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Associate Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras Wes Kenney wins First Annual Varna International Conductors Competition

July 26, 2007, Fort Collins, CO - Colorado Colorado State University Department of Music is proud to announce that Wes Kenney, associate professor of music and music director of the Fort Collins Symphony, has won the first Varna International Conductors Competition, held in Bulgaria. The competition, held in Vidin which is located in the northwest corner of Bulgaria, was a six-day conducting workshop and competition that ended July 22 and featured conductors from two continents.



Kenney said "I'm thrilled to be selected as the winner of this first competition. The entire experience was extremely positive. With fondness, I tip my hat to my colleagues from two continents for their outstanding performances. I look forward to returning to Bulgaria for concerts in the near future."

Return Engagements in Bulgaria

As part of the winning prize, Kenney will return to Bulgaria during the next season to conduct concerts in Vidin, a picturesque city situated along the Danube River.

The Vidin State Philharmonic Orchestra, founded as a private institution in 1910, became State Orchestra on 28 April 28, 1949. The competition featured works by renowned composers, including Bartok, Brahms, Beethoven, Shostakovich and Johann Strauss.

Maestro Dion Tchobanov, Chief Conductor of the Sofia Philharmonic, Sofia State Opera, and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, saluted Kenney's performance. "The orchestra, concertmaster, faculty, and myself have concluded unanimously that the winner is Maestro Wes Kenney from Colorado, USA," Tchobanov said.

About Wes Kenney

Kenney was named Music Director for the Fort Collins Symphony in 2003. He has also served as an Associate Professor of Music at Colorado State University since 2003. Kenney holds a Master of Music from San Francisco State University where he was top in his graduating class and won the prestigious Carmen Dragon Prize the best conductor in the California State University system. He also received a Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude from University of Southern California where he majored in Music History. Further conducting studies were taken at Die Hochschule fr Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna, the Conductors Institute, and at American Symphony Orchestra League and Conductors Guild Workshops.

In Demand as a Guest Conductor

His performances, described by reviewers as "beautiful and exciting," "lively and stylish," and "first-rate," have resulted in his growing demand as a guest conductor. This past season Maestro Kenney guest conducted the Buffalo Philharmonic-where he appears regularly, the Williamsburg Symphonia, and was in

the pit for the Williamsburg Chamber Ballet's production of the Nutcracker. During the 2002-2003 season, Maestro Kenney returned to the New Mexico Symphony for four performances of The Nutcracker , followed by debuts with the Williamsburg Symphonia (VA), Acadiana Symphony (LA) and the Ft. Collins Symphony (CO). Other appearances include the Richmond Symphony, the Long Beach Symphony, the Alabama Symphony, the San Juan Symphony, and the Virginia All-State Orchestra. His concert with the Dubuque Symphony in 2000 was called the "best performance of the season" by the local press. He has also appeared with the Savannah Symphony, Sewanee Music Festival, Spokane Symphony, Virginia Ballet Theater, Norfolk Chamber Consort, Coastal Valleys Symphony, Universal Ballet Korea , Virginia Waterfront International Arts Festival, and the Virginia Chorale.

Success Directing from the Orchestra Pit

Mr. Kenney has also enjoyed success directing from the orchestra pit as well having conducted for opera, ballet, and musical theater. He has appeared as conductor for Taconic Opera's production of Carmen, Gianni Schicchi and Die Kluge for Oakland Lyric Opera, Dear World, Into the Woods, and Secret Garden for San Francisco State University, Oliver for TOP Theater, Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat for the University of Southern California and No, No, Nanette for the Masquers Club. For the latter he won a LAWEE award as music director of the year. In addition he has conducted numerous performances of The Nutcracker, Swan Lake, The Firebird, and many other dance works.

About the School of the Arts

The School of the Arts at Colorado State University provides an enriched venue in which the study and practice of Art, Dance, Music and Theatre are nurtured and sustained by building the skills and knowledge needed by future generations of arts professionals to become contributors to the essential vitality of our culture and society. For more information, visit www.sota.colostate.edu or contact the Department of Music at (970) 491-5529.

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