

For Immediate Release  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

September 8, 2011

## **The VSO's 2011-12 season launches on September 24<sup>th</sup> with Maestro Bramwell Tovey and pianist Jon Kimura Parker**

**Vancouver, BC** - The **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's** 2011/2012 season begins with one of Vancouver's most famous and loved musical exports, **Jon Kimura Parker**, as he returns to play one of the most popular piano concertos ever written, **Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3**. **VSO Music Director Bramwell Tovey** conducts the concerts on **Saturday and Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 8pm** at the **Orpheum Theatre**.

Internationally acclaimed concert pianist **Jon Kimura Parker** was born, raised and educated in Vancouver, and is an Officer of The Order of Canada. In recent seasons, Mr. Parker has performed as guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the NHK Tokyo Orchestra, and with major orchestra in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Montreal, Phoenix, San Diego, Salt Lake City and Toronto. A committed educator, Jon Kimura Parker is Professor of Piano at The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston, where he currently resides.

Mr. Parker will perform **Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3**, one of the most technically challenging concertos in classical piano repertoire. Composed in 1909 during Rachmaninoff's most fruitful years as a composer, the piece makes extreme demands of agility, power and emotion from the performer. In the words of Mr. Parker, the guest pianist for these performances:

The Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3 is really the concerto that strikes terror into so many young pianist's hearts... It is *thickly* written; there's a combination of big chords to play and very fast notes to play. There are two cadenzas written for the piece...the climax of either of those cadenzas is immensely powerful music. I always think that listening to this must be like standing under a waterfall.

This blockbuster season-opening concert also features one of **Tchaikovsky's** greatest works, *Symphony No. 5*. Tchaikovsky agonized over the debate between free will and the idea that life was predestined, and one's choices mattered little. One could struggle to break free from fate, but ultimately, were all efforts doomed to failure? This question is grappled with explicitly and implicitly through Tchaikovsky's fourth and fifth symphonies, intimately related works though ten years apart. Tchaikovsky's *Symphony*

*No. 5* was written in the summer of 1888, premiering the following November in St. Petersburg, with the composer at the helm. Tchaikovsky was pursued by many demons, and had struggled mightily with a numbing depression in the years leading up to the *Fifth's* composition. However, by that summer he was feeling in better spirits and eager to prove that he still had plenty to give as a composer. Inspiration struck in the form of a motto representing fate, as Tchaikovsky once again entered into a creative process with the purpose of working out an answer to the question of free will versus determinism.

The fate motto is heard throughout the work, beginning with a statement of “complete resignation before fate” in the composer’s words. The motto weaves its way through the piece dramatically, always returning in march-like form, couched in a pessimistic minor tonality. It is only in the finale that the clouds seem to part, and the fate motto is transformed into a triumphal E major march to bring the work to a rousing conclusion. But has fate really been vanquished? The triumphant nature of this work’s conclusion seems unconvincing, as a dark shadow seems to hover in background, a whisper of doubt that perhaps keeps the door open a crack for the struggle to continue in the *Sixth Symphony*, where Tchaikovsky’s final answer is given.

#### CONCERT INFO

**Goldcorp Masterworks Gold**

**Saturday and Monday, September 24 & 26, 8pm, Orpheum Theatre  
Rachmaninoff & Tchaikovsky**

**Bramwell Tovey** *conductor*

**Jon Kimura Parker** *piano*

Reznicek Donna Diana: Overture

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

#### TICKET INFORMATION:

**Tickets:** \$26.75 - \$84 (senior, student and subscriber discounts available)

**Tickets available online at [www.vancouversymphony.ca](http://www.vancouversymphony.ca) or by calling VSO customer service at 604.876.3434**

**Series Sponsor:** Goldcorp Inc.

#### BIOGRAPHIES

**Jon Kimura Parker** *piano*

Internationally acclaimed concert pianist Jon Kimura Parker's extraordinary career has taken him from Carnegie Hall and London's Royal Festival Hall to Baffin Island and Zimbabwe. A true Canadian ambassador of music, Mr. Parker has given two command performances for Queen Elizabeth II, special performances for the United States Supreme Court, and has performed for the Prime Ministers of Canada and Japan. He is an Officer of The Order of Canada, his country's highest civilian honour.

In recent seasons, Jon Kimura Parker has performed as guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the NHK Tokyo Orchestra, and with major orchestra in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Montreal, Phoenix, San Diego, Salt Lake City and Toronto. This season Mr. Parker performed at the Beijing Music Festival, and with the Iceland Symphony, and as concerto soloist with twelve symphony orchestras in North America with conductors including James DePreist, William Eddins, Carlos Kalmar, Jahja Ling, Andrew Litton, and Gerard Schwarz. Jon Kimura Parker has also performed this season in duo recital with James Ehnes, Lynn Harrell, and Cho-Liang Lin. This summer he returns to Minneapolis for opening night of the Minnesota Orchestra's Sommerfest.

Recent summer orchestral festival appearances have included the Hollywood Bowl, Mainly Mozart, Sun Valley and Vail, as well as chamber music festivals in Amelia Island, La Jolla, Santa Fe, Seattle, Steamboat Springs and Orcas Island. An unusually versatile artist, Mr. Parker has jammed with Doc Severinsen in Calgary and Bobby McFerrin in Philadelphia and Baltimore, and has performed with Audra McDonald and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. As a member of the outreach project "PianoPlus," Mr. Parker toured remote areas including the Canadian Arctic, performing classical music and rock 'n' roll on everything from upright pianos to electronic keyboards.

An active media personality, Mr. Parker has hosted the classical music television series "Whole Notes," on Bravo! Canada. He also hosted CBC Radio Two's five-part series "Up And Coming," showcasing young musicians. He has played himself in a guest appearance on the Disney Channel's "Under the Umbrella Tree". Mr. Parker was also seen on CNN performing in war-torn Sarajevo, and documented on PBS's "The Visionaries." In commemoration of this event, Jon Kimura Parker was a featured speaker and performer alongside humanitarians Elie Wiesel and Paul Rusesabagina at the 50th Anniversary of AmeriCares.

A committed educator, Jon Kimura Parker is Professor of Piano at The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston. His former student Jade Simmons was named the first New Music/New Places Fellow by New York's Concert Artists Guild. Mr. Parker is also Honorary Co-Chair of the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory at the University of Ottawa. He has given master classes and lectures at The Juilliard School, The Steans Institute, New York University, and Yale University. Jon Kimura Parker is also the Artistic Advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival.

"Jackie" Parker received all of his early education in Canada, training with his uncle, Edward Parker and his mother, Keiko Parker. He studied with Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and University of British Columbia, Marek Jablonski at The Banff Centre, and with renowned pedagogue Adele Marcus at The Juilliard School, where he received his doctorate. He won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition.

Mr. Parker has recorded for Telarc with Yoel Levi, Andre Previn and Peter Schickele. He was born, raised and educated in Vancouver. He lives in Houston with his wife, violinist Aloysia Friedmann and their daughter Sophie. For further information, please see [www.jonkimuraparker.com](http://www.jonkimuraparker.com) and [www.oicmf.org](http://www.oicmf.org).

**Bramwell Tovey** *conductor*

A musician of striking versatility, GRAMMY® Award winning conductor Bramwell Tovey is acknowledged around the world for his artistic depth and his warm, charismatic personality on the podium. Tovey's career as a conductor is uniquely enhanced by his work as a composer and pianist, lending him a remarkable musical perspective. His tenures as music director with the Vancouver Symphony, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras have been characterized by his expertise in operatic, choral, British and contemporary repertoire.

Mr. Tovey who is entering his twelfth season as Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony, also continues as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and as founding host and conductor of the New York Philharmonic's Summertime Classics series at Avery Fisher Hall. In 2008, both orchestras co-commissioned him to write a new work, the well-received Urban Runway, which has also been premiered in Canada. He was also honored with the Best Canadian Classical Composition Juno® Award in 2003 for his Requiem for a Charred Skull

An esteemed guest conductor, Mr. Tovey has worked with orchestras in the United States and Europe including the London Philharmonic, London Symphony and Frankfurt Radio Orchestra. In North America, Mr. Tovey has made guest appearances with the orchestras of Baltimore, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Seattle and Montreal as well as ongoing performances with Toronto, where his trumpet concerto, commissioned by that orchestra received its premiere in winter of 2009 as a preview of his first full-length opera "The Inventor" premiered in Calgary in winter 2011. To his already busy summer schedule in 2011 he added debuts with the Cleveland Orchestra and Boston Symphony as well as a return visit to the Philadelphia Orchestra, this time in their summer series in Saratoga, NY.

Tovey has been awarded honorary degrees, including a Fellowship from the Royal Academy of Music in London, honorary Doctorates of Law from the universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, and Kwantlen University College, as well as a Royal Conservatory of Music Fellowship in Toronto. In 1999, he received the M. Joan Chalmers National Award for Artistic Direction, a Canadian prize awarded to artists for outstanding contributions in the performing arts.

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