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California Symphony to present world's first classical concert in 3-D as part of innovative 2008-2009 season



2008 – 2009 Subscription Series

- October 12 & 14, 2008

Samuel's Barber's *Adagio for Strings* with Russian handstand acrobats Iouri Safranov and Nikolai Melnikov

Jon Nakamatsu performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30

Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 (From the New World)

- January 25 & 27, 2009

Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and the West Coast premiere of Lee Johnson's *Dead Symphony*

- March 8 & 10, 2009

Stefan Jackiw performing Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64

The world premiere of Mason Bates' second commission as California Symphony's 2007-2010 Young American-Composer-In-Residence

Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 4

- May 3 & 5, 2009

Aaron Copland's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Appalachian Spring*

Piano prodigy Conrad Tao performing Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major

Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, accompanied by the 3-D world premiere of the video suite, "Astronomical Pictures at an Exhibition"

On the heels of the California Symphony's most successful season yet – appropriately called "Beyond the Music" for such unusual pairings as Gustav Holst's *The Planets Op. 32* performed live to a high-definition video suite of images from outer space and Falla's *Three Cornered Hat Suite No. 2* accompanied by a flamenco dancer – Music Director Barry Jekowsky is raising the bar again on innovative programming.

California Symphony's 2008-2009 subscription series will include the world's first live symphony in 3-D; Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* visually interpreted by Russian handstand acrobats; the West Coast premiere of a new orchestral tribute to the Grateful Dead; and the world premiere of a second cutting-edge score from electronica d.j. and classical composer Mason Bates.

"Last season was an amazing success. Based on our sell-out concerts and the feedback we received, there's no question that people want more from their concert experience," says Jekowsky, who notes that the season's ticket sales were the highest ever in the orchestra's 21-year history. "I firmly believe that our new subscription series will both enhance our regular patrons' love of the symphony's range of outstanding artistic performances and repertoire, while surprising newcomers with how thrilling and exciting a symphonic concert can be."

About acrobatic performers Iouri Safranov and Nikolai Melnikov:

"Though breathtaking by itself, when Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* is performed with Iouri and Nikolai, it becomes a spectacular collaboration of music and body sculpture," says Jekowsky, who has

worked with the world class acrobats before. "What they do visually with the music is extraordinary. They actually make music with their bodies." Both were raised and trained in Russia – Safranov at the Russian Olympic Reserve School of Acrobatics and Melnikov at the Moscow Circus School. Safranov went on to tour the world with the Moscow Circus, before joining the Barnum and Bailey Ringling North American tour and the long-running MGM Casino production of "EFX," starring Michael Crawford and David Cassidy. Melnikov spent several years on the road with the famed Moscow Circus before becoming a member of the cast in Cirque Du Soleil's "Mystere."

About 1997 Van Cliburn Gold Medalist Jon Nakamatsu:

San Jose resident Jon Nakamatsu will be performing the piece that brought him the gold medal at the 1997 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Often referred to as the *Rach 3*, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30, is widely regarded as one of the most difficult and brilliant concertos in the standard piano repertoire. Nakamatsu's latest CD, *Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F / Rhapsody in Blue / Cuban Overture*, has appeared in the top ten of the Classical Billboard charts. Among other honors, he was named Debut Artist of the Year by NPR's Performance Today. A graduate of Stanford University with a master's degree in education, he was featured in the PBS film, "Playing with Fire," about the 1997 Van Cliburn competition.

About Lee Johnson's *Dead Symphony*

Lee Johnson's *Dead Symphony* conveys the spirit of the Grateful Dead in a 12-movement orchestral work in which he has woven themes from the band's songs, including "St. Stephen" and "Blues for Allah." Calling his tribute "a musical embrace of American culture," Johnson notes that "The Grateful Dead lived in the musical moment in a world of perpetual exploration and endless possibility."

"The *Dead Symphony* is a completely unique work," says Jekowsky. "Yet it's not like a piece for rock band and orchestra. It is a purely symphonic setting of twelve of their songs presented in a very innovative way that is quite extraordinary."

Johnson has conducted and recorded with The Russian National Orchestra and The London Symphony Orchestra, among others, as well as composed six symphonies, numerous chamber works, four musicals, two operas, works for ballet theater, feature and experimental film scores and more. Among other honors, the Callaway Professor of Music Chair at LaGrange College in Georgia has received an Emmy, an ASCAP award for composition and an ADDY.

About violinist Stefan Jackiw

California Symphony will celebrate the 200th anniversary of composer Felix Mendelssohn with the CSO debut of Stefan Jackiw performing the composer's great violin concerto. Recognized as one of the most significant artists of his generation, Jackiw, who is still in his early 20s, has performed with major orchestras throughout the U.S., including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony and the Chicago Symphony. His European debut, in 2000, at the Philharmonia Orchestra under Benjamin Zander was featured on the front page of *The London Times*. Other engagements abroad include the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, l'Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and the Seoul Philharmonic. In December 2003 he was invited by Yuri Temirkanov to play the Barber Violin Concerto as part of the Winter Arts Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. Among other accolades, Jackiw's performance with the Boston Symphony was selected by the *Boston Globe* as one of the top two solo appearances of the year, and his solo with the Seattle Symphony was chosen by the *Seattle Times* as the best debut of the year.

About pianist Conrad Tao

"Conrad is breathtaking," says Jekowsky, who conducted Tao's West Coast debut in October 2006 at the California Symphony. "He reminds me of Sarah Chang at that age. They're both so incredibly gifted."

Thirteen-year-old Conrad Tao is now recognized as one of the most talented emerging artists today. Critic Harris Goldsmith noted in *Musical America* that Tao was "the most exciting prodigy to ever come my way." Since making his California Symphony debut, Tao has performed throughout the U.S. and world. Upcoming concerts this summer include recital debuts at the Verbier Festival in Switzerland and the Festival Internacional de Piano "Blanco y Negro" in Mexico City, Mexico, a pre-concert recital at Mostly Mozart Festival at Avery Fischer Hall in New York, and a tour of China with the Juilliard Orchestra. An award-winning composer as well, Tao is enrolled in Juilliard's Pre-College Division, and studies privately with former Christopher Theofanidis, the California Symphony's former Young American-Composer-in-Residence. His compositions have been featured on NPR's "From the Top" and earned the BMI Carlos Surinach Prize as the youngest winner of BMI's prestigious award for young composers in the Western Hemisphere, among other honors.

About Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, accompanied by the 3-D world premiere of the video suite, "Astronomical Pictures at an Exhibition."

The grand finale of the season will mark a classical *first* in which audience members will don 3-D glasses to watch a live multi-media extravaganza to mark the International Year of Astronomy to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's scientific discoveries.

"Pictures at an Exhibition" was written by Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky to commemorate the sudden passing of a friend -- architect and artist Victor Hartmann. During a retrospective showing of Hartmann's works, Mussorgsky was determined to capture in music the experience of walking among his friend's paintings. Each movement is filled with vivid musical images to convey the moods and feelings of a different painting, separated by interludes to create the feeling of walking through the gallery. The work was not published until 1886, five years after the composer's death. Of the many arrangements written since, the most remarkable was produced in 1922 by French composer and master orchestrator Maurice Ravel, to be performed by the California Symphony on this occasion.

Following the California Symphony's standing-room only performances of his "Gustav Holst's The Planets" in October 2007, astronomer and visualizer Dr. Jose Francisco Salgado has created "Astronomical Pictures at an Exhibition." The suite of high-definition videos takes viewers through a virtual gallery featuring art-like images and science visualizations of the cosmos, as well as Salgado's own astronomy-inspired artwork. As the camera moves towards the works of art, audience members enter space through pictures as they fly past Earth, planets, stars, black holes, and galaxies. "Astronomical Pictures at an Exhibition" premiered in standard format in May, presented by the Chicago Sinfonietta.

José Francisco Salgado is an astronomer and science visualizer at the [Adler Planetarium](#) in Chicago. Formally trained in Physics (BS, Univ. of Puerto Rico) and Astronomy (PhD, Univ. of Michigan), he uses his skills in astronomy education and visual arts to create multimedia works that communicate science in engaging ways. From 2006 to 2008, Salgado hosted 110 editions of *Nuestra Galaxia* (WGBO, Univision Chicago), a weekly astronomy news segment for which he received an Emmy nomination.

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All performances of the California Symphony are held at the Hofmann Theater in the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Sunday matinee concerts begin at 4 p.m.; Tuesday night concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. For subscription series tickets (four concerts; \$144 - \$244), visit www.CaliforniaSymphony.org or call (925) 280-2490. Tickets for individual concerts (\$39 - \$59;

students \$20) will be on sale in September. Call (925) 943-SHOW or purchase online at www.LesherArtsCenter.org. For more information, call the California Symphony office at (925) 280-2490.

The 2008-2009 season is made possible by the generous support of the following sponsors: Bank of America (season), Chevron (guest artists), Michael Stead Porsche, John Muir Health, KPMG and the Diablo Regional Arts Association.

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