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USC Thornton School of Music Honors James Conlon, David C. Bohnett and John C. Herklotz at 24th Annual Charles Dickens Dinner

Friday, December 10, 2010, 6:30 PM, at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel

LOS ANGELES (November 11, 2010) – Tradition, philanthropy and the holiday spirit come together at the USC Thornton School of Music's 24th Annual Charles Dickens Dinner at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel on Friday, December 10, at 6:30 p.m. With carolers and roving instrumentalists providing a festive atmosphere, the black-tie musical gala is an annual tradition that raises funds for music scholarships. Ranked among the nation’s top music schools and conservatories in the U.S., the Thornton School provides $5.5 million in merit-based financial aid every year to admitted students. All proceeds from the event support scholarships for USC Thornton School of Music students.

The highlight of the evening is an awards presentation to three outstanding individuals who have had a transformational impact on the Southern California music community. This year’s honorees include James Conlon, David C. Bohnett and John C. Herklotz, who will be awarded the prestigious Thornton Legacy Award, John C. Argue Dickens Medal of Honor, and Founders Award, respectively.

“This event has become a staple of USC and the arts communities, and we are elated to honor Messrs. Conlon, Bohnett and Herklotz for being an integral force in the continued success of the arts, not just in Los Angeles but across our nation and throughout the

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world,” said Robert A. Cutietta, dean of the USC Thornton School of Music. “Further, they are propelling young people towards a bright future through their scholarship support for today’s talented students.”

The John C. Argue Dickens Medals of Honor was awarded at last year’s sold out event to former USC President Steven B. Sample and wife Kathryn Sample for their vast contributions to USC in their nearly two-decade tenure. Guests included Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and wife Maria Shriver.

Opening remarks by newly inaugurated USC President C. L. Max Nikias will be followed by the awards presentation and performances to heighten the holiday atmosphere. The night features exceptional Thornton student performers, including clarinetist Joseph Morris and soprano Marina Harris, as well as costumed carolers, members of the USC Opera program, and superb instrumentalists.

Tickets to USC Thornton’s Charles Dickens Dinner are $600, $1,250, and $2,500, and $5000; tables start at $5,000. The Millenium Biltmore Hotel is located downtown at 506 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA, 90014. For tickets and information, please call (213) 740-6474.

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Editors, Please Note:

**Calendar Listing**

**WHAT:**
USC Thornton School of Music Honors James Conlon, David C. Bohnett and John C. Herklotz at 24th Annual Charles Dickens Dinner

**WHEN:**
Friday, December 10, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:**
Millennium Biltmore Hotel
506 S Grand Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90071

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About the Honorees

James Conlon is Music Director of Los Angeles Opera, the Ravinia Festival—summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Cincinnati May Festival, where he holds a place among the longest-tenured Music Directors of any major classical music institution in the country. Over the span of his career, he has led virtually every major symphony orchestra in North America and Europe and has conducted more than 250 performances at the Metropolitan Opera.

Mr. Conlon is renowned for his efforts to raise public consciousness to the significance of works of composers whose lives and compositions were suppressed by the Nazi regime, for which he received the Crystal Globe Award from the Anti-Defamation League.

Among numerous honors, he is a member of the American Classical Music Hall of Fame, the recipient of two Grammy Awards, and one of the first five recipients of the Opera News Award. He was awarded honorary doctoral degrees by The Juilliard School, Chapman University and Brandeis University. Mr. Conlon was named an Officier de L’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government in 1996, and in 2004 was promoted to Commander. In 2002, he received France’s highest distinction from then president of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac—the Légion d’Honneur.

Previous John C. Argue Dickens Medals of Honor recipients include Kathryn and Steven B. Sample, Carol Colburn Hogel, Deborah Borda, Beverly and Herbert M. Gelfand, Joan and John Hotchkis, Sherry Lansing and William Friedkin, Joynce and Kent Kresa, Gary and Maddy LeMel, Carol and Warner Henry, Jeanine and John C. Cushman III, Barry and Nancy Sanders, John and Liz Argue, Michael and Phylis Hennigan, Nadine and Ed Carson, Sandra and Shell Ausman.

David C. Bohnett is a philanthropist and technology entrepreneur committed to effecting positive change through community-building and social activism. In addition to serving as Chair of the David Bohnett Foundation and head of the early stage technology fund, Baroda Ventures, he is Chairman of the Board of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, Board Member of the California Community Foundation, and Trustee of amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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The David Bohnett Foundation was established in 1999 and has since granted over $35 million to a range of innovative organizations. Main areas of funding include The Fund for Los Angeles, supporting a broad spectrum of arts, educational and civic programs; LGBT-related programs; voting rights and registration initiatives; research and public policy research to reduce the toll of firearm violence; and animal research and rights.

The scope of the Foundation’s launch was made possible by the sale of Bohnett’s prescient Internet site GeoCities.com, a pioneering endeavor in social networking, e-commerce and user-generated content. His many awards and distinctions include Los Angeles Business Journal’s Technology Leader of the Year, Time Digital’s Top 50 Cyber Elite, and Entrepreneur of the Year for Southern California.

Bohnett’s academic accomplishments include an M.B.A in finance from the University of Michigan and a B.S. in business administration from the University of Southern California.

Previous John C. Argue Medal of Honor recipients include John and Liz Argue, Sandra and Sheldon Ausman, Deborah Borda, Nadine and Edward Carson, Jeanine and John Cushman, Beverly and Herbert Galfand, Phyllis and Michael Hennigan, Carol and Warner Henry, Joan and John Hotchkis, Sherry Lansing and William Friedkin, Maddy and Gary LeMel and Nancy and Barry Sanders.

John C. Herklotz was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, and later served in the U.S. Army as a member of the 44th Infantry Division, attended the Army Specialized Training Program and then completed his service with the 191st Signal Repair Company in the China-Burma-India area. He earned his degree in accounting from DePaul University and immediately began work at Price Waterhouse, obtaining his CPA license. In 1951, he began a successful career with the Chicago Tribune, as internal auditor, manager of the tax department, and finally chief financial officer for the Tribune’s subsidiary companies. In addition, he was auditor and controller for WGN Continental Broadcasting. During the next twenty years, he rendered consulting and brokerage services to numerous radio, television, and cable companies. In 1988, John formed the Cellular Financial Corporation and sold it in 1990 to Centel Corporation to pursue his lifelong dream of devoting time and resources to charitable and worthwhile causes.

He is currently chairman of Tesuque Radio Company and, as the owner and chief executive officer of Herklotz Enterprises, Inc. John produced the feature film, The Giant of Thunder Mountain.

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In 1998, The Vatican conferred the Papal Knight of St. Gregory on John for his significant service and assistance to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. John’s charitable endeavors include his role as financial contributor and chairman of the Board of Directors of American Happenings and his support through generous scholarship gifts for the USC Thornton School of Music.

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**About the USC Thornton School of Music**

Led by Dean Dr. Robert A. Cutietta, the USC Thornton School of Music brings together a stellar faculty, chosen from a broad spectrum of the music profession, and musically gifted students from around the globe. Founded in 1884, and today the oldest continually operating cultural institution in Los Angeles, the Thornton School consistently ranks among the top one percent of the nation's music schools and conservatories. Graduates of the school attain positions with major orchestras, ensembles, recording studios and music industry firms and perform on stages and in studios around the world.

Blending the rigors of a traditional conservatory-style education with the benefits of studying at a leading research university, the Thornton School offers students a thorough music education in a real-world context. Located at the center of Los Angeles, the school is the collegiate partner of choice for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Opera, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the GRAMMY Foundation and The Recording Academy, to name a few.

In addition to their work with these ensembles, Thornton students are a constant presence in local classrooms, reaching out to the next generation of musicians through music education and appreciation courses. With its faculty, its students, its events and its work, the Thornton School is one of the most important cultural resources in Los Angeles.