



# MERCURY . ORCHESTRA

Channing Yu, Music Director . Justin Albstein, General Manager

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## **Channing Yu Wins 2010 American Prize in Orchestral Conducting**

(CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—July 9, 2010) Cambridge conductor Channing Yu, music director of the Mercury Orchestra and artistic director of the Lowell House Opera, won the top prize today in the 2010 American Prize in Orchestral Conducting, community orchestra division.

Yu was chosen as the winner from a diverse group of conductors hailing from 26 states and the District of Columbia, on the basis of recordings of their live orchestral performances. The panel of judges, led by conductor David Katz, highlighted “obviously careful and thoughtful preparation...excellent interpretations...a thrilling rendition of the Rondo-Finale from the Mahler Symphony No. 5,” taken from a live recording of the Mercury Orchestra’s 2009 performance. This June, the Mercury Orchestra was announced as winner of the 2010 American Prize for Orchestral Performance.

“Congratulations to Maestro Yu on receiving this tremendous personal honor right on the heels of the Mercury Orchestra’s award,” says Justin Albstein, General Manager of the Mercury Orchestra. “We have seen Maestro Yu provide continually outstanding artistic leadership to the Mercury Orchestra. As an organization, we’re excited that his extraordinary musicianship has been recognized at the national level, and we look forward to exploring new artistic horizons together.”

“I’m always thrilled to be on stage with the Mercury Orchestra; what a wonderful surprise for us both to be recognized in this competition.” says Yu. “This award is so valuable because it really is accomplishing what its creators intended: recognizing the passion and the hard work that goes into making great music and encouraging community music efforts all around the country. I know I am not imagining this: even our rehearsals feel much more exciting!”

Yu, an accomplished pianist and violinist who began formal studies in conducting with Dr. James Yannatos while an undergraduate at Harvard College, is a devoted interpreter of both the symphonic and operatic literature. Beyond his conducting posts in Cambridge, he has appeared as frequent guest conductor with the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra in Greensburg, Pa., and as guest opera conductor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. He was invited as one of fourteen conductors worldwide to work with conductors Neeme Järvi, Leonid Grin, and Paavo Järvi in master classes at the 2009 Leigo Lakes Music Days Festival in Estonia.

Cambridge resident Susie Ikeda, principal second violinist and a member of the Mercury Orchestra’s governing board, adds: “Channing Yu combines boundless vision and unfaltering determination with an abiding love for the music we present. He has steadfast faith in our all-volunteer orchestra and knows what we’re capable of. Somehow he’s able to evoke a musical result that is far greater than the sum of its parts, a result that we’re honored to share with our community. As a member of the orchestra from its inception, I couldn’t be prouder of the Mercury Orchestra or of our conductor for receiving this national recognition.”

On July 17, Channing Yu leads the Mercury Orchestra in a performance of two highly charged

showpieces for symphony orchestra, Igor Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, at 8 p.m. in Sanders Theatre, Harvard University, 45 Quincy St., Cambridge, Mass.

Tickets for the July 17 performance—\$20 regular admission; \$15 students, Harvard ID and seniors age 65-plus—can be purchased online at [www.mercuryorchestra.org](http://www.mercuryorchestra.org). For more information, contact Mercury Orchestra's general manager, Justin Albstein, at [info@mercuryorchestra.org](mailto:info@mercuryorchestra.org) or (617) 826-9092.

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**About Mercury Orchestra.** Founded in 2008, the 97-member Mercury Orchestra, under the direction of conductor Channing Yu, has a mission to bring great works of the symphony orchestra repertoire to Cambridge, Mass., in live performances of the highest quality; to bring amateur orchestral musicians together in the Cambridge area to play challenging repertoire; and to educate new audiences about the rich traditions of classical music. The orchestra is national winner of the 2010 American Prize in Orchestral Performance Competition, Community Orchestra Division. For more information visit [www.mercuryorchestra.org](http://www.mercuryorchestra.org)

**More information about The American Prize:**

[www.theamericanprize.org](http://www.theamericanprize.org)

[theamericanprize.blogspot.com/2010/07/channing-yu-wins-american-prize.html](http://theamericanprize.blogspot.com/2010/07/channing-yu-wins-american-prize.html)

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High-resolution color photographs at [www.mercuryorchestra.org/press.html](http://www.mercuryorchestra.org/press.html)



Channing Yu, conductor (Photo: Rick Peckham)



Channing Yu conducts the Mercury Orchestra.  
(Photo: Timothy Yu/Mercury Orchestra)