For Media Information, Contact:
Patrick Moran, Ex. Dir., Marian Anderson Award, 215-893-1837
Susan Buehler, Bellevue Communications 215-893-4284
Katherine Blodgett, Dir. Pub./Media Relations, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 215 893-1939
For photos: Lauren Saul, Pub. Relations Coordinator, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 215.875.7657
These numbers are NOT for publication

MARIAN ANDERSON AWARD ANNOUNCES GALA PROGRAM

Stars of Film, Classical, Popular Music and Jazz To Gather on November 12.

Philadelphia, October 9, 2007 – The Marian Anderson Award has announced the program planned to honor actor and activist Richard Gere on November 12, 2007, at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, when he receives the 2007 Marian Anderson Award. In announcing the program, Award Chair Pamela A. Crawley noted, "This is a special year for us as this marks the first time we are honoring someone born in our city. Although he was born in Philadelphia, like Marian Anderson, Richard Gere is truly a citizen of the world with a global impact and global concerns. We have developed a great program to honor him and we have invited some extraordinary people to participate. Among our distinguished guests is his friend, Academy Award nominated actress, Diane Lane. They have known each other for many years and Ms. Lane will summarize Richard Gere's artistic impact on film, and present this year's Award. Another close friend who will be participating is Dr. Helene Gayle, President and CEO of CARE International, who will speak about Richard Gere's commitment to humanitarian issues. The Gala Concert will feature our own world famous Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Maestro Thomas Wilkins in special works that will include music associated with Richard Gere's film career and personal favorites. The Orchestra will be joined by the dazzling young Canadian opera star Measha Brueggergosman and jazz trumpet virtuoso Jon Faddis. The performance will conclude with The Philadelphia Orchestra and the one and only Patti Labelle. Crawley went on to note that, "Each year we have an opportunity to celebrate extraordinary artists and this will be a very special Gala. I don't think you will find a more appreciative audience than those who come together each year for the Marian Anderson Award to thank the artists who are committed to making a better world."

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The Gala Performance will be preceded by a black-tie Gala Dinner, also at the Kimmel Center, which is a fundraiser for the Marian Anderson Award and its grant programs that support young artists. Those interested in attending the Gala Dinner, which includes a premium ticket to the Gala Performance, can call the Marian Anderson Award office at 215-893-1879 to receive an invitation. Single tickets for the Gala Performance are available now by calling Ticket Philadelphia at 215-893-1999 or by visiting The Philadelphia Orchestra's website at **www.philorch.org**. For the fourth year, the Gala Concert will be taped for broadcast at a later date on WPVI TV-6 ABC.

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Richard Gere emerged very quickly as a lead actor of unique power in a film career that now spans more than 30 years and includes over 40 films. At the beginning of his career he established himself as a screen presence in *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977), following that with his performance in the cinematic masterpiece *Days of Heaven* (1978). These movies preceded additional iconic roles in films that grew to include *American Gigolo* (1980), *An Officer and a Gentleman* (1982), *Pretty Woman* (1990), and *Unfaithful* and *Chicago* (2002). His latest films, *Hoax* (2007) and *The Hunting Party* (2007), have drawn broad critical acclaim.

Years before artists of his generation began to assume the mantle of advocacy and activism, Richard Gere began the dual journey of the artist humanitarian. As early as 1978 he began lending support to the cause of Tibetans who had been both persecuted and driven from their homeland by China, in a process that amounts to cultural genocide and continues today. In the early '80s, Gere also became one of the first outspoken advocates for those living with HIV/AIDS. Having achieved an artistic career that positioned him at the pinnacle of public interest, he has used that position to assist those in need, and he has remained constant in his advocacy for both Tibet and HIV/AIDS to this day.

Richard Gere was the founding chairman of Tibet House in New York. He created and sponsored the International Year of Tibet in 1991, culminating in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's historic visit to New York. Upon leaving Tibet House in 1992, Mr. Gere became involved with the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington, D.C., and since 1995, has served as Chairman of the Board. From this position, he has addressed the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, the U.S. House of Representatives, the European Parliament, and the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. In 1999 and 2003, Gere sponsored the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to New York City and will do so again in 2007.

Through both the Gere Foundation and his public charity Healing the Divide**,** Mr. Gere continues to be a longtime supporter of other humanitarian aid, human rights, and cultural preservation organizations.

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Mr. Gere has been a longtime sponsor of amfAR, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

He has received honors from amfAR, Amnesty International, the Harvard AIDS Institute and the Eleanor Roosevelt Center.

MARIAN ANDERSON AWARD

The Marian Anderson Award honors artists whose leadership on behalf of a humanitarian cause(s) or issue benefits society. Previous recipients include Sidney Poitier (2006), Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis (2005), Oprah Winfrey (2003), Danny Glover (2002), Quincy Jones (2001), Elizabeth Taylor (2000), Gregory Peck (1999), and Harry Belafonte, (1998). No award was given in 2004.

Created in 1998, the Award is named for the great Philadelphian and American singer Marian Anderson, and is produced and administered under the direction of J. Patrick Moran. Since its inception, the Award program has provided more than $450,000 in free public programs, residencies, commissions, and grants to young artists.

MARIAN ANDERSON

Marian Anderson, the most celebrated contralto of the 20th century, was born in Philadelphia on February 27, 1897, to an African-American family of modest means. Recognized for her extraordinary musical talent, as well as her generosity and commitment to others, Ms. Anderson was a master of repertoire across operatic, recital, and American traditional genres. Throughout her musical career, she played an incalculably vital role in the acceptance of African-American musicians in the classical musical.

In 1957 Ms. Anderson was appointed by the U.S. Department of State to serve as a Special Envoy to the Far East, and the following year President Dwight D. Eisenhower named her to the post of delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations. She sang at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961; in 1963 President Lyndon B. Johnson bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon her. On her 75th birthday, in 1974, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution ordering a special gold medal minted in her honor. On April 8, 1993, Marian Anderson died at the age of 96 in Portland, Oregon.

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