



Paul Gambill, Music Director • Connie Linsler Valentine, Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2007

Contacts: Jennifer Neal

jneal@nco.org

(615) 256-6546, ext. 3

Katie Campbell

kcampbell@mpf.com

(615) 259-4000

**NASHVILLE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA JEWISH-AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL
KICKS OFF WITH BIG, FAT JEWISH WEDDING**

-- MARCH 11-24, 2007 --

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Nashville Chamber Orchestra’s theme of *Music Without Boundaries* turns it’s ear to Jewish culture as it presents the NCO Jewish-American Music Festival. The festival, held March 11-24, will feature something for everyone including a walk through a traditional Jewish wedding with the New York wedding singer Benny Amar, a film at The Belcourt, Jewish Composers Chamber Concert, a Fiddle Fever family concert, Jewish-American Songwriters Night at the Bluebird and the finale concert featuring George Gershwin’s infamous *Rhapsody in Blue*.

“It’s a magnificent opportunity to expose people to the diversity and vitality of Jewish culture and the distinct and varied music tradition of Jewish-Americans.” said NCO executive director Connie Linsler Valentine. “It’s truly a community event with collaborations through Vanderbilt University, the Nashville Jewish Film Festival, Nashville Jewish Federation and the JCC.”

JEWISH-AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL EVENTS:

MY BIG FAT JEWISH WEDDING

Sunday, March 11 • 3 p.m.

Gordon Jewish Community Center, 801 Percy Warner Blvd., Nashville

Rabbi Saul Strosberg, Wedding Rabbi & Wedding Band Leader

Benny Amar, Wedding Singer Superstar

NCO Big Fat Jewish Wedding Band

Participate in the joy of an authentic reproduction of a traditional Jewish wedding ceremony, with commentary by Rabbi Saul Strosberg and featuring wedding couple Laurie and Philip Rice. Celebrate with all of the rituals, including dancing, kosher food and beverages. Everyone welcome!

Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$7.50 for students and can be purchased by calling the NCO at 615-256-6546.

About the Artists:

Rabbi Saul Strosberg joined the Congregation Sherith Israel as its spiritual leader in 2005. A talented musician who plays trumpet and keyboard, Rabbi Strosberg was a member of two bands while in college and rabbinical seminary, Neshoma Orchestra and Barock Orchestra. He also co-produced and performed on a recently-released CD, "Jerusalem Stone" (Sameach Music). Rabbi Strosberg also has served as High Holiday Cantor for his home-town synagogue, and holds the Washington DC record for the longest Rosh Hashanah shofar blast.

Everyone who sees **Benny Amar** perform thinks they must know him from somewhere - so captivating is his charisma and charm. Benny's music experience includes singing for the Miami Boys Choir, leading High Holiday Services and performing on bandstands all over the world. Benny's memorable style stems from his Brazilian origins and always captures a crowd. Benny's passion for music has also manifested over the last several years in his original compositions.

--

A CANTOR'S TALE

Tuesday, March 13 • 7 p.m.

Belcourt Theatre, 2102 Belcourt Ave., Nashville

A film by Erik Greenberg Anjou (92 min.)

Performance by Cantor Jacob Mendelson

In partnership with the Nashville Jewish Film Festival

Winner of the "Audience Award" at the Washington, DC, Miami and San Diego Jewish Film Festivals; "Festival Favorite" at Houston Jewish Film Festival; "Special Director's Selection" at Detroit Jewish Film Festival

A Cantor's Tale is a love song to the art of hazzanut, the musical chanting of Jewish liturgy, with its ancient, moving melodies and bravura embellishments. Brooklyn-born Cantor Jacob Mendelson, explores the American roots of hazzanut while taking us on a musical voyage that spans the Atlantic. There's music in the air, everywhere. A Cantor's Tale is very much like Levy's Real Jewish Rye, you don't have to be Jewish to love it!

Tickets are \$8 for general admission and \$5 for students and seniors, and can be purchased by calling the NCO at 615-256-6546.

About the Artists:

Growing up in Brooklyn, **Cantor Jacob Mendelson** witnessed the dwindling days of the Golden Age of Hazzanut. Now an international figure in the field, both as practitioner and teacher, Cantor Mendelson has just finished his tenure as President of the Cantors Assembly of America, the largest body of cantors in the world. Following a recent historic concert in Carnegie Hall,

celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Cantors Assembly, the New York Times hailed his performance as "stunning."

--

JEWISH-AMERICAN COMPOSERS CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT

Thursday, March 15 • Talk & Concert 8 p.m.
Turner Recital Hall, Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University,
2400 Blakemore Ave., Nashville

Members of the Nashville Chamber Orchestra and Blair School of Music faculty perform works by Bernstein, Golijov and Michael Alec Rose. Rose & performers give a short schpiel on "What Makes Music Jewish?"

Free Admission

--

FIDDLE FEVER FAMILY CONCERT

Sunday, March 18 • 3 p.m.
Downtown Public Library Auditorium, 615 Church St., Nashville

Crystal Plohman, fiddle
Klezmer Kidz

Take your family on an international fiddle tour with klezmer, Celtic, Gypsy and other world-music fiddle styles. Featuring the Klezmer Kidz and other special guest fiddlers.

A SPRING INTO THE ARTS event co-sponsored by:
NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Free Admission

About the Artists:

Prodigiously talented, a dedicated educator, and an experienced communicator, **Crystal Plohman** was one of the first of a new breed of classically trained violinists who, at a young age, branched out into the multi-faceted world of fiddling. A native of Winnipeg, Crystal became Canada's first female fiddling champion, and has performed and taught with a who's who list of famous players and recording artists. Along the way, Crystal was also recruited to establish and direct the Fiddle Program for Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music (which position she still holds).

Nashville, Tennessee's **Klezmer Kidz** is a 7-piece band of young musicians, aged 11 to 16, who play Jewish 'roots' music. Along with their founder and director, Nashville producer and guitarist Jim Prendergast, they draw their repertoire from deep in the heart of Eastern European musical tradition. In much the same way that Bluegrass musicians have kept alive their age-old Anglo-Celtic music, this young all-acoustic band has revived and energized the repertoire of the 19th Century 'klezmerim' (travelling groups of Jewish musicians who played for weddings, celebrations and events for the nobility).

--

JEWISH-AMERICAN SONGWRITERS NIGHT

6 p.m. and 9 p.m., Tuesday, March 20
The Bluebird Café, 4104 Hillsboro Pike, Nashville

The Jewish-American Songwriters Night includes a night at the iconic Bluebird Café and features some of Nashville's top singers and songwriters.

6 p.m. – Jason Blume, Jeff Jacob, Michael Hunter Ochs, Karen Taylor-Good
9 p.m. – Liz Hengber, Georgia Middleman, Joie-Scott, Stacy Widelitz

6:00 p.m. show - \$7 food/bev. minimum

9:00 p.m. show - \$12 + \$7 food/bev. minimum

Reservations for this event may be made after March 13 by calling The Bluebird Café at (615) 383-1461.

--

GERSHWIN & KLEZMER

Saturday, March 24 • 8 p.m.
Schermerhorn Symphony Center, One Symphony Place, Nashville

Nashville Chamber Orchestra

Paul Gambill, *conductor*

Amy Dorfman, *piano*

Brave Old World, *klezmer band*

George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* swings hard with New York City jazz of the 1920's, tinged with influences of his Jewish heritage. Since the 15th century the secular Jewish folk music known today as klezmer has been used to inspire celebration and dance. These worlds will be brought together for an evening filled with wild, joyful and poignant music. Plus, the world premiere of *Arguing with God*, an NCO commissioned klezmer concerto from Michael Alec Rose.

7 PM Meet The Music - Discussion featuring Maestro Gambill, composer Michael Alec Rose and Brave Old World. Symphony Center Curb Education Room.

Tickets are \$19-\$69 and can be purchased by calling the Schermerhorn Symphony Center at 615-687-6400. For Group Sales call the NCO at 615-256-6546.

About the Artists:

Michael Alec Rose is Associate Professor of Composition at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music. His awards and commissions include the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation's chamber music commission, for which he composed his *String Quartet No. 2*, premiered at Lincoln Center and the Library of Congress; 19 consecutive annual awards in composition from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, 1986-2004; and three commissioned performances by the Nashville Symphony, most recently of his *Symphony No. 1—Paths of Peace*. Rose received his B.A. and M.A. in music and music composition from the University of Pennsylvania and his Ph.D. in music composition from the Eastman School of

Music. He has studied with Pulitzer-Prize winning composers George Crumb and Richard Wernick, as well as with two other legendary mentors, George Rochberg and Samuel Adler. Rose's work as a teacher is an integral part of his life as a composer. He has won several major teaching awards at Vanderbilt, including the prestigious Chair of Teaching Excellence.

Brave Old World brings together four pioneering virtuosi of the Klezmer scene. Vocalist and violinist Michael Alpert, renowned for his native Yiddish and soulful lyricism, "is the only klezmer artist writing Yiddish songs on contemporary topics" (New York Newsday). Musical Director Alan Bern, acknowledged as the leading master of klezmer accordion and piano, brings a unique and innovative musical vision to the group's arrangements. Kurt Bjorling inspires audiences with the passion and imagination of the Jewish clarinet, while the incomparable Stuart Brotman embodies multi-instrumental virtuosity on bass, percussion and cimbalom. Brave Old World has brought klezmer music into the global-village present with original and provocative new Yiddish songs on subjects as contemporary as Chernobyl and the fall of the Berlin Wall, in international workshops and residencies, and through pioneering collaborations with East European artists like Hungary's renowned Muzsikás. Brave Old World creates its music anew onstage at every concert, and plays it with a passion that reaches out and embraces audiences.

Pianist **Amy Dorfman** has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States and in Europe. A native of Columbus, Ohio, Ms. Dorfman attended Indiana University's School of Music, where she studied with Alfonso Montecino and James Tocco. As a guest artist, she has performed at the Sedona Music Festival and in chamber recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Since 1990, Amy has been a member of the *Dorfman/Katahn Piano Duo* with Enid Katahn. The Duo has appeared with the Nashville Symphony and presents recital programs nationally. She has received several awards for her playing, including the Individual Artist Fellowship from the Tennessee Arts Commission and first prize in the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. She is currently Associate Professor of Piano at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University.

--

About NCO

The Nashville Chamber Orchestra has come to be recognized as one of America's most creative and innovative orchestras, presenting its unique style of Music Without Boundaries. Under the leadership of Music Director Paul Gambill and Executive Director Connie Linsler Valentine, the extraordinary music making of this ensemble has garnered a steady stream of national media attention plus recordings for Warner Bros., NAXOS, Angel, Almanac and Alabaster Records, and a national award for Adventurous Programming from ASCAP. Its innovative Kid Pan Alley-Nashville CD received three prestigious national media awards, plus a 2006 GRAMMY® nomination.

The NCO is funded in part by grants made available through the Metro Nashville Arts Commission, the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For Further Press Photos: Contact Jennifer Neal at jneal@nco.org

Nashville Chamber Orchestra
2002 Blair Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37212
(615) 256-6546
(615) 467-7023 (fax)
www.nco.org