Earth) that were known at the time. The work had its first complete, public performance on November 15, 1920, in London, under the direction of Albert Coates.

The October 14 and 16 program will also feature noted violin soloist Roy Malan performing the West Coast premiere of *Phantasy for Violin and Orchestra on Rimsky-Korsakov's Le Coq d'or* by his former mentor, American composer Efreim Zimbalist, and Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its Broadway debut and the composer's 90th birthday.

Zimbalist was a well known concert violinist, composer, teacher and conductor who came from a musical family. By the age of nine, he performed in the orchestra his father conducted. At 12, he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied under Leopold Auer, made his performing debut in Berlin and London in 1907, and appeared with the Boston Symphony in 1911, after which he moved to the U.S. In 1928, he joined the faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he was appointed its director in 1941.

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

"Efreim Zimbalist was a great violinist and a great composer who has been largely overlooked," says conductor Jekowsky. "*Phantasy 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. Its virtuosity is most demanding

for the soloist, so we're thrilled to be the first orchestra on the West Coast to present it – particularly with as accomplished a violinist as Roy to perform it.”

Rounding out the program, Jekowsky will honor his former mentor, Leonard Bernstein, on what would have been his 90th birthday. The occasion also marks the 50th anniversary of Bernstein's incomparable musical score for the 1957 Broadway hit, *West Side Story*, which later became the Oscar-winning film musical against which all others have since been measured.

Widely considered to be the most accomplished American musician/composer of the 20th century, Bernstein was the Music Director of the New York Philharmonic and composed three symphonies and many other concert works, but one of his great loves, persisting since his youth, was the musical theater. He scored his first hit with his very first Broadway show, *On the Town*, in 1944, when Bernstein was only 26.

DETAILS

WHAT: “Reaching the Outer Limits,” featuring the California Symphony under Music Director Barry Jekowsky performing live to the acclaimed seven-part HD video suite, “Gustav Holst's The Planets,” produced and directed by Adler Planetarium astronomer and graphic artist Dr. José Francisco Salgado (who will be present); noted violinist Roy Malan performing the West Coast premiere of Efrem Zimbalist's *Phantasy for Violin and Orchestra on Rimsky-Korsakov's Le Coq d'or*; and Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*. A free Q & A with our astronomer guests will follow each concert.

DATES: Sunday, October 14 at 4 pm. Tuesday, October 16, 2007 at 7:30 pm.

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

TICKETS: call (925) 943-SHOW or purchase online at www.dlrca.org

MORE INFORMATION: www.CaliforniaSymphony.org

Special thanks to Season Sponsor Bank of America and Concert Sponsor Michael Stead Porsche.

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