

## **2007- 08 GUEST ARTIST & SOLOIST BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Margaret Batjer, concertmaster and violin, (May 17 and 18, 2008)**

Margaret Batjer made her first solo appearance at the age of fifteen with the Chicago Symphony in Gian Carlo Menotti's Violin Concerto. Since then, she has been re-engaged by the Chicago Symphony, as well as the Philadelphia and New York String orchestras and the St. Louis, Seattle, San Jose and Dallas symphonies. Batjer has also appeared as a soloist throughout Europe. She has recorded the Bach Concerto for Two Violins in D minor for Philips with Salvatore Accardo and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and more recently with Hilary Hahn and the LA Chamber Orchestra, directed by Jeffrey Kahane, for Deutsche Grammophon. In the spring of 2000, she and Jeffrey Kahane inaugurated LACO's Conversations series by performing the complete cycle of Beethoven's sonatas for violin and piano at Zipper Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Batjer graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music as a student of Ivan Galamian and David Cerone. In 2005, Batjer joined the faculty of the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California. She has been the concertmaster of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra since 1998.

### **Harry Bicket, conductor (March 29 and 30, 2008)**

Harry Bicket is artistic director designate of The English Concert, a post he will assume in the 2007-08 season. His expertise with Baroque and Classical repertoire, particularly with the works of Handel, has taken him around the globe, leading to appearances with the world's most esteemed orchestras and opera companies. Bicket's programs often showcase his gift for choral repertoire, from the great passions, masses and oratorios of the Baroque and Classical eras to the works of Fauré, Elgar and Tippett. Appearing with period- and modern-instrument ensembles alike, he has conducted the orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; the Israel, Royal Stockholm, Rotterdam and Royal Liverpool philharmonic orchestras; Bayerische Rundfunk; Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo; and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. In the US, he has conducted orchestras in Boston, Colorado, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Minnesota, San Francisco, Saint Louis and Seattle; the Los Angeles and St. Paul chamber orchestras; and the New York Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. As music director of western Scotland's Crear Studio, Bicket oversees a varied concert series that presents established artists such as Ann Murray and Trevor Pinnock and provides unique performance opportunities for exceptional young musicians. Additionally he has established educational residencies and workshops with the Southbank Sinfonia and produced a series of CDs called Crear Classics in conjunction with the Avie label.

**Timothy Brock, conductor (May 31, 2008)**

Since the premiere of his Piano Concerto in G minor at the age of 17 (with Alexander Zubitsky as soloist), Timothy Brock has been an active composer and conductor who has specialized in concert works of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and in silent film. In 1989, at age 25, Brock became principal conductor of the Olympia Chamber Orchestra, serving at that post for 11 years. In the course of his tenure there, he gave over 20 world premieres of new or lost works by various composers including Sibelius, Shostakovich, Copland and Milhaud. Timothy Brock's association with silent film began in 1985 when he was commissioned to write a score to accompany the G.W. Pabst film, *Pandora's Box*. He has subsequently written or restored original orchestral scores for over 20 silent films. Other recent film music commissions include the restoration of the 1929 manuscript score to Dmitri Shostakovich's only silent film work, *New Babylon*; a newly-written score to Buster Keaton's *Steamboat Bill Jr.* (presented at LACO's annual silent film gala in June, 2004); and the incidental music to the new BBC/Spiegel Television documentary, *The Tramp and the Dictator*. Brock premiered his score for Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.*, which was commissioned for LACO, at the Silent Film Gala in June 2007.

**Uri Caine, composer-in-residence, composer and piano  
(European Tour February 28, 2008 – March 8, 2008)**

*The New York Times* calls Uri Caine "ferociously versatile," saying, "He is a genuine polyglot, at home in jazz but fluent in many musical languages and capable of juxtaposing them in virtuoso collage." Recently, Caine has been commissioned to write works for the Vienna Volksoper, the Seattle Chamber Players, Relache, the Beaux Arts Trio, and the Basel Chamber Orchestra. Since the 2005-06 season, Caine has been composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. His residency ends in June 2008. Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra audiences have been treated to a number of Caine's world premieres, including his Concerto for 2 Pianos and Chamber Orchestra honoring Mozart, commissioned by LACO's Sound Investment program, at LACO's May 2006 concerts, and his *Mosaics* (for Piano and Chamber Orchestra), commissioned for LACO, at May 2007's *Musaic* at the Jazz Bakery festival. The European premiere of the latter is scheduled for LACO's tour in 2008. During the 2007-08 season, Caine continues his participation in the orchestra's Meet the Music program, when he inspires students to explore musical improvisation and compose "on-the-spot" during the program's events.

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**Douglas Davis, cello (March 29 and 30, 2008)**

“Every one of these works became a masterpiece in Mr. Davis’ hands,” *The New York Times* wrote of cellist Douglas Davis. *The Los Angeles Times* called Davis’ playing “splendid” and applauded his “rich sound.” A native of Los Angeles, Davis studied with the renowned master Gregor Piatigorsky and is principal cello of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. A frequent soloist with LACO, he participated in the world premiere of Paul Creston’s *Sadhana*, Op. 117 for cello and orchestra. Davis gained great distinction as one of the prize winners in the Second International Tchaikovsky Competition and, following the award, he toured the U.S.S.R in concert. In recent years, he has toured throughout the United States and Europe and has participated in Helmuth Rilling’s Bach Summer Academy in Stuttgart. Davis has served on the faculties of California State University at Northridge and UCLA. Davis also serves as principal cello of the Pasadena Symphony.

**Jeffrey Kahane, music director, conductor and piano**

Renowned as a pianist and conductor, Jeffrey Kahane is recognized by audiences around the world for his mastery of diverse repertoire from Bach to Gershwin. He has established a reputation as a truly versatile artist equally sought after as soloist, conductor, and chamber musician. A native of Los Angeles, Kahane was warmly welcomed in 1997 as the fifth music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. The 2007-08 season marks his third year as music director of the Colorado Symphony. Kahane also continues as artistic director of the Green Music Festival in Sonoma County.

**Vesselina Kasarova, mezzo-soprano  
(European Tour February 28, 2008 – March 8, 2008)**

Vesselina Kasarova was born in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. In 1989, she was awarded the first prize at the New Voices competition in Gütersloh, Germany and was subsequently engaged by the Opera House of Zürich. She performed for the first time at the Salzburg Festival in 1991, followed quickly by her debut as Rosina at the Vienna State Opera, where she performed as a regular guest for two years. Within a short time, she won the hearts of the audience and became “the darling of the public.” Since then, she has performed at all important international opera houses, including La Scala in Milan, the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, the Liceo Barcelona, the Teatro Comunale in Florence, the Munich State Opera, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Nederlandse Opera Amsterdam, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Opéra Bastille and the Opéra Garnier in Paris – just to name a few. Kasarova has become world famous for her interpretation of Mozart operas, bel canto and French opera. She has worked with some of the greatest conductors:

Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Sir Colin Davis, Seiji Ozawa, Daniel Barenboim and Riccardo Muti. Kasarova is one of the most sought-after mezzo-sopranos.

**Jennifer Larmore, mezzo-soprano (September 29 and 30, 2007)**

Jennifer Larmore is an outstanding American mezzo-soprano who has parlayed operatic success in Europe into international stardom. Known for excelling in the coloratura roles of the Baroque and bel canto, she may be heard on the major recording labels on over seventy CDs to date, which has earned her the distinction of being the most recorded mezzo-soprano of all time. Following her European debut in 1986, her vocal talents, energetic acting and natural beauty quickly established her as an emerging star, and the next years found her performing leading roles in the prestigious theaters of Paris, Vienna, Prague, London, Rome, Berlin, Madrid, Lisbon, Brussels, Geneva, Amsterdam, Milan, Tokyo, Melbourne, Seoul, Buenos Aires, and Salzburg. In 1994, Larmore returned to the United States in a triumphant Carnegie Hall appearance. This success was followed by the coveted Richard Tucker Award and her subsequent debut at the Metropolitan Opera in the role of Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Since then, she has been a regular attraction at the Met, singing a wide range of roles in works ranging from Handel's *Giulio Cesare* to the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*. Larmore was the honored vocalist selected to close the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games with the singing of the *Olympic Hymn*. In 2002, Dr. Larmore (conferred by Westminster College of Princeton) was knighted by the French government with the title *Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* in recognition of her contribution to the world of French music.

**Kenneth Munday, bassoon (December 8 and 9, 2007)**

Kenneth Munday has performed as principal bassoonist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra since 1976, when he was appointed by Sir Neville Marriner. He has appeared on the orchestra's numerous recordings and has collaborated as soloist with all of the orchestra's music directors. A much sought-after chamber music performer, he has participated for several summers at the Marlboro Music Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, and Festival Casals, as well as the Cascade Head, Santa Fe, and Idyllwild Arts Faculty chamber music series. Kenneth is a founding member of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra Winds, a new member of the ensemble L'eau and a frequent collaborator with colleagues and pianist/music director Jeffrey Kahane in chamber music performances. He regularly performs at the Oregon Bach Festival, where he plays chamber music, appears as soloist, and serves as principal bassoonist with the Festival Orchestra. He performed the world premiere of the John Steinmetz Bassoon Concerto with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in 2003 and later played the West Coast premiere of Luciano Berio's *Sequenza* for solo bassoon, a piece he recorded for Naxos records. (It was recently released as part of the only complete set of Berio's *Sequenzas*). As an active studio musician, Munday has played on hundreds of film scores written by

most of the great film composers. He has also performed on John Williams' recording of concert music and a CD featuring music for cello and orchestra featuring Yo-Yo Ma.

**Kevin Puts, composer (May 17 and 18, 2008)**

Hailed by the press as "one of the best young composers in America," Kevin Puts has had works commissioned and performed by leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists throughout North America, Europe and the Far East. He is known for his distinctive and richly colored musical voice and has received many of today's most prestigious honors and awards for composition. As the composer-in-residence of the Fort Worth Symphony, Puts is writing a violin concerto to be premiered by concertmaster Michael Shih in April 2007. He has been selected as the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival's 2007 American composer-in-residence and will write a new orchestral piece to be premiered there by the New York Philharmonic. Puts is also the recipient of a Music Alive residency with the Mobile Symphony, which will premiere a new work in February 2008, and he is writing a clarinet concerto for Bil Jackson and the Colorado Symphony, commissioned by Kathryn Gould and Meet the Composer, to be premiered in 2008-09. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center gave the New York premiere of *And Legions Will Rise*, and the Baltimore Symphony performed *River's Rush*, both in November 2006.

**Khosrow Soltani, Persian ney (November 3 and 4, 2007)**

Khosrow Soltani was born in Tehran and has been living in Austria since 1974. He studied in Tehran's conservatory and finished his degree as a bassoonist in 1971. From 1971 to 1974, he played bassoon as a regular member of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra. In October 1974, he began his bassoon studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna, Austria, with Karl Oelberger. He finished his degree with honors three years later. He has been a member of Les Menestrels, a Viennese ensemble of early music, since 1976. He has also recorded and toured the United States and Canada with the Clemencic Consort and Musica Antiqua Wien. He studied recorder with Hans Maria Kneihls, finishing his degree in 1984. Soltani began performing the Persian ney in 1979 and has performed the ney in many different ensembles. In 1984, he founded Shiraz, an ensemble for Persian music, with which he has played many concerts at various European festivals. In addition, he has recorded for the WDR, the NDR, and Franc Musiq, among others. Also a composer, Soltani's *Ancient cal a new*, *Great Mahur*, and *Salut del amore* are available on commercial CDs.

**Joseph Swensen, conductor (December 8 and 9, 2007)**

Joseph Swensen is currently principal conductor of Malmö Opera och Musikteater and Conductor Emeritus of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. His present and future engagements at Malmö Opera include productions of *La Bohème*, *Macbeth*, *Porgy and Bess*, *La fanciulla del West*, and *Salome*, among others. Swensen's many guest

conducting engagements include the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, London Mozart Players, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta de la Ciudad de Granada and Orquestra Nacional do Porto. Joseph Swensen was principal conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra from 1996 to 2005. When he relinquished this post in September 2005, he was invited to become the orchestra's conductor emeritus. Swensen and the SCO have toured extensively in the US, Far East, Spain, and Portugal. They have performed at the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, Tanglewood and Ravinia festivals, the BBC Proms, the Barbican and the Concertgebouw. Swensen and the orchestra have made a series of recordings for Linn records, including music by Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Brahms, Prokofiev and Dvůřák. The Prokofiev recording features Swensen's own orchestration of the composer's *Cinq Melodies*. His enthusiasm for new music has resulted in many major works written for both him and the SCO by such composers as James MacMillan, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Sally Beamish, Karin Rehnqvist and Elenor Alberga. Joseph Swensen, an American of Norwegian-Japanese descent, was born in 1960 in New York and now lives with his family in Copenhagen, Denmark.

#### **André Watts, piano (October 13 and 14, 2007)**

André Watts burst upon the music world at the age of 16 when Leonard Bernstein chose him to make his debut with the New York Philharmonic in its Young People's Concerts, broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV. Only two weeks later, Bernstein asked him to substitute at the last minute for the ailing Glenn Gould in performances of Liszt's E-flat concerto with the New York Philharmonic, thus launching his career in storybook fashion. More than 40 years later, André Watts remains one of the world's most celebrated and beloved superstars. For his numerous achievements and contributions to the world of classical music, he was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame in June, 2006. Watts performs with many of the American orchestras with which he has had close relationships for many years, including the Philadelphia Orchestra in Philadelphia and Carnegie Hall, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Atlanta, St. Louis, National, Indianapolis, Seattle, Milwaukee, Colorado and New Jersey symphonies. He also appears in recital throughout the country, including at Orchestra Hall in Chicago and Orchestra Hall in Detroit under the auspices of the Chicago and Detroit symphonies. In addition to his regular visits to the major summer music festivals including Ravinia, Tanglewood, Saratoga, the Mann Music Center, Mostly Mozart and the Hollywood Bowl, André Watts's recent engagements include appearances with the New York Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra and the Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Houston, Dallas and Cincinnati symphonies; a tour with the Israel Philharmonic with performances in Boston, Chicago and Atlanta; recitals at New York's Lincoln Center and Metropolitan Museum, the Kennedy Center, and Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles; a Carnegie

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Hall appearance with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; a European tour with the Baltimore Symphony; and an appearance at the Proms in London.

**Chee-Yun, violin (January 19 and 20, 2008)**

Violinist Chee-Yun's combination of flawless technique, beautiful tone, and compelling musical temperament has quickly captured the attention of the music world. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and Young Concert Artists International Auditions winner, Chee-Yun has performed with many of the world's foremost orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, and the Toronto, Houston, and National symphonies. Among her career highlights are performances at the Kennedy Center's gala farewell to Mstislav Rostropovich, the Mostly Mozart Festival's tour of Japan, a national tour with the San Francisco Symphony, performances across three continents of the Penderecki Concerto No. 2 with the composer on the podium, the premiere of Lou Harrison's Suite for Violin and String Orchestra, a performance with Michael Tilson Thomas in the inaugural season of Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, and the US premiere of the Penderecki Sonata No. 2 with pianist Barry Douglas at the Kennedy Center. In 1993, Chee-Yun returned to Korea to receive the *Nan Pa* award, that country's highest musical honor. She was honored in a different manner in the United States, when she was invited to perform at the White House for President Bill Clinton and his guests in honor of the recipients of the National Medal of Arts.

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