



For Immediate Release
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PLEASE NOTE – TIME CHANGE TO 5:30PM

**Festival del Sole Presents A Free Independence Day Concert Featuring the World Premiere of “American Festivals,” a new Symphonic Oratorio by Bay Area Composer Nolan Gasser
On Poetry and Orations by Poet Robert Trent Jones, Jr.**

**Concert Also Features the Napa Valley Symphony and Chorus, Piano Prodigy Conrad Tao, Mezzo-Soprano Jill Grove and Baritone Eric Owens
Conducted by Music Director Asher Raboy**

**July 4, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Theater with a LIVE Simulcast at the California Veterans Home Grounds
FREE - Reserve your FREE tickets at 707.226.8742**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, June 23, 2008—Festival del Sole, Napa Valley’s premier international music festival, is proud to present a free Independence Day Concert, July 4, 2008 at **5:30pm**. The concert will take place at the Lincoln Theater with a live simulcast on a big screen on the grounds of the California Veterans Home.

Presented in gratitude to the Napa Valley community, the Independence Day Concert features the Napa Valley Symphony in an all-American program that includes the world premiere of composer **Nolan Gasser’s** *American Festivals*, written on a text by poet **Robert Trent Jones, Jr.** and narrated by Emmy-award winning actor **Craig T. Nelson**; Dudley Buck’s *The Festival Overture on the American National Air*; and *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin, featuring piano prodigy **Conrad Tao**. The evening concludes with a spectacular fireworks display.

"Festival del Sole has become a world-class festival because of the support and innovation of the people of Napa Valley," said Festival Co-Founder Rick Walker. "Since its inception three years ago, dozens of local wineries, restaurants, resorts, media outlets, sponsors, businesses and community organizations have generously contributed to making the Festival a great success. This is our chance to say thank you to an extraordinary community."

The concert begins with Dudley Buck’s festive *The Festival Overture on the American National Air*, and is followed by one of the most celebrated pieces of American music, George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*. Composed for symphony and solo piano, *Rhapsody in Blue* features 13-year old piano prodigy Conrad Tao. Celebrated by music critic Harris Goldsmith as "the most exciting prodigy to ever come my way" (*Musical America*), Tao is a New York-based pianist and composer who has been performing since the age of 4.

The Independence Day concert concludes with the highly-anticipated world premiere of *American Festivals*, a symphonic oratorio by composer Nolan Gasser, on a text by poet

and renowned golf course designer Robert Trent Jones, Jr. *American Festivals* is narrated by Emmy-award winning actor **Craig T. Nelson** (“Coach, The District, The Incredibles, and Born On The 4th of July”), and features internationally-celebrated mezzo-soprano **Jill Grove**, and baritone **Eric Owens**, widely acclaimed for his commanding stage presence and inventive artistry, and the Napa Valley Symphony and Chorus. *American Festivals* is comprised of four movements and uses four major American holidays as reference points: Fourth of July, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day and Thanksgiving. This work will be performed in its entirety for the first time at this concert.

The Independence Day concert is free of charge to the public. Seating inside Lincoln Theater is on first come, first served basis and the doors will open at 4:30pm. Approximately 100 VIP tickets priced at \$150 are also available, providing access to a special hospitality tent before and after the performance, a hosted reception with the artists, and premium seating for the concert and fireworks display.

About the Composer - *American Festivals*

Nolan Gasser, a critically acclaimed composer, pianist, conductor and arranger, and published musicologist, received his Ph.D. in Musicology from Stanford University, where he has been an Adjunct Professor in Medieval and Renaissance Music History. His compositions have been performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, and La Salle Pleyel in Paris; and by ensembles such as the Charleston Symphony, the Memphis Symphony, the Oakland Symphony, the Pasadena Pops Orchestra, the American Brass Quintet, among many others. Dr. Gasser is the principal architect of the Music Genome Project, the musical technology behind the famous Pandora personalized radio application – which has recently surpassed 10 million subscribers; he is also the Artistic Director of the Classical Archives, the largest classical music website on the Internet.

Robert Trent Jones, Jr. a graduate of Yale University with a BA in American Studies is a world-renowned golf course architect, a master of language and published poet. He has designed more than 250 courses on six continents in 43 countries, including Chateau Whistler Golf Club, British Columbia; The Links at Spanish Bay and Poppy Hills, Pebble Beach, California; Princeville Golf Resort courses, Kauai, Hawaii; Pine Lake and Golden Valley Golf Clubs, Japan; Shanghai Golf Club and Spring City Golf Clubs, China; Alcanada Golf, Mallorca, Spain; Turning Stone Oneida Nation “Kahluyat” Course, New York; and Windsor Golf Club. He is the only living golf course architect to have a new U.S. Open Golf Championship venue attributed to him, Chambers Bay Golf Course on Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington for 2015. He designed his first, the Silverado Country Club golf course in Napa. He is the winner of many Best Course and Best New Course awards in Asia, Europe, Australia, Caribbean, and the United States.

About Festival del Sole

The third annual Festival del Sole runs July 12 through July 20, 2008 and features world-class musical concerts followed by five-star meals and the finest wines at some of the most stunning venues throughout the Napa Valley. The Festival also features visual art exhibitions, free community concerts and family events. This year’s artists include famed violinists **Joshua Bell** and **Dmitry Sitkovetsky**, pianists **Jean-Yves Thibaudet**, **André Watts**, **Simone Dinnerstein** and **Kristin Pankonin**, sopranos **Measha Brueggergosman** and **Lisa Delan**, and mezzo-soprano **Jill Grove**. Featured ensembles are the **Dallas Symphony**, **UBS Verbier Chamber Orchestra**, **Del Sole**

Festival Orchestra, the Rossetti String Quartet and the Napa Valley Symphony. Other adventurous programming includes the Grammy-nominated Cuban group **Tiempo Libre** and renowned Persian artist **Mamak Khadem.**

Gala events with the artists and other special guests are the culinary highlight and social center of Festival del Sole. Participating wineries and venues include Far Niente, Robert Mondavi Winery, Dominus Estate, Moulds Vineyards, Darioush Winery, Opus One, Sterling Vineyards, Calistoga Ranch, Clos Pegase, Grgich Hills, Sullivan Vineyards, CONSTANT Diamond Mountain Vineyard, FARM at The Carneros Inn, and Villa Mille Rose estate.

Festival del Sole also includes an outstanding exhibition of work by **Henri Matisse** on loan from the Bank of America.

Festival del Sole Sponsors and Supporters

Festival del Sole's Official Sponsors include Calistoga Ranch, Solage Calistoga and Bouchaine Vineyards. Title luxury goods sponsor is Chopard. Major philanthropic support comes from the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, Tatiana and Gerret Copeland, Athena and Timothy Blackburn, Dede Wilsey and Maria Manetti Farrow. The Koret Foundation, Bank of America, Merrill Lynch/Private Banking & Investments, Springcreek Advisors, LLC, among many others, have also awarded grants to Festival del Sole.

More support is reflected in the Festival's strong network of partners across the Napa Valley. Resort Partners are Calistoga Ranch, Auberge du Soleil, Solage Calistoga and The Carneros Inn. Founding Partner Wineries are Blackbird Vineyards, Darioush, Far Niente, PlumpJack Winery and Robert Mondavi Winery. The roster of Winery Partners includes Boutique Wine Producers of the Napa Valley, Clos Pegase, CONSTANT Diamond Mountain Vineyard, Dalla Valle Vineyards, Dominus Estate, Grgich Hills, JP Harbison, Moulds Vineyards, Opus One, and Sullivan Vineyards.

Reflecting the broad base of community participation, Partner Organizations include the Napa Valley Symphony and Napa Valley Museum, COPIA, Lincoln Theater, Castello di Amorosa, the Napa Valley Vintners and 55 Degrees.

Also helping to promote and publicize Festival del Sole are Media Partners Caviar Affair Magazine, C Magazine, Diablo Magazine, Elite Traveler, KDFC Classical Radio, KVON & The Vine, Napa Sonoma Magazine, Nob Hill Gazette and Performance Today. Artwork for the *American Festivals* concert by Jan Kasprzycki of Maui, Hawaii.

Images and B-roll available upon request. Please contact Mona Baroudi at mona.baroudi@sbcglobal.net or 415.615.2735.

TICKETS:

Admission to the July 4 Concert is FREE to the public. VIP Tickets are available for \$150 by calling (707) 226-8742.

Tickets for Festival del Sole concerts at Lincoln Theater, Castello di Amorosa and Robert Mondavi Winery range from \$45-\$125. For tickets, please call (707) 226-8742.

FESTIVAL PACKAGES: Passes include exclusive access to gala lunches, dinners and other VIP events, and prime seating at performances. For information and purchases, please call (888) FDS-NAPA or write to info@fdsnapa.org.

For further information and schedule updates, please visit www.fdsnapa.org.