



**MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008**

# **NEWS RELEASE**

Contact: Christine Riffle

[marketing@augustasyphony.org](mailto:marketing@augustasyphony.org)

## **AUGUSTA SYMPHONY MASTERWORKS A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE Beethoven's Ninth Symphony "Ode to Joy"**

The Augusta Symphony, under the direction of Maestro Donald Portnoy, presents **Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 "Ode to Joy" on Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. on February 2.** The concert is at **First Baptist of Augusta.** This Masterworks concert presents two of the most powerful compositions in the orchestral repertory. The program includes **Joseph Schwantner's *New Morning for the World: Daybreak of Freedom***, based on the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., with **narrator W. Isaac Holmes.** The orchestra also performs **Beethoven's** iconic **Symphony No. 9** featuring soloists Tonya Currier, *soprano*; Jennifer Luiken, *alto*; Jae Yoon Kim, *tenor*; and Jacob Will, *baritone* and a 150 member chorus including the Augusta Choral Society and the Presbyterian College Choir, prepared by Choral Director Dr. J. Porter Stokes.

Considered the most powerful symbol of absolute music in the classical music canon, **Beethoven's Ninth Symphony** ("Ode to Joy") is recognized worldwide as one of the greatest musical achievements. Since its debut performance on May 7, 1824, this masterpiece has been performed innumerable times in conjunction with some of history's most momentous events. His final symphonic work, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 was the first symphony to include vocalists and the first to exceed an hour. The fourth and final movement introduces the famous Ode to Joy theme based on Friedrich Schiller's 18<sup>th</sup> century poem "Ode to Joy." Schiller's poem expresses his idealistic vision of the human race becoming brothers, a vision that Beethoven shared. At the premiere of this masterpiece, the deaf Beethoven had to be turned around so he could see the audience's exuberant applause. Symphony No. 9 features four soloists and chorus.

As a matter of interest, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony set the standard for CD capacity: the standard length of a CD is approximately 74 minutes because it allows an entire performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to be played uninterrupted. In 1985, the European Union chose the melody of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for the European Union anthem to musically express the ideals of freedom, peace and solidarity for which Europe stands.

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Joseph Schwantner** is one of America's leading composers and currently serves as the Professor of Composition at the Yale School of Music. In 1979, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his first orchestral work, *Aftertones of Infinity*. With the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. approaching in 1983, Schwantner composed *New Morning for the World: Daybreak of Freedom*, a work for orchestra and narrator using excerpts from Dr. King's speeches including his immortal "I Have a Dream" speech. This work has since entered the standard repertory of orchestras nationwide.

W. Isaac Holmes, Assistant Professor of Music at Paine College and Artistic Director of the Columbia County Choral Society, narrates the moving text at the evening's performance.

**Tickets are available online at [www.augustasympphony.org](http://www.augustasympphony.org) or by calling 706.826.4705. Tickets are \$25, \$40, and \$50.** Full-time students and military personnel with valid I.D. may purchase \$7 tickets on concert evening only (no advance reservations can be taken for discounted tickets). The concert box office opens at 6:30 p.m. at First Baptist of Augusta. This season presents *Interludes*, an opportunity for patrons to discuss the evening's performance and enjoy light refreshments. *Interludes*, hosted by The Friends of the Symphony support group, begin at 7 p.m. and resume during intermission in the Welcome Center at First Baptist of Augusta.

**THE MASTERWORKS SERIES SPONSOR IS MCG HEALTH SYSTEM. CONCERT SPONSORS FOR THIS EVENING'S PERFORMANCE ARE DR. J. ROGERS BYRD AND MR. & MRS. CHARLES WHITWORTH. Media Sponsors are AT&T The Real Yellow Pages, Georgia Public Broadcasting, and The Augusta Chronicle.**

For more information about the Augusta Symphony, visit [www.augustasympphony.org](http://www.augustasympphony.org), call 706.826.4705, fax 706.826.4735, or email [marketing@augustasympphony.org](mailto:marketing@augustasympphony.org). Located on the second floor of the Sacred Heart Cultural Center, the Symphony office is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

# # #

---

*The Augusta Symphony Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit entity and is supported in part by an award from the **Georgia Council for the Arts** through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. The Georgia Council is a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. The Augusta Symphony is also supported in part by the **Columbia County Community and Leisure Services** and the **Greater Augusta Arts Council** through appropriations from the **City of Augusta**.*



*The premier provider of orchestral music in the Central Savannah River Area.*  
Post Office Box 579 | Augusta, GA 30903-0579 | Phone: 706.826.4705 | Fax: 706.826.4735  
[www.augustasympphony.org](http://www.augustasympphony.org)