N E W S R E L E A S E

CONTACT:
Katherine Blodgett
Director of Public/Media Relations
phone: 215.893.1939
e-mail: kblodgett@philorch.org

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Simon Rattle returns to lead Philadelphia Orchestra in a rarely-performed masterpiece

In his only appearance with a North American orchestra, Rattle conducts the Philadelphians' first-ever performances of Schumann's **Das Paradies und die Peri**

Performances feature sopranos Christine Brandes and Heidi Grant Murphy, mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink, tenors Joseph Kaiser and Mark Padmore, bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni, and The Philadelphia Singers Chorale

(*Philadelphia*, November 16, 2007) – Conductor **Simon Rattle** returns to Philadelphia in November to lead **The Philadelphia Orchestra** in a rarely performed masterpiece: **Robert Schumann's** ***Das Paradies und die Peri.*** This mystical oratorio features nearly 200 performers including orchestra, chorus, and six vocal soloists. Chosen as a fall 2007 "critic's pick" by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the Orchestra's first-ever performances of the work offer a rare opportunity to hear one of the world's great conductors lead a neglected work by a master composer.

The concerts, which take place at Philadelphia's **Kimmel Center (November 29, December 1-2)** and New York City's **Carnegie Hall (November 30),** are Mr. Rattle's only guest appearances with a North American orchestra during the 2007-08 season. Mr. Rattle's ongoing relationship with The Philadelphia Orchestra has resulted in many unique and highly acclaimed concerts including Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* ("among the most magnificent musical achievements of the orchestra's last dozen years" [*Philadelphia Inquirer*]) and the world premiere of Sofia Gubaidulina's *Feast During a Plague* ("which had the power of a prophetic utterance" [*New Yorker*]).

The Philadelphia Singers Chorale and six vocal soloists join the Orchestra for these performances. Soprano **Heidi Grant Murphy** makes her Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut as the Peri, and soprano **Christine Brandes** returns as the Maiden. Mezzo-soprano **Bernarda Fink** makes her Orchestra debut in the role of the Angel and the mezzo-soprano solo. **Mark Padmore** debuts as the tenor soloist and baritone **Luca Pisaroni** debuts as Gazna, the Man, and baritone solo. Tenor **Joseph Kaiser** makes his Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut as the Young Man.

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A Forgotten Masterpiece

Das Paradies und die Peri tells the story of a Peri, a fairly-like being born to a fallen angel and a mortal, whose pedigree excludes her from paradise unless she can win her salvation with a suitable gift. The Peri's search takes her to India, Egypt, and Syria before her third and final offering is accepted and she is welcomed into paradise.

When Robert Schumann began *Das Paradies und die Peri* in February 1843, he was known in Germany mostly as a music critic and a composer of songs and solo piano works. *Peri* premiered the following December and made him an international star. Within five years the work was performed all over Germany and Europe and even received an American premiere in New York City. Early audiences and critics praised the piece, yet after several decades as a mainstay of orchestral repertoire *Das Paradies und die Peri* is all but forgotten.

A quintessentially Romantic work, the oratorio reflects 19th-century fascination with the East and depicts an outcast individual's struggle for redemption. The text is based on *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance*, an epic poem drawn from a Persian legend, by the Irish poet Thomas Moore. Moore's poetry lacks the timeless appeal of Schumann's music. His flowery language, which fit 19th-century aesthetic sensibilities, may seem exaggerated and sentimental to modern ears, and the mythical story feels somewhat archaic today. Schumann's glorious music, however, displays the composer's genius at its peak. The work's sublime writing for orchestra, chorus, and soloists carry its theme of salvation, and its intimate moments of lyric beauty display Schumann's unrivaled gift for song.

About the Artists

In a career spanning more than 30 years, **Simon Rattle** has distinguished himself through his long-term relationships with a number of orchestras, wide-ranging repertoire, and innovative educational and audience-building activities. He is currently chief conductor and artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic and principal artist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Born in Liverpool in 1955, Simon Rattle studied at London's Royal Academy of Music. In 1974 he became assistant conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony and Sinfonietta. A number of guest positions followed, including principal guest conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic. He became principal conductor and artistic adviser of the City of Birmingham Symphony in 1980 and subsequently their music director (1990-1998), building up the ensemble and placing it firmly on the international map with extensive touring and inventive programs. Alongside the CBSO, Mr. Rattle worked with the UK's Philharmonia, the London Philharmonic, and the London Sinfonietta orchestras.

Mr. Rattle made his North American debut in 1979 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and served as its principal guest conductor (1981-1994). He was also a regular guest with the Boston Symphony. Mr. Rattle's Glyndebourne debut in 1977 was followed by many productions with the London Philharmonic and, more recently, with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. His English National Opera debut took place in 1985 and he has conducted a number of productions for the Royal Opera House, Covent

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Garden, and Netherlands Opera. His U.S. opera debut was in 1988 with Los Angeles Opera.

December 1993 marked Mr. Rattle's debuts with the Vienna Philharmonic and The Philadelphia Orchestra; he has maintained close links with both orchestras. Mr. Rattle first conducted the Berlin Philharmonic in 1987 and appeared regularly with that orchestra in subsequent years.

An exclusive EMI artist for many years, Simon Rattle has made over 70 recordings for the label, and received numerous prestigious international awards. Recent releases include Holst's *The Planets* with Colin Matthews's *Pluto* and world premiere recordings of "asteroids" by Saariaho, Pintscher, Turnage, and Dean; Shostakovich Symphonies Nos. 1 and 14; Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* suite; a Beethoven symphony cycle with the Vienna Philharmonic; Debussy's *La Mer*; Dvo□ák's tone poems; Schubert's Symphony No. 9; and Carl Orff's *Carmina burana.* Mr. Rattle's Mahler symphony cycle with the CBSO was completed with the release of Symphony No. 8 in 2005.

Simon Rattle has received many international awards for his outstanding contribution to music and his involvement in educational and community activities. These include a CBE, Knight Bachelor, the Albert Medal from the Royal Society of Arts, a BAFTA for his television series, *Leaving Home* (UK), the Cross of Honor for Society and the Arts (Austria), and Echo-Klassik's Conductor of the Year (Germany). In France he is an Officier des Arts et des Lettres.

For biographies of sopranos **Christine Brandes** and **Heidi Grant Murphy**, mezzo-soprano **Bernarda Fink**, tenors **Joseph Kaiser** and **Mark Padmore**, and bass-baritone **Luca Pisaroni**, visit the Concert Calendar at www.philorch.org.

The Philadelphia Singers is a unique chorus of professional singers who excel in solo as well as ensemble work. Founded in 1972 and now under the direction of David Hayes, the Philadelphia Singers performs regularly with leading national and local performing arts organizations, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Mannes Orchestra, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, and Astral Artistic Services.

The Philadelphia Singers Chorale was founded in 1991 as the symphonic chorus of the Philadelphia Singers. The Chorale is composed of professional singers and talented volunteers. In its role as resident chorus of The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chorale appears with the Orchestra in all its choral subscription concerts, as well as annual performances of Handel's *Messiah.* Past performances with The Philadelphia Orchestra have included Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder,* Mahler's Second and Third symphonies, Brahms's Requiem, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Adams's *Harmonium,* Honegger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake,* Rossini's Stabat Mater, and many other works.

Members of the ensemble come from outstanding educational backgrounds, including the Curtis Institute, the Academy of Vocal Arts, the Juilliard School, the Peabody Conservatory, Westminster Choir College, the Eastman School of Music, and the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, as well as vocal institutes in Austria, Italy, and Switzerland.

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David Hayes was appointed music director of the Philadelphia Singers in 1992. He studied conducting with Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School and with Otto-Werner Mueller at the Curtis Institute, where Mr. Hayes is a staff conductor; he is also director of orchestral and conducting studies at New York's Mannes School of Music. He has performed as guest conductor with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, the Relâche Ensemble, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the American Repertory Ballet, the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, and at the Verbier and Berkshire Choral festivals, among others. Mr. Hayes is also a cover conductor for The Philadelphia Orchestra.

By the Numbers: A Monumental Work

Duration: 1 hour, 36 minutes

Stage Requirements: Work is sung in German, with translation projected on screens above the stage.

Instrumentation: 197 musicians

Voices
2 sopranos
1 mezzo-soprano
2 tenors
1 bass-baritone
Chorus of 120

Strings
47

Winds
3 flutes
2 oboes
2 clarinets
2 bassoons

Brass
4 horns
2 trumpets
3 trombones
1 tuba

Percussion
1 timpani
3 percussion

Other
1 harp

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 the launch of a Global Concert Series, which involves multi-casting concerts to large-screen venues through the Internet2 network; the opening 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.

November 29 at 8:00 p.m. – Thursday evening – Verizon Hall at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
November 30 at 8:00 p.m. – Friday evening – Carnegie Hall
December 1 at 8:00 p.m. – Saturday evening – Verizon Hall at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
December 2 at 2:00 p.m. – Sunday afternoon – Verizon Hall at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Simon Rattle, *conductor*
Heidi Grant Murphy, *soprano* – PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA SUBSCRIPTION DEBUT
Christine Brandes, *soprano*
Bernarda Fink, *mezzo-soprano* – PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA DEBUT
Mark Padmore, *tenor* – PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA DEBUT
Joseph Kaiser, *tenor* – PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA SUBSCRIPTION DEBUT
Luca Pisaroni, *bass-baritone* – PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA DEBUT
The Philadelphia Singers Chorale (David Hayes, *music director*)

Schumann *Das Paradies und die Peri*

Free PreConcert Conversation: David Fox, lecturer, University of Pennsylvania. PreConcert Conversations will take place in the Rendell Room 1 hour before the concert.

The December 1 concert is sponsored by Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll LLP.

The Philadelphia Orchestra acknowledges the support of Blank Rome, LLP, in the presentation of this season's concerts at Carnegie Hall.

Simon Rattle's appearance is made possible through the Margaret and Eugene Ormandy Guest Conductor Fund.

Tickets: $10-$113, 215.893.1999 or www.philorch.org.

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