

**SAN DIEGO YOUTH SYMPHONY AND CONSERVATORY TO JOIN
ORCHESTRAS FEEDING AMERICA TO BENEFIT LOCAL FOOD BANK**

National Food Drive Inspired by the Upcoming Film *The Soloist*

**Audiences and Community Members invited to drop off food on March 28,
2009**

March 20, 2009 – San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory (SDYS) will participate in Orchestras Feeding America, the first national food drive by America's symphony orchestras. SDYS's student musicians, staff members and volunteers will collect non-perishable food at open rehearsals on March 28th between 8:30am and 5:30pm outside of Rm. 207 in Casa Del Prado, in Balboa Park. The food will be donated to the local food bank, Feeding America San Diego. For information about the types of food that can be accepted visit www.feedingamericasd.org.

To date, nearly 250 orchestras have come together to combat hunger in their communities through Orchestras Feeding America, and the number of participants is growing daily. The nationwide project will take place in March and April, and is organized by the League of American Orchestras, which represents the nation's professional, volunteer, and youth orchestras, and Feeding America's network of over 200 food banks and 63,000 agencies. The drive was inspired by the true story of the upcoming film *The Soloist*.

"We all are feeling the effects of this economic crisis, but we cannot let that stop us from helping our neighbors in greater need," said SDYS President & CEO, Dalouge Smith. "Our student's music uplifts people, but with this project we can do more to support the community that has supported us for so long."

One in eight Americans is at risk of hunger. According to the USDA, there are 36 million people at risk of hunger in the U.S.; 12 million of them are children. In December 2008, Feeding America conducted a survey of 160 food banks nationwide – the results were troubling, with food banks reporting a 30 percent increase in demand for emergency food assistance, compared to one year ago.

The Soloist, starring Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey, Jr., directed by Joe Wright, will be released by Paramount Pictures to theaters nationwide on April 24th. A Dreamworks Pictures/Universal Pictures presentation in association with Studio Canal and Participant Media, the film is based on the true story of the relationship between *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez and Nathaniel Ayers, a gifted Juilliard-trained string player whose mental illness landed him among the homeless on the streets of Los Angeles. The relationship has expanded to include staff and musicians of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. *The Soloist*, which also features the Los Angeles Philharmonic, is a

testament to the redemptive power of music and a reminder of our connections to the most vulnerable among us.

The San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory is the 6th oldest continuously operating youth symphony in the United States and boasts nearly 500 students annually in seven different training ensembles. Ensemble skill levels range from pre-professional to beginner with students between 7 and 25 participating. Other instructional programs include music theory classes, conducting classes, brass and woodwind ensembles, string quartets and octets, flute choir, saxophone ensemble, percussion ensembles, chamber music ensembles and viola instruction. Annual auditions are held each June for student placement in the ensemble appropriate to their skill level.

Contact the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory at (619) 233-3232 or visit them on the web at www.sdys.org for more information about tickets, concerts, and annual student auditions.

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