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**THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY'S NEW *PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO*
ARTIST AND COMPOSER RESIDENCIES FEATURE
COMPOSER GEORGE BENJAMIN AND CELLIST YO-YO MA
JANUARY 7-26, 2010**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 19, 2009) – The San Francisco Symphony's (SFS) new *Project San Francisco* features three weeks of concerts, pre-concert talks, post-concert Q&As and special educational events this January with composer George Benjamin and cellist Yo-Yo Ma from January 7-26. *Project San Francisco*, the Symphony's multi-faceted composer and artist residency program, brings some of today's most significant musicians and composers to San Francisco to collaborate with the SFS in concerts, chamber music, lectures, and education and community events. *Project San Francisco* is an integral part of the San Francisco Symphony's multi-year Centennial Initiatives, strengthening the Orchestra's role in the musical community, expanding orchestral repertoire, and attracting new audiences as the SFS prepares to mark its 100th season in 2011-12. Detailed information can be found at sfsymphony.org/projectsf.

JANUARY 7-17: GEORGE BENJAMIN: *PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO*

From January 7-17 *Project San Francisco* shines the spotlight on the work of British composer **George Benjamin**. As Phyllis C. Wattis Composer-in-Residence, Benjamin will lead the SFS in the West Coast premiere of his 2008 Piano Concerto, *Duet* with pianist **Nicholas Hodges** who makes his SFS debut in these performances. Benjamin also leads the SFS in his earliest orchestral work, *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*; Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole* and *Mother Goose Suite*; and *Oiseaux exotiques*, written by Benjamin's composing mentor, Olivier Messiaen. Conductor **David Robertson**, a longtime champion of

Benjamin's music, leads the SFS in the composer's *Dance Figures*, a West Coast premiere, and *Jubilation*.

Of Benjamin's works Robertson says, "The thing I like about George's music the most is the sheer breadth of it. This is someone whose mind is all-encompassing like a really fascinating encyclopedia, but in no way dry because he has a very good sense of humor. There's a wealth of experience and a wealth of connections. You almost keep wanting to come up with more and more colorful metaphors when you listen to George's music." About the residency: "The experience of a living creator, someone like George Benjamin who is such an inspiring person to listen to and to be around...keeps us all fresh and lets us all be aware of just how lucky we are to have music."

On **January 17** Benjamin will join SFS musicians as pianist in a chamber music concert, where he will perform his *Piano Figures*. Jonathan Vinocour and Yun Jie Liu will be featured in his *Viola, Viola*. In pre-concert talks, free to all ticketholders, before the performances **on January 7, 9, and 10** Benjamin will speak in conversation with Peter Grunberg and **January 14,15, and 16** with Laura Stanfield Prichard. The Friday 6.5 concert on **January 8** conducted by David Robertson will include Benjamin's remarks about his works *Jubilation* and *Dance Figures*. Immediately following the concert on **Saturday, January 16** Benjamin will participate in *Off the Podium*, an informal question and answer session free to all audience members that evening. At a private colloquium to be held on **Saturday, January 9** Benjamin will engage in a dialogue with San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (SFSYO) musicians in a discussion moderated by SFSYO Music Director Donato Cabrera. Cabrera will interview Benjamin, and SFSYO members will have the opportunity to ask questions on topics such as the composer's craft; inspiration, genesis and development of works; interpretive approaches to contemporary music; and the current state and future of contemporary music. Also as part of *Project San Francisco* on **January 12** Benjamin will work as a mentor with San Francisco Conservatory of Music composition students. The Phyllis C. Wattis Composer-in-Residence Program began in the 2008-09 season with a successful and acclaimed two-week residency with esteemed Russian composer Sofia Gubaidulina.

ABOUT GEORGE BENJAMIN

George Benjamin first appeared with the SFS in 1992 as conductor, pianist, and Artistic Director of the Wet Ink Festival, the SFS' celebration of contemporary composers. Over the course of the festival the SFS performed his *At First Light* and the U.S. premieres of his works *Antara* and *Piano Sonata*. Benjamin also performed an improvised piano accompaniment to the silent films *Ben-Hur* and *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. In 1999 he made his subscription series conducting debut with the SFS, leading his own works *Viola, Viola* (with former Principal Viola Geraldine Walther and current Associate Principal Viola Yun Jie Liu) and *Three Inventions*, and Ligeti's Piano Concerto featuring Pierre-Laurent Aimard. At other times the SFS has performed his *Palimpsest*, *Sudden Time* and *Three Studies for Solo Piano*.

"Having always regarded [the SFS] as a quite wonderful orchestra, I've been particularly struck in recent years by the development of a remarkable new glow and warmth in their sonority," Benjamin said. "Their loyalty and interest in my work over the decades touches me more than I can say. In a program that I will conduct, performances of my oldest and newest orchestral works will be juxtaposed with music by my teacher, Messiaen, and also by an earlier composer particularly close to my heart, Ravel."

JANUARY 19-26: YO-YO MA: PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

From January 19-26, *Project San Francisco's* 2009-10 Artist-in-Residence program welcomes Yo-Yo Ma. Ma joins Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas and the SFS for performances of Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 2 and Brahms' *Double Concerto* with violinist Colin Jacobsen, who makes his SFS debut in this concert. Ma also performs a chamber music concert with members of the SFS and a recital with pianist Emanuel Ax. The recital will feature an SFS co-commissioned world premiere from Peter Lieberman entitled *Remembering Schumann* paired with music from Schumann and Chopin, as 2010

marks the 200th birthday for both composers. In celebration of this bicentennial Ax will perform works by Chopin and Schumann during all three concerts with the SFS this season. The other recitals will take place in March and April. While at the SFS Yo-Yo Ma will round out his *Project San Francisco* residency by coaching two student chamber music ensembles, a string quartet from the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, performing Schubert's String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, *Death and the Maiden*, D. 810 and a string quartet from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music playing Beethoven's String Quartet, Opus 132, first movement. The *Project San Francisco* Artist-in-Residence program is made possible by the generous support of Marcia and John Goldman.

ABOUT YO-YO MA

These are Yo-Yo Ma's first subscription season concerts with the SFS since 1994. Yo-Yo Ma first performed with the San Francisco Symphony in 1970 under Seiji Ozawa in Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No. 1. In 1983 he returned to the SFS for concerts of Dvořák's Cello Concerto with then-guest conductor MTT. He has graced the Davies Symphony Hall stage many times since and performed with all SFS Music Directors since Ozawa - Edo de Waart, Herbert Blomstedt and Michael Tilson Thomas. Ma was guest soloist for the San Francisco Symphony's Opening Gala in the 2005-2006 season and in 2008 he performed with MTT and the Orchestra at Carnegie Hall's Opening Night celebration of Leonard Bernstein. The performance was nationally broadcast on Thirteen/WNET New York's *GREAT PERFORMANCES* television series, nominated for an Emmy® Award and is now available on DVD from SFS Media. The concert will be broadcast in China in late November 2009.

For his latest album, *Songs of Joy & Peace*, Yo-Yo Ma invited many of his favorite artists from the worlds of popular and classical music to collaborate on a selection of songs -- some sacred, some secular, some traditionally seasonal, some simply beloved -- connected in their sense of wonder and appreciation of the holiday season. Yo-Yo Ma conceived of *Songs of Joy & Peace* as a universal holiday house party of music "uniting different forms of joy" with the idea of combining familiar material with songs that would offer the listener the gift of discovery performed by old friends and new. *Songs of Joy & Peace* celebrates the universal hopes, dreams and good cheer animating seasonal festivals -- Christmas, Hanukkah, Eid, Kwanzaa, Yuletide, Winter Solstice, New Year's, Ramadan -- the world over.

Yo-Yo Ma is an exclusive Sony Classical artist, and his discography of over 75 albums reflects his wide-ranging interests. He has made several successful recordings that defy categorization, among them *Hush* with Bobby McFerrin, *Appalachia Waltz* and *Appalachian Journey* with Mark O'Connor and Edgar Meyer and two Grammy®-winning tributes to the music of Brazil, *Obrigado Brazil* and *Obrigado Brazil - Live in Concert*. Yo-Yo Ma's most recent recordings include *Paris: La Belle Époque*, with pianist Kathryn Stott, *Appassionato*, which contains some of the world's most romantic music and *New Impossibilities*, a live album recorded with the Silk Road Ensemble and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Yo-Yo Ma is strongly committed to educational programs that not only bring young audiences into contact with music but also allow them to participate in its creation. While touring, he takes time whenever possible to conduct master classes as well as more informal programs for students - musicians and non-musicians alike. He has also reached young audiences through appearances on *Arthur*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and *Sesame Street*.

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and soon came with his family to New York, where he spent most of his formative years. Later, his principal teacher was Leonard Rose at the Juilliard School. He sought out a traditional liberal arts education to expand upon his conservatory training, graduating from Harvard University in 1976. He has received numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the Glenn Gould Prize (1999), the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Dan David Prize (2006), the Sonning Prize (2006), and the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award (2008). Appointed a CultureConnect Ambassador by the United States Department of State in 2002, Yo-Yo Ma has met with, trained and mentored thousands

of students worldwide including Lithuania, Korea, Lebanon, Azerbaijan and China. He has performed with and conducted master classes for members of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra. In 2006, Secretary General Kofi Annan named him a U.N. Messenger of Peace and in 2007 Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon extended his appointment.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO
THREE-WEEK ARTIST AND COMPOSER RESIDENCIES**

Thursday, January 7 at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 9 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 10 at 2:00 p.m.
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Flint Center, Cupertino
Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

David Robertson, conductor
San Francisco Symphony
The Crowden Lower School Chorus, children's choir

PROGRAM:
George Benjamin/Jubilation
Debussy (arr. Jarrell)/Three Etudes
George Benjamin/Dance Figures
Mendelssohn/Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 56,
Scottish

PRE-CONCERT TALK: Peter Grunberg in conversation with composer George Benjamin give the "Inside Music" talks one hour prior to the concerts. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open fifteen minutes prior.

BROADCAST: Portions of these concerts will be broadcast on CLASSICAL 102.1 KDFC at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19.

TICKETS: \$35-\$135 Davies, \$15-\$71 Flint; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box office or online at sfsymphony.org.

Friday, January 8 at 6:30 p.m.
FRIDAY 6.5 SERIES
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

David Robertson, conductor
San Francisco Symphony
The Crowden Lower School Chorus, children's choir

PROGRAM:
George Benjamin/Jubilation
George Benjamin/Dance Figures
Mendelssohn/Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 56,
Scottish

Composer George Benjamin and conductor David Robertson will speak during this concert and share their unique perspectives on the works performed.

TICKETS: \$35-\$130; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box office or online at sfsymphony.org.

Thursday, January 14 at 2:00 p.m.
Friday, January 15 at 8:00 p.m.**
Saturday, January 16 at 8:00 p.m.*
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

George Benjamin, conductor
Nicholas Hodges, piano
San Francisco Symphony

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

PROGRAM:

Ravel/*Mother Goose Suite, Five Pieces for Children*
George Benjamin/Piano Concerto, *Duet* (West Coast premiere)
Messiaen/*Oiseaux exotiques*
George Benjamin/*Ringed by the Flat Horizon*
Ravel/*Rapsodie espagnole*

PRE-CONCERT TALK: Laura Stanfield Prichard in conversation with composer George Benjamin give the “Inside Music” talks one hour prior to the concerts. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open fifteen minutes prior.

BROADCAST: Portions of these concerts will be broadcast on CLASSICAL 102.1 KDFC at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26.

DAVIES AFTER HOURS:

Part performance, part reception, at *Davies After Hours* the **John Santos Sextet** performs their musical response to the Symphony concert on Friday, January 15 in the transformed nightclub-like setting of the second tier lobby following the concert. Free to all ticketholders. Cash bar. More info is at sfsymphony.org/daviesafterhours

POST-CONCERT Q&A:

The SFS invites audience members to participate in *Off the Podium*, an informal post-concert question and answer session with George Benjamin immediately following the concert on Saturday, January 16.

TICKETS: \$15-\$135; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box office or online at sfsymphony.org. ***Davies After Hours* will be held in the 2nd Tier lobby after the concert on Jan. 15. **Off the Podium*, an informal Q&A session with the artists, begins immediately after the Jan. 16 performance.

Sunday, January 17 at 2:00 p.m.
CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Sharon Grebanier, violin
Mariko Smiley, violin
Gina Feinauer, viola
Yun Jie Liu, viola
Wayne Roden, viola
Jonathan Vinocour, viola
Margaret Tait, cello
Robin McKee, flute
Douglas Rioth, harp
George Benjamin, piano

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

PROGRAM:
Debussy/Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp
George Benjamin/*Viola, Viola*
George Benjamin/*Piano Figures*
Britten/String Quartet No. 2 in C Major, Opus 36

TICKETS: \$35; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box office or online at sfsymphony.org.

Wednesday, January 20 at 10:00 a.m. –
Open Rehearsal
Wednesday, January 20 at 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, January 21 at 8:00 p.m.
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
Yo-Yo Ma, cello
San Francisco Symphony

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

PROGRAM:
Sibelius/*The Oceanides*, Opus 73
Shostakovich/Cello Concerto No. 2 in G major,
Opus 126
Tchaikovsky/Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Opus 17,
Little Russian

PRE-CONCERT TALK: Alexandra Amati-Camperi gives the “Inside Music” talks one hour prior to the concerts. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open fifteen minutes prior.

BROADCAST: Portions of these concerts will be broadcast on CLASSICAL 102.1 KDFC at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 2.

TICKETS: Open Rehearsal, \$45 reserved, \$30 general. Concerts \$15-\$140. Available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box office or online at sfsymphony.org.

Saturday, January 23 at 8:00 p.m.
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
Yo-Yo Ma, cello
Colin Jacobsen, violin
San Francisco Symphony

PROGRAM:
Sibelius/*The Oceanides* Opus 73
Brahms/Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor,
Opus 102
Tchaikovsky/Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Opus 17,
Little Russian

PRE-CONCERT TALK: Alexandra Amati-Camperi
gives the “Inside Music” talks one hour prior to the
concerts. Free to all concert ticket holders; doors open
fifteen minutes prior.

BROADCAST: Portions of this concert may be broadcast
on CLASSICAL 102.1 KDFC at 8:00 p.m. on
Tuesday, February 2.

TICKETS: \$15-\$145; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box
office or online at sfsymphony.org.

Sunday, January 24 at 7:00 p.m.
SPECIAL CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

Yo-Yo Ma, cello
Members of the San Francisco Symphony

PROGRAM:
To Be Announced

TICKETS: \$15-\$130; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box
office or online at sfsymphony.org.

Tuesday, January 26 at 8:00 p.m.
YO-YO MA AND EMANUEL AX IN RECITAL
PROJECT SAN FRANCISCO

Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco

Yo-Yo Ma, cello
Emanuel Ax, piano

PROGRAM:
Schumann/Adagio and Allegro for Cello and Piano,
Opus 70
Schumann/Five Pieces in Folk Style for Cello and
Piano, Opus 102
Peter Lieberson/*Remembering Schumann* (World
Premiere; SFS co-commission)
Chopin/*Polonaise brillante* in C major for Cello and
Piano, Opus 3
Schumann/Fantasy Pieces for Cello and Piano, Opus 73
(*Fantasiestücke*)
Chopin/Cello Sonata in G major, Opus 65

TICKETS: \$15-\$100; available through SFS Ticket Services at (415) 864-6000, the Davies Symphony Hall box
office or online at sfsymphony.org.

The concerts on January 7, 8, 9 and 10 and 14, 15 & 16 are made possible through the generosity of the Phyllis C. Wattis Composer Residency.

Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

David Robertson's performance is supported by the Louise M. Davies Guest Conductor Fund.

Concerts on January 14, 15 & 16 are made possible through the generosity of AT&T, Presenting Sponsor of the May 22, 2010 Black and White Ball ©.

Yo-Yo Ma's artist-in-residency is made possible through the generosity of Marcia and John Goldman.

The Open Rehearsal Series is sponsored by PG&E

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