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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra take Beethoven project to the Far East

Highlights of the Summer Tour 2011 include first concerts in Asia, a concert at Berlin's Waldbühne, and a recording of all of Beethoven's symphonies

Berlin, July 29, 2011 - After its triumphant tour through the Middle East and Europe in May, Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra continue their Beethoven project on the upcoming summer tour that will add a fifth continent to their itinerary. For the first time ever, the WEDO will travel to Asia, with concerts in Beijing (5.8.), Shanghai, (7.8.) Seoul (10.-14.8.) and the Joint Security Area between North and South Korea (15.8.).

A second part of the tour will lead the orchestra to the festivals in Lucerne (18.8.) and Salzburg (19.8.). The orchestra will then play an open-air concert at Berlin's mythical Waldbühne (21.8.) before concluding with a live recording of the full cycle of Beethoven's symphonies in Cologne in late August. For the European performances of the 9th Symphony, Barenboim and the WEDO could draw on the support of first-class soloists: Anja Harteros, Waltraud Meier, René Pape and Peter Seiffert who have generously agreed to donate their participation.

A boxed set of Daniel Barenboim and the WEDO's Beethoven interpretation will be released on Decca in spring 2012 - an affordable "Beethoven for all" for our times, interpreted with the youthful passion and precision the orchestra is famous for.

The WEDO has taken up its annual summer workshop and rehearsals in Pílas, Spain. Discussions of this year's symposium are devoted to the recent youth revolutions in the Arab world. The orchestra's rehearsals will focus on the symphonies of Ludwig v. Beethoven, music closely associated with humanistic values such as freedom, equality and human dignity.

The tour will start with concerts in Ronda (30.7.), Seville (31.7.) and an open air on Madrid's Plaza Mayor (1.8.). Next stop is Beijing with an appearance in the Forbidden City Concert Hall (5.8.). The WEDO will also play two concerts at the Shanghai Music Festival (7.-8.8.) and then move on to the South Korean capital Seoul for a week of concerts featuring all nine Beethoven symphonies in context and ending with an open air performance of the 9th Symphony in the Joint Security Area dividing North and South Korea. Please see www.west-eastern-divan.org for details and a full concert schedule.

The Asia Tour of the WEDO is made possible by the support of its first partner BMW. „Encouraged by the successful launch of "Staatsoper for all", our cooperation with the Staatsoper Berlin, BMW already supported General Music Director Daniel Barenboim on his concert tour to South America in 2008," says Maximilian Schöberl, Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs of BMW Group. "BMW's support for Culture and the Arts can look back on 40 years of history, with over 100 current projects worldwide. One essential aspect of all projects is intercultural dialogue - also one of Maestro's declared goals. For this reason we are proud to be a partner in the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra's Asia Tour, yet another joint concert series under Daniel Barenboim's leadership.

About the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

In 1999, Daniel Barenboim and the late Palestinian literary scholar Edward Said created a workshop for young musicians from Israel, Palestine and several Arab countries to promote coexistence and intercultural dialogue. They named the orchestra after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's collection of poems entitled "West-Eastern Divan", a central work for the evolution of the concept of world culture.

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra's first sessions took place in Weimar and Chicago. In 2002, it found a permanent home in Seville, Spain, where it is generously supported by the regional government of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucia). An equal number of Israeli and Arab musicians form the base of the orchestra, together with a group of Spanish members. They meet each summer in Seville for a workshop, where rehearsals are complemented by lectures and discussions and followed by an international concert tour.

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra has proved time and again that music can break down barriers previously considered insurmountable. The only political aspect that prevails in the work of the WEDO is the conviction that there is no military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that the destinies of Israelis and Palestinians are inextricably linked. Through its work and existence the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra demonstrates that bridges can be built to encourage people to listen to the narrative of the other.

While music alone cannot resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, it grants the individual the right and obligation to express himself fully while listening to his neighbour. Based on this notion of equality, cooperation and justice for all, the orchestra represents an alternative model to the current situation in the Middle East.

The Orchestra's repertoire expands beyond symphonic works to opera and chamber music performances. Concert highlights have included performances at Berlin's Philharmonic Hall, the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Musikverein in Vienna, Carnegie Hall in New York, the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, the Hagia Eirene Museum in Istanbul, the Salle Pleyel in Paris, the Plaza Mayor in Madrid and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires as well as a concert in honour of Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations in New York in December 2006. The orchestra is a regular guest at the BBC Proms and the Salzburg Festival.

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra has released a number of highly acclaimed CDs/DVDs. These include a concert at Victoria Hall in Geneva (2004), a live recording of Beethoven's 9th Symphony at Berlin's Philharmonic Hall (2006) and the emblematic concert at the Cultural Palace in Ramallah (2005). Its most recent release is an interpretation of Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony "Pathétique" and Schönberg's "Variations for Orchestra", the first release of a new exclusive contract with Decca Classics. The documentary "Knowledge is the Beginning" has won several awards, among them an International Emmy (2006).

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the support of BMW as first partner of the Asia Tour 2011, the invaluable long-term funding by the Junta de Andalucia and the generous help of its other corporate and private supporters.



west-eastern divan orchestra

