



For Immediate Release:

Contact: Emily Buckley, public relations manager
ebuckley@sarasotaorchestra.org

TWO WORLD-RENOWNED PERFORMERS TO HEADLINE SARASOTA ORCHESTRA BENEFIT CONCERT
Fundraiser benefiting Orchestra musicians will feature soloists James Ehnes and Robert Levin

Sarasota, FL – December 15, 2009 – The Board of the Sarasota Orchestra announced today a Benefit Concert for January 16, with proceeds going to the Orchestra’s musicians.

Two internationally acclaimed soloists will come together on the same concert program to recognize and support the musicians of the Sarasota Orchestra. The concert will feature Grammy Award-winning violinist James Ehnes performing Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto* and Sarasota Music Festival artistic director and Mozart scholar Robert Levin performing Mozart’s *Piano Concerto*.

The Sarasota Orchestra, conducted by artistic director Leif Bjaland, also will perform Dvorak’s *Carnival Overture* and Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Capriccio espagnol*, the opening and closing pieces of the program.

Following the concert, which will be held at 8 p.m. at the Sarasota Opera House, the Orchestra will host a Champagne and Dessert Reception at which Ehnes, Levin, Bjaland and Orchestra musicians will greet guests. Tickets for the reception are being sold separately from concert tickets.

“This benefit concert is truly unique and spectacular,” said Joseph McKenna, president and CEO of the Sarasota Orchestra. “It is a special occasion to have two guest artists of this caliber perform on the same program. We are thrilled to offer this to the Sarasota and Manatee communities and to have this opportunity to recognize our talented musicians.”

In a show of community support, donors have stepped up to sponsor the concert even before its formal announcement, McKenna reported. They include: Jules and Sheila Rose, sponsoring Maestro Leif Bjaland; Toby and Noel Siegel, sponsoring Robert Levin; and Anne Nethercott, in memory of her husband Jim, sponsoring James Ehnes.

(MORE)

Levin's ties to the Sarasota Orchestra are long and meaningful. He has served on the faculty of the Sarasota Music Festival since 1979 and is currently its artistic director. Levin is recognized as a leading authority on Mozart and is known for his embellishments, reconstructions and completions of unfinished Mozart works. A professor at Harvard University, Levin also travels the globe, performing with many of the world's great orchestras.

Ehnes has rapidly established a pre-eminent reputation among young concert violinists. He has performed in 30 countries on five continents, and his recent North American concert engagements include appearances with the Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and Los Angeles symphonies, among others. Ehnes is an extremely prolific and multi-award-winning recording artist. He took home the 2008 GRAMMY Award for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance with Orchestra, as well as six Juno Awards for best classical album. Originally from Canada, he and his wife Kate are residents of Bradenton.

Tickets for the Benefit Concert are \$50-\$100 and are available at www.SarasotaOrchestra.org.

Post-Concert Reception tickets also are available online for \$50 each.

###