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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 24, 2009

THIERRY FISCHER JOINS THE UTAH SYMPHONY AS MUSIC DIRECTOR

Fischer will be the seventh Music Director of the Utah Symphony

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah Symphony | Utah Opera (USUO) President and CEO Melia Tourangeau announced today that Thierry Fischer has been named the seventh Music Director in the 70 year history of the Utah Symphony with immediate effect. Currently, the Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic, the Swiss conductor was unanimously selected by the 12-member search committee. Former Music Director, Keith Lockhart concluded his tenure on May 30, 2009.

A native of Geneva, Switzerland, Fischer got to know the members of the Utah Symphony through two guest conducting weeks in the past two seasons. Fischer will conduct one performance with the Utah Symphony in the 2009-10 season, but has already taken the lead role in artistic planning and will conduct five Masterworks performances during the 2010-11 season. Following the 2010-11 season, Fischer will conduct a minimum of twelve Masterworks performances each season for the remaining term of his contract. Fischer's four-year contract includes an option to renew for an additional three years in December 2011.

"I couldn't be more excited to have Thierry Fischer joining our organization as the new Music Director for the Utah Symphony," said Melia Tourangeau, President and CEO of USUO. "His musicianship on the podium is exhilarating and leaves everyone wanting more – musicians and audience alike. Off the podium, we would be hard pressed to find someone who would fit Utah better. Thierry's leadership comes so naturally. He is a genuine personality with great integrity for the music he creates. His authenticity and approachability will endear him to our audiences and the community. Under his leadership, the next chapter in the legacy of the Utah Symphony will be written, and I am honored to help make it happen."

Thierry Fischer commented, "I am thrilled and honored to be the next Music Director of the Utah Symphony. From my very first concerts in Salt Lake in October 2007 I

realized that here was an orchestra and an organization dedicated to providing great art, and with a hunger for creativity and excellence. I strongly believe that such a positive attitude from everybody involved, even in this difficult economic climate, yields endless artistic opportunities.”

Fischer also looks forward to his first permanent conducting role in the United States. “I look forward very much to building on the orchestra’s strong traditions, bringing new energy and fresh programming perspectives. I am excited to do this in America first of all, and especially in Utah where I think the desire to develop a very lively cultural life is already strong.”

“This is very exciting news for the musicians of the Utah Symphony,” said Ralph Matson, Concertmaster of the Utah Symphony. “We have seen terrific conductors in our search and the selection of Thierry Fischer is a wonderful conclusion to that process. In the time we have spent with Maestro Fischer, there has developed a fine rapport, and very warm mutual regard. We look forward to a wonderful collaboration and fine music making to share with our fabulous Utah audience.”

In November 2006, former Music Director Keith Lockhart announced he would not renew his contract after the conclusion of the 2008-2009 season. At that time, a search committee was organized, consisting of three members of the Board of Trustees, one community representative, two representatives of the organization’s management and six members of the Utah Symphony Orchestra.

“As a search committee, we were looking for an individual who would, first and foremost, bring extraordinary conducting skills and musical talent to the Utah Symphony,” said Jerry Fenn, Chair of the Search Committee. “We also were looking for a person who had the ability to lead – to lead this orchestra to even greater accomplishments and to be a leader of integrity in our community. Finally, we were looking for a person who would demonstrate a strong commitment to Utah and who would generate great enthusiasm and increased support among our patrons and donors. The Search Committee unanimously concluded that Thierry Fischer in every way met the criteria we established and we wholeheartedly believe we have selected the right person to lead the Utah Symphony as Music Director and we are thrilled he has chosen to join us,” concluded Fenn.

The USUO Board of Trustees was focused on finding strong leadership for the orchestra and they found it in Fischer. “Thierry fits the role perfectly,” said Patricia A. Richards, Board Chair of USUO. “He brings us great artistic vision, an attention to beautiful sound and exciting performances which have thrilled our audiences in his past visits. He will also be a perfect complement to our existing strong artistic leadership team of Christopher McBeth as Opera Artistic Director, Jerry Steichen as Principal Pops Conductor, David Cho as Associate Conductor and Susanne Sheston as Chorus Master.”

Fischer will spend a substantial proportion of each year in Salt Lake, accompanied by his wife Catherine. Ms. Richards commented, “In my personal interactions with Thierry and

Catherine, I have found them both to be warm, genuine and positive individuals who look forward to spending time here and to getting to know Utah and its people. I know they will find many friends here and I am thrilled to have them as part of our community.”

Fischer will retain his position as Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in the U.K., which he has held since 2006. “I am proud of my relationship with BBCNOW, and am excited by the prospect of the creative stimulus which leading such different organizations will bring.” Fischer's position with the BBC requires him to conduct at least 12 concerts a season including two appearances at the BBC Proms in London.

Fischer is also Music Director of the Nagoya Philharmonic in Japan, where he is currently contracted until March 2011. He spends six weeks a season in Nagoya, and his fresh and ambitious approach to planning and music-making has attracted attention across Japan.

Full Biography

Fischer studied flute with Aurèle Nicolet and began his musical career as Principal Flute in Hamburg and at the Zurich Opera, where he studied scores with the great conductor and cellist Nikolaus Harnoncourt. He first began conducting in his 30s when he replaced an ailing colleague, and subsequently directed his first few concerts with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe where he was Principal Flute under Claudio Abbado. Spending his apprentice years conducting in Holland, Thierry Fischer has since appeared with many leading orchestras in the U.K. and Europe.

Fischer took up his title with BBC National Orchestra of Wales in 2006. His inaugural concert featured Florent Schmitt's *Psalm 47*, which was subsequently recorded for Hyperion as the first in a series of French discs, and Messiaen's *Turangalila*, which was recorded live for the cover disc of the BBC Music Magazine. Together, Fischer and the BBCNOW, have toured the U.S.A., Spain and Prague and their first disc of Stravinsky ballets was released in August 2009 for Signum Records. Fischer and his BBC orchestra appear every year at the BBC Proms in London and together, have mounted major celebrations of the music of Dutilleux and Messiaen.

Fischer has been Chief Conductor with the Nagoya Philharmonic since April 2008, refreshing the artistic programming and quality of performances. He makes his Tokyo debut in May 2010 when he will take the Nagoya Philharmonic to Suntory Hall.

During his tenure in Belfast with the Ulster Orchestra, Fischer toured with the orchestra to Prague and New York and appeared several times at the BBC Proms, conducted cycles of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann and Honegger, and began his relationship with Hyperion with a series of recordings of the works of Jean Francaix. His wider discography also includes recordings for, among others, ASV, Chandos, and a Frank Martin disc on Deutsche Grammophon with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, which was nominated for a Gramophone Award.

Fischer's hallmarks are a lightness of touch and transparency of texture, allowing room for vivid characterization. He has a keen stylistic sense and brings a fresh approach to repertoire which extends from Bach, the classical repertoire and early Romantics; the Second Viennese School, the great French composers of the early 20th century, a keen advocacy of his compatriots Frank Martin and Honegger, and a particular feel for the music of Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Shostakovich. His affinity also with the unique textures and radical utopianism of Messiaen is no accident, and he played a major role in the BBC's Messiaen celebrations in 2008. Fischer regularly programs contemporary composers such as Simon Holt (Composer-in-Residence at the BBC National Orchestra of Wales), and is a regular guest of the London Sinfonietta.

Last season Fischer made debuts with the Czech Philharmonic and with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic – joining the latter in a performance of Frank Martin's rarely-performed opera *The Tempest* in the prestigious Matinee series in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. The live recording will be released on Hyperion in spring 2010. He also made debuts with several orchestras in the United States, notably with the New Jersey Symphony. Next month he conducts the Indianapolis Symphony for the first time.

Already well-established in Europe, Fischer has conducted orchestras such as the Philharmonia, Orchestre National de Lyon, Berlin Konzerthausorchester and the radio orchestras of Paris (Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France), Stockholm, Hanover, Lugano and Saarbruecken. In 2009-10 he will appear several times with the SWR Baden-Baden, in a repertoire from Mahler to Britten and Holliger. In parallel to his symphonic career, Fischer's collaborative approach has fostered strong relationships with several prestigious chamber orchestras, notably the Scottish Chamber, Northern Sinfonia, Dutch Radio Chamber, and Ensemble Orchestral de Paris.

Thierry Fischer is represented worldwide by Intermusica.

More information online at www.intermusica.co.uk/fischer.

For press photos, please visit: utahsymphony.org/fischer.php.

About Utah Symphony | Utah Opera

The Utah Symphony, which performs at Abravanel Hall, and Utah Opera, which performs at the Capitol Theatre, reaches 450,000 citizens in Utah and the Intermountain region, with educational outreach programs serving more than 200,000 students annually. They perform year round with performances in their home venues and at the Deer Valley® Music Festival, Ogden, Sundance and in communities throughout the Intermountain West. The organization employs 83 full-time musicians and 60 staff. More information is online at www.utahsymphonyopera.org.

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