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CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS
ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITH
CONDUCTOR ERI KLAS AND PIANIST JOYCE YANG ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 29 AT 3:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, February 19, 2009—**Estonian National Symphony Orchestra** stops in Berkeley on its much-anticipated debut American tour on **Sunday, March 29 at 3:00 p.m.** at Zellerbach Hall. Founded more than 80 years ago and conducted by the highly respected Estonian-born conductor **Eri Klas**, the orchestra will present Arvo Pärt’s meditative *Cantus In Memoriam Benjamin Britten*; Sergei Rachmaninoff’s enduringly popular Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18; and Jean Sibelius’s Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43, sometimes called the “Symphony of Independence.” **Joyce Yang**, the silver medal winner in the 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition lauded for her “neat mixture of vibrancy and intimacy, combining a taut rhythmic sense with elastic freedom” (*Washington Post*), will join the orchestra for the Rachmaninoff concerto.

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The **Estonian National Symphony Orchestra** traces its roots to the first concert ever broadcast by Tallinn Radio on December 18, 1926. The ensemble became known as the Radio Broadcasting Symphony, and by 1939 had 39 performers who presented live concerts in addition to their radio performances. In the years following World War II, the orchestra grew in size, quality, and prominence; it was not unusual for audiences in Tallinn to hear new works by Dmitri Shostakovich after their premieres in Moscow and Leningrad. In spite of Soviet repertoire policy, in this period the orchestra often presented works by Bach, Händel, Mozart and Beethoven, along with contemporary works by Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Webern, Orff and others.

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From 1963 to 1979, under the baton of Neeme Järvi, the orchestra's repertoire and activities expanded greatly. It changed its name from the Estonian Radio Symphony Orchestra to the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra in 1975, and expanded its broadcast concert series to include Estonian television. It also recorded acclaimed volumes of Estonian music in this era. This heyday came to an end when Estonia's borders opened in the early 1990s; nearly half of the orchestra's musicians left for better career opportunities in the West. The ensemble began a slow rebuilding phase. Today it has 100 permanent members, plays 60 concerts per year, and is hailed for its "big, unified sound that sweeps the listener along" (Minnesota Public Radio).

The Estonian National Symphony Orchestra has premiered works by Estonian composers Eduard Tubin, Eino Tamberg, Lepo Sumera, Arvo Pärt, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Tõnu Kõrvits, Toivo Tulev, and others. Its recordings on the Virgin Classics label have won high praise, including the first-ever *BBC Music Magazine* award for Best Orchestral Recording in 2006 for its disc of Edvard Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, conducted by Paavo Järvi. The orchestra's recording with the Estonian National Male Choir and the Ellerhein Girls Choir of Sibelius Cantatas won a 2003 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance.

ERI KLAS

Called "a musician's musician" (*Orange County Register*), Estonian-born conductor **Eri Klas** has earned a global reputation through more than 40 years of work with orchestras around the world. He studied conducting at the Tallinn Conservatory, and upon graduation traveled to St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) to work with Nikolai Rabinovich. He made his debut at the Estonian National Theatre in Tallinn in 1964, conducting Bernstein's *West Side Story*. In 1969, Klas began a 12-year stint as assistant conductor at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, leading opera, ballet and orchestral performances. He became music director of the Estonian National Opera in 1975, and 20 years later became its conductor laureate.

Klas made his United States debut in 1991 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. He has since appeared with most major North American orchestras, including Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, St. Louis, Detroit, Cincinnati and Vancouver, as well as the National Symphony Orchestra. Klas is equally in demand in Europe, serving in official positions

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with the Tallinn Philharmonic, Finnish National Opera, and Holland Kammerphilharmonie and making guest appearances with the Berlin, Munich, and Rotterdam Philharmonics. He has been described as “a bear of a man” and his conducting has been praised as “clear, sweeping and always musical” (*Cincinnati Enquirer*).

Klas is a champion of Estonian composers and has conducted world premieres of works by Pärt, Tamberg, Tormis, Tubin, Eller and others. He is also an educator who has taught conducting at the Sibelius Academy and the Estonian Music Academy, and an enthusiastic advocate for young musicians, having worked with the Estonian Youth Orchestra, the Sibelius Academy Orchestra, the Irish Youth Orchestra and the Asian Youth Orchestra. A former Estonian lightweight junior boxing champion, Klas is a member of the Estonian Olympic Committee, chairman of the Estonian Cultural Foundation, and a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF.

JOYCE YANG

At age 19, **Joyce Yang** was the youngest competitor in the 2005 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and winner of the silver medal. In the years since, she has earned a reputation as a skilled and versatile musician and an able collaborator with several orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the National Symphony and the New York Philharmonic.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Yang began piano lessons at age four and by age 10 had won several Korean piano competitions and entered the Korean National Conservatory. Yang moved to the United States in 1997 to study at the pre-college division of The Juilliard School in New York. In her first year, she won the division’s concerto competition and played the Haydn Concerto in D major with the Juilliard Pre-College Chamber Orchestra. At age 12, Yang performed the Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and in 1999 she debuted with the Juilliard Orchestra conducted by Leonard Slatkin. She continues to study at Juilliard with Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky.

Yang has appeared at prestigious venues and festivals, including the Mann Center, the Ravinia Festival, the Kennedy Center, Avery Fisher Hall, the Hollywood Bowl and the Tonhalle in Zurich. She has earned praise for “absolutely astonishing virtuosity” (*Zurich Review*), “impeccable articulation and admirable integrity” (*New York Times*), and for moving “beyond youthful promise to a startling blend of technical assurance and interpretive flair” (*Contra Costa Times*).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Estonian National Symphony Orchestra** in concert with **Eri Klas**, conductor and **Joyce Yang**, piano, on **Sunday, March 29, 2009** at **3:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at \$36.00, \$56.00 and \$70.00. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10 for UCB students; \$15 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, March 29 at 3:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Orchestra

Estonian National Symphony Orchestra

Eri Klas, conductor

Joyce Yang, piano

Program:

Pärt/Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Rachmaninoff/Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18

Sibelius/Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

Tickets: \$36.00, \$56.00 and \$70.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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