

TPO Press Release

**Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra to perform in Washington, D.C.
at the Kennedy Center**

The Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO), Taiwan's premiere orchestra, will perform in the Concert Hall of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C., on Sunday, July 16th at 8:00 p.m. The TPO will perform under the baton of guest conductor Yoel Levi, music Director Emeritus of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

The program in Kennedy Center is a culturally musical feast featuring two Taiwan folk songs, Johann Strauss's *Fruelingstimmen*, Chien-Tai Chen's piano concerto *Far Horizon* and Anton Dvorak's *Symphony No.9, "From the New World"*.

Regarded as Taiwan's foremost international touring orchestra, the TPO has undertaken more foreign tours than any other Taiwanese professional symphonic orchestra. TPO has, from the very first moment of its creation, made music at the highest artistic level.

TPO was founded by enthusiastic musicians at 1985 and has come a long way under the direction of the late American Maestro Henry Mazer (1920-2002) who came from Chicago Symphony Orchestra and stayed with the TPO for over 18 years.

In the summer of 1990, the TPO undertook its first overseas concert tour of

North America, with performances in the United States and Canada. In October 1995, the TPO embarked on yet another tour to the United States, performing for discerning ears in Boston and New York.

One of the performances was given at one of the United States leading concert halls, the "Boston Symphony Hall." The audience was elevated and impressed. The orchestra received a standing ovation, an utmost recognition rarely bestowed on foreign ensembles.

The New York and Boston media showered the Taipei Philharmonic with positive reviews, among them, Richard Dyer, the editor of the Music Page of the *Boston Globe*, who wrote: "The first sound of the Taipei Philharmonic in Boston Symphony Hall was electrifying. The way the orchestra plays is a real tribute to Mazer's musicianship. Mazer has a rare understanding of how *Verklarte Nacht* is constructed, how it should sound and the wallop it should pack. They play with glowing sound, precision of intonation, absolute unanimity of impulse and rare commitment."

The TPO undertook its first concert tour of Europe in the early 1990s, with concerts in France, Brussels and in Vienna at the prestigious "Grosser Musikvereinsaal," one of the World's Top five concert halls. The TPO gave the finest interpretation of Schubert, which won high praise from Franz Endler, one of Vienna's leading music critics.

He wrote in the *Vienna Kurier* Newspaper: "The ensemble plays with precision and unity... the Sinfonietta is of considerable quality... This conductor (Henry Mazer) made Schubert come alive and touch our hearts

again."

In September 2001, led by the Asian conductor Paul Tien-Chi Lin, the TPO embarked on a concert tour of Scandinavia to give two concerts in Stockholm, Sweden at the Berwald Concert Hall, and Helsinki, Finland at the Finlandia Concert Hall. This event was the first time that a Taiwanese symphonic orchestra has ever been invited to perform in Scandinavia.

On the day after the horrendous 911 attacks in the fall of 2001, the orchestra changed its scheduled program and presented a moving tribute concert to commemorate the victims.

The following May, the TPO undertook another tour to Germany and the Czech Republic, as a guest performer at a sold-out concert at Dvorak Concert Hall during the Prague Spring International Music Festival with Czech pianist Martin Kasik, followed by concerts at the Braunschweig Classix Festival in Germany, and the Janacek International Music Festival in the Czech Republic.

In August 2003, the TPO returned to Europe for their third European tour for critically acclaimed concerts in Estonia's Tallinn Concert Hall, and at the Estonian Music Festival Glasperlenspiel in Parnu, followed by yet another sold-out concert in Helsinki, Finland. This was the orchestra's second appearance in Helsinki, and the first time in the Finnish capital that a foreign orchestra had appeared for concerts twice in as many years.

In September 2004 an extensive concert tour of Central European followed,

with the opening concert at the Warsaw Autumn Contemporary Music Festival with international acclaimed Finnish conductor Leif Segerstam. There, the TPO performed the world premiere of Leif Segerstam's *101st Symphony*, dedicated to the TPO and broadcast throughout Poland by Polish Radio.

This was followed by concerts at the Wratistavia Music Festival in Wroclaw, Poland, the Music Festival Sacrum-Profanum in Krakow, the Karol Szymanowski Philharmonic Concert Hall, the Smetana Hall in Prague during the Prague Spirit Music Festival, the Budapest Music Festival at the Liszt Concert Hall, and a number of other concerts throughout Hungary and Poland. In total eight concerts were performed before a total of 6,500 people.

For the 2003 / 2005 seasons, the TPO appointed the seasoned Russian conductor Alexander Rudin as its chief conductor. The TPO has consequently since made four European concert tours, two of which in Russia in June 2004, where it appeared at the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall for the White Nights Festival, followed by a performance in Moscow at the new Moscow Performing Arts Center.

The TPO undertook its fifth European tour, in June 2005 with concerts in Paris and at the Auvers International Music Festival in France, and returns back to France in June 2006 to perform at the Sully Music Festival, with concerts in Germany as well.

This year, the TPO will undertake two concerts in the U.S. in July, with

performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and at the TODI Music Fest in Portsmouth, Virginia.

When the TPO performs overseas, it often blends in Taiwanese folk music along with its more traditional Western oeuvre. These Taiwanese works are often embraced by European and American classical music audience with warmth and acclaim, as are their interpretations on the orthodox, classic pieces.

The Taipei Philharmonic came a long way under the baton of the late American conductor Maestro Henry Mazer, who passed away in 2002. Mazer's selfless dedication, disciplinary technique, and an intricate understanding of music inspired the orchestra to produce sounds which were homogeneous in conception and interconnected at all times. Maestro Mazer molded the orchestra with daunting masterpieces by Mozart, Beethoven, and Mahler, helping it join the ranks for the world's finest symphony orchestras.

An Introduction to the Performers

Conductor Yoel Levi



As Music Director Emeritus of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, **Yoel Levi** conducts two concert weekends each season. In addition, he serves as Music Advisor to the Flemish Radio Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2001 he was named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, one of the most prestigious awards given by the French government. While he was Music Director of the ASO from 1988 to 2000, Mr. Levi's impact on the orchestra was summed up by *Gramophone* magazine, which said, "Yoel Levi has built a reputation for himself and his orchestra that is increasingly the envy of his Big Five American counterparts in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston, and Chicago."

Pianist: Dr. Chien-Tai Chen



Dr. **Chien-Tai Chen** is a noted musician and composer from Taiwan. His other major works include Opera "Journey To The West," piano trio "In Foreign Lands," string quartet "Style", "Zen In Five Strings" for large string orchestra, violin concerto "Hakka-Wanderer".

Pianist: Brian Ganz



A leading pianist of his generation, **Brian Ganz** has accumulated an impressive array of awards, concert credits and appearances around the world. Ganz won his first grand prize, in Marguerite Long Jacques Thibaud

International Piano Competition in Paris, 1989. In 1991, he was awarded silver medalist with third prize in Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Piano Competition. Last year he began a project with Maestoso Records in which he will record the complete works of Frederic Chopin. The project will be completed in 2010, the 200th anniversary of Chopin's birth.

Vocalist: Tang Huey-Ru



Vocalist **Tang Huey-Ru** graduated from the “Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi di Milano,” in 1984 and at present is a prominent soprano on the stage in Taiwan. She also often represented the conservatory in other countries such as Switzerland and Germany performing works of the Baroque and Classical periods with the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory Orchestra.

Program: "Taiwan Night"

Soprano Tang Huey-Ru: Two Taiwan Folk Songs and Johann Strauss's *Fruelingstimmen*

Pianist Chien-Tai Chen: Piano Concerto *Far Horizon*

Pianist Brian Ganz: Antonin Dvorak's *Symphony No.9 "From the New World"*

The Symphony No. 9, opus 95, "From the New World", popularly known as the *New World Symphony*, was composed by Antonin Dvořák in 1893. It is by far his most popular symphony and one of the most popular symphonies in the modern repertory. Dvořák wrote it during his visit to the United States from 1892 to 1895. It is in four movements:

1. Adagio - Allegro molto
2. Largo
3. Scherzo: Molto vivace
4. Allegro con fuoco

Ticket Prices: \$20, \$25, \$30, \$35, \$40, \$45, \$50, \$55, \$60, \$65, \$70

Box Office: Instant Charge, Kennedy Center at Instant-Charge at (202) 467-4600 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Toll-free number: (800) 444-1324

For further information regarding the performance in Kennedy Center,

please see the website: <http://kennedy-center.org/calendar/index.cfm?fuseaction=showEvent&event=RGXBZ>

For more information about the TODI Music Fest, please see the website:
http://www.todimusicfest.com/2006_generic_page.html

What the critics are saying about the Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra:

“The first sound of The Taipei Philharmonic in Boston Symphony Hall was electrifying.”

----*Richard Dyer (Boston Globe)*

“The ensemble plays with precision and unity the Taipei Philharmonic is of considerable quality. The conductor made Schubert come alive and touch our hearts again.”

----*Franz Endler (Vienna Kurier Newspaper)*

“There are two elements that surprise the connoisseur upon the overture of Mozart’s Marriage of Figaro performed by the Taiwanese Philharmonic Orchestra: the speed and the strong tone quality”.

----*Ms. Annmari Salmela (Helsinki Daily News)*

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