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Contact: Susan Newsom, (253) 272-7264
snewsom@symphonytacoma.org

Seven vocal soloists featured in music of *West Side Story* during Season Opening

West Side Story

Saturday, October 21, 2017, 7:30 pm
Sarah Ioannides, conductor
Pantages Theater

TACOMA, WA – Symphony Tacoma will open its 2017-2018 Season with the first official observance of the highly anticipated Bernstein Centennial in the Pacific Northwest. Music Director Sarah Ioannides, whose contract with the Symphony was recently extended through 2024, will present a program featuring music from the composer/conductor's most famous musical, *West Side Story*; his film score for *On the Waterfront*; and his opera *Candide*.

Joining her will be the Symphony Tacoma Voices and a cast of seven vocal soloists: Tess Altiveros as Maria, Elizabeth Galafa as Anita and Francisca, Bianca Raso as Rosalia, Dawn Padula as Consuela, John Marzano as Tony, John Arthur Greene as Riff, and Caisey Raiha as Bernardo. The concert will be held at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, October 21 in the Pantages Theater, 901 Broadway, Tacoma.

Praised for “a ripe, sensual lyric soprano” (*Opera News*), soprano **Tess Altiveros** will sing the role of Maria. Recent engagements include Seattle Opera's critically acclaimed *The Combat*, *St. Matthew Passion* (Colorado Symphony), *Don Giovanni* (Skylark Opera Theatre), *La Bohème* (Colorado Symphony), Vaughan Williams *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Seattle Pro Musica), and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Angels & Demons Entertainment). Other recent credits include *The Turn of the Screw* (Eugene Opera), *Don Giovanni* (Juneau Lyric Opera), *Die Fledermaus* (Opera Coeur d'Alene), *La Voix Humaine* (Vespertine Opera Theater), *Carmen* (Opera Fairbanks). A native Seattleite, Tess just completed her ninth season singing for the Seattle Mariners.

Mezzo-Soprano **Elizabeth Galafa**—singing the roles of Anita and Francisca—was born in Southern California and raised in Florida. Two years after completing her Master's at the University of Michigan, she married and moved to the Pacific Northwest. Among her concert credits, she sang in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* in her final U. of M. performance. She also performed in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* under conductor Kamal Khan. *Arts at Michigan* wrote, “Elizabeth Galafa was a force of nature... it was impossible to take one's eyes off her.”

Mezzo-soprano **Bianca Raso** will perform as Rosalia. An alumna of the University of South Carolina, she is familiar to Tacoma audiences from her recent appearance in *La Périchole* with Tacoma Opera. In July, she performed with The Seattle Gilbert and Sullivan Society in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Additional performance credits include *Stellaluna* with the Seattle Children's Theatre, *The Yeomen of the Guard* with Seattle Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and LionFish Production's *Never The Sinner*. A native of Toronto, Raso lives with her husband in Seattle.

Mezzo-soprano **Dawn Padula** appears as Consuela. A versatile performer of opera, oratorio, musical theatre, jazz and classical, Dr. Padula is Director of Vocal Studies at the University of Puget Sound. She recently toured Bulgaria with the Pazardzhik Symphony in performances of Mozart's *Requiem*. In August, she released her first classical solo album, *Gracious Moonlight*. Padula has performed with the Tacoma and Kitsap operas, Concert Opera of Seattle, and Puget Sound Concert Opera; and has concertized with the Oregon Symphony, Seattle Bach Choir, and Second City Chamber Series, among others.

Tenor **John Marzano**—singing the role of Tony—was born and raised in Tacoma. He earned his Bachelor's at PLU, studying under Barry Johnson. A frequent performer with the operas of Seattle, Vashon and PLU, Marzano's recent appearances include Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and *Die Zauberflöte*, Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Britten's *Albert Herring*, and Bizet's *Carmen*. On the concert stage, he has performed with the Tacoma Youth Symphony, PLU Orchestra, Choral Union, and Choir of the West, among others.

John Arthur Greene is no stranger to the role of Riff, the leader of the Jets, since his first appearance in the Broadway production of *West Side Story* at age 20. A native of North Carolina, Greene grew up listening to all types of music, including classical, opera, jazz, rock, blues, soul—and especially Broadway. At age 18 he performed on tour as Action in *West Side Story*; two years later the late great director Arthur Laurents invited him to play the role of Riff. Current roles include Theo in *School of Rock*, Luke in *Mim*, and Jonathan in *Tick Tick Boom*, to name a few. He performs all over New York, and his singles "Easy" and "Brooklyn," as well as his Debut EP, *Shadows Of Light*, are available on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon, and YouTube.

Casey Raiha, appearing as Bernardo, has been a featured soloist for Masterworks Choral Ensemble, the Olympia Choral Society, and Seattle Unity Church. Specializing in Musical Theatre, Casey also performs in Shakespeare, pantomime, dance and vocal recitals, concerts, Cabarets, radio dramas, staged readings, and improv. Recent appearances include *South Pacific* with Coeur d'Alene Summer Theatre, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Seattle Shakespeare Company, and *Singin' in the Rain* with Village Theatre. He has performed in venues all over the Pacific Northwest, including Benaroya Hall, Mount Baker Theatre in Bellingham, and The Washington Center in Olympia.

The global celebration titled "**Leonard Bernstein at 100**" officially began on August 25, 2017 and continues for exactly one full year. Composer, conductor, educator, pianist, cultural ambassador—Leonard Bernstein filled all these roles and more with aplomb. Igor Stravinsky admiringly termed him "a department store of music." Bernstein received his first permanent conducting job in 1943, serving as Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic. On November 14, 1943, he was called upon to substitute for an ailing Bruno Walter at Carnegie Hall. Broadcast nationally on radio, the concert caused an instant sensation and made Bernstein a celebrity almost overnight.

As Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from 1958 to 1969, he led more concerts with the orchestra than any previous conductor. His famed *Young People's Concerts* were broadcast on national television for 14 seasons, well beyond his tenure as Music Director. For an entire generation, Bernstein came to exemplify and symbolize a new, distinctly American classical maestro: young, handsome, charismatic, approachable, debonair, passionate, and compassionate.

West Side Story, a modern retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, is set in 1950s New York City, with the Montagues being replaced by the Anglo Jets, and the Capulets by the rival Puerto Rican Sharks. The magical partnership of Bernstein and lyricist Stephen Sondheim resulted in energetic, emotional music paired with clever, memorable lyrics.

West Side Story rapidly entered mainstream culture and remains there to this day. Bernstein's music has been covered by jazz musicians like Buddy Rich, Oscar Peterson, Stan Kenton and Chick Corea; and rock and pop artists such as Little Richard, Keith Emerson, Alice Cooper, Selena, Trisha Yearwood, and Salt-n-Pepa, among many more.

Tickets for the concert start at \$19.50 and are available for purchase at www.symphonytacoma.org or by calling the Broadway Center box office at 253.591.5894.

About Symphony Tacoma:

Building community through music. Inspiring audiences with live musical experiences that transcend tradition, Symphony Tacoma has been a vital part of Tacoma's cultural landscape for 70 years. In 2014, Symphony Tacoma welcomed music director Sarah Ioannides, whom the *Los Angeles Times* called "one of six female conductors breaking the glass podium." Today's Symphony Tacoma is a metropolitan professional symphony orchestra with more than 80 orchestral musicians and a volunteer chorus of 70. Keeping live musical performance alive in the heart of the region, Symphony Tacoma concertizes for an annual audience of nearly 20,000 citizens throughout Pierce County and the Greater Puget Sound area. www.symphonytacoma.org

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