State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico

Music Director: Enrique Bátiz

Conductor: Enrique Bátiz
Guest Piano Soloist: Leonel Morales

Saturday, January 19, 2008, 7:30 p.m.
PROGRAM

Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80
Johannes Brahms

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23
Leonel Morales, piano soloist

Intermission

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 97 (Rhenish)
Robert Schumann

Sensemaya (The Snake Killing Ritual)
Silvestre Revueltas

PROGRAM NOTES

Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80
Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

The Academic Festival Overture was composed as a tribute to university life, and specifically to the University of Breslau. In 1879, the University conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy on Brahms, citing the composer as princeps musicae severioris. Not being impressed by such academic formality, Brahms responded with this Overture fraught with good humor. The work, regarded by Brahms’ contemporaries as a “very jolly potpourri of students’ song à la Suppé,” a view which the composer did nothing to rebut, contains a number of themes from the “studentenkneipen” (students' drinking parties) of which Brahms once familiarized himself with during a visit to Gottengen. The Overture received its first performance on January 4, 1881, with Brahms conducting, before an assemblage of the students and faculty of the University, as well as citizens of Breslau.

The music opens with a solemn original theme in C minor, which serves as an introduction to the stately folksong, Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus (We Had Built a Stately House), that is followed by a lively student ditty titled, Der Landesvater (The Father of His Country). The bassoons and oboes next present Was kommt dort von der Höhe (What Comes There From on High), and the finale unfolds with the entire orchestra proclaiming the ever famous refrain associated with college life, Gaudeamus Igitur.

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Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)

In the winter of 1874, Tchaikovsky presented his newly written First Piano Concerto — one of the best-loved in the repertoire today — to his much admired and trusted senior colleague at the Moscow Conservatory, Nikolay Rubinstein, for an opinion on the work. Tchaikovsky suffered one of the biggest disappointments of his career when, on Christmas Eve, Rubinstein — who had been so supportive of the composer in the past — rejected the concerto with a torrent of scathing criticism, summarily declaring the work ill-composed and unplayable. This unexpected reaction from Rubinstein left the composer totally devastated and sank him into a severe state of depression. Tchaikovsky then sent his concerto to Hans von Bülow, who found it “original, noble and powerful”; on October 25, 1875 Bülow took the concert world by storm when he presented the work in Boston with unprecedented success. After this, Rubinstein reconsidered his position,
recognizing the concerto for the masterpiece it is, and added it to his repertoire, playing it quite often throughout Russia.

The first movement begins with a lengthy — 106 measure long — introduction marked Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso. At the outset, the horns present a four-note descending motif, punctuated by sharp chords from the rest of the orchestra. The piano then enters with a long series of chords, as the violins play an impassioned theme based on the opening motif. Eventually, the first movement proper, Allegro con spirito, arrives as the piano introduces the main theme with minimal support from the orchestra. One of Rubinstein’s criticisms was that he found this an unseemly theme to ennoble by incorporating it into a piano concerto; the theme is derived from a Ukrainian folksong commonly sung by blind beggars. The somewhat more relaxed and stately second theme begins with an ascending scalar motif and ends with descending leaps. Both themes are subjected to a brilliant double exposition, with the exchange of virtuoso and expressive elements and argumentative tension between soloist and orchestra. The soloist has plentiful occasion to shine with its many ornate and rhapsodic passages and several demanding cadenzas.

The contrasting second movement, Andantino semplice, takes the form of a scherzo, but in reverse — instead of the normal fast-slower-fast pattern, a soulful episode surrounds a jaunty middle section. It begins with a tender love theme played by a solo flute against pizzicato strings, and then taken over by the piano. After a contrasting phrase is heard, the oboe once again takes the main melody. Then the piano embarks on a frolicsome scherzando episode marked Allegro vivace assai. Although it does so at first by itself, soon the violas and cellos join in with a melody of their own — the French song Il faut s’amuser, danser et rire (“One must have fun, dance and laugh”) which was a favorite of Désirée Artôt, to whom the composer was briefly engaged. After an ingenious reference to the first movement’s second theme, the soloist plays a short cadenza that leads into the main love theme once again to conclude the movement.

The last movement, Allegro con fuoco, is built upon a rondo structure with elements of sonata form. After a few introductory measures from the orchestra, the piano presents the main recurring theme; this assertive mazurka-like theme is derived from yet another Ukrainian folksong. Two other subjects come into play here: one is of great significance and bears a syncopated dance rhythm; the other is of a subsidiary nature and gentler in character. The two principal themes are freshly emphasized within a different context each time they are repeated. At the coda, now in the major key, the subsidiary theme finally attains its full import. Then, with minimal intervention from the orchestra and in a flurry of virtuoso playing, the piano rushes to the work’s exhilarating conclusion.

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**Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 97 (Rhenish)**
**Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856)**

For a short time in 1850 Robert Schumann was appointed Music Director of Düsseldorf, and during that period he composed his Cello Concerto and the Rhenish Symphony, which owes its title to the Germanic ambiance found in the Rhine valley at the time. It was a great success within the context of German music of that period. Schumann even titled the five symphonic movements using Germanic terminology:

- Lebhalit (Allegro)
- Scherzo: Sehr mässig (Very Moderate)
- Nicht schnell (Not Fast)
- Feierlich (Solemn)
- Lebhaft (Vivo)

The first and fifth movements are brilliant and expansive, but especially the first, with its
heroic E-flat Major key strongly affirmed by the horns and trumpets. The second movement is in the style of a Ländler, an Austrian folk dance from which evolved, among other things, the origins of some elements of the waltzes and trios of the scherzo movements of Bruckner symphonies, not to mention some important moments in Mahler’s symphonies. The third movement of the Rhenish Symphony is lyrical and contemplative, and in the fourth we find a direct anecdotal reference, for it is in this movement that the trombones make their presence felt, intoning a solemn melody of gothic contours. It is said that Schumann created this melody in remembrance of the ceremony in which the Cardinal of Cologne was invested in the Cologne Cathedral.

History tells us that the premiere was not the success it could have been because Schumann demonstrated, once again, his considerable lack of talent as an orchestral conductor. A few years later Schumann would be obliged to renounce his activities as an orchestral conductor altogether as he began the difficult descent into the mental illness that would eventually take his life.

— Program note written by Tom Null

**Sensemaya (The Snake Killing Ritual)**  
**Silvestre Revueltas (1899 – 1940)**

Revueutas worked within a variety of musical idioms, and Sensemaya, one of his most inventive and popular, is an interestingly-scored work for large orchestra. Inspired by the poem of the same name by the Cuban Nicolás Guillén, the music portrays the ritual death of a snake.

In the poem, the rhythmic words *mayombé-bombe-mayombé* are repeated several times, and Revueltas reflects this by using a repeated motif initially stated by the bassoon and later presented in various orchestral guises. Throughout, the work has great rhythmic power, and is occasionally reminiscent of American composer Aaron Copland. Sensemaya, one of the most internationally-known Mexican concert pieces, reveals Revueltas’ mastery of both orchestration, and a modern tonal, but still somewhat dissonant, palate.

— Program note written by Tom Null
**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Enrique Bátiz (Conductor)**

At the age of 62, Enrique Bátiz is one of the most famous orchestra conductors in Latin America and no doubt he is a gifted artist who has won international popularity and fame and whose interpretations produce the deepest and most profound emotion.

He was born in Mexico City on May 4, 1942. In 1950 he studied piano with Francisco Agea and in 1960 he continued his studies with Gyorgy Sandor. That same year he went to Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. In 1962 he studied piano with Adele Marcus in New York at the famous Juilliard School of Music, where he also studied conducting and received a diploma in 1965. In 1964 he made several national tours as a pianist. In 1965 he was a semifinalist in the Marguerite Long International Piano Contest in Paris, France. From 1967 to 1970 he specialized in piano with Zbigniew Drzewiecki in Poland. He also had private lessons in orchestral conducting with Stanislaw Wislocki.

In 1970 he was named Director Conductor Founder of the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico. Maestro Bátiz was the conductor of the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico for 12 years (1971-1983), then of the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra for seven years (1983-1989) and resumed directorship of the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico from 1990 to the present. Since 1984, he was named “guest conductor” of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and, as an invited guest conductor, he has led more than 500 symphony orchestras around the world.

His work is represented with a collection of 145 recordings of which 41 are with the Royal Philharmonic, nine with the London Symphony, three with the Philharmonia, 12 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, two with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, 19 with the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra, 58 with the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico and one with the Toscana Orchestra in Florence, Italy, for the British record companies EMI Records International, Academy of Sound and Vision, Musical Heritage (United States), NAXOS, IMG International Management Group, Pickwick, RPO Records and Arts (Germany).

The repertory of Enrique Bátiz as a conductor ranges from classical to contemporary works. He has been described as an artist who conducts with enthusiasm, expressing a deep understanding, unusual even among the finest conductors.

Throughout his career, he has received important distinctions and awards. He received La primera Presea Bienal in Art from the State of Mexico Confederation of Professionals;
The International Gold Mercury award of Rome, given for the first time to a Latin American artist; and The Jose Martí and the Tlatelolco’s Eagle Medal. In 1984 he won First Prize at the British Music Trades Association for his interpretation of French Music with the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico (Debussy’s Prelude of the afternoon of a Faun). In 1986 Bátiz received the Rio Branco medal, an official grade given by the Brazilian government, for the worldwide digital recording of the nine Bachianas brasileiras by Heitor Villa-Lobos. On four occasions (1971, 1981, 1983, and 1996), he received the annual prize as the most distinguished artist of the year from the Mexican Union of Theatrical and Musical broadcasters. His recording of the Third Symphony of Saint-Saens, made in 1984, is considered the best recorded version of this piece by Gramophone Magazine and the Penguin Stereo Records Guide.

In 1986 the London Sunday Times considered his recording of Petrushka by Stravinsky as the recording of the year. In 1991 he received the Mexican Mozart medal given by the Domecq Cultural Institute. In December of 1992, the London CD Review magazine designated the recording he made with the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of the Symphonic Dances and The Isle of Death by Rachmaninov as one of the best recordings made that year. In March of 1995, he won the Estado de Mexico Prize. In 1994, in the area of arts, Bátiz received the Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, for his contribution to the musical culture of the State of Mexico and the recognition he has achieved in the musical world. As this honor is recognized throughout the country and the whole world, he has been declared “Mexiquense Destacado.”

Enrique Bátiz has recorded the complete nine symphonies by Beethoven, the nine Bachianas brasileiras by Villa-Lobos, the complete pieces for orchestra by Joaquin Rodrigo, Manuel M. Ponce, and Bizet, and eight volumes of Mexican music that have been published with great worldwide acclaim. In 1997 Enrique Bátiz made a complete recording of three symphonic cycles with the State Symphony of Mexico; the six symphonies by Tchaikovsky (12 sessions in six days in February 1997), and the four symphonies by Brahms (in only four days), precisely in the centenary of his death and in September of 1998, the four symphonies by Schumann, short pieces by Tchaikovsky (Capriccio Italien, Francesca da Rimini, Polonaise and Waltz from Eugene Onegin, Slavonic March, Mazeppa Overture and Valse mélancholique from Suite No. 3), as well as three short pieces by Joaquin Rodrigo (Miedo, Canconeta and 2 Berceuses) in six days of recording sessions.

**Leonel Morales (Piano Soloist)**

The perfect combination of extraordinary gifts, technique, talent and inspiration have made possible that Leonel Morales has become one of the most brilliant and successful pianists of his generation.

“...He shows the beauty of sound with an assured technique and great dynamics that never pass the limits...a superb artist...” — La Libre Belgique

“...He has a brilliant technique, a fine sense of harmony and a strong temperament.” — Salzburger Nachrichten

“...Brave pianist; great and accurate technique.” — Hamburger AbendBlatthanfefttad

Born in Cuba, nowadays Leonel Morales is a naturalized Spanish citizen and has lived in Spain since 1991. His work covers the entire piano repertoire. As a recognized performer of Spanish music he usually includes scores by the greatest Spanish composers on his performances. Many of his concerts had been recorded, such as the awarded Concierto Breve by Xavier Montsalvatge with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid and Antoni Ros Marbá, the two concerts for piano and orchestra by Antón García Abril recorded with the Orquesta de Radio Televisión Española with Enrique García Asensio or the complete work for piano of the same author.
Leonel Morales is often invited to take part as a member of the jury in many international piano competitions such as: Chopin (Rome), Cittá de Marsalla, AMA Calabria, Principal de Andorra, Fundación Guerrero, Ciudad de Oporto, Viotti, and Calabria. He is president of the jury in the International Piano Competition of Spanish Composers (CIPCE) that takes place annually in Las Rozas (Madrid). A Professor of Piano at the Conservatorio Superior de Castellón, he is also an outstanding pedagogue: some of his pupils have won national and international competitions. He has served as Manager of the Piano Festival in Granada since 1998.

State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico
(Orquesta Sinfónica Del Estado de Mexico)

On August 27, 1971, under the initiative of Enrique Bátiz and the government of the State of Mexico, the Symphonic Orchestra (OSEM) of this state was founded, with the purpose of spreading music as an art as a means of creating union and identity among the citizens of the state. Located in the city of Toluca, and having as its home hall the Sala Felipe Villanueva, the Orchestra has been characterized since the start by its endeavor to carry its message to all the municipalities of the state, to all corners of the country. It was also the first institution of its kind to visit the 16 political divisions of the Federal District. Soon it was giving concerts in the main settings of the capital of the country, from the Bellas Artes Theater and National Auditorium to the Sala Nezahualcoyotl, as well as other halls in outlying areas such as the San Benito Abad Theater of the Centro Escolar del Lago in the municipality of Cuautitlán, which, in spite of its location, 40 kilometers from the center of the city, seems to be destined to become the favorite hall for the metropolitan public, not only from the area, because of its admirable acoustic conditions and the comfort of the hall.

In 2000 the OSEM performed at the Fourth Festival of the Historic Center of Campeche and the following year at the Orchestral Festival organized by the Nacional Council for Culture and Arts. For six years the orchestra has carried out a festival in Valle de Bravo, in the state of Mexico, showing through it how excellent art can be when it is the result of a joint effort of the living forces of the country. In 1975 the OSEM made its first tour to the United States, returning continuously for three years starting in 1979, playing in the most important cities. In 2002 it toured for the first time in Germany and returned to Europe in 2003 and 2005.

Between 1983 and 1985 the orchestra was under the direction of maestro Manuel Suarez, and later, until 1989, Eduardo Diaz Muñoz.

The promotion of new musical talents, which has been an objective of the orchestra since its beginnings, has given fruits not only in the many talents developed within it, from which 40 excellent soloists have evolved, but also in the discovery and encouragement of young performers, through the International Henryk Szeryng Violin Contest begun in 1992, which, in the four times it has been held, has enjoyed the presence of the most notable aspiring violinists of the world and has rewarded a dozen of them.

Through the 33 years of its existence, the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico has hosted innumerable guest directors and soloists chosen from the most outstanding in the world. It would take too long to mention them all.

The recordings of the OSEM cover the broadest range of any Mexican orchestra. Within
them special mention can be made of the recordings dedicated to the works of Verdi and Rossini; Mexican and Spanish music, with the works of Isaac Albéniz, Joaquin Rodrigo, Manuel M. Ponce and Carlos Chavez standing out; but most of all the integral series of the symphonies of Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms and Tchaikovsky.

Both the orchestra and its artistic director have repeatedly received the Annual Award from the Mexican Union of Chroniclers of Theater and Music given for its 25th anniversary, by the First Festival of Classical Music in 1996 with the participation of other orchestras in the country, as well as for its promotion of musical activities in Mexico.

A significant accomplishment of the OSEM helped by the Trust Foundation has been the institutionalization of the Festival Valle de Bravo year after year, since 1997. Concerts of this festival take place in the lovely town in Valle de Bravo as well as in the theater of Bellas Artes in Mexico City, the most important national setting. In 2003 the OSEM embarked on a European Tour performing in Spain, Poland, Germany and France. In 2005 the orchestra travelled to Paris, France and offered two concerts, one in Sala Gaveau and the other in Theater Mogador with extraordinary success. In September 2005 the OSEM travelled to the People’s Republic of China to offer six concerts in the most important cities of the country including Changsha, Shanghai, Shenyang, Harbin and Beijing.

As the third millennium begins, the State Symphony Orchestra of Mexico and its Director, Enrique Báñez, enjoy well-deserved fame as the most important musical group of the country, and the institution holds high the flag of quality, founded in love of its labor and the ceaseless search for excellence.
STATE SYMPHONY OF MEXICO ROSTER
Music Director and Conductor: Enrique Bátiz

First Violin
FÉLIX PARRA
Nana Babayev
Elena Dotsenko
Spartak Babayev
Liliya Pershina
Ilya Fedotov
Luis Vital
Catherine Barrow
Walter Carrillo
Josiane Roy
Iryna Borenko
Nune Tshavrshyan
Dmitry Kiselev
Alexander Grizlov
Claudio Alvarez
Juan Pablo Vital
Gyöngyi Horvath
Carlos Castejón
Guadalupe López

Second Violin
LUIS GARCÍA
Carmen Loa
Luis Palomino
José Ramírez
Víctor Palomino
Oscar Díaz
Alvaro Cubides
Jaime Chávaro
Leopoldo Miravete
María Olvera
Rodolfo Galván
José Urbán
Aarón Acevedo

Viola
CHINGIZ MAMEDOV
Marcelino Urbán
Augusto Carrión
Byron Díaz
Elena Vasilivna
Jamie Cervantes
Armen Aghabekyan
Djamilia Rovinskaia
Luis Mendoza
Roberto Garduño
Betsabe Jiménez

Cello
ASAF KOLERSTEIN
Sona Poshotyan
Kamila Pietrzyk
Iván Chernyshov
Magdalena Gutaj
Luis Vital
Issac González
Irina Yeganyan
Jairo Saquicoray

Double Bass
MARCOS AVENDAÑO
Dwight Bryan
Arturo Rodríguez
Jesús Escudero
Boris Vladyshevslyi
Vladimir Ochivalov
Rafael Forero

Flute
SABINA LAURAIN
Jeremy Brimhall
Jaime Segura
Helen Benson

Oboe
JOSEPH SHALITA
Anna Foshee
Aarón Reyes

Clarinet
THOMAS JONES
Lorenzo Meza
Marco Forono
Iván Cruz

Bassoon
ADRIÁN JOJATU
Mauricio Rauda
Jamie Sinatra

French Horn
PAUL MILLER
Michael McGirr
Sarah Hogan
Oxford Kitchengs
Clive Whatley

Trumpet
JOHN URNESS
Michael Samford
Ignacio Cornejo
Ramón Meza Bustamante

Trombone
RAMÓN MEZA SUAREZ
Raúl Quezada
Alejandro Cortés

Tuba
Anatacio Meza

Timpani
Sergio Quesada

Percussion
Manuel García Fajardo
José Luis Barquera
Abel Benitez
Sergio Rábago
Ricardo Ramos

Harp
Christian Topp

Piano
Mariya Fedotova
Wojciech Nycz