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MEDIA RELEASE

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Arizona Musicfest: America's Great Music is here January 31 through February 27, 2011

January 19, 2011 – Scottsdale / Carefree, Arizona - Although *Arizona Musicfest* has become "America's Premier Winter Music Festival," it's still our local treasure. This year's 20th Anniversary brings the world's greatest music to the scenic Sonoran Desert foothills, while keeping all the festival's original warmth and "casual elegance." You'll be able to experience the top artists of Broadway, classical and jazz delivering virtuoso performances that speak directly to the heart, mind, soul, even the funny-bone.

Lynn Bowers, Managing Director of Arizona Musicfest confirms, "Our audiences know we have it all - spectacular programming, the best musicians in the country AND a friendly, neighborhood feeling."

The highlight of *Arizona Musicfest* is the Festival Orchestra conducted by Robert Moody. Maestro Moody's work has been called, "incandescent" by *Arizona Republic* critic Richard Nilsen, who labeled the concert he attended, "one of the most exciting concerts of the year."

This year, Festival Orchestra (FO) week includes the much anticipated World Premiere of "Desert Transport," an important acoustic work by Mason Bates inspired by a helicopter ride over Arizona. The piece was commissioned by Arizona Musicfest, which puts it in elevated company with Tanglewood, Greenwich and Juilliard.

Speaking of hot young musician/composers, Chris Thile, mandolinist extraordinaire from the bluegrass Punch Brothers, will join the orchestra to perform his recently debuted classical composition, "Mandolin Concerto." Thile was recently showcased on "Saturday Night Live," and Jay Leno's Tonight Show.

The festival opens on January 31, with *Sandy Hackett's Rat Pack Show* delivering the unforgettable music and high spirits of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr. and Joey Bishop. Sandy, the son of famed funny man Buddy Hackett, makes certain you'll have it your way with hits like "Luck Be a Lady," "For Once in My Life" and "My Way."

Celebrate The Beatles when The Fab Four: The Ultimate Tribute combines a perfect recreation of The Beatles' sound with the band's witty wise-cracking. Act 1 of the show on February 4, introduces "The Early Beatles," while Act 2 whisks you away on a "Magical Mystery Tour." It's the best tribute a fan can "Imagine."

In an exclusive engagement on February 8, the Miami String Quartet, one of the most respected ensembles in the nation, performs Haydn's "String Quartet in D Major," Vasks' "String Quartet #3," and Schumann's String Quartet in A Major." Benny Kim (violin), Yu Jin (viola), Cathy Meng Robinson (violin), and Keith Robinson (cello) have a sound that's so rich your cholesterol will zoom off the charts.

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The 20th Anniversary Reunion Band concert, on February 11, is the perfect opportunity for jazzophile or newcomer to dip a toe or be completely immersed in 'straight up' jazz. The crème de la crème will perform together on the same stage: Ken Peplowski (clarinet), Byron Stripling (trumpet), Wycliffe Gordon (trombone), Eric Schneider (saxophone), Derek Smith (piano), Jay Leonhardt (bass) and Bob Breithaupt (drums).

The future is, literally, here on February 13, when 17 year old prodigy Conrad Tao performs an exciting program of Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky and Beethoven. This phenom is already a fixture on concert stages internationally. Insider's tip: If we're lucky, we'll hear one of Tao's own prize-winning compositions.

Without a doubt, the Valentine's Day dinner and cabaret is the perfect date night for February 14. Treat your special someone to the greatest love songs of Broadway with today's brightest stars, the beguiling Jenn Newman and Broadway's handsomest, most melodious tenor, Mike Eldred.

The Pizzarelli family sets the standard for stylish modern jazz. "The New York Times" (1.10.11) declared Pizzarelli's group "one the finest traditional ensembles in all of jazz." On February 18, the Pizzarelli Quartet with John (guitar and vocals), Martin (bass), Larry Fuller (piano) and Tony Tedesco (drums) is joined by Broadway vocalist Jessica Molaskey and incomparable guitar wizard, Bucky Pizzarelli. They'll perform beloved standards and selections from John's newest CD, "Rockin' in Rhythm."

Arizona Musicfest founding artistic director, Paul Perry, joins current artistic director Robert Moody and talented friends for two performances on February 19, to toast twenty wonderful years of *Arizona Musicfest*. Expect amusing stories, much laughter and, above all, great music.

Maestro Robert Moody launches Festival Orchestra week on February 22 with a program that should be christened with magnificent champagne! Mozart's effervescent "Overture to The Marriage of Figaro" and Artist-in-Residence trumpeter Ryan Anthony in the dazzling "Arutunian" Trumpet Concerto, are sparkling precursors to the excitement of Composer-in-Residence Bates' "Desert Transport." *Opening Night* culminates with the melodious and poignant "Symphony No. 2" by Sergei Rachmaninoff.

The emotional and technical brilliance continues into the next concert. Johann Sebastian Bach's formidable "Brandenburg Concerto No. 2" opens the February 24 program. Then the string section takes center stage in Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis." The evening concludes with Chris Thile's "Mandolin Concerto," which recently debuted to reviews that declared it "nothing short of astonishing."

On February 25, the orchestral fireworks begin with Copland's celebrated "Fanfare for the Common Man," and they don't quit. Next is Astor Piazzola's engaging "Four Seasons in Buenos Aires," followed by Chris Brubeck's "Interplay for Violins." "Interplay" is a memorable showcase for Festival Orchestra members Yuriy Bekker, Corine Brouwer, Charles Dimmick and Robin Mayforth, who are concertmasters of their primary orchestras. Organist Jimmy Jones electrifies with Jongen's thunderous "Toccata" from the "Symphonie Concertante," after which Ravel's mesmerizing "Bolero" provides the evening's memorable 'send off.'

For the truly grand finale of *Arizona Musicfest 2011*, renowned soloists from around the country, Christina Major, Rita Litchfield, John McVeigh and Troy Cook, join Maestro Robert Moody and the Festival Orchestra and Chorus on February 27, in Beethoven's intoxicating, monumental "Symphony #9" with the breathtaking "Ode to Joy." It is the utmost expression of humanity's unity.

Call (480) 488-0806, toll free (866) 488-0806 or visit www.azmusicfest.org for tickets and detailed concert information.