



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:
Maryellen H. Gleason
Phoenix Symphony Association
602-452-0402

Mark Dix
Musicians of the Phoenix Symphony
602-361-5411
602-254-4377

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2009

Phoenix Symphony Musicians and Symphony Board Reach Landmark Accord

*Institution unites to battle impact of recession and challenges
community to increase Symphony support*

PHOENIX – The Phoenix Symphony Association, Inc. and Phoenix Symphony Musicians announced today a landmark three year agreement representing a contribution of almost \$2 Million in compensation reductions by the Musicians to the Association over the next three years.

While the Phoenix Symphony has enjoyed several sellout weekends this season for both Classical and Pops programming, contributed revenues which make up over 50% of the Symphony's operating budget are down significantly forcing the Symphony Association to take a hard look at operating expenses and to gird for continued softness in contributions for the near term.

Like other arts organizations in Phoenix and around the country, the Symphony Association felt it needed to take proactive steps to reduce operating expenses and to take a hard look at reducing aspects of its operation for savings along with the chance to maximize concert revenue potential.

In an unprecedented gesture, the Musicians have agreed to an aggregate 17% pay cut over the next three seasons to continue the positive forward momentum of the Symphony Association, in which they will be joined by the Virginia G. Piper Music Director, Michael Christie, and President & CEO Maryellen H. Gleason along with the administrative and artistic staff.

Earlier in the season, artistic leadership and staff leadership took steps to reduce the operating budget by negotiating lower guest artist fees, voluntary staff pay cuts, staff layoffs, staff pay furloughs as well as administrative and program budget reductions.

Phoenix Symphony Association Board Chair, C.A. Howlett said, “I applaud everyone in our institution, but especially the Symphony Musicians for their spirit of community commitment and their dedication to continue providing world class classical music and education programs to our community. We needed some creativity and flexibility in our labor contract to ensure our continued success and I am thankful our Musicians agreed to be enthusiastic partners in this effort. What we are announcing today is a new level of cooperation between the music director, the staff, the Musicians, and the board of the Phoenix Symphony. Each party has agreed to significant sacrifices to give our renowned orchestra the means to survive in the painful recession. Now we call on the community to help us. We are confident that with our community’s support and encouragement together we can keep classical music alive in Phoenix. Please join the Symphony partnership for the future.”

The Symphony has enjoyed an era of revitalization in artistic innovation under the leadership of Virginia G. Piper Music Director Michael Christie and the audiences have responded with great enthusiasm making the future for the institution bright once we weather the storm of the economic recession.

Symphony President & CEO Maryellen Gleason said, “These challenging times have forced our institution to take a hard look at our operating budget and to bring our expenses in line with projected revenues. I am grateful that our orchestra is a partner with our board and staff in creating a sensible plan for moving forward and continuing our artistic success.”

Charles Berginc, Chairman of the Orchestra Committee said, “Extraordinary times require extraordinary measures and all would agree that this cut, which reduces minimum salary for these professional musicians down to \$35,000, is painful, but a sacrifice we are willing to make to help see the Symphony through this downturn. This orchestra has been painstakingly built over the past 60 years with thousands of volunteer hours and millions of donated dollars. As its joint stewards, along with board and management, the Musicians feel we owe it to the community to do everything possible to

make sure live symphonic music continues. Our community wins and we all win by uniting to ensure a great music future for Phoenix. I also want to mention that all the Musicians see a great deal of passion from our board chair, C. A. Howlett, and we thank him along with, Mal Jozoff, who together led the negotiations. We thank them along with our entire board and staff for their hard work, dedication and leadership in guiding the Symphony through this challenging time.”

Offering almost 200 concerts around the Valley, and in collaboration with Ballet Arizona, the Symphony is the largest arts organization in the State of Arizona performing primarily in Symphony Hall, a part of the Phoenix Convention Center. The economic impact of the Symphony is estimated to be approximately \$30 Million annually.

City of Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon said, “Our Symphony is a critical part of ensuring that Phoenix is a great city and I celebrate the partnership between the board, the staff and the Musicians in this united effort. It is not only a privilege, it is a special gift for our great city and the entire state, to have the treasure of a live orchestra performing great music and I challenge everyone in our community to continue supporting this effort by making a contribution today. Let’s not take this treasure for granted.”

Contributions to the Symphony can be made on-line at www.myartscommunity.org or by calling 602-495-1999. In addition, The Phoenix Symphony’s full 2009/10 Season has been announced, with season tickets ranging from \$80 “choose your own” packages to subscriptions including the full Symphony season. Tickets are available at www.phoenixsymphony.org or by calling 602-495-1999.



About Music Director Michael Christie: Michael Christie begins his fifth season as the Virginia G. Piper Music Director of The Phoenix Symphony with the 2009-10 season. He also serves as Music Director of the Colorado Music Festival and of the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He has appeared with orchestras across the United States, Europe, and Canada, as well as with the Finnish National Opera, Queensland Opera, and Zürich Opera. In 1995, Mr. Christie was awarded a special prize at the First International Sibelius Conductor's Competition. Following the competition, he became an apprentice conductor with the Chicago Symphony. Michael Christie graduated from

the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music with a bachelor's degree in trumpet performance. His conducting teachers have included Daniel Barenboim, Robert Spano, Eiji Oue, and Peter Jaffe.

***About The Phoenix Symphony:** The Phoenix Symphony has been proudly serving the citizens of the Phoenix metropolitan area and Arizona since 1947. What began as an occasional group of musicians performing a handful of concerts each year (in a city of fewer than 100,000 people) today serves more than 300,000 people annually, with almost 200 concerts and presentations throughout the greater Phoenix area and beyond.*

Under the artistic leadership of Michael Christie as the Virginia G. Piper Music Director and administrative leadership of President Maryellen H. Gleason, the orchestra is overseen by the non-profit Phoenix Symphony Association under Board Chairman C.A. Howlett.

The Phoenix Symphony presents an annual season from September through the beginning of June, featuring full-length classical and pops concerts at Symphony Hall in downtown Phoenix, as well as concerts in Scottsdale, Mesa, Prescott and throughout central Arizona. The Symphony performs for more than 80,000 students and children, helping to introduce music to new generations through a variety of education and youth-engagement programs.