



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VANCOUVER'S FREE OUTDOOR CONCERT RETURNS
WITH RENOWNED GUEST CONDUCTOR
AWADAGIN PRATT ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
Orchestra to play first concert in the park since 2008

(Vancouver, WA) The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is happy to return a beloved Vancouver tradition to Esther Short Park at 3 pm on Sunday, September 8. After a five-year absence, the orchestra will offer a free outdoor concert, less than two weeks before the beginning of The VSO's 35th season at Skyview Concert Hall. Also, for the first time ever, the orchestra will be conducted by acclaimed conductor, pianist and violinist, Awadagin Pratt.

The program will feature the overture from *La forza del destino* by Verdi, *The Moldau* by Smetana, *Slavonic Dances* by Dvořák and ends with Beethoven's majestic Symphony No. 5. There will also be a surprise guest to be announced at a later date.

Vancouver Mayor Tim Leavitt said "The City of Vancouver is honored to have the VSO perform once again in Esther Short Park. They have become a cornerstone for our local arts community, providing world-renowned classical music and opening doors to cultural experiences for young audiences. The City is grateful for their continued presence in our community."

"We are so happy to be able to give the gift of music back to the community after such a long absence," said VSO Chair Kathy McDonald. "Thanks go out to the Friends of the VSO, for their tireless efforts to raise the funds to restore such a crowd-pleasing family event. Most of all, this is a chance for families to gather in a beautiful setting to listen to their community's great symphony."

VSO Executive Director Igor Shakhman adds "We are thrilled to have Awadagin joining us to lead the orchestra for this momentous event. He is acclaimed for his musical insight and electrifying intensity as a pianist and a conductor. Our audience will love him!"

Born in Pittsburgh, Pratt began studying piano and violin as a child. He has been the subject of numerous articles in the national press, including *Newsweek*, *People Magazine* and *New York Newsday*. He was named one of the 50 Leaders of Tomorrow

in *Ebony Magazine's* special 50th anniversary issue and has been featured on National Public Radio's *Performance Today*, *St. Paul Sunday Morning* and *Weekend Edition*. On television, Mr. Pratt has performed on the *Today Show*, *Good Morning America* and *Sesame Street*, been profiled on CBS Sunday Morning and was one of the featured soloists on PBS's "Live from the Kennedy Center - A Salute to Slava." In November 2009, Mr. Pratt was one of four artists selected to perform at a White House classical music event that included student workshops hosted by the First Lady, Michelle Obama, and performing in concert for guests including President Obama. He has performed two other times at the White House, both at the invitation of President and Mrs. Clinton.



Mr. Pratt's recording for Angel/EMI include *A Long Way From Normal*, an all Beethoven Sonata CD, *Live From South Africa*, *Transformations* and an all Bach disc with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. His most recent recordings are the Brahms Sonatas for Cello and Piano with Zuill Bailey for Telarc and a recording of the music of Judith Lang Zaimont with the Harlem Quartet for Navona Records.

Mr. Pratt is currently an Associate Professor of Piano and Artist in Residence at the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

About The VSO

Entering its 35th season, The VSO has been a cornerstone of Southwest Washington's arts community, providing world-renowned classical music, promoting young musicians, and opening doors to classical music for young audiences through events such as the annual In-School concerts, Young Artists Competition and various family-styled special events and performances. With a full-sized professional orchestra of over 70 core members, many of whom are teachers in our school districts and beyond, the orchestra provides our region with a multi-concert classical season every year. The VSO performs at Skyview Concert Hall, 1300 NW 139th Street, Vancouver. Season support for The VSO is provided by Sterling Bank and All Classical 89.9. Tickets for the VSO Chamber Series and all VSO symphony concerts are on sale now at (360) 735-7278 or www.vancouversymphony.org.

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