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OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES MUSIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL MORGAN'S 20th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Season highlights include operatic and symphonic masterpieces, a night at the movies, new Sunday matinees and world premieres from
New Visions/New Vistas Commissioning Project

**"An Evening with Denyce Graves" Gala Concert at Oakland's Fox Theater on
October 3 to benefit Oakland East Bay Symphony youth education programs**

Season Tickets Now On Sale; Call 510 444 0801 or www.oeps.org

OAKLAND, Calif., May 4, 2009 – In celebration of Music Director Michael Morgan's 20th Anniversary with the Oakland East Bay Symphony (OEPS), the orchestra's 21st season presents a dynamic program that stays true to the vital, relevant and forward-thinking programming for which it is known. The season begins November 13, 2009, with "Night at the Opera" starring renowned soprano Hope Briggs, and continues with monthly concerts at Oakland's landmark Paramount Theatre through the May 16, 2010 performance of Ludwig van **Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 "Choral,"** with its timely message of hope for peace among nations. Enticing additions to the season's schedule are two new Sunday matinees, on March 21 and May 16.

On Saturday, October 3, prior to the start of the regular subscription series, the incomparable **Denyce Graves** will join Morgan and the Oakland East Bay Symphony for a Gala concert, dinner and reception benefiting the Symphony's educational and outreach programs at the newly renovated Fox Theater in Oakland. OEPS has garnered national recognition for its education programs, which serve more than 24,000 East Bay students annually. Graves, who will sing selections from Broadway to opera, including her signature role as Carmen, is recognized worldwide as one of today's most exciting vocal stars, and has received critical acclaim in performances on four continents. She recently starred in a concert honoring the 70th anniversary of Marian Anderson's historic performance at Washington's Lincoln Memorial. *USA Today* identifies her as "an operatic superstar of the 21st Century," and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* exclaims, "if the human voice has the power to move you, you will be touched by Denyce Graves." For additional information and to purchase gala tickets, please call 510-444-0801 or visit www.oeps.org.

The Symphony's milestone season includes many exciting highlights, including world premieres by Rebeca Mauleón and Benedikt Brydern, winners of the New Visions/New Vistas Commissioning Project; an evening exploring Armenian classical music, featuring the young Siberian-born violinist Mikhail Simonyan and Edvard Mirzoyan's Symphony for Timpani and String Orchestra; a screening of the silent film *The General* (1927) with soundtrack accompaniment by organist Christoph Bull; Duke Ellington's *Harlem* (1924) and Charles Ives' Symphony No. 2; as well as masterpieces by classical composers Camille Saint-Saëns, Richard Strauss, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Michael Morgan's favorite composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

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“In selecting the programs and artists for the next season at the Oakland East Bay Symphony, and knowing it was my 20th anniversary, I wanted to both celebrate my history, with friends from past performances, and look ahead to the future with the exciting composers and performers in our newest commissioning project. Of course, we’re always exploring new territory with culturally specific programs, and finding ways to engage even more of our community with programs like our movie evening, at which we’ll actually present my favorite silent film, Buster Keaton’s *The General*,” said Morgan, “At times like this, the arts play an even more important role in the life of a community, by providing a respite, lifting our spirits and giving us hope.”

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 8 p.m.

A Night at the Opera celebrates the season’s opening with musical highlights from some of the world’s grandest, most renowned operas, and brings together the OEBS, Oakland Symphony Chorus, under the direction of Lynne Morrow, and confirmed featured soloists – and favorites of both Morgan and past OEBS audiences – **Hope Briggs**, soprano, **Kalil Wilson**, tenor, and bass **Kirk Eichelberger**. A South San Francisco native, Briggs is renowned for her dramatic character portrayals and distinctive soprano voice.

The opening night program includes well-known orchestral and vocal selections from *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi (1871), *La Bohème* (Giancorno Puccini, 1896), *Don Carlo* (Verdi, 1867), *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti (1835), *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Pietro Mascagni, 1890), *The Ring Cycle* (Richard Wagner, 1869-1874), *Candide* (Leonard Bernstein, 1956) and *Nabucco* by Verdi (1842). The concert’s sponsor is Wells Fargo.

LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 4 p.m.

Returning again by popular demand, the Symphony brings back the concert that has become a Bay Area holiday tradition, the choral extravaganza *Let Us Break Bread Together: A Target Holiday Celebration*. Joining Michael Morgan and the OEBS musicians on stage are the **Oakland Symphony Chorus**, **Terrance Kelly** and the **Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir**, **Mt. Eden High School Choir**, and klezmer band **Kugelplex**. (Please note that the December concert is not included in the OEBS subscription series.) The concert’s sponsor is Target.

NOTES FROM ARMENIA – FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 8 p.m.

Building on the success of a 2008 OEBS concert featuring Persian music, Maestro Morgan once again explores the rich classical music from another distant region of the world, Armenia. This concert features **Edvard Mirzoyan’s** Symphony for Timpani and String Orchestra and **Lazar Saryan’s** *Panel Armenia*, which was inspired by the paintings of his father, the great Armenian painter Martiros Saryan. Also on the program is Symphony No. 39 by **Mozart** as well as works featuring the young Siberian-born violinist **Mikhail Simonyan** who, in his early 20s, is already recognized as one of the most celebrated talents of his generation.

VIEWS OF AMERICA – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 8 p.m.

OEBS features a world premiere by **Rebeca Mauleón**, one of the four composers from non-classical genres selected as part of the **New Visions/New Vistas** commissioning project. Mauleón is an internationally acclaimed pianist, composer, educator and producer. For the past thirty years she has embraced diverse musical genres and worked with various artists including Carlos Santana, Tito Puente, Steve Winwood and Mickey Hart. This evening will be her first composition for full orchestra. Also on the bill for the evening are works by two of the most important composers in American history: **Charles Ives** and jazz great **Duke Ellington**. OEBS performs Ives’ Symphony No. 2, widely regarded as a true American masterpiece, and Ellington’s *Harlem*, a jazz odyssey through the busy streets of this New York City neighborhood.

THE MIGHTY WURLITZER: Music at the Movies –

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 8 p.m.; SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2 p.m.

In Michael Morgan's non-traditional style, OEBS screens Buster Keaton's hilarious silent film *The General* (1927), accompanied by concert organist **Christoph Bull** on the Paramount Theatre's celebrated "Mighty Wurlitzer" pipe organ. Bull, University Organist and Professor at UCLA since 2002, will play his own original score to *The General*. Also on the bill is **Saint-Saëns'** Symphony No. 3 "Organ Symphony," known to movie-going audiences as the theme from *Babe* (1995).

MUSICAL VISIONARIES – FRIDAY APRIL 16, 8 p.m.

The virtuosity of the OEBS musicians is showcased in this concert. **Richard Strauss'** *Don Quixote*, based on the famous novel by Miguel de Cervantes, dramatically depicts different characters and scenes from the novel using various instruments in the orchestra. The principal cellist and protagonist for the evening is Dan Reiter, whose cello solo represents the character Don Quixote. Hailed as one of the premiere pianists of his generation, **Adam Neiman** is featured in the popular Piano Concerto No. 1 (1875) by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The evening's program also features the OEBS' second **New Visions/New Vistas** work, with a world premiere by **Benedikt Brydern**, an award-winning composer and performer with many film scores to his credit. He will offer a vibrant, jazz-infused piece that reflects his lifelong interest in old time jazz and swing.

ODE TO JOY – FRIDAY MAY 14, 8 p.m.; SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2 p.m.

The season concludes with one of the most universally beloved and recognized masterpieces in the classical repertoire: **Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 "Choral."** This work stands apart from nearly every other symphony because of its hopeful message of unity and brotherhood, enormous scale and unique use of the human voice. The grand choral finale "Ode to Joy" has come to symbolize the hopes and dreams of humankind, and the possibility of peace among nations, a particularly timely message. Soloists include **Kristin Clayton**, soprano; **Layna Chianakas Haddad**, mezzo soprano; **Adam Flowers**, tenor; and **Bojan Knezevic**, baritone. The concert sponsor is Bell Investment Advisors, Inc.

Oakland East Bay Symphony's 2009-10 season is supported, in part, by grants from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **California Arts Council**, the **Oakland City Council**, and the **City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program**. Media sponsors for the season include *Oakland Magazine*, *Oakland Tribune*, Comcast and KDFC.

All series concerts are preceded by an on-stage lecture at 7 p.m. presented by well-known Bay Area musician and lecturer John Kendall Bailey. All performances are presented at Oakland's historic Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway. The Gala Concert is presented at the Fox Theater, 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. To order OEBS series tickets, call Oakland East Bay Symphony at 510-444-0801 or visit www.oeps.org. Single tickets for individual subscription concerts go on sale October 1, 2009. **Ticket prices remain unchanged for the 2009-10 season** and range from \$84 to \$342 for a full subscription and from \$20 to \$65 for single tickets.

For complete information about Oakland East Bay Symphony, please visit www.oeps.org.

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Photos available upon request and online at <http://www.oeps.org/page/press.htm>

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