



It's all about the music®

Contact:

Jane Baxter Lynn
206-550-1620
jbl@jblprstrategies.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AMID GROWING ACCLAIM, AUBURN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
TO PERFORM AT BENAROYA HALL IN JANUARY**

Auburn, WA, November 17, 2006: Conceived on a napkin 10 years ago, the Auburn Symphony has stunned critics with the high quality of its music. In celebration of its 10th anniversary season, this fully professional orchestra, led by Pacific Northwest Ballet music director and ASO co-founder Stewart Kershaw, will play at Benaroya Hall on Sunday, January 14th at 3:00 pm. Shostakovich's monumental Symphony No. 11 "The Year 1905" will be the highlight of the concert. The orchestra gained rave reviews last year in Auburn when it presented a flawless performance of this rarely played Shostakovich symphony.

Also on the program is Wagner's Overture to "Die Meistersinger" and Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor with Craig Sheppard, the University of Washington's esteemed professor of piano. A free pre-concert lecture will be given by Kershaw 45 minutes prior to the concert.

Concert benefactor James Raisbeck, CEO & Board Chairman of Seattle-based Raisbeck Engineering said: "The orchestra's performance of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11 "The Year 1905" will ignite everyone who is moved by the combination of a great composer, a most-talented orchestra, a dynamic conductor and the musical story that is Russia during the uprising of the peasants against the Tsarist regime of the early 20th Century".

Comprised of musicians from the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra (PNB) and other northwest orchestras, the Auburn Symphony is gaining recognition as one of the State's top symphony orchestras. The high profile concert, to be held in the S. Mark Taper Foundation Auditorium at Benaroya Hall, is designed to further raise awareness of the ASO in the region. It is also to honor co-founder and music director Stewart Kershaw, PNB's long-time music director, and the ASO musicians, who year after year produce high caliber music without always receiving the recognition they deserve.

Tickets range from \$20-\$60 and are available from Auburn Symphony (www.auburnsymphony.org or 253-939-8509), Ticketmaster (www.ticketmaster.com or 206.628.0123) and at the Benaroya Box Office.

Auburn Symphony Orchestra • P.O. Box 2186, Auburn, Washington 98071
253-939-8509 • auburnsymphony@trillium.org • www.auburnsymphony.org

The concert is being presented by Mayor Pete Lewis and the City of Auburn, and supported by Orchestra Circle donors: James & Sherry Raisbeck (Raisbeck Engineering), Peter & Peggy Horvitz (King County Journal Newspapers), Firoz & Najma Lalji (Zones Inc.), US Bancorp Foundation, and The Boeing Company. Other sponsors include: Auburn Regional Medical Center, Pacific Northwest Ballet and Puget Sound Energy, as well as media sponsors Classical KING FM 98.1 and King County Journal Newspapers.

According to Auburn's Mayor Pete Lewis: "The City of Auburn has supported the Auburn Symphony since its inception ten years ago. It is with great pride that we are helping make this occasion possible. A high profile concert at Seattle's Benaroya Hall will not only showcase our exceptional orchestra, it will also raise awareness of the City as a whole. We're letting others know that there truly is more to Auburn than they imagined."

Firoz Lalji, President & CEO of Auburn-based Zones, Inc. explained why Zones is involved in this concert: "The Auburn Symphony is one of the best orchestras in this state. Yet very few people know about it. The musicians are all professionals, many of whom play with the Pacific Northwest Ballet orchestra. Stewart Kershaw, the PNB's music director, conducts the orchestra and the rapport between him and the musicians is electric. It's a great experience to hear the ASO play and we want to be sure that people who enjoy classical music, especially those who live in South King County, realize that they have this incredible orchestra right on their doorstep."

James Blanchard, ASO's president, said: "As our second decade begins, we were looking for ways to grow our audiences. We recognized that it would take a high profile event like a concert at Seattle's Benaroya Hall to convince classical music lovers in King County and surrounding areas to add the Auburn Symphony concerts to their annual symphony schedule. Once people hear the quality of the orchestra's performance, they will be hooked!"

"It was always my dream to build a professional symphony orchestra. When the City of Auburn gave me the support to start an orchestra, playing at the Auburn Performing Arts Center, we agreed to start at the top with some of the finest professional musicians in this region," Kershaw said. "Ten years later, we have a dedicated Board of committed classical music lovers, a healthy budget, and a growing following of people who have discovered that you don't only have to go to Seattle for world-class symphony music."

more/...

“Maestro Stewart Kershaw and his Auburn Symphony Orchestra will finally be on center stage when they play at Benaroya in January. This marquee billing is long overdue,” Raisbeck said. “As the PNB’s principal conductor for more than 20 years Stewart has always impressed Sherry and me with his artistic talents, his energy and his organizational skills. However, he and his talented orchestra have typically received second billing as the PNB’s supporting cast. Since Stewart co-founded the ASO ten years ago, their music under his baton has been nothing short of superb.”

"Seattle has so many great cultural opportunities that people don't automatically think of seeing a show outside of the city," says Ken Kirkpatrick, President, Washington State, U.S. Bank. "This concert gives the Auburn Symphony Orchestra, one of our community gems, the opportunity to present to a larger audience and remind folks that art and music are happening in their neighborhood, even if their neighborhood is outside of Seattle city limits."

"The Boeing Company's support of the Auburn Symphony is a source of pride for our employees and their families," said Bob Watt, vice president, Government Relations and Global Corporate Citizenship. "Boeing has invested approximately \$3.5 million in cash and in-kind donations to the arts so far this year, with about 80 percent of our arts and cultural investments dedicated to performance and exhibit sponsorships. At Boeing, we know that our Puget Sound communities are infused with a strong arts culture and this helps attract the best and brightest minds to Washington State. Our company has more than 67,000 employees in the Puget Sound region and is the largest private employer and high-tech firm in the Evergreen State, so giving back to the communities in which we live is important to us."

###

BACKGROUND

The Auburn Symphony Orchestra (ASO) is a 501C3 not-for-profit corporation, founded in 1996. Conducted by co-founder Stewart Kershaw, the Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB)’s music director, the ASO is a fully professional orchestra, comprised of more than 60 musicians from the PNB and other Northwest orchestras. Its mission is to foster the joy of music in the region through performances of unsurpassed quality. Performing three symphony and two chamber programs annually in the City of Auburn, the ASO operates under the auspices of the City of Auburn’s Arts Commission.

Stewart Kershaw’s personal mission for the ASO is to promote the best in the northwest, showcasing both professional musicians from northwest orchestras and inviting top northwest soloists to participate. In

addition, each year he auditions young talented musicians from South King County to play with the orchestra.