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Markus Stenz Makes His Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Debut Leading Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"

Kolja Blacher makes BSO debut with Schumann's Violin Concerto

Baltimore, Md. (September 20, 2012) – Under the baton of BSO debuting conductor **Markus Stenz**, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) will perform Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, "Eroica" on **Thursday, October 4 at 8 p.m.** at the **Music Center at Strathmore**, and **Saturday, October 6 at 8 p.m.** at the **Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall**. German violinist **Kolja Blacher** will make his BSO debut performing Schumann's Violin Concerto. In addition, the Orchestra will perform *Chaos* from Rebel's *The Elements*. *Please see below for complete program details.*

Originally, Beethoven subtitled his Third Symphony "Sinfonia eroica, composed to celebrate the memory of a great man," which many believe is a dedication to the French revolutionary Napoleon Bonaparte. "Eroica" means "heroic" in Italian, which symbolizes the ideals of the French Revolution that Beethoven held in such high esteem. However, upon hearing that Bonaparte crowned himself emperor in 1804, Beethoven tore off the title page of score that bore the dedication. Beethoven's Third Symphony is groundbreaking in that it is twice as long as many classical symphonies and its themes of aggression and power conveyed through unexpected harmonies makes the symphony a model for other composers.

Described as "sorrowful, romantic, mature and lyrical" by Yehudi Menuhin, Schumann's violin concerto is an emotional piece in three movements. Written just two years before his death, the violin

concerto was Schumann's last major work before his mental instability caused him to stop composing. After Schumann's death in 1856, the violin concerto went unpublished and was effectively forgotten about until its discovery in 1933. The piece was first performed in 1937, and has since become part of the standard violin repertoire. Guest violinist Kolja Blacher's 2011 recording of this work on the Philharmonie label earned praise from critics, including the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which hailed it as "utterly unique."

French composer Jean-Féry Rebel's *Les éléments* depict the creation of the world. The BSO will perform the Symphony's introduction, "Chaos." In the composer's own words, "The introduction to this Symphony was natural; it was Chaos itself, this confusion which reigned between the Elements before the instant when, subject to invariable laws, they took their prescribed place in the order of nature. I dared to combine the confusion of the Elements with harmonic confusion. I tried to make heard all the sounds mingled together, or rather all the notes of the octave together in one chord."

Markus Stenz, conductor

A student of the School of Music in Cologne under Volker Wangerheim and at Tanglewood with Leonard Bernstein and Seiji Ozawa, Markus Stenz has held the positions of artistic director of the Montepulciano Festival (1989-1995) and principal conductor of the London Sinfonietta (1994-1998) – one of the most renowned ensembles for contemporary music. As artistic director and chief conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (1998-2004), Maestro Stenz broadened his repertoire and established his career as an international conductor.

Markus Stenz is the general music director of the City of Cologne and Gürzenich-Kapellmeister as well as principal guest conductor of the Hallé Orchestra. He assumes the position of Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra in the 2012-2013 season.

He made his debut as an opera conductor at *La Fenice* in Venice in a production of Hans Werner Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers*. He has since conducted many world premieres and first performances and has appeared at many of the world's major opera houses in Milan, Chicago, London, Berlin and Munich and international festivals in Glyndebourne, Edinburgh, Bregenz and Salzburg.

Markus Stenz conducts many of the world's leading orchestras including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, Berlin Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Vienna Symphony and NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo. In the United States, he has conducted the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

For the label OehmsClassics, Markus Stenz is currently recording a complete cycle of Gustav Mahler's symphonies with his Gürzenich-Orchestra.

Kolja Blacher, violin

Kolja Blacher, born in Berlin, received his first violin lesson at the age of four. He later went to New York City to study at the Juilliard School of Music with Dorothy DeLay, and then with Sandor Vegh in Salzburg.

As a soloist, Blacher has performed with significant orchestras worldwide, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Dresden Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, NDR Symphony, Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra Tokyo, KBS Orchestra Seoul, London Philharmonic Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. He has performed with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Alan Gilbert, Daniel Harding, Vladimir Jurowski, Dimitri Kitajenko, Diego Matheus, Kent Nagano and Matthias Pintscher.

Besides his work as a soloist, he also has collaborated with many musicians like Kirill Gerstein and Clemens Hagen (with whom he plays in a piano trio), Vassily Lobanov, Natalia Gutmann, Wolfram Christ, Alois Posch and Peter Sadlo.

More recently, "Play-Direct" concerts have captured Blacher's interest. Leading the orchestra from the desk of the concertmaster, he has worked regularly with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, Festival Strings Lucerne, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Camerata Bern, and the Orchestra of the Komische Oper in Berlin.

Blacher has also recorded highly acclaimed CD's, the latest one with works by Schnittke and Prokofiev. He teaches with great passion at the music academy Hanns Eisler in his hometown of Berlin.

His violin is the Tritton Stradivari made in 1730. It is on generous loan from Miss Kimiko Powers.

COMPLETE PROGRAM DETAILS

Beethoven's Mighty Eroica

Thursday, October 4, 2012 at 8 p.m. – Music Center at Strathmore

Saturday, October 6, 2012 at 8 p.m. – Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall

Markus Stenz, conductor

Kolja Blacher, violinist

Rebel: *The Elements: Chaos*

Schumann: Violin Concerto

Beethoven: Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"

Tickets range from \$30 to \$90 and are available through the BSO Ticket Office, 410.783.8000 or BSOmusic.org.

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