



MEDIA RELATIONS CONTACTS

[Jessica Kelly](mailto:jkelly@mondaviarts.org), 530-754-5428
[Camille Spaccavento](mailto:cspaccav@mondaviarts.org), 530-754-5422

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Feb. 25, 2009

The Mondavi Center Presents the Estonian National Symphony: Pärt, Prokofiev, and Sibelius

Davis, Calif.—The **Estonian National Symphony Orchestra**, **Eri Klas**, conductor, performs in **Jackson Hall** of the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts**, UC Davis, **Saturday, March 28**, at **8 p.m.** The program features **pianist Joyce Yang** and comprises **Arvo Pärt's "Summa"**; **Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, op. 26**; and **Sibelius' Symphony No. 2 in D Major, op. 43**. There is a **Pre-Performance Lecture** in the **Studio Theatre** at **7 p.m.** with **David Deffner**, California State University, Sacramento, professor of music and Davis Community Church director of music.

Says **Don Roth**, Mondavi Center executive director, "The Estonian Symphony may be under the radar for many concert-goers who may not be familiar with the wonderful musical tradition of that small country. We look forward to a great performance."

Pricing is \$75/65/45 for regular tickets and \$37.50/32.50/22.50 for students and children. Purchase tickets online at MondaviArts.org, through the Mondavi Center box office at 530-754-2787 or 866-754-2787 (toll-free), or at the door. Accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. This event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center's Western Health Advantage **Orchestra Series**, which concludes with the **San Francisco Symphony** on **May 21**.

The **Estonian National Symphony Orchestra (ENSO)** began as a small radio orchestra in 1926. Over the years, it has become Estonia's representative orchestra and recently significantly increased its international scope. ENSO's high-quality recordings on Virgin Classics have won several awards, including a GRAMMY for the recordings of Sibelius' cantatas. In 2007, the CD "Magma" of Erkki-Sven Tüür's music was chosen as orchestral album of the month by BBC Music Magazine and appeared in Gramophone's top ten list of outstanding new albums. In 2005, The New York Times named ENSO's CD "Peer Gynt" as "surprise highlight of the year," and in 2006 the CD also won BBC Music Magazine's award for best orchestral album. While ENSO has toured widely throughout the world—in Romania, Bulgaria, Kuwait, Germany, Canada, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Switzerland, Spain, Russia and beyond—this present tour includes its first visit to the United States.

Conductor Eri Klas, a native of Estonia whose musical godfather was the legendary violinist and conductor David Oistrakh, frequently guest conducts on the North American continent. Klas made his U.S. debut in 1991 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. In 1995, he made his debuts with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony, following highly successful appearances at the Blossom and Ravinia festivals. Since then, he has appeared with most of the major North American orchestras, including the Boston, St. Louis, Detroit, Cincinnati, Vancouver and National Symphonies and the Minnesota Orchestra.

Equally in demand throughout Europe, Klas was named the chief conductor of the Novaya Opera Theatre of Moscow in March 2006. In addition, he is currently the artistic director of the Tallinn Philharmonic in Estonia, principal guest conductor of the Finnish National Opera and conductor laureate of the Tampere Philharmonic and the Estonian National Opera. He has guest conducted the Berlin, Munich and Rotterdam Philharmonics and appears regularly with the

Swedish and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestras, BBC Philharmonic, Stockholm and Helsinki Philharmonics, RAI Turino and the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, among others. Altogether, he has conducted more than 100 orchestras at least in 45 different countries around the world.

Pianist Joyce Yang, at the age of 19, won the silver medal at the Twelfth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2005. The prize package included \$20,000, three years of U.S. concert engagements, and a compact disc recording on the Harmonia Mundi USA label. The youngest of the Cliburn Competition's participants, she was the recipient of both the Steven De Groote Memorial Award for the Best Performance of Chamber Music as well as the Beverley Taylor Smith Award for the Best Performance of a New Work. Of her spectacular finish at one of the world's most prestigious showcases for young talent, she told reporters, "I'm still dreaming."

The dream continued in summer 2006, as Yang appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Mann Center, the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival and the Aspen Symphony, and as she opened the season of the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center. In November 2006, Yang made her New York Philharmonic debut with Lorin Maazel in Avery Fisher Hall, preceded by concerts with the orchestra in Korea. She appeared with the Philharmonic again in 2007 and 2008. Yang's recent activities have also included engagements with the symphonies of Houston, Indianapolis, Fort Worth, Colorado, Kansas City, Colorado Springs and Nashville and the National Symphony, as well as numerous recitals throughout North America and in Europe, including appearances at the Kennedy Center for the Washington Performing Arts Society and the Tonhalle in Zurich.

The 2008–09 season Yang's New York recital debut at the Metropolitan Museum, the Ravinia festival with the Chicago Symphony and James Conlon, and the Hollywood Bowl. She has been invited by James Conlon to play the Bernstein "Age of Anxiety" with the Deutsches Symphonie Berlin this fall, which will mark her debut with that orchestra.

Born in Seoul, Korea, Joyce received her first piano lessons at age 4 from her aunt. She quickly took to the instrument, which she received as a birthday present, and over the next few years won several national piano competitions. By age 10 she had entered the Korean National Conservatory. In 1997, she moved to the U.S. to study at the pre-college division of the Juilliard School of Music.

During her first year at Juilliard, she won its Pre-College Division Concerto Competition, resulting in a performance of the Haydn Concerto in D Major with the Juilliard Pre-College Chamber Orchestra. In April 1999, she was invited to perform at a benefit concert with the Juilliard Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Slatkin. Winning at the Philadelphia Orchestra's Greenfield Competition led to a performance of the Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Philadelphia Orchestra when she was just 12.

Yang is featured in "In the Heart of Music," a documentary about the 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Her debut disc distributed by Harmonia Mundi USA includes live performances of works by Bach, Liszt, Scarlatti and the Australian composer Carl Vine. She currently resides in New York City, where she attends the Juilliard School as a student of Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky.

- **Estonian National Symphony Orchestra**
- **Sat., March 28, 8 p.m.**
- **Mondavi Center, Jackson Hall**
- **9399 Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616 (GPS)**
- **\$75/65/45 regular; \$37.50/32.50/22.50 students, children**
- **530-754-2787**
866-754-2787 (toll-free)
530-754-5402 (TDD)
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