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Anne Akiko Meyers
to perform with the
California Symphony
on March 11 and 13

**The world-renowned
violinist makes first Bay Area
appearance since 1994**

In the third of its 20th Anniversary series, the California Symphony conducted by Barry Jekowsky will present one of the world's most sought-after violinists, **Anne Akiko Meyers**, performing Samuel Barber's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14. This appearance marks Meyers' first performances in the Bay Area since 1994, when she was a guest artist with the California Symphony.

This event will take place on **Sunday, March 11, at 4 pm** and on **Tuesday, March 13, at 7:30 pm** at the **Dean Leshner Center for the Arts** in Walnut Creek. Tickets can be ordered online at www.dlrca.org or by calling **(925) 943-SHOW (7469)**.

The program will also include **Carl Nielsen's *Aladdin Suite***, **Antonín Dvorák's *The Golden Spinning Wheel, Op. 109***, and the unveiling of the second and third movements (by **Chris Theofanidis** and **Kevin Puts**) of the "**Young American Composers Concerto for Orchestra**" – a work in progress that will have its world premiere during the Symphony's season finale in May. The latter – an unprecedented piece consisting of four movements, each featuring a different section of the orchestra – is being created through a

unique collaboration of the award-winning alumni of the California Symphony's prestigious YACR program.

Past performances of Barber's Concerto, Op. 14, have yielded rave reviews for Myers, including from...

- The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* last July: "It's hard to imagine that Meyers could play with any more energy, confidence and imagination than she showed on the Barber....She took one of the most demanding concertos in the repertoire and turned in a captivating tour de force. Her breakneck brilliance completed an awe-inspiring interpretation."
- The *Raleigh News Observer* in 2003: "She can play the violin like a house afire. She showed exquisite sensitivity with Barber's lovely melodic lines, than polished off the last, with its demanding pyrotechnics, with clarity and assurance. No one wanted to let her off the stage."
- And the *Baltimore Sun* in 1994: "She captured the concerto's Puccini-like yearning and tenderness with the naturalness of a great singer, which brought at least one listener close to tears."

Meyers, who is widely admired for her technical brilliance and compelling stage presence, constantly tours the world, appearing with major orchestras and at leading music festivals. Last year alone, she visited 14 states (many of them multiple times) and three foreign countries. Among them, she performed with the American Symphony, conducted by Leon Botstein, last November, and at a memorial concert in Hiroshima commemorating the dropping of the Atomic Bomb.

A former child prodigy, the Juilliard graduate debuted with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and appeared on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson" at the mere age of 11. A year later, she was performing with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. At 15, she joined the Young Concert Artists roster, and was signed by ICM Artists at 16. At 18, her first recording was released by RPO, featuring Meyers performing the Barber violin concerto and Brunch concerto with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Christopher Seaman.

Among other career highlights, she has been featured on a PBS special with the Boston Pops Orchestra and John Williams, toured Japan with Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony at the age of 20, released the first of multiple recordings on the RCA label at 21, toured Moscow and Japan with the Moscow Philharmonic conducted by Mariss Jansons, made headlines in 1993 as the sole recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, collaborated with

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Joseph Schwantner on a new violin concerto, and presented by the National Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop at the Kennedy Center in a world premiere of Joseph Schwantner's *Angelfire*, a work written specifically for her.

For more information, please go to www.AnneAkikoMeyers.com. Her 2002 performance on NPR's "Performance Today" can be heard at <http://www.npr.org/programs/pt/4a/meyers.html>

EVENT DETAILS:

WHAT:

The **California Symphony, conducted by Barry Jekowsky**, will feature world-renowned violinist **Anne Akiko Meyers** and new compositions by CSO Young-American-Composers-in-Residence alumni **Chris Theofanidis**, winner of the 2003 Masterprize Competition, and **Kevin Puts**, winner of the 2002-2002 Rome Prize in Composition. This concert is the third in the series celebrating California Symphony's 20th Anniversary season.

PROGRAM:

- Carl Nielsen's *Aladdin Suite*
- Antonín Dvorák's *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, Op. 109
- Samuel Barber's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14
- World Premiere of *Movement Two* and *Three* of the "Young American Composers Concerto for Orchestra" (commissioned by California Symphony and scheduled to debut in its entirety in May 2007)

DATES:

Sunday, March 11, 2007 at 4 pm

Tuesday, March 13, 2007 at 7:30 pm

WHERE:

**Dean Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive,
Walnut Creek, CA 94596**

TICKET PRICES:

\$39 - \$59

FOR TICKETS: Order online at www.dlrca.org or
call (925) 943-SHOW (7469)

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

PROGRAM DETAILS

Samuel Barber, *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14*

Samuel Barber – who was born in 1910 and died in 1981 – was one of the leading members of the generation of American composers who came to maturity shortly before World War II. He began his musical studies at the age of six, and began composing at seven. At 14, Barber entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and joined its faculty at 21. Barber’s music was always firmly rooted in the traditional vocabulary and technique he learned at Curtis, which did not prevent him from composing works of great fantasy and expressivity. His music is rich in texture, free in rhythm, and always melodic. He wrote two operas, two symphonies, three concertos and a great deal more in almost every musical form.

Barber’s *Violin Concerto* had its origin in a commission from a wealthy businessman who had taken an interest in a young violinist and wanted a new work for him to play. The composer began to write it in a little Swiss village during the summer of 1939 and continued to work on it in Paris, but the imminent outbreak of World War II sent him back to Philadelphia, where he showed his benefactor and the violinist/protégé the work in progress. When the violinist complained that the finale was too difficult but that the whole was not enough of a showpiece, the businessman asked for his money back.

Barber said that he had already spent the money in Europe, and to demonstrate that the finale was playable, a Curtis student named Herbert Baumel learned it in one morning and performed it, with piano accompaniment, that afternoon. This demonstration, of course, proved the first young violinist’s low level of competence, but in the end, Barber returned half of his fee and the others gave up the right of first performance – which was given on February 7, 1941, by Albert Spalding, Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

During the years that followed, a number of distinguished violinists found that the beauty of this work made it well worthwhile to attack its difficulties, which are not of the obvious

showy kind that its original sponsors sought. It is classical in form and romantic in expression and probably the most frequently performed violin concerto by an American composer.

The lyrical first movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, is based on two themes that are similar in character but are clearly and separately defined: the first played at the very beginning by the soloist; the second soon following on the clarinet. The second movement, *Andante sostenuto*, has three parts: a long melody on the oboe, a freely rhapsodic treatment of it by the violin, and then the soloist's repetition of it. The third movement, *Presto, in moto perpetuo* ("Fast, in perpetual motion") shows an abrupt shift in character, perhaps an attempt to please its original sponsors, but it makes a brilliant and effective closing. The concerto is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, snare drum, piano and strings.

Carl Nielsen, *Aladdin Suite*

The austere, powerful and rugged music of Denmark's most remarkable composer, Carl Nielsen (who was born in 1865 and died in 1931) is not frequently performed and not extensively known in this country today. Nielsen's work falls into the category of late 19th century Romantic music, but he was not a nationalist composer, and his country's folksongs rarely make an appearance in his work. Nielsen received his education in Copenhagen, then studied in both France and Italy, and was active as a violinist, conductor and educator in his native country.

Nielsen's father was a house-painter who played the violin and trumpet at village dances. Like his father, the composer also played both trumpet and violin and joined a military band as a young teen, before studying composition at the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen. As a violinist in the Royal Theatre orchestra, he visited Europe's principal musical centers. Although his exposure to the music of the Continent influenced him as a composer, he developed a strong musical language that was uniquely his. He composed six symphonies, two operas, several concertos, and a large amount of chamber music in a distinctive, original style and sometimes in very novel forms.

When he became disenchanted with opera, he turned to writing music for theatre productions instead. He composed his *Aladdin Suite* as incidental music for a play by Adam Oehlenschläger. It premiered in February 1919 at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre, but here again Nielsen was disappointed because the elaborate nature of the production did not allow for his music to be highlighted in performance in the way he had hoped. As a result, he decided to extract several orchestral items from the extensive dance sequence in Act Three and to use them as concert pieces.

These eventually were published as the *Aladdin Suite* in 1940. The first section of the suite is the *Oriental Festival March*. Its evocative minor tonality creates the sound of a splendid Asian ceremony. *Aladdin's Dream* and *Dance of the Morning Mist* follow. The dream sequence is written for strings, and a gentle but spirited dance follows with a combination of flutes and violins. Third comes the *Hindu Dance*, in which the woodwinds are highlighted in dialogue. The *Chinese Dance* makes a contrast with its rhythmic liveliness. The *Marketplace in Ispahan* is the most famous piece in the suite. A most alluring section, it resembles the music of the American composer, Charles Ives, in its layering of four distinct threads in different keys and meters. It succeeds admirably in evoking the diverse activities of a hectic marketplace. The dramatic *Dance of the Prisoners* vividly recalls descriptive passages in Nielsen's symphonies. The energetic *Negro Dance* completes the suite.

Antonín Dvořák, *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, Op. 109

Dvořák – who was born in 1841 and died in 1904 – came from a humble and non-musical background. His father was a butcher and inn-keeper, but that did not deter him from beginning to study the violin and organ. By the time he was 16, against his father's wishes he left home to study in Prague. At 21, he shifted to playing the viola (traditionally the instrument taken up by failed violinists) and joined the orchestra of the National Theater in Prague. By this time, he had already begun composing, initially creating lengthy works in the classical forms. He did not become well-known for another decade, except marginally in the local Prague community of musicians.

In 1875, Dvořák applied for and received a grant from the Imperial government commission of which Brahms, who immediately recognized his talent, and the powerful critic Eduard Hanslick were members. Brahms gave Dvořák significant help to propel him into his successful and great career, recommending that his own publisher, Simrock, issue a book of ten Moravian songs that Dvořák had composed as duets for two sopranos and piano. The songs became a huge success when they appeared in 1878, and then Simrock asked Dvořák to write the Czech equivalent of Brahms's popular *Hungarian Dances*. Dvořák responded immediately with his first set of *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46*, which were also published in 1878, and immediately made him a musical figure of world renown.

When, in 1892, he accepted an invitation to take up temporary residence in the United States, he had already achieved critical and popular success. In the years spent here, he wrote some of his most famous music, including the *American String Quartet* and *Symphony No. 9*, known as *From the New World*. When he returned to Prague in 1895, Dvořák composed his last quartets, which were his last abstract music, and then turned his attention to the symphonic

poem, which became his last major orchestral music. In the mid-late 19th century, many composers wrote music inspired by literary subjects. In tone poems, composers used a poem or narrative to provide descriptive programs for their orchestral music, creating the symphonic tone poem. Liszt, Wagner and Strauss all used this structure.

Dvořák rediscovered *Kytice* (“*The Garland*,”) a collection of folk ballads by the nationalist poet Karel Jaromír Erben (1811-1870), who was an icon of Czech literature in the 19th century. In 1896, Dvořák composed four of his last orchestral works, all symphonic poems based on tales drawn from Erben’s anthology; his fifth symphonic poem, composed in 1897, and not based on Erben, was his last. He began the sonorous and lush sounding *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, the third symphonic poem inspired by Erben, on January 15, 1896, and completed it on April 25. It made its premiere on October 26, 1896 in London.

As Liszt does in his tone poems, Dvořák attaches a musical theme to each central character in the plot, allowing the events to shape how he makes the musical theme evolve. The structure of Erben’s narrative determines the form of the work, and the language of the poems also impacts the music. Throughout the score, the rise and fall of his melodic lines follows the contour of Erben’s verses.

The tale is a sort of Czech Cinderella, but in the Erben version, the tale, with Dornicka as the main character, is more gruesome, as the Golden Spinning Wheel of the title is exchanged for Dornicka’s eyes, arms and legs after her dismemberment at the hands of her stepmother and stepsister. Luckily, Dornicka is put together again and taken home, allowing the work to conclude happily.

In the tale, a young king, riding horseback, stops at a cottage to request a drink of water, and immediately falls in love with Dornicka, who is at the spinning wheel. When he later returns to visit her, he meets her evil stepmother, who has a young, unmarried daughter of her own. Subsequently, the stepmother and her daughter murder and dismember Dornicka, and the stepmother’s own daughter is sent to marry the king. The evil stepmother later sends Dornicka’s feet, hands, and eyes to the king’s castle. After the wedding, depicted in the music with a polka, the king goes off to war. Meanwhile, an old man, wandering in the woods, discovers the remains of Dornicka’s body and is determined to bring her back to life. He exchanges a golden spinning wheel for her feet, a golden distaff for her hands, and a golden spindle for her eyes. When the king returns from the war triumphantly, the spinning wheel plays a song to him describing the crimes the stepmother and her daughter committed. The king goes to the forest and finds Dornicka alive, and he takes her back to his castle. In Erben’s ending, wolves destroy the evil stepmother and her daughter, but Dvořák ends his work joyfully.

The rapid paced conclusion is a furiant of extraordinary power.

The score calls for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, harp, and strings.

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