

FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION – December 14, 2007 – Walnut Creek, CA



Acclaimed pianist JOYCE YANG scheduled for first Bay Area orchestral solo since winning 2005 Van Cliburn Silver Medal

January 27 & 29 concert reunites Yang with the California Symphony, where she made her professional debut at age 13

Those lucky enough to be in the audience when 13-year-old Joyce Yang made her professional debut with the California Symphony in 1999—along with those who weren't--will not want to miss her triumphant return on January 27 and 29 as a world-renowned 2005 Van Cliburn Silver Medalist.

Now 21, the Korean-born former prodigy has grown up to become one of the most gifted pianists of her generation. Yang regularly performs with world-class orchestras and in major recitals—the result of capturing second place in what has called “an Olympian event in the world of classical music.” Yang was not only the youngest competitor in a field of 35 in the last Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, held every four years, she was also selected to receive 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.

Showcasing young prodigies is a California Symphony tradition and personal passion of Music Director Barry Jekowsky that dates back to the orchestra's premiere concert on May 17, 1987, when the featured guest artist was 16-year-old violinist Kyoko Takezawa. Among the others who have since achieved international fame are violinists Sarah Chang (then 9), Leila Josefowicz (12), and Hilary Hahn (18); pianists Helen Huang (10), and Chloe Pang (13); and cellist Alisa Weilerstein (14).

At the time of Yang's professional debut in 1999, she had been in the U.S. only two years, after immigrating at the age of 10 to New York to study at the Julliard School of Music (also Jekowsky's alma mater). Yang received her first piano lessons at age four from an aunt. After winning several national piano competitions, she entered the Korean National Conservatory at age 10, and subsequently made a number of concerto and recital appearances in Seoul and Taejon. Despite an exhaustive appearance schedule, Yang continues to attend Juilliard, where she studies with the noted Dr. Yohaved Kaplinsky.

Yang will perform **Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2***. The January 27 and 29 program will also feature **Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*** and **Kodály's *Háry János Suite*** – both from operas – and **Leroy Anderson's *Forgotten Dreams and Serenata*** as a tribute to the legendary American composer on the centennial of his birth. Full of drama and jubilation, Beethoven wrote *Leonore Overture No. 3* an overture to his *Fidelio*. *Háry János Suite* features a rare instrument, the cimbalom (a variant of the hammer dulcimer), originated in the late 1800s.

Sponsored by Bank of America, Chevron, and John Muir Heath, both concerts will be held at the Leshar Arts Center in Walnut Creek. Dates and times: Sunday, January 27, at 4 pm. Tuesday, January 29, at 7:30 pm. Tickets: \$39 - \$59. Purchase online at www.LesharArtsCenter.org or by calling (925) 943-SHOW. For more information, visit www.CaliforniaSymphony.org.

DETAILS

WHAT: "Romance & Reunion," featuring internationally-celebrated pianist Joyce Yang performing Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* with the California Symphony under Music Director Barry Jekowsky. Also on the program: Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*, Leroy Anderson's *Forgotten Dreams and Serenata*, and Kodály's *Háry János Suite*

DATES: Sunday, January 27, 2008, at 4 pm. Tuesday, January 29, 2008, at 7:30 pm.

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

TICKET PRICES: \$39 - \$59

TO PURCHASE: call (925) 943-SHOW or purchase online at www.LesharArtsCenter.org

MORE INFORMATION: www.CaliforniaSymphony.org

Event supported by Bank of America (Season Sponsor), Chevron (Season Guest Artist Sponsor), and John Muir Health (Concert Sponsor).

For more information about Joyce Yang:

- Official bio: <http://www.opus3artists.com/artists/joyce-yang>
- National Public Radio interview: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4707604>
- Dallas Morning News: http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/stories/DN-yang_0926gl.ART.State.Edition2.42ae2e2.html
- The Daily Skiff: <http://media.www.tcdailyskiff.com/media/storage/paper792/news/2007/09/26/News/Love-Of.Music.Drives.Van.Cliburn.Winner-2991922.shtm>
- Ft. Worth Star-Telegram: <http://www.opus3artists.com/news/?id=233>
- 2008 Tour Schedule: http://www.cliburn.org/index.php?page=yang_tour

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