

PRESS RELEASE

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THE SANTA FE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & CHORUS
PRESENTS A

BEETHOVEN MARATHON **Saturday, May 21st—6pm & Sunday, May 22nd—4pm**

FEATURING INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED PIANIST
ANTON KUERTI

WITH THE SANTA FE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, *Steven Smith Conducts*



"suddenly we were in the unmistakable presence of greatness. He was no longer playing the piano; the music was playing him, and we rode the wave too."

— *The Globe & Mail, Toronto*

Join the Santa Fe Symphony for a "Beethoven Marathon" featuring internationally renowned pianist Anton Kuerti, quoted by The Boston Globe as being "...one of the best interpreters of Beethoven around." For Saturday's concert, Mr. Kuerti will be performing Piano Concerti 3, 2, and 4, and on Sunday he will perform the beloved Piano Concerti 5 and 1, along with the full Symphony orchestra. Tickets for these performances range from \$20 to \$70 and are available through the Symphony Box Office (505) 983-1414 or (800) 480-1319, and The Lensic Box Office (505) 988-1234. Tickets are also available online. Visit www.santafesymphony.org or www.lensic.org.

AT THE LENSIC PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

ANTON KUERTI, PIANO

Throughout his prodigiously successful career, pianist Anton Kuerti has been acclaimed for the clarity of his musical vision and the immense technique with which he serves a wide choice of repertoire. He remains among an elite list of pianists performing at the very highest level, through which he extends his vision to a new generation of listeners. Recent concerto performances with the Boston Symphony and the Detroit Symphony, and return recital engagements at the Concertgebouw are only the latest in a long series of performances through which Kuerti's artistry deepens the human experience.

Anton Kuerti was born in Austria, grew up in the U.S., and has lived in Canada for more than 35 years. His teachers included Arthur Loesser, Mieczyslaw Horszowski and Rudolf Serkin. At the age of 11 he performed the Grieg Concerto with Arthur Fiedler and, while still a student, he won the famous Leventritt Award. In 2007 he received two more prestigious awards, the Schumann Prize of the Schumann Gesellschaft in Germany, and the National Arts Prize of the Banff Centre in Canada.

His distinguished performing career has included tours to nearly forty countries, including Japan, Russia, and most of Europe. He has performed with most major U.S. orchestras and conductors, such as the Boston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony (Menuhin), Cleveland Orchestra (Szell), Philadelphia Orchestra (Ormandy), and the orchestras of Atlanta, Denver, Detroit, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and San Francisco. His vast repertoire includes some 50 concertos, including one he composed himself.

Anton Kuerti maintains a busy performance and teaching schedule in North America and abroad. In the last two seasons he has performed the complete cycle of the five Beethoven Piano Concertos with the Columbus Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Brott Festival Orchestra. He has appeared as concerto soloist with The Boston Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra (Peter Oundjian conducting.) and the symphonies of Toronto, Edmonton, Colorado, Victoria, Kitchener-Waterloo, Thunder Bay, Windsor and Santa Fe, as well as with the National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. A sought-after recitalist, he has just given a selection of successful recitals, including appearances in Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, as well as on the stages of the Caramoor and Ravinia Festivals. Recent chamber music performances include a program for CBC Montreal, a visit to the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and a week-long residency at the Vermont Mozart Festival including recital, chamber music and concerto appearances. Anton Kuerti performed a Beethoven "Sonatathon" for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society in late spring 2003 before his return to the Caramoor Festival that summer.

In Canada Kuerti has appeared in 140 communities from coast to coast, and has played with every professional orchestra, including 39 concerts with the Toronto Symphony. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada, and is the recipient of several honorary doctorates.

Anton Kuerti is one of today's most recorded artists, having put on disc all the Beethoven Concertos and Sonatas, the Schubert Sonatas, the Brahms Concertos and works by many other composers. His recordings are heard almost daily on the CBC. Soon to be released is a CD of works for piano and orchestra by Schumann, and a world premiere release of works for violin and piano by Czerny. A critic for the U.S. magazine *Fanfare* wrote simply that 'Kuerti is the best pianist currently playing'. CD Review (London) called him 'one of the truly great pianists of this century... stunningly played... poignantly beautiful ... a superb Schubert player', while Classic CD (London) wrote that his was 'some of the finest Schubert playing I've ever heard.

Ludwig van Beethoven, (1770 -1827) was the most predominant musical figure in the transitional period between the Classical and Romantic eras. Born in Bonn, Germany, Beethoven is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers of all time. He began his musical education under the tutorship of his father, who was a musician in the Electoral court at Bonn. The child's musical talent manifested itself early, and his father attempted unsuccessfully to exploit the boy as a child prodigy. Beethoven's incredible talent was soon noticed by others and in 1779 he became the protégé of Christian Gottlob Neefe, who taught him composition. His talent was also noticed and appreciated by the reigning prince, Elector Maximilian Franz, who subsidized his musical studies. After a very difficult childhood, Beethoven moved to Vienna at age 22. He quickly established a reputation as a piano virtuoso and composer. During the early period of his career,

Beethoven was seen as emulating his great predecessors Haydn and Mozart, at the same time exploring new directions and gradually expanding the scope and ambition of his work.

There is evidence that Beethoven began work on his *Second Piano Concerto* as early as 1785. This concerto contains some of the earliest music he wrote that has made it into the standard repertory. He revised it thoroughly in his first years in Vienna, and then—after its premiere at a charity concert in 1795—he wrote an entirely new finale in 1798. During these same years, he wrote another piano concerto, in C major, which was published in March 1801. When the Concerto in B-flat was published later that year, it was inevitably listed as No. 2, though it had been the first to be written.

Between 1804 and 1808, Beethoven composed Symphony No. 5 in C minor (Op. 67). This symphony is one of the most popular and best-known compositions in all of classical music, and one of the most often played symphonies. It comprises four movements: an opening sonata, an andante, and a fast scherzo which leads *attacca* to the finale. First performed in Vienna's Theater an der Wien in 1808, the work achieved its prodigious reputation soon afterwards. E. T. A. Hoffmann described the symphony as "one of the most important works of the time."

Beethoven suffered through a troubled personal life and poor health for many years, which worsened over the years. The loss of his hearing led him to contemplate suicide. He was also attracted to unattainable (married or aristocratic women) whom he idealized, but never married. In 1826, his health took a turn for the worse. He died on March 26th. Unlike Mozart, who was buried in a pauper's grave, 20,000 Viennese citizens lined the streets at Beethoven's funeral.