

the colorado symphony



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BÉLA FLECK, ZAKIR HUSSAIN AND EDGAR MEYER
JOIN JEFFREY KAHANE AND COLORADO SYMPHONY**

All American concert features world premiere of Kenji Bunch's First Piano Concerto

- Artists:** Colorado Symphony
Kahane Conducts American Classics
Jeffrey Kahane, *conductor*
Monica Ohuchi, *piano*
Béla Fleck, *banjo*
Zakir Hussain, *tabla*
Edgar Meyer, *double bass*
- Program:** COPLAND: Suite from *Appalachian Spring*
KENJI BUNCH: Piano Concerto
BÉLA FLECK, ZAKIR HUSSAIN AND EDGAR MEYER: *The Melody of Rhythm*, Triple Concerto for Banjo, Double Bass and Tabla
GERSHWIN: *An American in Paris*
- Performances:** Friday, May 20 at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, May 21 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 22 at 2:30 p.m.
- Tickets:** Remaining tickets currently start at \$32.

DENVER – May 10, 2011 – Conductor **Jeffrey Kahane** returns to the Colorado Symphony for three groundbreaking all American concerts on May 20, 21 and 22 as concertgoers experience the thrills of a world premiere piano concerto by **Kenji Bunch**, as well as the artistry of banjo virtuoso **Béla Fleck**, tabla legend **Zakir Hussain** and double bass master **Edgar Meyer** in performance of their triple concerto, *The Melody of Rhythm*. Tickets are on sale now for this must-experience concert that also features Copland's Suite from *Appalachian Spring* and Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. These exciting performances kick off a series of concerts celebrating American composers and artists that continues in June with *Celebrate America* featuring Sandy Patti, a glamorous evening with Pink Martini, and night with R&B stars Boyz II Men.

Once again under the baton of former music director Jeffrey Kahane, the Colorado Symphony presents the world premiere of Bunch's first piano concerto featuring pianist **Monica Ohuchi**. Heralded as "a

composer to watch” by *The New York Times*, Bunch has quickly emerged as one of the most prominent American composers of his generation, appealing to audiences and performers alike with a distinctive, vibrant voice in contemporary American music.

This thrilling evening continues with a rare performance of ***The Melody of Rhythm, Triple Concerto for Banjo, Double Bass and Tabla*** featuring the three composers: Fleck, Hussain and Meyer. These masterful genre-benders are the leading virtuosos on their respective instruments and move with ease among the worlds of classical, bluegrass and world music.

Instantly recognized as “unique and incomparable,” the dazzling, expressive concerto creates something stylistically unique from the influences of bluegrass, folk, classical, Indian, Oriental, blues and jazz. *The Melody of Rhythm* is essentially an exploration of the vast range of musical experiences available in today’s global culture as filtered through the distinct but interlocking sensibilities of three master musicians.

About Kenji Bunch’s First Piano Concerto

Kenji Bunch’s Piano Concerto, composed in 2010/11, was commissioned through the Magnum Opus Project: Kathryn Gould, founding patron and commissioner, and Meet The Composer, project manager.

On the Concerto, the composer writes, “Along with symphonies and string quartets, the piano concerto has long been one of the classic milestones in a composer’s trajectory — a yardstick that has inspired and intimidated me for years. I often wondered how I would approach this undertaking, how I could alter some aspect of the instrumentation, timing or other parameter in order to subvert the conventions and offer a fresh take on this storied genre. When I was fortunate enough to receive this opportunity to not only write a concerto, but to write specifically for my wife, Monica Ohuchi, as the soloist, I decided to fully embrace the tradition to which I was humbly contributing, and designed this work as a classic, three-movement, full-length concerto with full orchestra, in the spirit of the iconic concertos I grew up admiring. To this end, I present the three movements as the traditional components of dramatic opening to establish the relationship between soloist and orchestra, slow, lyrical middle movement to serve as the work’s emotional center, and virtuosic perpetual motion to provide a bravura finale.”

“Due to a multitude of logistical reasons, the premiere of this work was postponed for over a year — which turned out to be a great blessing in disguise. During the interim, Monica and I pursued another collaboration when I wrote a set of performance études for solo piano for her, which she has since recorded. This experience not only taught me a vast amount about writing for the piano, and specifically for her hands, but it also allowed the two of us to really develop a musical vocabulary together. I ended up discarding much of what I had written previously— especially for the solo part. This new incarnation of the concerto features a strong influence from my set of études, and is truly a genuine collaboration in which the soloist’s input has been invaluable.”

About the Guest Artists

Béla Fleck has been called the premiere banjo player in the world. He has virtually reinvented the image and the sound of the banjo through a remarkable performing and recording career that has taken him all over the musical map. At home equally in the great classical halls and concert arenas of the world,

Fleck has won eleven Grammy® Awards and has been nominated in more categories than anyone in Grammy® history.

Zakir Hussain is mutually appreciated as an international phenomenon in the field of percussion and in the music world at large. A classical tabla virtuoso of the highest order, his consistently brilliant and exciting performances have not only established him as a national treasure in his own country, India, but earned him worldwide fame. Widely considered a chief architect of the contemporary world music movement, Hussain's contribution to world music has been unique, with many historic collaborations.

Equally at home at the keyboard or on the podium, **Jeffrey Kahane** has established an international reputation as a truly versatile artist, recognized by audiences around the world for his mastery of a diverse repertoire ranging from Bach, Mozart and Beethoven to Gershwin, Golijov and John Adams. Kahane made his conducting debut at the Oregon Bach Festival in 1988. Since then, he has guest conducted orchestras such as the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, Philadelphia Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Academy of St. Martin's in the Fields, and the Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Dallas and New World symphonies, among others. Currently in his 14th season as music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Kahane concluded his tenure as music director of the Colorado Symphony in June 2010.

Edgar Meyer is prominently established as a unique and masterful instrumentalist with an active career as both performer and composer. Hailed by *The New Yorker* as "...the most remarkable virtuoso in the relatively unchronicled history of his instrument," Meyer's unparalleled technique and musicianship in combination with his gift for composition have brought him to the fore, where he is appreciated by a vast, varied audience. His uniqueness in the field was recognized by a MacArthur Award in 2002.

Since capturing first prize at the Chinese International Piano Competition at the age of five, Japanese-American pianist **Monica Ohuchi** has been awarded top prizes in more than 20 national and international piano competitions. Performing to wide acclaim as soloist and chamber musician, Ohuchi's concert engagements have brought her to such prestigious venues as Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater, Meany Hall of Seattle and the Canadian Opera Company's Richard Bradshaw Amphitheater. Beginning in the 2010/11 season, Ohuchi is engaged in a three-year contract performing the world premiere of Kenji Bunch's First Piano Concerto.

Tickets: Tickets are on sale now at www.coloradosymphony.org, the Colorado Symphony Box Office: (303) 623-7876 or (877) 292-7979 or in-person in the lobby of Boettcher Concert Hall in the Denver Performing Arts Complex. Hours are Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

About the Colorado Symphony

The state's only full-time professional orchestra, the Colorado Symphony embraces a tradition of musical excellence by presenting a diverse array of symphonic performances throughout the year. Originally established in 1989 as the successor to the Denver Symphony, the Colorado Symphony performs in Boettcher Concert Hall and throughout the Front Range, presenting outstanding education and outreach programs, as well as Masterworks, Pops, Holiday, Family, and the exciting new *Inside the*

Score series that has attracted a historic level of first-time concertgoers. By presenting music that is both timeless and inspiring, while taking risks with new musical collaborations and interactive concerts, the Colorado Symphony is attracting more diverse and younger audiences than ever before. To date, 30 percent of the 2010/11 season concertgoers are new patrons. The increasing popularity of Colorado Symphony concerts as well as a strong fund-raising base not only re-affirms the artistic excellence of the orchestra, but also reflects the deep-rooted enthusiasm for symphonic music felt by so many individuals across the region. For more information about the Colorado Symphony, visit www.coloradosymphony.org.

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