

THE LOS ANGELES CHAMBER ORCHESTRA PRESENTS INSPIRED BEGINNINGS

THE PROGRAM FEATURES ACCLAIMED CONDUCTOR JOSEPH SWENSEN LEADING THE U.S. PREMIERE OF HIS SINFONIA IN B, AND SHOWCASES LACO BASSOONIST KENNETH MUNDAY

**SATURDAY, DEC. 8, AT 8 PM (THE ALEX THEATRE)
 SUNDAY, DEC. 9, AT 7 PM (ROYCE HALL – UCLA)**

The Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra welcomes back renowned conductor Joseph Swensen for Inspired Beginnings, a concert featuring the U.S. premiere of Swensen’s *Sinfonia in B* and LACO principal bassoonist Kenneth Munday on Saturday, December 8 at 8 pm at the Alex Theatre in Glendale and Sunday, December 9 at 7 pm at Royce Hall at UCLA. In keeping with the evening’s celebration of youth and vitality, the program explores two of Mozart’s early pieces, the **Symphony No. 33 in B-flat major** and his **Bassoon Concerto in B-flat major**. The concert concludes with *Sinfonia in B*, Swensen’s unique orchestration of Brahms’s original Piano Trio, Op. 8.

“This will truly be an exciting night for enthusiasts of this period,” LACO music director Jeffrey Kahane comments. “There is a lovely contrast between high romanticism [Brahms] and true early romanticism [Mozart]. Here, we have late 18th century elegance at its most intimate.”

Written in 1779 while Mozart was in the employ of the Archbishop Colloredo, with whom he had a notoriously abrasive relationship, the Symphony No. 33 in B-flat major was one of the final pieces Mozart composed in Salzburg. While Mozart had exhibited some of the more experimental influences of his travels in Mannheim and Paris a few years earlier in his Symphony No. 32, Colloredo would have none of it. Consequently, Mozart’s Symphony No. 33 initially conformed to a more traditional, Italianate three-movement format. After parting (badly) with Colloredo two years later, Mozart added the much-acclaimed minuet. “Not one of the grand gestures typical of Mozart’s later works,” says LACO music director Jeffrey Kahane, “the piece is a very delicate, lyric and intimate symphony.”

Performed by bassoonist Kenneth Munday, the Concerto in B-flat major is the only concerto Mozart is known to have written for the bassoon. Composed when Mozart was only 18 years old, the work is rumored to have been commissioned by an amateur bassoonist—though that claim is largely unsubstantiated. The concerto also features a melody that reappears 12 years later as a theme in the aria “Porgi Amor” (“Oh, Love”), from Mozart’s comic opera *The Marriage of Figaro*.

As LACO’s principal bassoonist for the last 31 years, Munday has established himself as a preeminent chamber musician, performer and teacher, appearing on the Orchestra’s recordings and collaborating with every one of its music directors.

The evening concludes with the U.S. premiere of *Sinfonia in B*, Swensen’s own orchestration of the original version of Brahms’s B major piano trio, which he considers to be the most important of Brahms’s published early works. Although Brahms completed the piece in 1854, he revised nearly three-quarters of it more than three decades later, yet titled the revised work to be the same as the original: Opus 8. For this reason, the original work remains virtually unknown among

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Recipient's Name
Recipient's Organization
Month Day, Year

2/3

much of the music community. "For me, the original Opus 8 is intriguing for many reasons. Not only is it a work of extraordinary quality and emotional depth, written by a composer just 21 years of age, but it is a quintessential example of Brahms's ultra-Romantic and forward-looking early style, a style deeply influenced by his mentor Robert Schumann," Swensen explains.

A highly regarded figure in classical music, Swensen is principal conductor of Malmö Opera och Musiktheater and Conductor Emeritus of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO), where he served as principal conductor from 1996 to 2005. Known for their passion for new music, Swensen and the SCO have had such composers as James MacMillan, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Sally Beamish, Karin Rehnqvist, and Elenor Alberga write major works expressly for them.

Concert Preludes, scheduled one hour prior to the concerts, feature the stories behind the music and are free for all ticket holders.

Tickets (\$17 to \$79) are on sale now and may be purchased online at laco.org, by calling the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra at 213 622 7001 x 215, or at the venue box office on the night of the concert. Discounted tickets are also available by phone for students, seniors 65 years of age and older, and groups of 12 or more.

Joseph Swensen is currently principal conductor of Malmö Opera och Musiktheater and Conductor Emeritus of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. His 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, North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta de la Ciudad de Granada and Orquestra Nacional do Porto. Swensen was principal conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra from 1996 to 2005, after which he was invited to become the orchestra's conductor emeritus. Under his direction, the orchestra has made a series of recordings for Linn records, including music by Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Brahms, Prokofiev and Dvořák. 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.

Kenneth Munday has performed as principal bassoonist with LACO since 1976, as 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, Festival Casals, as well as the Cascade Head, Santa Fe and Idyllwild Arts Faculty chamber music series. Munday is a founding member of the LACO Winds, a new member of the ensemble L'eau and regularly performs at the Oregon Bach Festival where he appears as soloist and serves as principal bassoonist with the orchestra. He is a dedicated performer of contemporary music and performed the world premiere of the John Steinmetz Bassoon Concerto with LACO in 2003 and played the west coast premiere of the Luciano Berio *Sequenza* for solo bassoon, a piece he recorded for Naxos. He is a frequent performer with period instrument ensembles throughout the country, playing baroque (5 key) and classical (9 key) bassoon with Santa Fe Pro Musica, Context of Houston and Musica Angelica. As an active studio musician, Munday has played on hundreds of film scores written by most of the great film composers. Munday has taught bassoon at many colleges and universities throughout Southern California, and has given master classes throughout the United States.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 – 8:00 PM
The Alex Theatre Glendale, CA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9 – 7:00 PM
Royce Hall, UCLA Westwood, Los Angeles

CONDUCTOR JOSEPH SWENSEN
SOLOIST KENNETH MUNDAY, bassoon

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Recipient's Name
Recipient's Organization
Month Day, Year

3/3

Mozart
Mozart
Brahms/Swensen
premiere)

Symphony No. 33 in B-flat major
Bassoon Concerto in B-flat major
Sinfonia in B (original 1854 version of Trio, Op. 8, orchestrated by Joseph Swensen) (U.S.

TICKET PRICES: \$17, \$29, \$48, \$69, \$79. (Subject to availability, discounts offered for students, seniors, and groups of 12 or more.)

TICKET INFORMATION: Tickets available online at www.laco.org or by phone 213 622 7001 x 215 or by fax 213 955 2071.
Tickets on sale at the theatre box office the night of the concert, if available.

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