

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 8, 2008

Contact: Lenore Eggleston (914) 682-3707 ext. 15
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**WESTCHESTER PHILHARMONIC KICKS-OFF HISTORIC SEASON
WITH GUEST ARTIST PIANIST LEON FLEISHER AND
CONDUCTOR ITZHAK PERLMAN**

Concert to mark Perlman's debut as primary conductor of orchestra

(Purchase, New York) — The Westchester Philharmonic begins a new era under the baton of Itzhak Perlman in October with a weekend of concerts **Saturday, October 11, 2008 at 8 pm and Sunday, October 12, 2008 at 3 pm**. Piano legend and recent Kennedy Center honoree Leon Fleisher will make his first-ever guest appearance with the Phil, taking on Beethoven's final, awe-inspiring Concerto No. 5 also known as "Emperor Concerto". The concerts will also mark Perlman's debut performance as primary conductor of the orchestra. Perlman was appointed Artistic Director of the Westchester Philharmonic beginning with the orchestra's 2008-09 season.

Music aficionados will know Leon Fleisher from his brilliant 15 year career in the 1950s and early 60s when he was hailed as "the pianistic find of the century." In 1965, Mr. Fleisher was suddenly struck silent when two fingers of his right hand became immobile and he was forced to "retire" at only 37 years old. After many treatments that finally helped relieve the neurological affliction known as focal dystonia, his right hand became strong enough for him to confidently return to the stage and the repertoire for two hands.

"In order to be able to make it across these last thirty or forty years, I've had to somehow de-emphasize the number of hands or the number of fingers and kind of go back to the concept of music as music – whether it be a single line for a wind instrument or a single line for one hand, or one hand sounding like two hands," says Fleisher.

Opening weekend concludes with Maestro Perlman leading the Philharmonic in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, which Beethoven himself called his "most excellent symphony." Audiences can also enjoy a pre-concert showing of Academy Award® nominated short film *Two Hands* produced by Susan Rose Behr and Nathaniel Kahn and directed by

Nathaniel Kahn. This simple and moving film tells the triumphant story of the pianist's struggle to maintain his career while working to regain the use of his right hand. The film will be shown one and a quarter hours before each concert and is free to ticket holders. All events for the opening weekend will be held in The Concert Hall at The Performing Arts Center Purchase College.

High resolution photos and artist biographies are available and may be downloaded from:
www.westchesterphil.org/pressphotos0809.asp

Concert Tickets

All performances will take place in The Concert Hall at The Performing Arts Center Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, New York. Five and four concert subscriptions are available and range from \$315-\$88. Single tickets range from \$75-\$25. Student/child/group discounts are available.

To purchase tickets and for additional information call the Westchester Philharmonic Box Office at (914) 682-3707 ext. 10. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover Card accepted. Visit the Westchester Philharmonic's website at www.westchesterphil.org.

About the Westchester Philharmonic

The Westchester Philharmonic orchestra, which recently appointed Itzhak Perlman as Artistic Director beginning with the 2008-09 season, is the only fully-professional symphony orchestra devoted to serving the people of Westchester County. Founded in 1983, the Philharmonic fulfills its mission in the concert hall, in the community, and in the classroom. Currently, the Philharmonic performs a main stage Concert Series at the Performing Arts Center Purchase College and partners with local agencies to present free and low-cost concerts for all County residents. It's award-winning education program serves over 2,000 elementary school students.

The orchestra is comprised of the finest musicians from the greater New York area and has worked with the world's finest soloists, including Itzhak Perlman, Midori, Joshua Bell, and the late Isaac Stern. With a focus on presenting the best music of the past and present, the orchestra places particular emphasis on providing young musicians with an opportunity to perform with, or compose for, a professional symphony orchestra early in their careers. The Philharmonic has become a home for living American composers and has proudly commissioned many orchestral works such as Melinda Wagner's *Concerto for Flute, Strings and Percussion*, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

The orchestra is dedicated to inviting and attracting people of diverse backgrounds to its concerts and continues to explore new partnerships with local schools, libraries, and community centers, so that all in the community have the opportunity to experience the joy of a live, classical music concert.

*Entergy Nuclear is a major sponsor of the Westchester Philharmonic.
Westchester Magazine is a media sponsor of Westchester Philharmonic.*

This season is made possible, in part, by the Basic Program Support Grant of the Westchester Arts Council with funds from Westchester County Government and with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

2008-09 Season At-a-Glance
Itzhak Perlman, Artistic Director

Opening Weekend

Saturday, October 11, 2008 at 8 pm and Sunday, October 12, 2008 at 3 pm

Itzhak Perlman, Conductor
Leon Fleisher, Piano

Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor")
Beethoven, Symphony No. 7

Pre-concert: Tuning Up

Saturday, October 11 at 6:45 pm and Sunday, October 12 at 1:45 pm

Academy Award® nominated short film *Two Hands: The Leon Fleisher Story* ©2006

Perlman Plays

Saturday, November 8, 2008 at 8 pm and Sunday, November 9, 2008 at 3 pm

Itzhak Perlman, Conductor and Violin

Bach Violin Concerto No. 2 in E Major
Mozart Symphony No. 35 ("Haffner")
Brahms Symphony No. 1

Pre-concert: Tuning Up

Saturday, November 8 at 6:45 pm and Sunday, November 9 at 1:45 pm

A discussion with members of the Philharmonic as they share their experiences working with Maestro Perlman.

Winter Pops

Saturday, December 20, 2008 at 3 PM

Starring Broadway Icon Brian Stokes Mitchell
Constantine Kitsopoulos, Guest Conductor

A Modern Spring

Saturday, April 18, 2009 at 8 pm and Sunday, April 19, 2009 at 3 pm

George Manahan, Guest Conductor

Ravel Le Tombeau de Couperin
Adams Shaker Loops
Barber Capricorn Concerto
Stravinsky Pulcinella Suite

Pre-concert: Tuning Up

Saturday, April 18 at 6:45 pm and Sunday, April 19 at 1:45 pm

A discussion of new music with pianist Michael Boriskin, composer Laura Kaminsky and conductor Manahan.

Season Finale

Saturday, May 16, 2009 at 8 pm and Sunday, May 17, 2009 at 3 pm

Itzhak Perlman, Conductor
Alisa Weilerstein, Cello

Mozart Symphony No. 27
Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No. 1
Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

Concerts are presented in The Concert Hall at the Performing Arts Center Purchase College
at 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY.

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