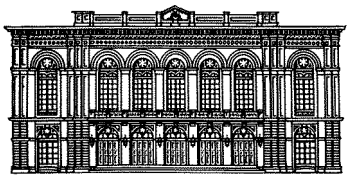
THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH
Music Director



N E W S R E L E A S E

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The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates 151st anniversary of Academy of Music with Concert and Ball

Music Director Christoph Eschenbach leads The Philadelphia Orchestra in a program ranging from classical to pop to avant garde, celebrating the kickoff of "the next 150 years" of the National Historic Landmark

Singer/Songwriter/Composer Billy Joel makes a special guest appearance in his debut performance with The Philadelphia Orchestra

Rising talents Dísella Làrusdóttir, soprano, and Conrad Tao, piano, to be featured

Blue Man Group brings creative flair in symphonic appearance

MSNBC's Chris Matthews hosts

Orchestra gives world premiere of an original classical composition by Mr. Joel

Anniversary Ball follows at the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue

(*Philadelphia,* September 23, 2007) – The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates the 151st anniversary of the Academy of Music with the annual Anniversary Concert and Ball, on **Saturday, January 26, 2008**. **The Philadelphia Orchestra**, led by Music Director **Christoph Eschenbach**, performs. Billy Joel makes a special guest appearance, in his first appearance with a major American orchestra. Rising young talents **Dísella Làrusdóttir,** soprano, and **Conrad Tao**, piano, will be featured. **Blue Man Group** will perform an original work with The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the concert will be hosted by MSNBC's **Chris Matthews**. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. The Academy Ball follows at the **Park Hyatt at the Bellevue**. **Blank Rome LLP** is the lead underwriter of the 151st Anniversary Concert and Ball.

Legendary singer/songwriter/composer Billy Joel makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with this

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performance. Mr. Joel and the Orchestra will perform a selection of his popular works from a career spanning 30 years. The Orchestra gives the world premiere of an original classical composition by Mr. Joel. A portion of the Ball proceeds will support The Philadelphia Orchestra's Billy Joel Endowment Fund for Education. Details of the programs to be supported by the Fund will be announced in the near future. This marks the first time Mr. Joel has created an endowment fund with an orchestra, although he has made significant donations to the music programs of New York University, the Juilliard School, Syracuse University, Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, the State University of New York at Purchase, the New England Conservatory, Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony's Academy for Advanced Musical Study.

Concert program

As the "Grand Old Lady of Locust Street" commences her next 150 years, the Academy of Music 151st Anniversary Concert celebrates the theme "From This Moment On" with a program emphasizing the classical, the popular and the avant garde. The concert commences with an overture performed by Christoph Eschenbach and The Philadelphia Orchestra. Performances by **Dísella Làrusdóttir** and Conrad Tao with Mr. Eschenbach and the Orchestra represent the wave of the future of classical music. Ms. Làrusdóttir is the 2007 vocalist winner of The Philadelphia Orchestra's distinguished Greenfield Competition.
Piano/violin/composition prodigy Conrad Tao is the winner of both Juilliard Pre-College's Gina Bachauer Piano Competition and the Prokofiev Concerto Competition. A special highlight of the evening will be the Orchestra's world premiere performance of a classical work composed by Billy Joel. The innovative Blue Man Group will present a new approach to symphonic performance with the Orchestra. The concert closes with Mr. Joel and The Philadelphia Orchestra performing a selection of his popular songs specially orchestrated for the occasion, continuing the Academy's long history of presenting popular music. The Anniversary Concert is created and produced by Wayne Baruch and Charles F. Gayton, who also produced the spectacular Academy 150th Anniversary Concert. *For concert-only tickets, which are available on the Amphitheatre level and go on sale on Monday, September 24, please call 215.893.1999 or visit www.philorch.org/academyofmusic.*

Dinner and Ball

The gala champagne dinner and ball following the concert take place at the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue. Nine dance orchestras will be located throughout the hotel. Blank Rome LLP is the lead underwriter of the 151st Anniversary Concert and Ball, which is chaired by Mrs. Joseph W. Rogers, Jr., and Mr. David F. Girard-diCarlo. The Ball is produced by Fred Stein of the Creative Group, Inc. *For gala information, call The Philadelphia Orchestra Academy of Music Restoration Fund Office at 215.893.1940.*

History of the Academy of Music and the Anniversary Concert and Ball

The region's premier gala benefit, the annual Academy of Music Anniversary Concert and Ball has been held each January for 51 years. It has always been one of the region's most successful fundraisers, with last year's 150th anniversary raising over $11 million with over $7 million dedicated to funding the restoration and preservation of the Academy of Music, including the recently undertaken restoration of the Academy's

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magnificent chandelier. Owned by The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, this National Historic Landmark served as the home of The Philadelphia Orchestra for more than a century, from the ensemble's founding in 1900 to the opening of The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in December 2001. The first Anniversary Concert and Ball took place on January 26, 1957, and celebrated the Centennial Jubilee of the Academy of Music. Chaired by Mr. G. Stockton Strawbridge, with Mrs. Francis Boyer as program book chairman, the event showcased a star-studded line up in which Eugene Ormandy shared his podium with Danny Kaye. Guest performers included classical artists Marian Anderson, Hilde Gueden, Arthur Rubinstein, and Isaac Stern, and popular singer Dinah Shore.

About the Artists

Having sold more than 100 million records over the past quarter century, Billy Joel ranks as one of most popular recording artists and respected entertainers in the world. In January, 2006, Billy Joel broke the record for "Longest Run of a Single Artist" at Madison Square Garden for his performances at the legendary venue. *Movin' Out*, a Broadway musical based on Mr. Joel's music choreographed and directed by Twyla Tharp, garnered Mr. Joel his first Tony Award for Best Orchestrations. Billy Joel has had 33 Top 40 hits and 23 Grammy nominations since signing his first solo recording contract in 1972. In 1990 he was presented with a Grammy Legend Award. Inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1992, Mr. Joel was presented with the Johnny Mercer Award, the organization's highest honor, in 2001. In 1999 he was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and has received the Recording Industry Association of America Diamond Award, presented for albums that have sold over 10 million copies.

Billy Joel has donated his time and resources to a variety of charitable causes outside the realm of his musical career and has recently launched an ongoing educational initiative to provide seed money, musical scholarships, and endowments to a variety of East Coast colleges, universities and music schools. For his accomplishments as a musician and as a humanitarian, Mr. Joel was honored as the 2002 *MusiCares Person of the Year* by the MusiCares Foundation and the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences. On September 20, 2004, Billy Joel received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, adding another milestone to his extraordinary career.

Blue Man Group is best known for their wildly popular theatrical shows and concerts, which combine music, comedy, and multimedia theatrics to produce a totally unique form of entertainment. The blissful party atmosphere created at their live events has become the trademark of a Blue Man Group experience.

The company applies its unique creative process to a wide variety of projects, including their live productions located in seven cities worldwide; the recording of three albums, the Grammy nominated *Audio, The Complex,* which became the musical basis for T*he Complex Rock Tour*, and *Live at the Venetian ® - Las Vegas*, available exclusively on iTunes©. Currently, Blue Man Group is also on the road touring their arena rock concert *How to be a MegaStor Tour 2.1.*

Blue Man Group has also ventured into film and TV scoring (most recently the animated feature *Robots*), commercial campaigns (such as Intel), and television programs (like the recurring storyline in *Arrested*

Development). As the company grows, it remains true to its vision of providing exciting experiences in a variety of media, which appeal to a broad range of age groups and cultural backgrounds.

Chris Matthews hosts *Hardball with Chris Matthews* Monday through Friday on MSNBC; *The Chris Matthews Show* on NBC; and he is a regular commentator on NBC's *Today* show. A television news anchor with significant depth of experience, Mr. Matthews has distinguished himself as a broadcast journalist, newspaper bureau chief, presidential speechwriter, and bestselling author. He covered the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first all-races election in South Africa, the Good Friday Peace Accord in Northern Ireland, and the funeral of Pope John Paul II. He has also covered every American presidential election campaign since the 1980s.

Mr. Matthews has received the David Brinkley Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism and the Gold Medal Award from the Pennsylvania Society. He was a visiting fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy Institute of Politics. He holds 18 honorary Ph.D.s.

Mr. Matthews worked for 15 years as a newspaper journalist, 13 of them as a Washington bureau chief for the *San Francisco Examiner* and two as a national columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Before that, he had a 15-year career in public service: in the U.S. Senate for five years for Senator Frank Moss of Utah and Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine; in the White House for four years under President Jimmy Carter as a presidential speechwriter and on the President's Reorganization Project; then for six years as the top aide to Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr.

In addition to winning The Philadelphia Orchestra's 2007 Greenfield Competition, soprano **Dísella Làrusdóttir** is a winner of Astral Artistic Services' 2006 National Auditions. She was a national finalist in the 2007 Metropolitan National Council Auditions, during which *The New York Times* hailed her as "reliably breathtaking," she recently performed on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, accompanied by the Met Orchestra. Ms. Làrusdóttir was a prizewinner in the 2006 Loren L. Zachary Society National Vocal Competition for Young Opera Singers, and the winner of New Jersey's 2004 National Association of Teachers of Singing Competition. She was also a recent semi-finalist in Operalia, Plácido Domingo's World Opera Competition, in Valencia, Spain.

A native of Iceland, Ms. Làrusdóttir began studying trumpet at the age of eight with her father, principal trumpet of the Symphony Orchestra of Iceland. She later completed studies at the British Royal School of Music's Singing School of Reykjavík. She performs regularly in Iceland, and in December 2004 released a Christmas CD with her two sisters, a recording that made the country's Top 40 chart after just three weeks in release. Ms. Làrusdóttir received a Master of Music degree in Voice Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University. She studies with Laura Brooks Rice.

Born in Urbana, Illinois, 12-year-old **Conrad Tao** showed his interests in music at a very early age, when he was found playing children's songs on the piano at about 18 months of age. Conrad started violin lessons at age three and formal piano lessons at three and half, and gave his first public piano recital at age four, and performed a recital at the World Piano Pedagogy Conference in Orlando, Florida at age seven. One year later he made his concerto debut with the Utah Chamber Music Festival Orchestra. Conrad was featured on the national radio program *From the Top* as both pianist and composer at age 10, and he was featured again on the

first-ever episode of *From the Top*'s "Live from Carnegie Hall" TV show in September 2006 as violinist, pianist, and composer. Conrad has also been featured on NPR's *Performance Today*. Past concerto performances include those with the Aspen Festival Orchestra under the direction of Leonard Slatkin, the Corpus Christi Symphony, the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's in a Carnegie family concert. Upcoming performances include those with the Miami International Piano Festival Orchestra in Lecce, Italy, the Virtuosi Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Skaneateles Festival Chamber Orchestra, and the Orlando Philharmonic. Mr. Tao is the winner of Juilliard Pre-College's Gina Bachauer Piano Competition and the Prokofiev Concerto competition in 2006.

One of today's leading international conductors, **Christoph Eschenbach** continues his creative artistic partnership with The Philadelphia Orchestra in his fifth season as music director. Held in highest esteem by the world's foremost orchestras and opera houses for his commanding presence, versatility, and consummate musicianship, Mr. Eschenbach has been acclaimed for his creative insight and dynamic energy as a conductor, a collaborator, and an ardent champion of young musicians. His 2007-08 Orchestra season celebrates such monumental works as Mahler's Symphony No. 8 ("Symphony of a Thousand") – part of the Orchestra's multi-season first-ever Mahler cycle – and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

In addition to his work with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Mr. Eschenbach continues as music director of the Orchestre de Paris. As a guest conductor, he has recently led the Chicago Symphony, the Hamburg NDR Symphony, and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra, among others. A prolific recording artist, Mr. Eschenbach has made numerous recordings, as conductor, pianist, or both. His discography includes works from J.S. Bach to music of our time, and he has been an ardent champion of 20th-century music on disc.

Before turning to conducting, Mr. Eschenbach had earned a distinguished reputation as a concert pianist. He began winning major competitions at age 11, and made his United States debut in 1969 with George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra. Mr. Eschenbach learned the art of conducting under, among others, Mr. Szell, who personally took him as his protégé, and with whom he worked for over three years. In addition, Herbert von Karajan was his mentor for nearly 25 years, and Mr. Eschenbach credits him as having had a tremendous influence on his development as a conductor. Mr. Eschenbach's conducting debut was in Hamburg in 1972. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut as a pianist in 1973; his Philadelphia conducting debut was in 1989. He was named principal guest conductor of Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra in 1981, serving as chief conductor from 1982 to 1986. Additional posts include music director of the Houston Symphony (1988-1999); chief conductor of the Hamburg NDR Symphony (1998-2004); music director of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival (1999-2002); and music director of the Ravinia Festival, summer home of the Chicago Symphony (1994-2003).

Among Mr. Eschenbach's awards are the title of Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters in France, the Légion d'honneur of France, the Officer's Cross with Star and Ribbon of the German Order of Merit, the Commander's Cross of the German Order of Merit, and the Leonard Bernstein Award, presented to him by the Pacific Music Festival, where he served as co-artistic director from 1992 to 1998. Additional information about Mr. Eschenbach can be found at his website, www.christoph-eschenbach.com.

Founded in 1900, **The Philadelphia Orchestra** has distinguished itself as one of the leading orchestras in the world through a century of acclaimed performances, historic international tours, best-selling recordings, and its unprecedented record of innovation in recording technologies and outreach. The Orchestra has maintained an unparalleled unity in artistic leadership with only six music directors piloting its first century: Fritz Scheel (1900-07), Carl Pohlig (1907-12), Leopold Stokowski (1912-41), Eugene Ormandy (1936-80), Riccardo

Muti (1980-92), and Wolfgang Sawallisch (1993-2003).

This tradition is carried on by Christoph Eschenbach, who became music director in 2003. The 2007-08 season, Mr. Eschenbach's last, focuses on monumental works of the symphonic repertoire, including Mahler's Symphony No. 8 ("Symphony of a Thousand"), Orff's *Carmina burana*, and Richard Strauss's *An Alpine Symphony*. During his tenure, Mr. Eschenbach has conducted Beethoven's nine symphonies paired with music of our time; led a four-week Late Great Works Festival; launched the Orchestra's first-ever multi-year cycle of Mahler's complete symphonies; and led tours of Europe, Asia, Florida and Puerto Rico, and the United States.

Recent Philadelphia Orchestra highlights include multi-casting a concert to large-screen venues through the Internet2 network; the launch of the Orchestra's Online Music Store, www.thephiladelphiaorchestra.com, in September 2006; regular broadcasts on NPR beginning in April 2006; a series of critically acclaimed recordings led by Mr. Eschenbach and released in partnership with Ondine Records; and a $125 million endowment campaign launched in 2003.

The Philadelphia Orchestra annually touches the lives of more than one million music lovers worldwide through its performances, publications, recordings, and broadcasts. The Orchestra presents a subscription season in Philadelphia each year from September to May, in addition to education and community partnership programs, and appears annually at Carnegie Hall. Its summer schedule includes an outdoor series at Philadelphia's Mann Center for the Performing Arts, free Neighborhood Concerts, and residencies at Saratoga Performing Arts Center in upstate New York, and the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC 151ST ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
January 26 at 7:30 p.m. – Saturday evening – Academy of Music

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Christoph Eschenbach, *conductor*
Special guest Billy Joel
Dísella Làrusdóttir, *soprano*
Conrad Tao, *piano*
Special guest Blue Man Group
Hosted by Chris Matthews

Program TBA

This concert will be performed without an intermission.
This concert is sponsored by Blank Rome, LLP.
Members of The Philadelphia Orchestra are graciously donating their services for this concert.

For gala information, please call the Academy of Music Restoration Fund Office at 215.893.1940. Concert-only tickets, on sale beginning Monday, September 17, are available in the Academy of Music's Amphitheatre: $150, 215.893.1999 or www.philorch.org/academyofmusic.