



Sarasota Orchestra Announces Return of Sarasota Music Festival

***Kaiserman Foundation grant of \$250,000 facilitates
continuation of 45 year Sarasota tradition***

Sarasota, FL – Monday, November 9, 2009 – The Sarasota Orchestra received notification from Raymond James Trust today that the Orchestra has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Jay and Becky Kaiserman Foundation to help fund the 2010 Sarasota Music Festival.

“We are thrilled that the Sarasota Music Festival will run from May 30 to June 19 in 2010, and will once again bring music students and exceptional faculty from around the world to Sarasota to study, mentor and perform classical and chamber music,” said Joseph McKenna, President and CEO of the Sarasota Orchestra.

In August, the Board of the Sarasota Orchestra announced that the Festival would be put on a one-year hiatus due to several years of budget deficits, a reduction in attendance of 45% since 1997 and a particularly challenging economic environment for the Orchestra this season.

“Jay and Becky Kaiserman loved the Sarasota Music Festival and would be delighted to see the community match their generosity during these challenging times,” said McKenna.

The one-year grant will fund the Festival’s operations, an enhanced marketing campaign and an effort to revitalize the Festival’s programming to attract new audiences.

“The Sarasota Music Festival is truly one of the premier festivals for chamber music anywhere in the world. Its return is not only fantastic news for Sarasota but an event that will be celebrated throughout the classical music world,” said Virginia Toulmin, Sarasota Orchestra Board Chair. “Our artistic director Robert Levin is already busy planning the program for 2010 that we are hopeful will excite and attract larger audiences than we’ve seen for years,” added Toulmin.

The next critical step in the long-term future of the Festival is the formation of a task force under the leadership of the Board of the Sarasota Orchestra. The task force members will be named on or about December 1, 2009, and will include a representative of the Kaiserman Foundation.

“The purpose of the task force is to evaluate the Festival’s mission, programming, structure and marketing, and offer recommendations that will sustain the Festival well into the future,” said Toulmin.

Founded in 1964, the Festival brings some of the best up-and-coming young musicians from around the world to Sarasota for the three-week Festival. Student acceptance is highly competitive with more than 500 applications from aspiring, college-aged musicians for 58 appointments. In the history of the Festival, there have been only two artistic directors. Paul Wolfe led the Festival from its inception until 2007, when Robert Levin, a longtime Festival faculty member, Harvard professor and internationally renowned piano virtuoso was named artistic director.

The Festival encompasses both education and performance with an intense daily schedule of master classes, coaching sessions, lectures, demonstrations and student recitals, as well as a series of nine public concerts featuring students and faculty.