



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**Christoph Eschenbach
Extends Contract as Music Director
of the National Symphony Orchestra and Kennedy Center
Through the 2016-2017 Season**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced a two-year extension of Christoph Eschenbach’s contract as Music Director of both the National Symphony Orchestra and the Kennedy Center. Currently serving his fourth season in those capacities, Maestro Eschenbach’s current contract runs through the 2014-2015 season. The new two-year agreement extends through the end of the 2016-2017 season.

“For the past four seasons, Maestro Eschenbach has elevated the stature of the National Symphony Orchestra and the Kennedy Center,” stated Kennedy Center President Michael M. Kaiser. “I am pleased this relationship will continue for an additional two seasons.”

“The National Symphony Orchestra Association Board of Directors has been invigorated by Maestro Eschenbach’s tenure,” said Jeanne Ruesch, Chairman of the NSO board of directors. “We are committed and enthusiastic about his passion for music and our future together.”

“The NSO continues to build artistically during Christoph’s tenure,” added Executive Director Rita Shapiro. “His focus on core repertoire and the cohesiveness of sound achieved during our two international tours has the NSO playing better than ever.”

“My experiences here have exceeded my expectations,” Christoph Eschenbach stated. “The NSO is an orchestra eager to make music together, and to make every rehearsal, and every composition an adventure. Even more, the members of the Orchestra are unique artists that I am proud to share with Washington audiences by featuring the members as soloists. The Kennedy Center, also, is such a warmly collaborative, cooperative environment that it provides a strong foundation for all the performing arts, in this extraordinary city and beyond.”

“The musicians of the National Symphony are so pleased that our relationship with Maestro Eschenbach will continue to grow and deepen in the coming years,” said Principal Oboe Nicholas Stovall. “The collaboration that we share with him, whether as a full orchestra, in roles as concerto

soloists, or chamber music partners is always stimulating and exciting. I, personally, am greatly looking forward to many more memorable performances with Maestro Eschenbach as Music Director of the NSO.”

The NSO’s recent concert performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* was greeted with high critical praise, with *The Washington Post* concluding, “Like all good ‘Rosenkavaliers,’ this was one that audiences here could start to wax nostalgic about almost as soon as it was over,” and the *Baltimore Sun* calling it, “cosmic music-making.” Elsewhere, Eschenbach’s work was recognized with a Grammy® for “Best Classical Compendium” for his recordings of Hindemith with the NDR Symphony Orchestra.

Maestro Eschenbach has gone beyond principal musicians in showcasing NSO members, selecting three section cellists for Penderecki’s *Concerto Grosso*. The 2014-2015 season highlights include *Mahler Explored* (the beginning of a multi-season focus on the orchestral and vocal works of Mahler), *Fantasy & Fate: Tchaikovsky Masterworks*, and participation in the Kennedy Center’s international project *Iberian Suite: arts remix across continents*.

During the four seasons of his tenure, which officially began with the 2010-2011 season, Eschenbach has taken the NSO on two international tours, visiting nine countries on four continents. Deutsche Presse Agentur called the NSO “a jewel of the American cultural scene,” and Spain’s *La Opinión* described the NSO and its performance as, “A splendid orchestra...a stupendous concert.”

Eschenbach has continued the NSO’s active commissioning of new works, and of the nine commissions or co-commissions during his tenure thus far, seven are by American composers: William Banfield, Peter Lieberson, Marc Neikrug, Roger Reynolds, Sean Shepherd, Augusta Read Thomas, and George Walker. Two of those works—the multimedia work by Roger Reynolds and Lieberson’s composition for narrator and orchestra—have paid tribute to former American heads of state: America’s founding father George Washington and President John F. Kennedy, for whom the Kennedy Center serves as a living memorial. A list of commissions, co-commissions, and premieres appears later in this release.

Christoph Eschenbach has hired or confirmed in tenure 13 NSO members, among them six principal players, and two assistant principal players. He has performed as part of the Fortas Chamber Music Concerts in the Terrace Theater three times, and on the Millennium Stage five

times, as well as in the NSO's community engagement program, In Your Neighborhood. He also has worked with students in the NSO's nationally recognized Youth Fellowship Program in four side-by-side NSO rehearsals, with a fifth to come in June.

A listing of highlights of Maestro Eschenbach's tenure with the National Symphony Orchestra appears below.

INTERNATIONAL TOURS

2012

Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay

2013

France, Germany, Oman, Spain

COMMISSIONED AND CO-COMMISSIONED WORKS:

Banfield, William	Symphony No. 10, "Affirmations,"* April 2012
Glanert, Detlev	<i>Shoreless River</i> , An NSO co-commission* U.S. premiere, January 2012
Hussain, Zakir	Concerto for Four Soloists, an NSO commission, world premiere, March 2011
Lieberson, Peter	<i>Remembering JFK: An American Elegy</i> A Hechinger commission, world premiere January 2011
Neikrug, Marc	Bassoon Concerto* An NSO co-commission, May 2014
Reynolds, Roger	<i>george WASHINGTON</i> , An NSO co-commission A Hechinger commission, world premiere, October 2013
Shepherd, Sean	<i>Blue Blazes</i> , A Hechinger commission, world premiere May 2011

Thomas, Augusta Read Violin Concerto No. 3 (“A Juggler in Paradise”)
An NSO Hechinger co-commission, U.S. premiere,
June 2011

Walker, George Sinfonia No. 4, “Strands”
An NSO co-commission, Washington premiere,
January 2013

*Led by guest conductors

ADDITIONAL PREMIERES

Dorman, Avner *Frozen in Time*, east coast premiere, January 2014

Pintscher, Matthias *Herodiade-Fragmente*, Washington premiere, October 2010

Shchedrin, Rodion *Slava, Slava*, U.S. premiere, May 2011

Widmann, Jörg Violin Concerto, U.S. premiere, February 2014

ADDITIONAL KENNEDY CENTER APPEARANCES

On the Millennium Stage:

October 8, 2010 with Christian Tetzlaff

June 8, 2011 with Jennifer Koh and NSO Principal Oboe Nicholas Stovall

February 28, 2012 with NSO Concertmaster Nurit Bar-Josef

March 24, 2012 with The Last Stand Quartet (all NSO members)

February 8, 2014 with NSO Wind Principals

On the Fortas Chamber Music Concerts Series

March 5, 2012 Recital with Matthias Goerne

March 12, 2012 Recital with Dan Zhu

January 27, 2014 Recital with Matthias Goerne

With the Kennedy Center Chamber Players

June 3, 2012

Additional Chamber Music Performances

November 2, 2012 Recital with NSO Principals, Kennedy Center Concert Hall

November 7, 2012 Duo Recital with Lang Lang, Kennedy Center Concert Hall

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

October 2010	Coaching Sessions with chamber musicians and vocalists at the University of Maryland
March 2011	Coaching Session with University of Maryland Chorus
February 2012	Coaching Session with University of Maryland Orchestra
January 2013	NSO In Your Neighborhood, celebrating centenary of Howard University Music Department

YOUTH TRAINING

Throughout his career, Maestro Eschenbach has taken an interest in working with young musicians. While his work in mentoring young performers has been often noted, he has been an active presence in the NSO's Youth Fellowship Program, the NSO's full scholarship training program for high school students. In his second season 2011-2012, Christoph Eschenbach instituted side-by-side sessions with Youth Fellows in an NSO rehearsal. To date he has led four such sessions, with a fifth to come in June.

November 15, 2011	Beethoven Symphony No. 6 ("Pastoral")
June 5, 2012	Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5
January 15, 2013	Brahms Symphony No. 2
January 21, 2014	Dvořák Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"
June 3, 2014	Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique"

Maestro Eschenbach has also participated in seven Q&As with the NSO's Youth Fellowship Program, alone or with other artists, and with area high school and middle school students also included in several.

January 19, 2011, also open to middle and high school students
February 2, 2012, also open to middle and high school students
May 31, 2012
November 8, 2012, with Lang Lang, also open to middle and high school students
May 2, 2013, with Alisa Weilerstein, also open to middle and high school students
December 5, 2013, also with NSO Concertmaster Nurit Bar-Josef
February 27, 2014, also with Christian Tetzlaff

RECENT AWARDS:

2014 Grammy® for Best Classical Compendium
2014 McGovern Award from Washington's Cosmos Club

NSO MEMBERS ENGAGED BY CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH:

Violins:

Joel Fuller 2009

Alexandra Osborne 2009

Oboe:

Nicholas Stovall, Principal, tenured 2011

Jamie Roberts, Assistant Principal 2011

Contrabasses:

Alexander Jacobsen 2013

Charles Nilles 2013

Trombone:

*Craig Mulcahy, Principal 2010

Barry Hearn, Assistant Principal 2009

David Murray 2014

Harp:

Adriana Horne, Principal 2013

Percussion:

Eric Shin, Principal 2012

Flute:

*Aaron Goldman, Principal 2013

Timpani:

Jauvon Gilliam, Principal 2010

*Already in NSO, promoted to principal

For more information about the Kennedy Center, visit www.kennedy-center.org.

For more information about the NSO, please visit www.nationalsymphony.org.

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