

For Immediate Release

**OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY CELEBRATES 20<sup>TH</sup> SEASON  
WITH SYMPHONIC, OPERATIC & BROADWAY MASTERPIECES:  
*THE RITE OF SPRING, OTELLO & SHOW BOAT,*  
PLUS NEW WORKS BY NATHANIEL STOOKEY & NOLAN GASSER**

**Special *Let Us Break Bread* Choral Concert Returns for the Holidays  
Season Tickets Now on Sale; Call 510 444 0801 or [www.oeps.org](http://www.oeps.org)**

OAKLAND, Calif., April 18, 2008—In celebration of **Oakland East Bay Symphony's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**, a season of masterpieces from the symphonic, operatic and Broadway world will be presented at the Paramount Theatre, including two world premieres by Bay Area composers **Nathaniel Stookey** and **Nolan Gasser**, along with the local debut of a new work by Latvian artist **Pateris Vasks**.

Season highlights include the debuts of *Zipperz* by Stookey, a Concerto for Cello and Orchestra by Gasser, Act I of Giuseppe Verdi's grand opera tragedy *Otello*, Igor Stravinsky's revolutionary *The Rite of Spring*, Serge Prokofiev's romantic *Romeo and Juliet*, and Aaron Copland's quintessential American work, *Appalachian Spring*. Capping the 2008/09 season, the Symphony will present its third installment of the unique **American Masterworks Series** with a concert version staging of the Broadway classic, *Show Boat*, by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II.

Returning by popular demand - and in keeping with a new musical tradition for the holidays - the Symphony will offer the highly acclaimed choral extravaganza, *Let Us Break Bread Together: A Target Holiday Celebration* concert scheduled for one performance only, Sunday, Dec. 14. Joining Michael Morgan and the Symphony musicians on stage will be the **Oakland Symphony Chorus**, **Terrance Kelly** and the **Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir**, **Mt. Eden High School Choir**, and klezmer band **Kugelplex**.

Oakland East Bay Symphony (OEPS) Music Director and Conductor **Michael Morgan** said, "the programming for our 20<sup>th</sup> season is in many ways about masterpieces from the orchestral, operatic and Broadway repertory." "This new season is also distinguished by several works that are deeply focused on passion and love given the premiere of *Zipperz*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Otello*, and *Show Boat*, the latter two being further distinguished by inter-racial love," said Morgan. "And, it simply wouldn't be a Symphony season without showcasing our commitment to young emerging talent as we present the Oakland Youth Orchestra in a side-by-side performance."

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2008**

The Symphony's Opening Night will present the world premiere of Stookey's *Zipperz*, "a story of love and sex, a breathless affair for two singers and orchestra." Bay Area natives **Eisa Davis** (Indie/pop/singer, Off-Broadway actress and niece of activist Angela Davis), and **Manoel Felciano** (a veteran of Broadway's current production of *Sweeney Todd*) will essay the roles of the sexually-charged lovers.

The opening concert will find Michael Morgan on the podium in a rare performance of George Antheil's playful *Jazz Symphony* from 1925, and later with Prokofiev's Suite from his lyrical ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*.

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### **FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2009**

Maestro Morgan will lead the Symphony in the world premiere of Sonoma County composer Nolan Gasser's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, featuring Israeli-born soloist, **Maya Beiser**. Gasser previously worked with the Symphony in 2007 with the local premiere of his *Black Suit Blues*. Symphony Associate Conductor **Bryan Nies** will take to the podium for a performance of Copland's exuberant and popular *Appalachian Spring*, and Music Director Morgan will return in the second half of the concert for a spirited interpretation of Symphony No. 3, by Johannes Brahms.

### **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2009**

Michael Morgan and the Oakland East Bay Symphony are well regarded for their commitment to providing music education in the public schools and encouraging the development of young East Bay artists. The February concert will showcase the **Oakland Youth Orchestra** playing side-by-side with the Symphony in a double orchestra performance of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ever-popular and heroic, *1812 Overture*. The evening will also include the winner of the 2008 OEBS Young Artist Competition in a concerto to be announced, and a performance of Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3, the *Scottish*.

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2009**

Maestro Morgan will launch the March concert with a new work by Latvian composer **Peteris Vasks**, *Sala: Symphonic Elegy for Orchestra*. This musical composition is presented as part of the Symphony's on-going Magnum Opus Commission, an innovative commissioning project shared by the symphony orchestras of Oakland, Marin and Santa Rosa. *Sala: Symphonic Elegy for Orchestra*, premiered with the Marin Symphony in January 2007. "Sala," a Latvian word for "island," conveys Vasks's attitude that all individuals are islands, a source of sadness as well as intense energy. From the plaintive English Horn opening to the dramatic climax, this 22-minute work has earned high praise among critics and public alike.

The concert will also include two contrasting works that regard love and passion: Symphony No. 49, *La Passione*, by Franz Joseph Haydn, and a concert performance of Verdi's dramatic opera, *Otello*. The Symphony will perform Act I only, and will be joined by the Oakland Symphony Chorus, **Lynne Morrow** director, in this masterpiece of Italian grand opera based on Shakespeare's work. Vocal soloists will be announced later in the season.

### **FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009**

International award-winning pianist **Sara Buechner** will make her OEBS debut in a performance of Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1. A Gold Medal Winner of the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition and a Bronze Winner of the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, Buechner has an active repertory of more than 100 piano concertos ranging from Bach to Wuorinen. She has performed with symphony orchestras across North America including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony, in addition to performing concerts and recitals throughout Europe and Japan.

The balance of the program will feature Michael Morgan and the Symphony in Stravinsky's monumental ballet score, *The Rite of Spring*, a 20<sup>th</sup> century musical landmark without peer.

### **FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2009**

The season will conclude with a concert version staging of *Show Boat*, a true milestone in the early development of the Broadway musical. Based on a novel by **Edna Ferber**, with music by Jerome

Kern, and book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, *Show Boat* was the first racially-integrated musical on Broadway, and the first to depict an interracial marriage. The work boasts a string of beloved hit songs, "Ol' Man River", "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man", and "Make Believe", among many others.

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Michael Morgan presents *Show Boat* as part of the Symphony's continuing **American Masterworks Series** (*Porgy and Bess*, 2007; *Follies*, 2008), with a cast that includes **Julie Adams** as Magnolia, and **Ben Jones** as Gaylord Ravenal. This concert performance will once again feature the Oakland Symphony Chorus and other soloists to be announced.

Oakland East Bay Symphony's 2008/09 season is supported, in part, by grants from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **California Arts Council**, and the **City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program**. Additional concert sponsors include **Target**, **Bell Investment Advisors, Inc.**, **KPMG**, and **Mueller Nicholls**. Media sponsors include **Oakland Magazine**, **Oakland Tribune**, **Comcast**, and **KDFC**.

All series concerts begin at 8 p.m., and are preceded by an on-stage lecture at 7 p.m. with **John Kendall Bailey**. The *Let Us Break Bread Together* holiday concert on Sunday, December 14, will begin at 4 p.m. All performances are presented at the Oakland's historic Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway. To order OEBS series tickets, call Oakland East Bay Symphony at 510 444 0801. Single tickets for individual concerts will go on sale by early October.

Coming up next, Oakland East Bay Symphony will offer a rare concert version performance of Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman's multiple Tony Award-winning Broadway show, *Follies*, on Friday, May 16 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, May 18 at 2 p.m. The cast features Oscar-winning **Rita Moreno**, Beach Blanket Babylon star **Val Diamond**, celebrated cabaret queen **Sharon McNight**, and world renowned opera star **Sheri Greenawald**, among many others.

The Symphony's current season will conclude Saturday, June 07, at the elegant Claremont Hotel with a royal fundraising gala dinner and auction.

For complete information about Oakland East Bay Symphony, visit [www.oeps.org](http://www.oeps.org).

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