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**SEATTLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA NAMES  
LUDOVIC MORLOT MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE**

**Assumes Music Director Post in 2011 - 2012 Season**

**Gerard Schwarz Becomes Conductor Laureate in 2011 - 2012**

**Seattle, WA – Seattle Symphony Orchestra** Board of Directors Chair Leslie Jackson Chihuly and Interim Executive Director Mark McCampbell announced today that French conductor **Ludovic Morlot has been named Music Director Designate, beginning in the 2010–2011 season, to assume the role of Music Director at the beginning of the 2011–2012 season** with an initial six-year contract. Seattle Symphony's current Music Director Gerard Schwarz, who has held that role since 1985, will assume the title of Conductor Laureate after his final season in 2010–2011.

"I am thrilled and grateful to be given this wonderful opportunity to lead the Seattle Symphony into a new era," remarked Morlot. "I am eager to share many musical moments and emotions with the Orchestra and its faithful audience, and to meet new concertgoers in the beautiful Benaroya Hall. My family and I feel privileged that we will soon become part of the Seattle community."

During Morlot's first season as Music Director in 2011–2012, he will conduct a minimum of eight weeks during the regular concert season. He will conduct a minimum of 13 weeks each season through the end of his initial contract in 2017.

When the then-35-year-old Morlot made his debut with the Seattle Symphony in October 2009, *The Seattle Times*' Melinda Bargreen praised his "quick, snappy gestures and mercurial intensity [that] seemed to energize the orchestra." He was re-engaged later this season, when a schedule change prevented Roberto Abbado from appearing with the Symphony. However, travel disruptions caused by the volcanic eruption in Iceland forced Morlot to miss two rehearsals and change the program on short notice. Under these challenging circumstances he delivered strong and exciting performances that underscored his remarkable poise, artistic presence and leadership qualities. The Music Director Search Committee then voted unanimously to recommend Mr. Morlot to the Board.

Last April was not the first time that stepping in for another conductor has enhanced Morlot's reputation. In 2006, he made unexpected debuts with both the New York Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony Orchestra to replace Christoph von Dohnányi and Riccardo Muti, respectively. Of his New York debut—which included Elliott Carter's challenging *Allegro Scorrevole*—*New York Times* critic Anthony Tommasini acclaimed, "He conducted the entire program with fluid yet unostentatious technique, palpable confidence and appealing energy. Mr. Morlot elicited a colorful, persuasive and breathless performance from the Philharmonic players." The accolades that followed these concerts were echoed in subsequent appearances with other major orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Ensemble Intercontemporain, among others. *The Guardian* said of Morlot's 2009 BBC Philharmonic debut: "Every so often in the musical world, a comparatively unknown quantity comes along and takes everyone's breath away. Such was the case last week, when Ludovic Morlot—French-born, British-trained and better known in the US—made his debut with the BBC Philharmonic."

The Music Director Search Committee was guided by Interim Executive Director Mark McCampbell and Board of Directors Chair Leslie Jackson Chihuly. Of the final decision, Chihuly states, "A year into our search for a new Music Director, we are thrilled to announce the appointment of Maestro Ludovic Morlot. We believe he will provide the exciting artistic leadership that Seattle Symphony needs in order to build on the growth this orchestra has enjoyed during Gerard Schwarz's 26-year tenure, and that Mr. Morlot's leadership will further secure our place as one of the great orchestras of the world." McCampbell further adds, "I am pleased to have a role in bringing the young and dynamic Morlot to Seattle. I greatly appreciate the diligent work of the search committee in coming to this decision and applaud the efforts of our supportive Board."

The 13-member search committee was chaired by former Washington First Lady and longtime Seattle Symphony Board member Nancy B. Evans, who says of the search process, "Leading our search committee over the past year was a rewarding experience. We met many excellent candidates and are delighted that our unanimous first choice is Ludovic Morlot. He embodies our essential criteria: passion for artistic excellence, an appreciation for the importance of community and audience, and the ability to represent Seattle Symphony internationally." Timothy Hale, violist and Chair of the Seattle Symphony and Opera Players' Organization added, "It is an honor to welcome Ludovic Morlot to our Symphony family. He possesses stunning talent along with charisma and intelligence that are sure to propel Seattle Symphony to new musical heights. We see a bright and exciting future with an enhanced national and international presence and continued artistic growth here on stage at Benaroya Hall."

Highlights of Morlot's 2010–2011 season include debuts with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, the Czech Philharmonic, NDR Hamburg, Orchestra de la Monnaie in Brussels, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. He also leads performances of Milhaud's *Le Boeuf sur le toit* and

Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* at Opéra National de Lyon and Opéra Comique in Paris. Morlot also returns to the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Ensemble Intercontemporain, among others.

Morlot will succeed Music Director Gerard Schwarz, whose 26-year tenure has seen impressive growth in the caliber and prominence of the orchestra and cultural landscape of Seattle. Maestro Schwarz expresses his best hopes for his successor, saying, "I wish Mr. Morlot tremendous success. I hope that this wonderful Orchestra and community will bring him the joy that they have brought me."

Schwarz and the Symphony have collaborated on more than 125 recording projects and received twelve Grammy nominations. They have also garnered six ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming in recognition of his efforts to champion the music of living composers and American composers in particular. Besides the growth of the orchestra, perhaps Maestro Schwarz's greatest achievement on behalf of Seattle Symphony was his vision to create a great concert hall for the citizens of Seattle.

### **Ludovic Morlot**

36-year-old French conductor Ludovic Morlot is quickly establishing a strong reputation as one of the leading conductors of his generation. Already in great demand in North America and Europe, he has been recognized by *The Telegraph* as "a conductor [who] is constantly looking to the musical inside, to a world behind the notes." *The Chicago Tribune* further commended his performances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for being "crisp, taut and stylish thanks to [his] considerable podium skills."

In addition to Morlot's 2010–2011 engagements noted earlier, highlights of his 2009–2010 season in North America included return engagements with the Chicago Symphony and Boston Symphony, as well as debuts with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, National Symphony (Washington, D.C.), and the symphony orchestras of Seattle, Cincinnati and Atlanta, among others. In Europe, he returned to the Rotterdam Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and Ensemble Intercontemporain, which he conducts regularly, and made debuts with the Oslo Philharmonic and Danish National Radio Symphony. Other highlights of the season included his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in London and on tour in Germany with violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, as well as an engagement with the Tokyo Philharmonic.

Committed to working with young people, Morlot recently led the Netherlands Youth Orchestra on a European tour, which included a concert in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw.

Recent notable engagements include appearances with the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Tonhalle Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Seoul Philharmonic. He has collaborated with many

distinguished soloists including Christian Tetzlaff, Gil Shaham, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Renaud Capuçon, Lynn Harrell, Frank Peter Zimmermann, Emanuel Ax and Jessye Norman.

Morlot has maintained a close working relationship with the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 2001, when he was the Seiji Ozawa Fellowship Conductor at the Tanglewood Music Center. He was subsequently appointed Assistant Conductor for the orchestra and their Music Director James Levine (2004–2007), and has conducted the orchestra in many public concerts both in Boston and at Tanglewood. He also served as conductor in residence with the *Orchestre National de Lyon* under David Robertson (2002–2004).

Trained as a violinist, Morlot studied conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London and then at the Royal College of Music as a recipient of the Norman del Mar Conducting Fellowship. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2007 in recognition of his significant contribution to music. Morlot and his family live in Lyon, France, and will make their future home in Seattle.

### **About Seattle Symphony**

Seattle Symphony, presenting its 108th season in 2010–2011, has been under the artistic leadership of Music Director Gerard Schwarz since 1985. In 1998, the Orchestra began performing in the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall in downtown Seattle. The Symphony is internationally recognized for its adventurous programming of contemporary works, its devotion to the classics, and its extensive recording history. Seattle Symphony has made more than 125 recordings, garnered 12 Grammy nominations and won two Emmy Awards. From September through July, the Symphony is heard live by more than 315,000 people. For more information on Seattle Symphony, visit [www.seattlesymphony.org](http://www.seattlesymphony.org).

### **About Benaroya Hall**

Benaroya Hall, home of Seattle Symphony, opened its doors to the public in 1998 as the first facility in Seattle designed exclusively for concert performance. Located on an entire city block in downtown Seattle, the Hall serves as a focal point of the city's urban core. Today, the concert hall is integral to the health of Seattle's downtown district – and has revitalized the area, drawing new restaurants and shops to the immediate vicinity of the hall where vacant, run-down buildings had been before. Benaroya Hall has two spaces for musical performances—the 2,500-seat S. Mark Taper Foundation Auditorium and the 540-seat Illsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall—and an underground parking garage. Following Benaroya Hall's phenomenal success, several other cities followed suit with concert halls of their own, creating an American concert hall “boom.” Benaroya Hall has received numerous awards, including a 2001 American Institute of Architects (AIA) National Honor Award for outstanding architecture. For additional information, including event listings and public tour schedules, please visit [www.benaroyahall.org](http://www.benaroyahall.org).

**Media Links:**

Seattle Symphony's Ludovic Morlot Page [www.seattlesymphony.org/morlot](http://www.seattlesymphony.org/morlot)

Ludovic Morlot's Official Website: <http://www.ludovicmorlot.com/>

**Media Contacts:**

Elizabeth Ferlic, Associate Director of Public Relations, (206) 215-4714  
[elizabeth.ferlic@seattlesymphony.org](mailto:elizabeth.ferlic@seattlesymphony.org)

Rosalie Contreras, Vice President of Marketing, Communications and Customer Care, (206) 215-4782  
[rosalie.contreras@seattlesymphony.org](mailto:rosalie.contreras@seattlesymphony.org)

Kirshbaum Demler & Associates, (212) 222-4843  
[info@kirshdem.com](mailto:info@kirshdem.com)

