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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE
SWEDISH RADIO CHOIR WITH
GUEST CONDUCTOR RAGNAR BOHLIN
ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28 AT 3:00 PM IN HERTZ HALL**

**Program includes choral masterworks and pieces by Scandinavian
and American composers**

BERKELEY, January 15, 2010—The **Swedish Radio Choir**, one of the great *cappella* choirs in the world, comes to Cal Performances on **Sunday, February 28 at 3:00 p.m.** in **Hertz Hall**. Guest conductor **Ragnar Bohlin**, chorus director of the San Francisco Symphony, will lead the group in a program that includes Scandinavian choral classics, major works by **J. S. Bach** and **Gustav Mahler**, and contemporary pieces by American and European composers that showcase the choir's mastery of the choral spectrum. Praised for a crystalline precision, the choir sings "with perfect balance, precisely controlled dynamic shadings and elegantly tapered phrase endings" (*The New York Times*).

The choir will begin its Berkeley performance with *Aftonen* ("Evening"), a shimmering late-Romantic gem by Swedish composer **Hugo Alfven** (1872–1960). It will be followed by Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer **Ned Rorem**'s dramatic *In Time of Pestilence* (1973), a set of six short madrigals on verses of Thomas Nashe. *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* ("I Am Lost to the World"), **Gustav Mahler**'s 1901 setting of Friedrich Rückert's melancholy poem, follows; it is part of the composer's moving *Rückert Lieder* and has been arranged for mixed chorus by **Cltyus Gottwald**.

A work by the prolific contemporary Swedish composer **Sven-David Sanström**, *Lobet den Herrn* ("Praise the Lord," 2003), follows. This piece is one of six motets Sandström has composed on the same texts that J. S. Bach used for his famous motets; Sandström's *Lobet den Herrn*, written for double choir, is a rapid, vigorous piece in three sections. It will be followed by perhaps the greatest of J. S. Bach's own motets, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* ("Sing unto the Lord a New Song", BWV 225), a piece in four sections for double choir that showcases many of

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Bach's compositional techniques, including the use of a chorale melody (the source is unknown) and the construction of a fugue.

After an intermission, the Swedish Radio Choir will return with contemporary Swedish composer **Anders Hillborg's** *Mouyayuom* (1983), a piece that has no words but is instead written on a "phonetic formula" that moves through the choir like a wave, expanding, contracting and evolving in close, precise harmonies. The concert will close with Swiss composer **Frank Martin's** *Mass for Double Choir* (1922–1926), a flowing and reverent piece that was first performed 40 years after its composition and which today is a beloved staple in the modern choral repertoire.

THE SWEDISH RADIO CHOIR

Founded in 1925, the **Swedish Radio Choir** came into global prominence when the celebrated Swedish musician Eric Ericson became its principal conductor in 1952. Ericson trained and molded the choir into a skilled, flexible choral instrument capable of singing the difficult choral music of composers such as Richard Strauss and Max Reger, as well as the music being written by Swedish composers of the day. Composers from Scandinavia and beyond, including Arthur Honegger, Ingvar Lindholm, Sven-Erick Bäck, Lars Edlund, György Ligeti and Krzysztof Penderecki, learned of the Swedish Radio Choir's sound and capabilities, found it to be ideal for their music, and composed works specifically for it.

Ericson retired after more than 30 years of service to the choir and still serves as its Conductor Emeritus. Successive music directors have brought new colors and skills to the Swedish Radio Choir. They include Anders Öhrwall, who brought particular understanding of Baroque music; Gustav Sjökvist, who premiered works by Sven-David Sandström, Tomas Jennefelt and Hans Gefors and collaborated with guest artists from popular music; Tõnu Kaljuste, the first non-Swedish director, who brought repertoire from Eastern Europe, including music by Arvo Pärt and Alfred Schnittke; and Stefan Parkman, who presented a series of concerts comprising all of Bach's major works with the choir. Peter Dijkstra of the Netherlands was named the Swedish Radio Choir's music director in 2007, but for its 2010 U.S. tour—including the concert in Berkeley—Ragnar Bohlin will lead the group.

The choir, which has been called “one of today’s top contemporary music ensembles” (ClassicsToday.com), regularly performs internationally in concerts and at festivals. In the past few years it toured in Italy, the Netherlands and Scandinavia, and performed with renowned Russian conductor Valery Gergiev and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra—a performance praised as “as close to perfection as one could wish for” (Musicweb-International.com). It has also recently toured in Italy with the Italian conductor Claudio Abbado (with whom the choir made several outstanding recordings a decade ago) and performed with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

The Swedish Radio Choir’s discography includes both *a cappella* and symphonic works on such labels as Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, Sony and Virgin Classics and earns high praise from reviewers and listeners. “The Swedish Radio Choir is an ensemble whose reputation walks miles in front of it, and I have yet to hear them in a bad performance” (*Audiophile Audition*). In more than 40 recordings, the choir has presented such masterworks as the Brahms *Deutsches Requiem*, the Mozart Requiem, the Rachmaninoff Vespers and the Verdi Requiem, as well as music by Lindberg, Pärt, Sandström, Stenhammar, Stravinsky and many other composers.

RAGNAR BOHLIN

Ragnar Bohlin became chorus director of the San Francisco Symphony in March 2007, and since his arrival the chorus has been praised for its “amazing elegance” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), its “radiantly ethereal” sound (*Contra Costa Times*) and for being “beautifully controlled, and especially ravishing” (*Bay Area Reporter*). Born in 1965, Bohlin holds a masters’ degree in organ and conducting and a postgraduate degree in conducting from the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, Sweden. He studied conducting with Eric Ericson in Sweden and piano with Peter Feuchtwanger in London on a British Council Scholarship. He also studied singing with the Swedish tenor Nicolai Gedda and has performed as a tenor soloist in both concert and oratorio settings, winning numerous prizes in international competitions.

As a leader of singers, Bohlin has served as choirmaster of Stockholm’s Maria Magdalena Church before coming to San Francisco and has prepared choruses for some of the world’s foremost conductors, including Herbert Blomstedt, Valery Gergiev, Esa-Pekka Salonen

and Alan Gilbert. He has appeared regularly on Swedish radio with the Swedish Radio Choir, the Maria Vocal Ensemble and the Maria Magdalena Motet Choir, and has worked frequently with the Royal Philharmonic Choir and the Opera Choir of Stockholm.

Bohlin has an extensive broadcasting and recording history that includes the premiere of Fredrik Sixten's Requiem on Swedish Public Radio, a CD of Sixten's *Saint Mark Passion*, and recordings of *a cappella* music, jazz and sacred music, including an October 2008 recording with the Swedish Radio Choir. Bohlin has taught at the Royal Conservatory in Stockholm and has been a visiting professor at Indiana University. He has received the prestigious Johannes Norrby Medallion for expanding the frontiers of Swedish choral music.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Swedish Radio Choir** with **Ragnar Bohlin**, guest conductor, on **Sunday, February 28, 2010** at **3:00 p.m.** in **Hertz Hall** are priced at **\$52.00**. 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 three 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 \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 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, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, February 28 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Swedish Radio Choir

Ragnar Bohlin, guest conductor

Program: *Alfven/Aftonen*

Rorem/In time of pestilence

Mahler, arr. Gottwald/Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen

Sandström/Lobet den Herrn

Bach/Singet dem Herrn ein neus Lied, BWV 225

Hillborg/Mouyayuom

Martin/Mass for Double Choir

Tickets: \$52.00, 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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