



THE IRIS
ORCHESTRA

Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Michael Stern

Executive Director Anne Kenworthy

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The IRIS Orchestra's 10th Season Opener Features

World Famous Virtuoso Midori, Commitment to Community Engagement

MEMPHIS, TENN. (September 18, 2009)...The IRIS Orchestra launches its 2009-2010 season with "**Midori Returns!**" Oct. 3 at the Germantown Performing Arts Centre (GPAC), 1801 Exeter Rd., featuring an encore performance by renowned violinist Midori and a message that music not only resounds inside the theatre, but also inside a community and within its young musicians.

Season tickets are still available for a stellar lineup of world-class guest soloists which opens with **Midori**, followed by award-winning pianist **Jeremy Denk**, recipient of the 1998 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Nov. 14; four-time Grammy winner and Metropolitan Opera star **Dawn Upshaw**, Jan. 9; **The IRIS Orchestra** "The Symphonic Quartet" led by Artistic Director Michael Stern, Feb. 27; and violinist **Jennifer Koh**, top medalist in the 1994 International Tchaikovsky Competition, March 20. Season tickets are \$260; single tickets are \$55 and dress rehearsal, \$10. All performances are at 8 p.m. while dress rehearsal shows are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. the day of the performance. Visit www.irisorchestra.org or call GPAC, 751.7500 (fax: 751.7514).

Reflective of her eclectic musical imagination and her wide breadth of repertoire, Midori will be featured with the IRIS Orchestra in works that span three centuries, from the Baroque to the music of our time, and also will collaborate with one of her students, Korbinian Altenberger, as a co-soloist. The program for Midori Returns! begins with the Violin Concerto No. 2 in E Major by Johann Sebastian Bach, continues with the Alfred Schnittke Double Concerto (Concerto Grosso No. 1), with Midori and Altenberger, as soloists, and is followed by the Rondo for Violin and Orchestra by Franz Schubert. Michael Stern and the IRIS Orchestra will conclude the concert with Symphony No. 39 in E Flat Major of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

"Midori has long been a good friend, and it is always a joy to make music with her," said IRIS Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Michael Stern. "She is of course a phenomenal musician, but most inspiring is the tremendous impact she continues to have, especially on young people, by her belief in both the importance of reaching out and the power of music to change lives. IRIS shares her commitment to community engagement. Her work both on and off the stage makes her the ideal soloist to play with us for the kickoff of our new season at GPAC."

Midori was named a Messenger of Peace by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2007 in response to her passion for open access to great music for all ages, in all geographic regions and to all socio-economic levels. She has created a new model for young artists who seek to balance the joys and demands of a performing career at the highest level with hands-on investment in the power of music to change lives. She also has founded and nurtured "Midori and Friends," a nonprofit organization providing educational experiences and concerts for underprivileged and hospitalized children.

With IRIS in Memphis, Midori will visit St. George's School Oct. 1, at 8250 Poplar Ave. in Germantown, to participate in "Rebecca's Light." The program honors the memory of Rebecca Klyce, a former St. George's student whose young life was cut short by a sudden cardiac arrhythmia and is remembered each year through presentations by IRIS guest artists. Midori will perform with two of her current students, Korbinian Altenberger and Moni Simeonov, both of whom also perform violin with the IRIS Orchestra. Students of the school, family and invited guests will enjoy a performance and slide show of Midori's travels as a UN Messenger of Peace. IRIS also will present the trio in a workshop at Houston High School Oct. 1, 9755 Wolf River Blvd., for students enrolled in the string programs at Houston Middle School, Houston High School and Collierville High School. IRIS is pleased to support this string program now in its second year.

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Midori also will offer a presentation to the newly formed Germantown Youth Symphony Orchestra during a rehearsal on Oct. 3. And Midori will present a masterclass as part of the partnership between The IRIS Orchestra and the University of Memphis Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music. The masterclass is a unique opportunity for music students at the University to engage with this special artist on Oct. 2 (10 a.m. to 12 noon) at Harris Concert Hall, 3775 Central. It is open to the public.

Midori's prolific career began as a child prodigy in Japan, and attracted global recognition after her legendary performance with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood when she was only 13 years old. She made her first recording for Philips at the age of 14, and has amassed an impressive discography. Currently under exclusive contract with Sony Classical, her two most recent recordings are an album of sonatas by J. S. Bach and Béla Bartók, with pianist Robert McDonald, as well as *The Essential Midori*, a 2-CD compilation of her most celebrated recordings to date.

Over the course of her career, Midori has become a major force in music both on and off stage. She is one of the most sought after violin virtuosos of her time. She has appeared with the great orchestras of the world, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Israel Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. Midori has collaborated with such musical greats as Claudio Abbado, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Daniel Barenboim, Isaac Stern, Michael Tilson-Thomas and Pinchas Zuckerman. Now well into her third decade of performing, she has firmly established herself as a leading soloist all over the world, a passionate and profound musician on stage, and at the same time deeply committed to music education, her own teaching and nurturing of young musicians, and community outreach.

Born in Munich, Germany, Midori's student, violinist **Korbinian Altenberger** is already following in the footsteps of his mentor Midori. He has performed on stages throughout this country, Europe and in Asia, South Africa and New Zealand. He also has embraced fully the commitment to community engagement, and will accompany Midori in the Memphis schools, participating in outreach, teaching and performance. He has previously worked with *Live Music Now!* in Europe, *Partners in Performance* in the U.S. and *Music Sharing* in Japan. In 2007, he performed in a chamber music and community engagement tour of Cambodia and is a regular participant in outreach projects in the Philadelphia and Los Angeles areas.

Michael Stern is the IRIS Orchestra's founding artistic director and its principal conductor. Under his direction, The IRIS Orchestra has been unanimously heralded for the brilliance of its playing, its varied programming with special emphasis on American contemporary music, and for its acclaimed recordings on the Naxos and Arabesque labels. Stern also is in his fifth season as music director of the Kansas City Symphony, which has been hailed for its remarkable artistic and institutional growth and development since his tenure began. In addition to his work in Kansas City and with the IRIS Orchestra, Stern has conducted the major orchestras in this country, and in Canada, Europe, and the Far East. This season marks his second as the principal guest conductor of the Orchestre National de Lille, in France. He studied at The Curtis Institute of Music under the tutelage of noted scholar and conductor Max Rudolf, and his studies have also included summers at the Pierre Monteux Memorial School in Hancock, Maine, with Charles Bruck. Previously, Stern earned a degree in American History at Harvard University.

The IRIS Orchestra was founded in September of 2000 by conductor Michael Stern at the invitation of Albert Peralion, former executive director of the Germantown Performing Arts Centre. Over the past nine years, it has earned wide acclaim for its unique vision, range of programming and commercial recordings. Their first CD, the music of Stephen Hartke, earned a place on the "Year's Ten Best" in 2002 by *The New York Times*. Comprised of musicians from all over the United States, alumni have assumed leadership positions in some of the foremost orchestras worldwide including the Boston Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam) and the San Francisco Symphony. It has been heralded not only for the excellence of its playing, but also for its originality as a model for an American orchestra. In past years, the IRIS Orchestra has presented a remarkable array of soloists including violinists Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell and Gil Shaham; pianists Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman and Garrick Ohlsson; and cellist Yo-Yo Ma. The list of commissioned composers is equally distinguished, including Stephen Hartke, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, William Bolcom, Ned Rorem, Jonathan Leshnoff, Huang Ruo and Adam Schoenberg.