

LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TIMOTHY MUFFITT • MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

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LANSING SYMPHONY TO PRESENT HARPIST YOLANDA KONDONASSIS IN MASTERWORKS 4: EXOTIC SKETCHES

Lansing, MI – December 17, 2010 – The Lansing Symphony Orchestra will present **Yolanda Kondonassis**, one of the world’s foremost harpists, in its fourth MasterWorks concert titled “**Exotic Sketches**” on **Saturday, January 8, 2011 at 8 p.m.** at Wharton Center for Performing Arts. Hailed by the *New York Times* for “powerful playing and musicianly energy,” **Ms. Kondonassis** brings her exquisite artistry to Lansing for **Ginastera’s Concerto for Harp and Orchestra**, a thrilling force that combines vibrant Argentinean flavors with dramatic and virtuosic solo harp. She will also be featured on Debussy’s exotic work for harp and orchestra *Danses Sacrée et Profane (Sacred and Profane Dances)*. The program will open with **Rossini’s Overture to *La Gazza Ladra***, used popularly in TV, radio and movies, including Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange*. The program will conclude with **Respighi’s epic *Pines of Rome***, a thrilling tribute to the city of Rome, depicted through portrayals of trees in different parts of the city.



MasterWorks 4: Exotic Sketches is sponsored by Fifth Third Bank and is presented with the support of the City of Lansing Arts & Cultural Grant Program funded through the Lansing Economic Development Corporation with help from the Arts Council of Greater Lansing.

Tickets start at \$12, available by calling **(517) 487-5001** or online at **www.LansingSymphony.org**. Group and student discounts available.

Grammy-nominated harpist **Yolanda Kondonassis** has been called “dazzling” by the *Detroit News* and is recognized as one of the world’s foremost harpists, performing both as a concerto soloist and recitalist throughout

the United States, Far East and Europe. Since making her debut at age 18 with the New York Philharmonic, she has appeared as soloist with numerous major orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony and the Hong Kong Philharmonic, to name a few. Other solo appearances include engagements at Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y and Taiwan's National Concert Hall.

Yolanda Kondonassis is celebrated as one of the world's premiere solo harpists and is widely regarded as today's most recorded classical harpist. Hailed as "an extraordinary virtuosa" and "sheer luminescence at the harp," she has performed around the globe as a concerto soloist and in recital, bringing her unique brand of musicianship and warm artistry to an ever-increasing audience.



Her fifteenth album on the Telarc label features the world premiere recording of Bright Sheng's *Never Far Away: Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, written for and premiered by Ms. Kondonassis. With well over 100,000 albums sold worldwide, her extensive Telarc discography includes her recent Grammy-nominated release of music by Takemitsu and Debussy entitled *Air*, and other titles such as *Salzedo's Harp*, *Debussy's Harp*, *The Romantic Harp*, her own (and the first-ever) harp transcription of *Vivaldi's The Four Seasons* with the Orchestra of Flanders.

As an author, composer, and arranger, Ms. Kondonassis has published three books to date: *On Playing the Harp*, *The Yolanda Kondonassis Collection*, and *The Yolanda Kondonassis Christmas Collection*, featuring Ms. Kondonassis' most popular arrangements from her acclaimed disc, *Dream Season: The Christmas Harp*. All of Ms. Kondonassis' works are published by Carl Fischer Music.

Ms. Kondonassis carries her passionate artistic commitment to issues regarding the protection of natural resources, air quality, and climate change. Royalties from several of her projects are donated to earth causes and she is the founder and director of *Earth at Heart*, a non-profit organization devoted to earth literacy and inspiration through the arts. Her first children's book, entitled *Our House is Round: A Kid's Book About Why Protecting the Earth Matters* was released on Earth Day, 2010.

Her long list of national and international honors includes top prizes in the Affiliate Artists National Auditions in New York and the Maria Korchinska International Harp Competition in Great Britain. The recipient of two Solo Recitalists Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Ms. Kondonassis has been featured on CNN and PBS television as well as National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, and

Performance Today. In addition to her active performing and recording schedule, Ms. Kondonassis heads the harp departments at The Cleveland Institute of Music and Oberlin College Conservatory, and has presented master classes around the world.

The 2010/2011 season is Music Director **Timothy Muffitt's** fifth season with the Lansing Symphony. Muffitt is also in his 12th season as Music Director & Conductor of the Baton Rouge Symphony. In the summer, he serves as Music Director of the Chautauqua Institution's Music School Festival Orchestra, one of the country's premier orchestral training ensembles. Previously, Muffitt served as the Associate Conductor of the Austin Symphony and as Artistic Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic's Casual Classics Series,



for which he was awarded a Certificate of Meritorious Service from the American Federation of Musicians. Muffitt has appeared with leading orchestras throughout the country and is recognized as a strong proponent of community arts education. He also has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Long Beach Symphony, Columbus Ohio's Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Virginia Symphony, the Grant Park Music Festival Orchestra in Chicago, and the Symphonies of Houston, Phoenix, Edmonton, Harrisburg, and Spokane. He has worked with many prominent performers, including Renee Fleming, Yo Yo Ma, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Andre Watts, Alicia de Larrocha, Pinchas Zukerman, Van Cliburn, Lynn Harrell, and Itzhak Perlman; and many prominent composers, including John Cage, Joseph Schwantner, Ellen Taffe Zwilich, John Harbison, Joan Tower, and Bernard Rands. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Timothy Muffitt studied at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra was established in 1929. More than 20,000 people attend Lansing Symphony concerts each year, and more than 250,000 listeners are able to hear broadcasts of the orchestra's performances by NPR affiliate WKAR-FM Radio. The Symphony's highly acclaimed education programs reach students in kindergarten through 12th grades. For more information, visit www.LansingSymphony.org or find us on Facebook® or Twitter.

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