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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Beethoven 7 and Klezmer at the Marin Symphony's February 25 & 27 concerts

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Symphonic favorite paired with Grammy-award nominated work, *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*

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SAN RAFAEL, CA—Audiences of the Marin Symphony's Sunday, February 25 and Tuesday, February 27 concerts will be treated to two epic works in one program: Beethoven's majestic Symphony No. 7 and contemporary composer Osvaldo Golijov's *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*, performed by solo clarinetist Todd Palmer. Also on the program is Kodály's *Galanta Dances*. Alasdair Neale conducts.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 needs no introduction. Written in 1811-12, its second movement, the stately and sweepingly melodic *Allegretto*, was immediately so well received that the audience of the 1813 premiere requested its encore. In the centuries since its first performance, the work has become one of the most popular in the classical music repertoire.

According to critics and performers alike, Golijov's work, *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*, is destined to follow suit in its popularity. Originally conceived as a clarinet quintet, the work was recorded by soloist Todd Palmer with St. Lawrence String Quartet in 2002 on the EMI Classics label. (Mr. Palmer was awarded a \$20,000 recording grant from the National Foundation of Jewish Culture to fund this project.) The recording became one of the top ten best-selling classical music CDs of 2003, receiving two Grammy nominations and the Prelude Award from the Netherlands for best chamber music recording of 2004.

Clarinet soloist Todd Palmer, who will be performing the work with the Marin Symphony on February 25 & 27, says of this work, "It's too early to put the 'masterpiece' label on it, but this is a remarkable piece—musically, the first of its kind." He observes that the first great clarinet quintet came from Mozart, two hundred years ago. Then, a hundred years later, came the Brahms clarinet quintet. Both works have become pillars of the clarinet repertoire. "I believe (the Golijov work) will become the next great clarinet quintet after the Brahms." Mr. Palmer adds with a smile, "And it's coming another hundred years later."

Marin Symphony audiences will hear a concerto version of this work, brought to the concert hall through the auspices of Magnum Opus, a commissioning project funded by philanthropist Kathryn Gould and designed to

provide nine new orchestral works over five years to be premiered by three San Francisco Bay area orchestras: the Marin Symphony, the Santa Rosa Symphony and the Oakland East Bay Symphony. Soloist Palmer notes of the orchestral work, "It has enlarged string forces. It's the same piece of music, and the big moments of the original quintet sounded orchestral anyway. I think it's a testament to any great piece of music that it can withstand being made into different versions."

Listeners—particularly fans of Klezmer music—will find much to love in this piece. A compellingly soulful work, *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind* blends orchestra, solo clarinet and the inflections of chant and Klezmer rhythms to yield a sound that clarinetist Palmer calls, "emotionally powerful. It's a very intense work with moments of great beauty." Undoubtedly, Osvaldo Golijov's unique compositional style derives from his unusual upbringing in an Eastern European Jewish household in La Plata, Argentina. Golijov himself writes of the piece, "The movements of this work sound to me as if written in three of the different languages spoken by the Jewish people throughout our history. This somehow reflects the composition's epic nature. I hear the prelude and the first movement, the most ancient, in Aramaic; the second movement is in Yiddish, the rich and fragile language of a long exile; the third movement and postlude are in sacred Hebrew." *The Boston Globe* echoes these sentiments when it calls the work "a 35-minute survey of Jewish history and Jewish music—full of mystery, pain and celebration." Isaac the Blind was a 13<sup>th</sup> century kabbalist rabbi of Provence, France.

Mr. Golijov, 46, ranks among the most sought-after composers in the world. In the past four years alone, he has received a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" and a commission from New York City's Metropolitan Opera. In 2000, the premiere of Golijov's *St. Mark Passion* took the music world by storm. The CD of the premiere of this work, on the Haenssler Classic label, received Grammy and Latin Grammy nominations in 2002. In January and February 2006, Lincoln Center presented a Festival called "The Passion of Osvaldo Golijov," featuring multiple performances of his major works, chamber music, late nights of Tango and Klezmer, and a night at the Film Society. Future projects include a collaboration with director Francis Ford Coppola on the score of his upcoming film, *Youth Without Youth*. Other projects include works for the Kronos and St Lawrence quartets, and for Yo-Yo Ma with the Boston Symphony.

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**The Marin Symphony concerts will be held on Sunday, February 25 and Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30pm at Marin Center, San Rafael. Tickets at \$65, \$50 and \$27 are available at 415.499.6800 (students half price). Free pre-concert talks with Maestro Neale begin at 6:30pm in the concert hall. Audience members are invited to meet clarinetist Todd Palmer, Maestro Neale and members of the orchestra immediately after the Tuesday, February 27 concert at the Symphony's regular Tuesday Night Wrap Party, Four Points by Sheraton Lounge, 1010 Northgate Drive, San Rafael. No host bar. Click [www.marinsymphony.org/accessible.htm](http://www.marinsymphony.org/accessible.htm)**

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