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CHRISTMAS WITH THE MAESTRO...AND SANTA TOO!

Cal Phil presents a 'sleigh-full' of holiday favorites – from The Nutcracker, Hansel and Gretel and Messiah to Sleigh Ride and Jingle Bells – on Saturday, December 13

Children will be invited on stage to help Maestro Victor Vener conduct

(Calendar summary follows press release)

SAN MARINO, CA. The California Philharmonic invites music lovers – and holiday revelers – from throughout Southern California to celebrate “Christmas With the Maestro” on Saturday, December 13 at 8 p.m. at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium in Pasadena. “It’s Cal Phil’s Christmas gift to the community. We’ll have something for everybody,” promises the orchestra’s founder and conductor, Dr. Victor Vener.

Vener isn’t exaggerating. The program will include excerpts from two of the holiday season’s most beloved and requested works – The Nutcracker by Tchaikovsky and Handel’s Messiah – as well as a selection of carols, Leroy Anderson’s Sleigh Ride, and scenes from Humperdinck’s opera Hansel and Gretel, featuring 18 year old mezzo soprano Clare Snodgrass as Hansel and soprano, Emily Dyer, 16, as Gretel. Both Snodgrass and Dyer are recipients of the Cal Phil Foundation’s Young Artist Performance Award.

“Humperdinck wrote the opera after his sister asked him to write music to accompany a dramatic version of Hansel and Gretel based on the fairytale which she had written for her children to perform,” explains Vener. “The opera has been popular with children ever since, especially during the holidays.”

Also performing excerpts from the Christmas opera is LA Opera resident artist, soprano Angel Blue. “What’s Christmas without angels?” asks Vener with a smile. “We have a real live Angel with a voice that is truly heavenly, as our audiences last summer learned when they heard Angel perform with us for the first time. The bravos lasted almost five minutes!”

One of the highlights of “Christmas with the Maestro” is its annual tradition of inviting children onstage to help conduct “Jingle Bells.” Meanwhile, the rest of the audience is encouraged to take part in the performance by jingling their keys in time to the music.

“People are coming prepared, now,” says Vener. “They’ll bring key chains loaded down with extra keys just for this part of the performance.”

Word of the fun has spread. “A jolly gentleman with a proclivity for red suits just may be tempted to take a break from his toy making and drop by, too,” Vener predicts.

Sponsors for the 2008/2009 Winter Season include the Zeilstra Foundation. Tickets for “Christmas With the Maestro” range from \$23 to \$88 and may be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at **213-365-3500** or by visiting www.ticketmaster.com. The historic Pasadena Civic Auditorium, dedicated to “the citizens of Pasadena” in 1932, is located at 300 East Green Street in Pasadena.

For more information about the California Philharmonic, call 626.300.8200 or visit www.calphil.org.

In 1995, Music Director and Conductor Victor Vener and a small group of enthusiastic, dedicated music lovers based in Pasadena, California founded the The CalPhil Foundation. The Foundation, a nonprofit community benefit organization, supports the California Philharmonic in its quest to expand awareness of classical music, thus increasing the interest and support for great timeless music with wide audience appeal, from the classical and operatic repertoire to diverse genres of jazz, pops, Hollywood and Broadway. Also, with a strong commitment to new music and to expanding the symphonic repertoire, the California Philharmonic has presented numerous world premieres of both orchestral and chamber works.

The California Philharmonic began regular programming in 1997 with a five-concert inaugural summer season of Cal Phil Festival on the Green on the grounds of the Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden in Arcadia. Now, Cal Phil presents concerts at venues throughout Los Angeles County. These include Cal Phil at Walt Disney Concert Hall (downtown Los Angeles), Cal Phil Festival on the Green at the Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanic Garden, and Cal Phil at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium.

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE ON CAL PHIL’S WEBSITE WWW.CALPHIL.ORG OR BY REQUEST

Calendar summary

December 13: Christmas with the Maestro

Featured soloists: Soprano Angel Blue and Cal Phil Foundation Young Artist Performance Award Winners soprano Emily Dyer and mezzo soprano Clare Snodgrass

Choruses: California Philharmonic Chorus under direction of Marya Basaraba

Program includes: excerpts from Handel’s Messiah, Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker, and Humperdinck’s opera Hansel and Gretel plus carols and holiday favorites

Location:

The Pasadena Civic Auditorium
300 East Green Street in Pasadena

Time:

8 p.m. (pre-concert lecture at 7 p.m.)

Ticket Info:

Tickets start at \$23

Call Ticketmaster at 213-365-3500 or visit www.ticketmaster.com

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