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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUBURN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WOWS AUDIENCE AT BENAROYA HALL

Auburn, WA, January 17, 2007: More than 1,200 people filled the S. Mark Taper Auditorium at Benaroya Hall in Seattle * Sunday afternoon (January 14th, 2007) to hear the Auburn Symphony Orchestra play its 10th anniversary concert. On a beautiful clear day, the walk-up ticket buyers lined up along the full length of the Third Avenue block.

The air was electric with excitement and the 88 musicians in the orchestra were obviously delighted to be there. Stewart Kershaw, ASO co-founder and Pacific Northwest Ballet music director, led this fully professional orchestra in a flawless and breathtaking performance of the monumental Shostakovich Symphony No. 11 "The Year 1905". The program began with Wagner's Overture to "Die Meistersinger" and the orchestra played a lovely and nuanced accompaniment to Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, interpreted beautifully by Craig Sheppard, University of Washington's esteemed professor of piano.

Created on a napkin 10 years ago, the Auburn Symphony has stunned critics with the high quality of its music. 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 at Benaroya Hall was designed to raise awareness of this relatively unknown classical gem.

James Blanchard, ASO President, said: "We achieved all our goals, the entire cost of the concert and then some was covered; we raised awareness of our wonderful orchestra throughout the region; the house was fabulous with over 1200 in attendance and Stewart Kershaw the ASO's music director and co-founder was able to achieve his and our dream of playing with his wonderful orchestra in Benaroya Hall. This was truly a great event for our outstanding symphony orchestra in celebration of 10 years in our community. Who could ask for anything more?"

The concert was 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.

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Other sponsors included: Auburn Regional Medical Center, Pacific Northwest Ballet and Puget Sound Energy, as well as media sponsors Classical KING FM 98.1, King County Publications and Comcast.

According to Auburn's Mayor Pete Lewis: "This was a wonderful concert that gave the Region an invitation to come to Auburn for great Arts and Entertainment. There's no doubt that the audience realized that Auburn has more to offer than they imagined."

Firoz Lalji, President & CEO of Auburn-based Zones, Inc. and Orchestra Circle Patron for the concert said: "The caliber of this performance was extraordinary. Zones is proud to support the Auburn Symphony Orchestra and their commitment to bringing world class music to South King County."

Orchestra Circle Patron James Raisbeck, said: "Stewart Kershaw and his amazing band of musicians comprising the Auburn Symphony Orchestra, made music rarely heard as brilliantly and as enthusiastically in Benaroya Hall as last Sunday. Stewart richly deserves the Top Billing and the accolades he has achieved."

Melissa Hines, with the City of Seattle's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs said: "Benaroya on Sunday was a smashing success. The turnout was great, the music was great, the press and promotion was excellent. Everyone associated with the ASO, especially the leadership, deserves kudos for making the ASO's Benaroya debut not just happen, but be stellar!"

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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.