

For Immediate Release

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## **NINA GORDON PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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### **GLENDALE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES OPENING OF THIRD SEASON WITH HOLIDAY GALA CONCERT, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN GLENDALE.**

**Program to feature acclaimed soloists cellist Ruslan Biryukov, operatic sopranos Nune Genjoian, Marine Abrahamyan-Abdasho, and tenor Haqumai Sharpe. Maestro Mikael Avetisyan to conduct.**

The Glendale Philharmonic Orchestra will celebrate the opening of its third season with a special holiday gala concert on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at the landmark First Baptist Church of Glendale, at 4:00 p.m. Located at 209 N. Louise Street, the church is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Presented as part of the Positive Motions Foundation concert series, the family-oriented seasonal program will feature a variety of orchestral pieces, holiday songs, arias, and Armenian folk songs, under the baton of Maestro Mikael Avetisyan, artistic director and principal conductor of the Glendale Philharmonic Orchestra. The gala concert will feature special performances by internationally acclaimed young cellist Ruslan Biryukov (founder of the orchestra), noted sopranos Nune Genjoian and Marine Abrahamyan-Abdasho and tenor Haqumai Sharpe, hailed as “one of the most promising young African-American tenors” by such opera legends as Mignon Dunn, Florence Quivar, and others.

The orchestra’s repertoire will include such Christmas favorites as “Sleigh Ride,” “Belle of the Ball,” and “A Christmas Festival” by famous composer LeRoy Anderson, the first artist to ever sell a million copies of an instrumental recording. Known for his artistry and passion, award-winning cellist Biryukov will play David Popper’s famous “Hungarian Rhapsody”. Operatic soprano Genjoian, (who appeared with the Armenian National Opera Theatre for over two decades), will perform Verdi’s “Brindisi”, and Marine Abrahamyan-Abdasho will give voice to traditional Armenian folk songs and other selections. Sharpe’s appearance will include a stirring rendition of Schubert’s “Ave Maria” and Franck’s “Panis Angelicus.”

Founded by Biryukov, the Glendale Philharmonic Orchestra consists of 35 professional musicians. The orchestra made its official debut to rave reviews and a sold-out crowd at The First Baptist Church of Glendale in January of 2010. Now one of the leading musical groups in the community, over 20,000 people have attended the orchestra’s concerts since its inception almost three years ago. Just recently, the Los Angeles Arts and Cultural commission awarded a grant to the Positive Motions Foundation to help further develop the Orchestra. “We are very happy to launch our 3<sup>rd</sup> season with the Glendale Philharmonic Holiday Gala program. Our mission is to present professional quality, affordable music concerts that enhance the culture of the community,” stated Biryukov.

Known to worldwide audiences, Biryukov has performed with such renowned artists as violinist Midori at Disney Hall, cellist Kirill Rodin at the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory, and was the only Russian cellist invited to solo during the inaugural season of the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall.

“It is truly inspiring to witness the orchestra’s professional, artistic evolution and the positive response of our community. A project that began by an accident at a Vodka tasting party is now a solid company with a bright future. Within just a few years our orchestra has acquired considerable recognition,” stated Maestro Avetisyan. He holds Doctor of Music degrees and Master degrees from the State Conservatory in Armenia and the St. Petersburg State Conservatory in Russia. In addition to his position with the Orchestra, Avetisyan previously served as the Principal Conductor of the Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra and is presently the Music Director of the Los Angeles Armenian Society Choir, and an instructor at the International School of Music in Glendale.

Tickets are \$15 (balcony), \$20 (mezzanine), \$25 (orchestra) and \$50 (VIP) and \$100 for the conductor’s circle. Tickets can be purchased by calling 323-663-3601 & 818-243-ALEX(2539) or online at [www.GlendalePhil.com](http://www.GlendalePhil.com) or [www.GlendaleArts.org](http://www.GlendaleArts.org) or [www.CelloArt.com](http://www.CelloArt.com). For Armenian and Russian speaking patrons, tickets may be purchased by calling 818-265-0506 or online at [www.TicketMicket.com](http://www.TicketMicket.com).

Parking is free in nearby parking lots on Louise Street and Wilson Avenue, or on the street. For further information about the Glendale Philharmonic Orchestra, please visit the website, [www.GlendalePhil.com](http://www.GlendalePhil.com) and [www.CelloArt.com](http://www.CelloArt.com) A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the First Baptist Church of Glendale.

Known for its architecture, perfect acoustics and beautiful sanctuary, The First Baptist Church of Glendale was originally built in 1924. It is considered a historical landmark in the area and has been beautifully restored.

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### **About The Artists:**

#### **Glendale Phil Artistic Director & Principal Conductor Maestro Mikael Avetisyan (of Glendale)**

**Mikael Avetisyan** received his Master’s Degrees in Opera-Symphony Conducting and Ethnomusicology and proceeded to complete his Doctoral Degree at Yerevan State Conservatory under the instruction of two leading professors, Maestro Yasha Voskanyan and Maestro Ohan Durian. From 1987 to 1989, parallel to his studies at Yerevan State Conservatory, Avetisyan completed a course in conducting in the class of Professor Iliya Musin at St. Petersburg State Conservatory. He is a diplomat of the 35th Kirill Kondrashin Conductors Master Classes held in the Netherlands by Sir Edward Downes and Peter Eotvos.

Starting in 1992 Avetisyan regularly performed with the Opera and Ballet National Academic Theater Orchestra and National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Yerevan. In 1994 he was chosen the Principal Conductor of Yerevan State Symphony Orchestra; and subsequently in 1997 he was appointed the Music Director and the Principal Conductor of the Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra.

Avetisyan has conducted the USSR State Symphony Orchestra and a number of European and Russian Orchestras in France, Netherlands, Greece, Spain, Russia and Georgia. His recordings with the Moscow Symphony Orchestra were released on RCD. From 2002 to 2007 Avetisyan was conductor with the New Valley Symphony Orchestra.

Presently he is the Music Director of the Armenian Society of Los Angeles Choir, and an instructor of composition and conducting at the International School of Music in Glendale. For his artistic achievements and 2004/05 concert series, Avetisyan was honored with the City of Glendale and County of Los Angeles's Artistic Achievement Diamond Award. In 2007 he showcased The Bruno Walter National Conductors Preview with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra in Jacksonville, FL.

### **Glendale Phil Founder and Cello Soloist RUSLAN BIRYUKOV (of Silver Lake)**

- "An astonishing young cellist Ruslan Biryukov. The audience gave the concert a standing ovation. If the first concert is any consideration, I would get my tickets early!" – Wendy Kikkert, *Beverly Hills Outlook*
- "To say the performance was incredible would not do it justice." - Jose Ruiz, *Review Plays*
- "Ruslan is an extraordinary; one of a kind performer. He has everything: technique, virtuosity, personality, communication, attractive and articulate presence, a great human story and background! He will be a big WINNER!" – Peter Mark, *Artistic Director, Virginia Opera*
- "Ruslan is a charismatic performer who brings the audiences to their feet. His artistry is both sensitive and passionate and his technical command of the instrument is stunning." – Eleonore Schoenfeld, *Piatigorsky Chair, Thornton School of Music* Cellist Ruslan Biryukov (Руслан Бирюков), known for his "superb artistry, passion and individuality," represents a new generation of creative professional musicians whose artistic level is recognized not only by awards, but also by a worldwide audience. Mr. Biryukov has performed throughout the world, including countries in the former USSR, in Europe, and in the United States. He was the only Russian cellist invited to solo during the inaugural season at the [Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall](#). Memorable chamber music experience includes performances with world renowned violinist [Midori](#) at the Disney Hall in Los Angeles, cellist Kirill Rodin at the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory, and members of the [Ysaye Quartet](#).

Ruslan Biryukov has been a master teacher in music festivals in Europe and Russia. He has held teaching positions at the Ippolitov-Ivanov State Institute of Music in Moscow, Russia and the Music Academy in Lovran, Croatia. His creative artistic ideas are based upon the tradition he learned from esteemed artists Kirill Rodin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Daniil Shafran, Natalia Gutman, Janos Starker, Steven Isserlis, and Eleonore Schoenfeld. Biryukov received his formal music education at [Baku Music Academy](#) in Azerbaijan, [Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory](#) in Russia, and the [USC Thornton School of Music](#). He first earned international recognition by winning major awards in Azerbaijan and by the inclusion of his name in the Gold Book of Russia's international program "New Names". Biryukov has gone on to win numerous other awards worldwide, including the 17th Mu Phi Epsilon International Competition.

In July 2010, Ruslan earned permanent residency from the U.S. government as an "Extraordinary Ability Artist." The title means that he has "sustained national or international acclaim and the achievements have been recognized" in his field, according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Founder of the Glendale Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Positive Motions Concert Series in Los Angeles, he is heralded as a charismatic performer who captivates attention of his audiences, Ruslan Biryukov is a much sought-after young musician who is committed to a lifetime of music making by sharing the art of music with worldwide audiences from all walks of life.

To read more about Ruslan Biryukov please visit [www.CelloArt.com](http://www.CelloArt.com) or [www.GlendalePhil.com](http://www.GlendalePhil.com)

Watch Ruslan's performances:

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL2edkMji0Y>
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr1IIIIHU6w>
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5rwPr75wAc>

### **Haqumai Waring Sharpe, (Vocal Soloist- Tenor, Afro-American) (of Inglewood)**

Hailed by opera legends such as Mignon Dunn, Florence Quivar and the late William Warfield as "one of the most promising young African American tenors", Haqumai W. Sharpe, a Chicago native, received his Bachelors of Music in Vocal Performance from Butler University, and continued his graduate studies in vocal arts at the University of Southern California. He is well known for his solo guest performances with Opera Noir, the Opera League of Los Angeles, African-Americans for Los Angeles Opera, the William Grant Still Music Festival, the National Association of Negro Musicians, Opera Buffs, the Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra and the Southeast Symphony.

He has performed for Opera Pacific, Utah Opera Festival and San Diego State University where he is currently in collaboration of singing the title role in the highly anticipated opera of Paul Laurence Dunbar. He has also appeared with the Fresno Grand Opera, Westchester Symphony and the Culver City Symphony.

He appeared as Madison in the world premiere of Monticello at the Skirball Center; other opera roles include Nate in W.G. Still's Highway 1, the title role of Albert Herring, Monostatos in the Magic Flute, Vasek in The Battered Bride, and Des Grieux in Manon. Mr. Sharpe was a Western Regional Finalist in the Met National Council Auditions, a finalist in the Opera Guild of Palm Springs Competition and a 2008 finalist in the Loren Zachary National Voice Competition.

Haqumai is soon to re-appear with Holman Chamber Orchestra performing the Cantata, Seven Last Words and with the Torrance Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Frank Fetta. In addition to his singing appearances, he is currently penning his first anthology of comedic short stories and poems that details his childhood years in the "Windy City!"

**Marine Abrahamyan-Abdasho** (Vocal Soloist-Soprano, Armenian) (of Glendale) was born and raised in Armenia. She graduated from Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory with a diploma of a concert singer and teacher and continued her studies, completing her post-graduate degree in Solo Singing. She has worked as a lecturer and as an illustrator at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. She was a soloist in "Gandzer" and "Sharakan" ensembles of radio and television as well as the Soloist in the Surb Zoravor Church of the Araratian Patriarchal Diocese.

**Nune Genjoian** (Vocal Soloist-Soprano, Armenian) (of Glendale) holds a Doctorate degree in singing. Her teachers were Professors Lilia Karamian at the Romanos Melikian Music College (Graduated in 1988) and Professor Nelli Piroumova at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. Winner of the Soviet Union National Vocal Competition (1987) Ms. Genjoian enjoyed a career of an operatic soprano with the Armenian National Opera Theatre for over two decades. Her operatic repertoire consists of over 30 leading roles in major opera productions including Violetta in Verdi's "La Traviatta" and Marguerite in Gounoud's "Faust. Currently she is teaching voice both privately and in music schools, and she performs as a soloist in St. Peter Armenian Church. She also serves as Vocal Instructor for the Chorus of the Armenian Society of Los Angeles. She has performed in many countries, including Germany, Armenia, Norway, and Syria.