

PRESS RELEASE

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Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus

PRESENTS ITS 27TH

Season Opener

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH AT 4:00 P.M.



The Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus is excited to present its “Season Opener” for the 2009-2010 season, featuring the 2009 *Van Cliburn Gold Medalist*, Nobuyuki Tsujii, *Piano*, performing Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 1. Don’t miss this incredible opportunity to see Tsujii’s *only* orchestral concerto appearance in the United States for the 2009-2010 season.

Frédéric Francois Chopin (1810 - 1849)

The music of Frédéric Chopin is, in many ways, a record of Chopin the pianist. All of his music is either for solo piano, or places the piano in an important role. As a performer, he was known for his improvisational ability, and his compositions are often the result of these performances.

Chopin was born in Poland to a French émigré and a Polish woman of the court. He received his training at the newly instituted conservatory in Warsaw and he performed concerts in Vienna and Warsaw before going to Paris at the age of twenty. It was during this time of public performance that he wrote his large works, such as his two Piano concertos. In Paris, he quickly became a part of the elite cultural circles and was championed by musical and literary figures alike. Most of his performances were in a more intimate atmosphere, and his music reflected this.

Chopin carried on a long-term romantic affair with the writer George Sand (Aurore Dudevant), spending periods of great creativity at her estate in Nohant. Here, Chopin continued to associate with Europe’s musical and literary elite. During this time he also established himself as a teacher, and many of his etudes were written as teaching pieces. These years were also marked by

deteriorating health. After his break with Sand in 1847, his condition worsened considerably. He died of tuberculosis two years later; his death was greeted with an outpouring of grief among Parisians.

The wonder of Chopin's music is the way he conjured new sounds from the piano. His pieces explore the full expressive range of the instrument, and he had the ability to create a kind of musical poetry. The freedom with which he played is reflected in his extensive use of tempo rubato. He also extended the harmonic language of the Romantic style; not by bold leaps to new chords and tonalities, but by subtle side trips that take his pieces to those new tonal areas. Finally, Chopin is remembered as one of the first nationalist composers, using the themes and dances of his native Poland as the sources for his pieces (especially the polonaises and mazurkas). In every way, Chopin was the quintessential "Romantic" composer, and Robert Schumann's initial reaction to his music was born out in his short but spectacular career.

Nobuyuki Tsujii, Piano

The announcement of twenty-year-old Japanese pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii as winner of the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Gold Medal at the Thirteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition marked a significant historic milestone for both this extraordinary artist and the competition. Already known in his home country for his refined and effortless playing, his spell-binding performances at the 2009 Cliburn brought Mr. Tsujii to the attention of hundreds of thousands of new fans throughout the world, while raising his status in Japan to superstar. Along with the medal, he received three years of international concert engagements coordinated by the Van Cliburn Foundation in the United States and by IMG Artists in Europe, as well as a CD recording of his award-winning Cliburn Competition performances for the *harmonia mundi usa* label.

Blind since birth, "Nobu" began receiving awards at age seven, when he was named first-prize winner at the All Japan Blind Students Music Competition. At the age of twelve, he made noted recital debuts at Tokyo's Suntory Hall and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. In 2005, at the age of sixteen, he was presented the Critic's Award at the Fifteenth Chopin Competition in Poland. Performance credits include appearances with the Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux, Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as with most of Japan's leading orchestras. He has also performed in the Czech Republic, Russia, and Taiwan. An acclaimed debut album released by Avex classics

in 2007 led to a fifteen-city tour of Japan and a second recording featuring Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Berlin's Deutsche Sinfonie Orchestra, released in 2008.

Immediately following his success at the 2009 Cliburn Competition, Mr. Tsujii made a recital debut in Germany at the Klavier-Festival Ruhr and returned to the United States for an Aspen Festival debut. His 2009–2010 concert season is also highlighted by performances with the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Europa at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, and recitals in Houston, Indianapolis, and Washington, D.C. Among engagements offered for the 2010–2011 season are a Martin Theater recital debut as part of the 2010 Ravinia Festival in Chicago, chamber music with the Takács Quartet, and concerts in Japan led by Vladimir Ashkenazy. In fall of 2009, *harmonia mundi usa* releases his 2009 Cliburn Competition recording featuring works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, and a recent work by American composer John Musto—a performance that earned him the Best Performance of a New Work prize.

Born in Tokyo, Nobuyuki Tsujii is devoted to his mother, Itsuko Tsujii, who has written two bestselling books about raising her gifted child. He is currently a participant of the performer's program at the Ueno Gakuen College of Music, and has studied with Masahiro Kawakami, Yukio Yokoyama, and Kyoko Tabe. More information can be found at www.nobupiano1988.com. His Cliburn competition performances are available for viewing at www.cliburn.tv.