

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Please note the new title for the work by Lera Auerbach to be premiered (which replaces *Overture for an Unforeseeable Future*): *Dreams and Whispers of Poseidon -- In Memory of the Lives Taken by the Sea, December 26, 2004*

AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY TO MAKE CARNEGIE HALL DEBUT
WITH PIANIST YUNDI LI AS SOLOIST, SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2005, 8 P.M.

Concert Conducted by Music Director Alexander Treger Will Be Yundi Li's
New York Orchestra Debut, and Will Feature East Coast Premiere of New Work
by Lera Auerbach

The American Youth Symphony (AYS), under the direction of its Music Director and Conductor Alexander Treger, will make its Carnegie Hall debut on Saturday, April 2, 2005, at 8 p.m. (Carnegie Hall is located at 57th Street and Seventh Avenue in Manhattan.) Internationally acclaimed pianist Yundi Li will be the featured soloist, performing Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 11, in E minor. The program will also feature Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 and the East Coast premiere of a new work, *Dreams and Whispers of Poseidon -- In Memory of the Lives Taken by the Sea, December 26, 2004*, by Lera Auerbach, Composer-in-Residence of the AYS. (This work replaces *Overture for an Unforeseeable Future*, which was previously announced.) The Auerbach work was commissioned by the Orchestra, which will present the world premiere six days earlier at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, where the Orchestra is based. Consisting of players between the ages of 16 and 25, the American Youth Symphony is a polished ensemble whose high standard of performance belies the youth of its members.

As one of the top pianists of the emerging generation, Yundi Li, at the age of 19 in 2000, became one of the youngest winners of the renowned Warsaw Chopin Competition and the first person in 15 years to be awarded a first prize. Music critic Harris Goldsmith describes the Chinese-born Li's considerable talent in the 2004 *Musical America Directory*, "Light years ahead in patrician elegance; exquisite

artistry from one of the greatest talents to surface in years - nay decades.” Yundi Li recently starred in a Nike commercial with famed cyclist Lance Armstrong, which aired during the 2004 summer Olympics.

The AYS concert is being presented by Carnegie Hall. Only two other youth orchestras have previously been featured as part of the venue’s official concert series – the New World Symphony, in connection with a Carnegie Hall retrospective on conductor Michael Tilson Thomas; and the Chicago Civic Orchestra, in conjunction with a Carnegie Hall series on conductor Daniel Barenboim.

“Every musician dreams of performing on the stage of Carnegie Hall, and I am delighted to showcase our extremely talented musicians at this unparalleled venue,” said Treger, who was appointed music director in 1998. “To have our performance part of the Hall’s regular concert series is a double honor.”

Rafael H. Agudelo, Executive Director of the AYS, stated: “For the past 40 years, the American Youth Symphony has been a hidden treasure of Southern California. Today, the level of performance is such that AYS can easily be considered one of the very best orchestras of young people in the country and the world. This Carnegie Hall performance is the introduction of the American Youth Symphony as an institution of national scope, which intends to serve as a magnet to attract the very best young orchestral musicians to Southern California.”

Currently celebrating its 40th anniversary season as one of the nation’s leading pre-professional training orchestras, the American Youth Symphony, based in Westwood, California, was founded by Mehli Mehta in 1964. His son, conductor Zubin Mehta, was named Honorary President of the orchestra in September. Its mission is to prepare highly talented young musicians for the demands of a professional orchestral career. The members, who undergo rigorous auditions, receive a stipend for their participation. Many of the Orchestra’s alumni have gone on to solo careers or have

joined major orchestras in the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel, South America and South Africa, including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Pacific Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Auerbach wrote about the thoughts which inspired her new work, *Dreams and Whispers of Poseidon -- In Memory of the Lives Taken by the Sea, December 26, 2004*, which will receive its New York premiere at the Carnegie Hall concert: "I was asked by Alexander Treger and the American Youth Symphony for a work to celebrate their 40th Anniversary Season, to be premiered at the opening of their concert program in Los Angeles at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and in New York at Carnegie Hall. I originally set out to write an entirely different work entitled *An Overture for an Unforeseeable Future*, but then the disaster of December 26, 2004, happened. A friend of mine, Brigitte Feldtmann, was in the Maldives, and miraculously escaped the deadly wave. AYS Outreach teacher Orlantha Ambrose was not among the survivors. 175,000 lives were taken by the sea that day. This changed the course of my work. The future indeed has been unforeseeable. A totally different piece had emerged.

"The ocean -- with its magnetic powers of creation and destruction, endless mysteries, unimaginable beauty, bottomless darkness and fascinating colors, its vastness, its creatures -- had been in my dreams from early childhood. Perhaps this fascination with the ocean partially happened because I lived in Chelyabinsk -- an industrial provincial city in Russia, very far from any sea (in fact, I had never seen an ocean until I came to New York at the age of 17). The imaginary sea of these tales and myths symbolized a different world: beautiful, mysterious and powerful, at times very cruel, but much more colorful than the world around me. In my first improvisations on the piano, at ages 3 and 4, I would try to paint a story in sounds. The story was about the sea and a white-sailed ship (a variation on a famous Lermontov poem). There would be a storm, the ship would sink and the sea would again appear as if nothing had happened. These were my first 'compositions.' Perhaps in some ways I am the same child, unable to wake up from the dream world of the myths, which only reflects too often in real life."

Tickets and Information

Tickets are \$17 to \$47 (senior, student and wheelchair seating may be discounted closer to the time of the concert), available at the box office; by calling CarnegieCharge, 212/247-7800; or online at www.carnegiehall.org. For more information on the American Youth Symphony, please visit www.aysymphony.org.

About the Artists

Pianist Yundi Li was heralded after being awarded first prize in the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 2000. He subsequently made his U. S. debut at Carnegie Hall in June, 2003, as part of Steinway & Sons' 150th anniversary gala concert. The following month, he made his American concerto debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra performing Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1. Since then, he has given recitals in Paris, Salzburg, Verbier and Hong Kong, and has appeared with the NHK Symphony in Tokyo and Osaka. Li has become known for his interpretations of the music of Chopin and Liszt. His second recording for DG of Liszt solo piano works was released to great acclaim in Europe and Asia in 2002, and in the U. S. in August, 2003. (The *New York Times* named the Liszt CD "Best of the Year" for 2003.) A third recording of the Chopin scherzi is being planned for release in mid-January, 2005, and will be followed by a new recording each year until 2009. He resides in Hanover, Germany. The Boston Globe said about Yundi Li: "Pianist Yundi Li has the talent, the looks, and the personal charisma to be a standard-bearer for a new generation of performers and audiences." The New York Times called him "spectacularly gifted," and the Los Angeles Times wrote: "He shows in this impressive performance the complete resources of a natural Chopin player: an effortless and sparkling technique, power and agility, speed, thoughtfulness and poetry."

Composer Lera Auerbach, born in Russia, is the youngest person and only American on the roster of Hamburg's prestigious international music publishing company, Hans Sikorski. She continues the great tradition of pianist-composers of the 19th and 20th centuries, already appearing as a solo pianist at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Munich's Herkulessaal, Oslo's Konzerthaus, Chicago's Symphony Hall, and Washington's Kennedy Center. Her original compositions have been commissioned for Gidon Kremer, the Royal Danish Ballet, David Finckel and Wu Han, Hamburg Ballet, Vadim Gluzman, Akiko Suwanai, Philippe Quint, Kremerata Baltica, and Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, among others. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in May 2002 performing her own Suite for Violin and Piano with Gidon Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica (with Mr. Kremer as solo violinist). Ms. Auerbach's music has been presented at Carnegie Hall each season since then. In 1991, during a U. S. concert tour, Auerbach defected from the Soviet Union, becoming one of the last artists to do so. She subsequently earned Bachelor and Master's degrees from The Juilliard School, where she studied both piano and composition.

Ms. Auerbach's awards and honors are numerous. In 2000, she was invited by the International Johannes Brahms Foundation to live and work at the composer's former home in Baden-Baden as artist-in-residence. In 2001, at the invitation of Gidon Kremer, she was composer-in-residence and guest artist at the Lockenhaus Festival in Austria, where no fewer than twelve of her works were premiered. Last season, the AYS premiered her Concerto for Violin and Orchestra at Walt Disney Concert Hall to critical acclaim.

Alexander Treger – an accomplished conductor, gifted violinist, and noted educator – was appointed Music Director of the acclaimed American Youth Symphony in 1998. The *Los Angeles Times* describes his conducting as “inspired” and stated that “Treger is broadening this orchestra’s repertoire.” Prior to being named Music Director of the American Youth Symphony, Treger guest conducted the Orchestra in 1994 and 1996. He has guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New World Symphony, Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, California’s Music in the Mountains Festival Orchestra, Santa Monica Symphony, and the Turku Philharmonic in Finland, among others. In addition to presenting master classes around the world, Treger held the position of Professor of Violin at the UCLA Music Department from 1977 to 1997 and served as the interim conductor of the UCLA Symphony in 1992. He was appointed the Music Director/Conductor of the Crossroads Chamber Orchestra in 1993. A major force in the classical music scene of Los Angeles for nearly three decades, Treger joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1974 and has served as the orchestra’s concertmaster since 1985.

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