



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LA PHIL'S SOUNDS ABOUT TOWN SERIES PRESENTS
JAMES CONLON CONDUCTING LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S CHORUS
AND AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY IN WORLD PREMIERE BY
ICELANDIC COMPOSER DANÍEL BJARNASON
AS PART OF SHAKESPEARE-THEMED PROGRAM**

Sunday, March 4, 2012, 7:30 PM
at Walt Disney Concert Hall

***Other Featured Works Include Willcocks' The Glories of Shakespeare and
Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet***

The LA Phil's prestigious Sounds About Town series continues with a Shakespeare-themed program featuring renowned conductor James Conlon conducting two of the country's leading youth ensembles – the Los Angeles Children's Chorus (LACC) and the American Youth Symphony (AYS) – in the world premiere of *The isle is full of noises...* by Icelandic composer Daníel Bjarnason based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and co-commissioned by LACC and AYS on Sunday, March 4, 2012, 7:30 pm, at Walt Disney Concert Hall. The ensembles also perform Sir David Willcocks' *The Glories of Shakespeare*, which draws on texts from *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and alternates between spirited syncopated rhythms and slower, richly harmonic elements. Additionally, the chorus and orchestra each perform separately with LACC Artistic Director Anne Tomlinson conducting a compilation of inventive settings of Shakespearean texts for treble voices, including Benjamin Britten's *Francie* and Douglas Beam's *Spirits*, and AYS Music Director Alexander Treger conducting a suite from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, described by National Public Radio as "one of the most beautiful scores of the 20th century." A pre-concert talk with Bjarnason hosted by Chad Smith, Director of Artistic Planning for the LA Phil, is open to ticket holders at 6:30 pm.

"We are honored to be a part of the esteemed Sounds About Town series and are extremely grateful to Mr. Conlon for conducting this highly anticipated premiere, which is reflective of his deep commitment to mentoring young artists," says Tomlinson.

Adds Treger, "In what promises to be a diverse and illuminating program, we particularly look forward to presenting a new piece by Daníel Bjarnason, who is considered to be one of the world's most intriguing composers writing for artists ranging from the London Sinfonietta to the post-rock group Sigur Rós."

Mirroring the plot of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Bjarnason's *The isle is full of noises...* begins with Miranda's compassionate plea to Prospero, her father – with whom she is stranded on an island along with Caliban, a monster who has taught them how to survive there – to have mercy on the souls sailing by the island on dangerously stormy seas. The choral writing divides the singers into 12 different parts with clustered harmonic chords serving to heighten her concern and despair. It then condenses in scope, drawing into three parts as she speaks of how she would have “sunk the seas within the earth.” The second movement finds a lyric melody artfully representing Caliban's calming words over a pulsating major seventh chord that reflects the unusual sounds on the island upon which they are marooned. The composer employs glissandi (vocal slides) and humming to highlight the evocative island sounds. The movement ends gently as Caliban reflects upon his dream of gaining riches and his hope “to dream again.” The concluding movement highlights the dramatic words of Prospero's “all shall dissolve” soliloquy by beginning with gentle harmonies that crescendo into the upper treble range, finally folding into one another to close in a single vocal octave.

Bjarnason has garnered widespread acclaim for his debut album, *Processions* (2010), with Time Out NY declaring that Bjarnason “create(s) a sound that comes eerily close to defining classical music's undefinable brave new world.” Both a conductor and composer, he has worked with a range of ensembles, including the London Sinfonietta, Ulster Orchestra and Sinfonietta Cracovia. He also regularly conducts at both the Icelandic Opera and Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Bjarnason has won numerous awards and grants and has twice been awarded a special recommendation for his work at the International Rostrum for Composers. In 2010, he was nominated for the prestigious Nordic Council's Music Prize and won the Kraumur Music Award. The same year, *Processions* won the coveted Best Composer/Best Composition category at the Icelandic Music Awards. Bjarnason's versatility as an arranger and conductor has led to collaborations with a broad array of musicians outside the classical field, including, in addition to Sigur Rós, Efterklang, múm and Ólöf Arnalds, among others.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, under the vibrant leadership of Music Director Gustavo Dudamel, presents an inspiring array of music from all genres – orchestral, chamber and Baroque music, organ and celebrity recitals, new music, jazz, world music and pop – at two of L.A.'s iconic venues, Walt Disney Concert Hall (www.laphil.com) and the Hollywood Bowl (www.hollywoodbowl.com). The LA Phil's season at Walt Disney Concert Hall extends from October through May, and throughout the summer at the Hollywood Bowl. With the preeminent Los Angeles Philharmonic at the foundation of its offerings, the LA Phil aims to enrich and transform lives through music, with a robust mix of artistic, education and community programs.

Tickets are available for \$17-\$39 from the Los Angeles Children's Chorus office at 626.793.4231.

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**Los Angeles Children's Chorus and American Youth Symphony Appear on LA Phil's Sounds About Town Series
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JAMES CONLON, one of today's most versatile and respected conductors, has cultivated a vast symphonic, operatic and choral repertoire. Since his 1974 debut with the New York Philharmonic, he has conducted virtually every major American and European symphony orchestra. Through worldwide touring, an extensive discography and videography, numerous essays and commentaries, frequent television appearances and guest speaking engagements, Conlon is one of classical music's most recognized interpreters. He is currently Music Director of Los Angeles Opera, the Ravinia Festival (summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and the Cincinnati May Festival, America's oldest choral festival. He has served as Principal Conductor of the Paris National Opera (1995-2004); General Music Director of the City of Cologne, Germany (1989-2002), where he was Music Director of both the Gürzenich Orchestra-Cologne Philharmonic and the Cologne Opera; and Music Director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic (1983-1991). Since his first appearance as a guest conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in 1976, Conlon has led more than 250 performances there and has often appeared at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden in London, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in Florence. Renowned throughout Europe for his interpretations of Wagner, since his tenure began at L.A. Opera in 2006, Conlon has sought to establish a Wagnerian tradition in Los Angeles. Over a span of five years, he has led seven Wagner works, including his first Ring Cycle in the United States. A month-long citywide Ring Festival, with the collaboration of 125 cultural institutions, accompanied the performances of the Ring at LA Opera in June 2010. The Wagner project will continue into and beyond the Wagner bicentennial in 2013. Conlon is currently engaged in a three-year homage to Benjamin Britten, set to culminate in 2013 during the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth. A long-time devotee of Britten's music, he is conducting six productions of Britten operas in the U.S. and Europe, including LA Opera's production of *Turn of the Screw* (in March 2011) and *Albert Herring* (spring 2012). The tribute extends also through symphonic and choral works. In an effort to raise awareness of the significance of the lesser-known works of composers silenced by the Nazi regime, Conlon has devoted himself to extensive programming of this music throughout Europe and North America. In 1999 he received the Zemlinsky Prize, for his efforts in bringing that composer's music to international attention. In 2007 he received the Crystal Globe Award from the Anti-Defamation League for championing these works, including his initiation of LA Opera's groundbreaking "Recovered Voices" project. His work on behalf of suppressed composers led to the creation of The OREL Foundation, an invaluable resource on the topic for music lovers, students, musicians and scholars. Committed to working with pre-professional musicians, he has devoted his time to teaching at The Juilliard School, the New World Symphony, Ravinia's Steans Institute for Young Artists, the Aspen Music Festival and School and Tanglewood Music Center. His coaching sessions and master classes with finalists of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition are documented in a collection of highly acclaimed PBS videos. In Los Angeles he works with students at The Colburn Conservatory, USC and UCLA. His pre-concert lectures at LA Opera consistently attract capacity crowds, and his appearances throughout the country as a speaker on a variety of cultural and educational topics are widely praised. Conlon has recorded extensively for the EMI, Sony Classical, Erato, Capriccio, and Telarc labels and has received numerous citations. He has appeared in several television series on PBS, and his Metropolitan Opera performances have been featured on DVDs released by Decca. Most recently, a double-bill of Zemlinsky's *The Dwarf* and Ullmann's *The Broken Jug*, and Braunfels' *The Birds*, both part of his Recovered Voices series at LA Opera, were released on DVD by the ArtHaus label. He is the recipient of two Grammy Awards – Best Classical Recording and Best Opera Album – for conducting LA Opera's production of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, released on DVD by EuroArts. Conlon holds several Honorary Doctorates and has received many awards. He is among the five initial recipients of the *Opera News Awards* and was honored by The New York Public Library as a "Library Lion." Conlon's other recent honors include the Medal of the American Liszt Society (2008), a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Istituto Italiano di Cultura (2010) and Italy's Premio Galileo 2000 Award for his significant contribution to music, art and peace in Florence (2008). He was named Commandeur de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Minister of Culture, and in 2002, he received France's highest distinction from then President of the French Republic Jacques Chirac: the Légion d'Honneur.

ANNE TOMLINSON, appointed artistic director of Los Angeles Children's Chorus (LACC) in 1995, conducts the Concert Choir and the Chamber Singers and is responsible for the educational and artistic development of LACC. She also serves as Children's Chorus Mistress for the Los Angeles Opera. During her tenure, she has prepared children for major operatic works including the world premiere of Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox* based upon the story by Roald Dahl, and has worked with Plácido Domingo, Andrew Litton, and Julius Rudel, among other renowned conductors. She has prepared children's choirs for Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Carlos Rizzi, and Maren Altop in Los Angeles Philharmonic performances of Bizet's *Carmen*, Stravinsky's *Persephone*, John Adams' *El Niño*, Mahler's Symphony No. 3, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and a fully staged production of Bernstein's *Mass* at the Hollywood Bowl, among many others. Los Angeles Master Chorale presentations include Christopher Rouse's *Requiem* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with Grant Gershon and Paul Salamunovich. Ms. Tomlinson is a frequent presenter at symposia, workshops and festivals. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and Master's degree in conducting from Northwestern University where she studied with Margaret Hillis. She received in 2000 the Gold Crown Award for Music Education, given by the Pasadena Arts Council, the 2001 Power of One Award, given by Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, and the 2006 Educator of the Year Award given by the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Southern California.

ALEXANDER TREGER, noted violinist, gifted educator and accomplished conductor, was appointed Music Director of the American Youth Symphony in 1998. Recognized for his inspiring work with promising young musicians, he has given master classes around the world and held the position of violin professor at UCLA from 1977 to 1997. In 1993, he was appointed Music Director/Conductor at Crossroads School where he has developed a youth chamber orchestra of the highest caliber. The Russian-born Treger studied with renowned violinist David Oistrakh at the prestigious Moscow Conservatory - he often refers to these six extraordinary years as the most influential in his development as a musician. After a few years with the Moscow Radio Orchestra led by Gennady Rojdesvenski and with the Israel Chamber Orchestra, where he held the post of Concertmaster/Soloist, Mr. Treger moved to the United States and joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1974. He became Assistant Concertmaster in 1978, and was appointed Concertmaster in 1985, a position he has held for 25 years. Mr. Treger won high praise for his numerous solo performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and at the Hollywood Bowl, under the direction of Zubin Mehta, Carlo Maria Giulini, Simon Rattle, Pierre Boulez, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Valery Gergiev, Yuri Temirkanov, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. He has also appeared as soloist with other major U.S. orchestras, including the San Francisco, Denver, Dallas, and Houston Symphonies. An avid chamber performer, he has collaborated in concerts with Radu Lupu, Yefim Bronfman, André Previn, Bernard Greenhouse, and Emanuel Ax. A musician of many interests and talents, he is increasingly devoting more time to conducting. Mr. Treger stepped in at the last minute to conduct the Los Angeles Philharmonic, replacing the indisposed Franz Welser-Möst and has guest conducted the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, California's Music in the Mountains Festival Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and the Santa Monica Symphony. Most recently, he has conducted the Turku Philharmonic in Finland, the State Academic Orchestra in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, the Guangzhou Symphony in China and the Armenian Philharmonic in Yerevan.

LOS ANGELES CHILDREN'S CHORUS – described by the media as “astonishingly polished,” “hauntingly beautiful,” and “one heck of a talented group of kids” – is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost children's choirs. Founded in 1986 and currently led by Artistic Director Anne Tomlinson, LACC performs with such leading organizations as LA Phil, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, LA Opera, LA Master Chorale, LACO, Pasadena Symphony and POPs and Calder Quartet. The chorus' roster includes more than 350 children aged 6-18 from 60 communities across Los Angeles in six choirs and “First Experiences in Singing” classes for young singers. LACC has toured North and South America, China and Europe, and produced the world-premiere of *Keepers of the Night*, an opera by Peter Ash and Donald Sturrock. The chorus appeared on LA Master Chorale's recently released Decca recording “A Good Understanding,” and Plácido Domingo's Deutsche Grammophon recording “Amore Infinito” (“Infinite Love”). The subject of a trilogy of documentaries by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Freida Lee Mock, LACC is featured in the Academy Award-nominated *Sing!*, about a year in the life of the choir; *Sing Opera!*, documenting the production of “Keepers of the Night”; and *Sing China!*, chronicling its groundbreaking tour to China just prior to the Beijing Olympics. LACC has performed with John Mayer on NBC's “The Tonight Show,” and was featured on Public Radio International's nationally syndicated show “From the Top,” among other credits. For more information on the choir, please visit www.lachildrenschorus.org.

The **AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY** (AYS) is dedicated to the artistic development of a new generation of musicians and to building new audiences for orchestral music. Led by Music Director Alexander Treger, the orchestra serves outstanding instrumentalists who seek to supplement their education and expand their horizon in a professional-level environment. AYS provides for unique performance opportunities, superb mentoring and inspiring collaborations with world-class artists and composers. Players are exposed to a wide repertoire and varied styles of music, from classical masterworks to world premieres and innovative film scores. With its sophisticated programming and well-attended performances in one of the finest concert halls in Southern California, the American Youth Symphony fosters curiosity, aspires to artistic excellence and strives to attract and engage the diverse communities of Los Angeles. No one is to be excluded on the basis of ability to pay. The orchestra's five concerts at Royce Hall are free to the public. This season, the American Youth Symphony is comprised of 100 students ranging in age from 15 to 27 and representing 33 different high schools and colleges. Access to the training ground is based on merit only. Training is free. Aspiring musicians audition live for a panel composed of the music director, assistant conductor and several principal players. There is no fee to audition. Founded in 1964 by Mehli Mehta, former Concertmaster of the Halle Orchestra, the American Youth Symphony has trained over 2,000 musicians who now enjoy successful careers in orchestras, music schools and recording studios around the world. Together, the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, and Cleveland Orchestras, for instance, employ eight AYS alumni in principal posts. 32 members of the three major orchestras in Los Angeles - the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Los Angeles Opera Orchestra - have trained at AYS. Last summer, Nigel Armstrong (AYS Concertmaster for the seasons 2009-2011) won 4th Prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and Ken Hamao (AYS Concertmaster for the seasons 2003-2007) won 4th Prize at the Sion Competition in Switzerland.

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EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CALENDAR LISTING

EVENT:

LA Phil – Sounds About Town

ARTISTS

James Conlon, conductor
Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Anne Tomlinson, artistic director
American Youth Symphony, Alexander Treger, music director

DATES:

Sunday, March 4, 2012, 7:30 PM
(Pre-Concert Talk, 6:30 PM)

PROGRAM:

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS	Sigh No More, Ladies Orpheus with his Lute
BRITTEN	Francie
JOHNSON	Where the Bee Sucks
BEAM	Spirits
WILLCOCKS	The Glories of Shakespeare
PROKOFIEV	Suite from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
BJARNASON	The isle is full of noises (World Premiere)

LOCATION:

Walt Disney Concert Hall
111 S. Grand Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

TICKET PRICES:

\$17-\$39

INFORMATION & TICKETS:

Los Angeles Children's Chorus office at 626.793.4231

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program and artists subject to change
02/01/12