

For Immediate Release
MEDIA RELEASE

September 12, 2011

Jazz and pop sensation Nikki Yanofsky – live with the VSO

Vancouver, BC - 17-year-old musical prodigy **Nikki Yanofsky** will perform jazz and pop classics with the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra** on **Wednesday, October 5, 8pm at the Orpheum Theatre**. VSO Assistant Conductor **Pierre Simard** conducts.

Since her debut at the 2006 Montreal International Jazz Festival, **Nikki Yanofsky** has skyrocketed to fame with a long list of accomplishments including recordings, performances and accolades. In the winter of 2010, Nikki was a featured artist at the **2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games** held in Vancouver, performing Canada's national anthem at the Opening Ceremonies of the Olympics, as well as "I Believe," the anthem for Canadian spirit during the games.

Garnering critical acclaim, Nikki's 2008 release *Ella... Of Thee I Swing*, a live CD/DVD package recorded in Montreal, earned Nikki two Juno nominations: **New Artist of the Year** and **Vocal Jazz Album of the Year**. Her first studio album, *Nikki*, debuted in 2010 in Canada at #1 on the Billboard Jazz Chart, #6 on the Billboard Pop Chart and was certified gold within 3 months.

Nikki Yanofsky will perform jazz and pop favourites such as *Cheek to Cheek*, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, *I Got Rhythm*, *God Bless the Child*, and *Take The "A" Train*, as well as a few original compositions.

CONCERT INFO

Specials

Wednesday, October 5, 8pm, Orpheum Theatre
Nikki Yanofsky with the VSO

Pierre Simard *conductor*
Nikki Yanofsky *vocalist*

TICKET INFORMATION:

Tickets: \$45-\$65 (senior, student and subscriber discounts available)

Tickets available online at www.vancouversymphony.ca or by calling VSO customer service at 604.876.3434

Presenting Sponsor: Air Canada

BIOGRAPHIES

Nikki Yanofsky

Nikki Yanofsky is a 17-year-old musical prodigy. Since her debut at the 2006 Montreal International Jazz Festival, where she won the hearts of the 100,000+ people in the audience, Nikki has never looked back.

Accomplishments early in her career were plentiful, including recordings, performances and accolades. At 13, she was the youngest singer ever on a Verve Records Release with “Airmail Special,” released on the Ella Fitzgerald tribute album *We All Love Ella: Celebrating the First Lady of Song*. On her 14th birthday, she began a collaboration with Marvin Hamlisch with a performance at Carnegie Hall and continued on a North American tour performing with many esteemed orchestras including the New York Philharmonic and the National Symphony Orchestra. She recorded “Stompin’ at the Savoy” with Grammy Award-winning artists Herbie Hancock and Will.i.am for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s audio book, *On the Shoulders of Giants*. She even reached into the realm of pop music, recording “Gotta Go My Own Way” for Disney’s DVD release of their smash hit *High School Musical 2* as well as recording the opening title for PBS’ current version of *The Electric Company* with renowned hip-hop artist Wyclef Jean. She was featured on the youth talent shows *From the Top* in the US and *The Next Star* in Canada. All of these performances culminated in the 2008 release *Ella... Of Thee I Swing* – a live CD/DVD package recorded in Montreal. Garnering critical acclaim and certified gold, it earned Nikki two Juno nominations: New Artist of the Year and Vocal Jazz Album of the Year.

In the winter of 2010, Nikki was a featured artist at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games held in Vancouver. Performing Canada’s national anthem at the Opening Ceremonies of the Olympics, Nikki appeared before a worldwide audience of 3.2 billion people. Nikki was also chosen to sing “I Believe,” the anthem for Canadian spirit during the Winter Olympic Games. Written by Stephan Moccio (Celine Dion) and Alan Frew (Glass Tiger), this song quickly became a #1 hit in Canada. The single had the highest first-week sales of any Canadian artist in SoundScan history and was certified quadruple-platinum, making Nikki the youngest artist to ever achieve this sales level. As “I Believe” was at the top of the iTunes Canada Pop Singles charts, *Ella... of Thee I Swing* went back to the top of the iTunes Canada Jazz Albums Chart and “I Got Rhythm” went to the top of the iTunes Canada Jazz Singles Chart. This was the first time since the inception of digital downloading that any artist has held these #1 positions concurrently.

Throughout her career, Nikki has used her budding fame to help the underprivileged – becoming an ambassador for the Montreal Children’s Hospital, The Children’s Wish Foundation and MusiCounts. Nikki also recently joined her fellow Canadian artists in recording K’Naan’s hit song “Wavin’ Flag” for Young Artists for Haiti. Being sold on iTunes as a single and video, the proceeds have directly impacted the lives of children, families and communities in Haiti through the relief and rebuilding efforts of Free the Children, War Child Canada and World Vision Canada. The local, national and international charity events that Nikki has been involved with to date have raised well over \$10 million.

In the spring of 2010, Nikki was signed to Decca Records and released her first studio album, *Nikki*. The album debuted in Canada at #1 on the Billboard Jazz Chart, #6 on the Billboard Pop Chart and was certified gold within 3 months. In the United States, Nikki debuted at #1 on the Billboard Heatseekers chart and continues to sell steadily. Produced by 14-time Grammy Award-winner Phil Ramone and Grammy-winning songwriter Jesse Harris (Norah Jones), *Nikki* features new arrangements of classic jazz songs as well as some of Nikki’s first original music. It includes collaborations with Harris and celebrated Canadian singer-songwriter Ron Sexsmith as well as a song written for Nikki by Feist.

Spring also saw the release of Nikki's second live DVD, *Live in Montreal*. Filmed at a sold-out Pierre-Mercure Theatre, the receptive audience was treated to an eclectic set of the jazz and pop classics she is known for, as well as several of the new originals that also appear on her debut studio album. Upon its debut, *Live in Montreal* was certified gold and has garnered rave reviews. The performance has been aired extensively on PBS as part of their 2010 pledge drives.

In the summer of 2010, Nikki returned to the Canadian Jazz Festival circuit, including her fourth consecutive concert at the Montreal Jazz Festival. It also had several debut performances including jazz festivals throughout Europe, Israel and a special solo performance with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. A highlight of the summer was an invitation to perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival with Quincy Jones' Global Gumbo All-Stars, in which she got to share the stage with jazz icon Herbie Hancock. The concert was filmed in High Definition, and is being planned for a 2011 release. Nikki tirelessly continued to tour in the fall of 2010 with a PBS-supported trip to the US, a short trip to Japan and debuts in London at the famed Pizza Express Jazz Club and Paris at Le Duc des Lombards. One week after her Paris concert, *Nikki* was released in France and entered their jazz charts at #1.

On October 16, 2010, Nikki was the inaugural recipient of the first annual Allan Slaight Award; one of the highest honors of her young career. This award recognizes excellence, philanthropy and longevity in a young Canadian in the performing arts and was presented at the Canada's Walk of Fame Awards gala.

2010 closed in top form for when iTunes worldwide named *Nikki* as the Vocal Jazz Album Of The Year in their annual Rewind list. 2011 will surely be another benchmark year in Nikki's career. Nikki will hit the ground running when, during Grammy weekend, she will reunite with Herbie Hancock in Los Angeles for a performance at the MusiCares Foundation *Person of The Year* gala honoring Barbra Streisand. The star-studded bill also includes Stevie Wonder, Tony Bennett, Diana Krall, and the cast of *Glee*. Nikki's 2011 plans also include a jazz vocal all-star concert tour entitled *Three Generations Of Divas* in which she will be appearing with superstars Dianne Reeves and Jane Monheit, promotion behind the highly anticipated UK release of *Nikki* and several months spent away from the spotlight, writing and recording songs for her second studio album. With all of these heavy commitments, Nikki will also find time to keep up her "A" average in high school, and prepare for graduation in the spring!

With continued professional and artistic success, the future is bright for Nikki Yanofsky.

Pierre Simard *conductor*

In his second season as Assistant Conductor of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, **Pierre Simard** is also Artistic Director with both the Vancouver Island Symphony (BC) and the Orchestre Symphonique de Drummondville (QC). Having served as Associate Conductor with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, he also performs as guest conductor with major orchestras in Milwaukee, Toronto, Ottawa (National Arts Centre), Victoria, Hamilton, Okanagan, Hot Springs (AR), Trois-Rivières, Québec's Les Violons du Roy and Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain. Recipient of many honours, Pierre Simard was awarded the Canada Council's Jean-Marie Beaudet Award in Conducting, recognizing his work on a national scale. He is also grantee of the Québec Music Council, the Québec Arts Council and the Montreal Mayor's Foundation.

A passionate defender of orchestral repertoire, Pierre Simard devotes himself to reinventing the concert form, combining his fresh ideas, fantasy and humour with music. His outstanding creativity and engagement with youth audiences inspire him to write and perform original symphonic shows, featured

all across Canada. Holder of a Master's Degree in Conducting from the Peabody Institute and five Conservatory Prizes from the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, Pierre Simard studied with Raffi Armenian, Frederik Prausnitz, JoAnn Falletta and Marin Alsop.

The VSO's Assistant Conductor position is made possible with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

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