

PRESS RELEASE

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Sunriver Music Festival Hires New Artistic Director

The Sunriver Music Festival has offered a three-year contract to George Hanson to serve as the Festival's new Artistic Director and Conductor. Maestro Hanson currently serves as the Music Director and Conductor of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and filled the role of the Sunriver Music Festival's Guest Conductor during the 2011 summer season.

"When our long-time Artistic Director and Conductor Lawrence Leighton Smith announced that he would be concluding his tenure with the Festival after 24 years, we knew we had a big job ahead of us in filling those shoes," said Pam Beezley of the Sunriver Music Festival. "George was initially contracted as our Guest Conductor for two concerts during our 2011 season."

"When Larry suddenly was unable to come to Sunriver due to his declining health, George graciously stepped up and conducted all five orchestral concerts," Beezley added. "He did an incredible job under these tough circumstances and the audience loved him."

"Our patrons were very impressed with George Hanson," said Jim Putney, Festival Board of Trustees President. "He had great energy and he was very engaging with the audience. The comments from long-time and new patrons were very positive about both George and the impressive quality of the orchestra."

"During our Board of Trustees' festival wrap-up meeting, we carefully reviewed our options and requirements for the Artistic Director position," added Putney. "By the conclusion of the meeting we voted unanimously to offer George Hanson the position. We are very pleased that he accepted our offer. We believe he will create new enthusiasm for the Festival as we enter our 35th season."

George Hanson took the helm at the Tucson Symphony Orchestra (TSO) in 1996 and has led the regional orchestra to international acclaim. TSO's first recording, released September 2008, reached Number Two on U.S. Classical Charts, and was lauded by critics around the globe.

Hanson is helping shape the changing role of the modern Music Director. As symphony and opera conductor, pianist, recording artist, television host, educator, community leader, fundraiser and passionate spokesman for the Arts, Hanson has helped establish the profile of the Tucson Symphony as the flagship organization in Tucson's cultural life. He is also a popular speaker, addressing the educational and economic importance of music and the Arts.

Hanson burst onto the European scene at age 28 with first prizes at the Budapest International Conducting Competition and shortly thereafter at the Stokowski Competition in New York. Early in his career, Hanson served as assistant to Leonard Bernstein. He was Resident Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony from 1988 to 1993, and assisted Kurt Masur at the New York Philharmonic from 1993 to 2000. He has led nearly 100 orchestras and operas, including the New York Philharmonic, the Radio orchestras of Berlin and Hamburg, Berlin's Komische Opera and Vienna's Kammeroper, the Warsaw Philharmonic, Mexico's National Symphony, and the orchestras of Osaka and Seoul. His 2010-2011 guest conducting appearances included debuts with the Bogota Philharmonic and the Pforzheim Orchestra. This season, his guest conducting schedule includes the Leipzig Orchestra.

In seven years as General Music Director of the Wuppertal Symphony and Opera in Germany, Hanson oversaw nearly 50 opera productions. Hanson made six recordings with Wuppertal; the first was praised by Henry Fogel in FANFARE Magazine as *"a recording of extraordinary importance. . . one of the year's 5 best."* Hanson's last recording there received the ECHO Klassik award, second only to the Grammy in international importance.

"I am very impressed with the leadership of the Sunriver Music Festival as an organization," shared George Hanson. "The musicianship of the orchestra is top-notch and I see enormous potential for this festival in the future."

Hanson added, "Central Oregon offers a perfect setting for this wonderful music and I am delighted to be part of the Sunriver Music Festival."

Learn more about the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and George Hanson at www.tucsonsymphony.org.

To get more information about the Sunriver Music Festival's upcoming concerts and events, call the Sunriver Music Festival Ticket Office at 541-593-9310 or email at tickets@sunrivermusic.org or visit www.sunrivermusic.org.