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2008-2009 51st SEASON:

www.BYSOweb.org

BOSTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS:
THE NATION'S ONLY YOUTH ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM FULL OPERA
IS PREPARING NEW PRODUCTION:

FULL, SEMI-STAGED PERFORMANCE OF MOZART'S *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*
PRESENTED ON JANUARY 18, 2009

(BOSTON – November 19, 2008) The city of Boston is home to the Tea Party, the Green Monster, the Boston Pops...and now, the only youth orchestra in the country to perform a full, semi-staged opera annually. Under the baton of Music Director Federico Cortese, the young musicians that comprise the most advanced ensemble at the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (BYSO) will perform a complete production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart's celebrated opera buffa, with some of the region's finest professional soloists.

The BYSO's premier ensemble, the Boston Youth Symphony (BYS), will perform this work at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2008, at 3 pm with professional soloist and choral singers (Italian supertitles will be included). *See end of release for names of the singers.*

Tickets are \$25—30, and discounted group, student and senior tickets are available; call the Sanders Theatre Box Office at (617) 496-2222. Free parking is available at the Broadway Garage on Felton Street.

Le nozze di Figaro (*The Marriage of Figaro*) is Mozart's comedy about mistaken identities and a marriage proposal gone awry at a fictitious Spanish castle. The ensuing story underscores timeless themes of love, fidelity, and forgiveness. Many of the arias are considered among Mozart's finest.

Of the 13 largest youth orchestras in the country recognized by the League of American Orchestras, this season the BYSO is the only one to perform a full, semi-staged opera. Moreover, this is the second consecutive year the BYSO does so. Music Director Cortese, who celebrates his 10th anniversary with the organization this season, has steadily increased the musical excellence and personal growth of his students by exposing them to broader and more challenging Classical repertoire and instituting a more rigorous chamber orchestra program.

During his tenure, the BYSO students have performed arias and overtures to operas, but it wasn't until the organization's 50th anniversary season in 2008 when the most

advanced orchestra first performed a full, semi-staged opera: Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. In the upcoming years, Mr. Cortese is committed to conducting at least four of Mozart's operas with the BYSO's premier orchestra – January's production of *Figaro* marks the second such effort.

Said Cortese, "The performance of a full opera by a youth orchestra is an absolutely remarkable and rare accomplishment of which I am very proud. Opera is a fantastic tool for the musical and personal growth of our students because of the rich and intricate musical and psychological storylines that weave in and out of the music in ways that are not seen in a standard symphony – Mozart's operas are a labyrinth of emotions. As I've rehearsed Mozart's masterpieces with these young musicians over the years, I could not be happier to see them develop a deep interest in sophisticated operas."

The production is arranged by Stage Director Micha Hendel of New York. He will direct 16 members from Chorus pro Musica and ten operatic cast members: Eric Downs as Figaro, Joanna Mongiardo as Susanna, Edward Parks as Il Conte d'Almaviva, Sara Jakubiak as La Contessa d'Almaviva, Abigail Nims as Cherubino, Rubin Casas as Bartolo, Amanda Ingram as Macellina and Steven Sanders as Don Basillio. The roles of Don Curzio, Barbarina, and Antonio are to be determined.

BYS is the most advanced of four different orchestras that comprise the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras. This 114-member ensemble engages students grades 5-12 from dozens of communities all over New England. BYSO performs a wide range of demanding orchestral repertoire, conducted by Mr. Cortese. This season, the BYSO will offer two additional Boston performances, including an April 5, 2009, performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 5 at Symphony Hall.

More information about the BYSO and its 51st season schedule is available at www.BYSOweb.org.

Sunday, January 18, 2009, at 3 pm at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University

Boston Youth Symphony (BYS), Federico Cortese, *Conductor*
Micha Hendel, *Stage Director*

MOZART *Le nozze di Figaro*
opera buffa in four acts, semi-staged

Eric Downs, *Figaro*
Joanna Mongiardo, *Susanna*
Edward Parks, *Il Conte d'Almaviva*
Sara Jakubiak, *La Contessa d'Almaviva*
Abigail Nims, *Cherubino*
Rubin Casas, *Bartolo*
Amanda Ingram, *Macellina*
Steven Sanders, *Don Basillio*
TBD, *Don Curzio*
TBD, *Barbarina*
TBD, *Antonio*

Also with members from Chorus pro Musica

AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

- Interviews with Music Director Mr. Cortese, Executive Director Ms. Weiskel, Stage Director Micha Hendel, singers, and youth musicians
- High-resolution orchestral photography of BYSO students
- A student roster of all BYSO participating youth and their hometowns

About Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (BYSO)

The BYSO consists of approximately 420 students representing more than 120 communities from the New England area. The BYSO is widely regarded as one of the country's finest youth orchestras and is recognized nationally as a model music and arts education organization. Since its inception in 1958 at Boston University, the BYSO (formerly the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras or GBYSO) continues to achieve the highest artistic standards and remains committed to musical excellence. The organization marked its 50th anniversary with a gala concert featuring cellist Yo-Yo Ma in May 2008. The BYSO receives generous support from Boston University's College of Fine Arts, which is a major sponsor of the BYSO. The organization also receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

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