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SAN FRANCISCO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SAN FRANCISCO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM LONG-LOST
SHOSTAKOVICH SCORE AT SCREENING OF 1929 SILENT FILM
CLASSIC, "THE NEW BABYLON."

The San Francisco Chamber Orchestra will present live performances of the original musical score by Dmitri Shostakovich at two screenings of the 1929 silent film classic, "THE NEW BABYLON," at the Castro Theatre, 7PM and 9PM, on Saturday, April 14. The film is being presented in conjunction with the 27th Annual San Francisco International Film Festival, which describes the event as "the most lavish undertaking the Festival has ever attempted." Tickets are \$10, \$15 and \$20, and are available at BASS, Ticketron, and the Downtown Center Box Office.

This film, "The New Babylon", which has been hailed as one of the few authentic epics of the cinema, represented the first collaboration between the then 22-year-old Dmitri Shostakovich and the famed Russian directorial team of Gregori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg. The brilliant score, however, was lost from the time of the film's first presentation in Leningrad in 1929 until shortly after the composer's death in 1975. Omri Hadari, the young Israeli conductor of the London Lyric Orchestra, reconstructed the lost score from a painstaking study of the parts discovered in Moscow archives.

(continued)

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Hadari will conduct the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra for the two Castro Theatre performances.

The music ranges from a giant can-can, to a musical commentary counterpointing the bourgeois singing "The Marseillaise" while the orchestra parodies Offenbach, to sensuous waltzes, to a lone piano amid the debris of battle, evoking Chopin. Vincent Canby, in The New York Times, said "What was gloriously apparent was that this Shostakovich score, the composer's first for a motion picture, is a model of its kind--occasionally rousing, and often extremely funny, all on its own, though it never comes between the images and the audience."

"The New Babylon" is one of the final triumphs of the silent era. The film is set in Paris in 1871 during the Franco-Prussian War, and focuses on a young girl employed in a posh Parisian department store (The New Babylon) who is caught up in the social upheaval leading to the establishment of, and eventual defeat of, the Paris Commune. The recent presentation of the film and reconstructed score at the New York Film Festival created a sensation. Film Comment said "... (it) was one of the great events in the history of the New York Film Festival... it had never before been seen and heard in this country as intended by its creators, with the thrilling music... and a steaming hot pot of images, most of which are startling and beautiful."

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Over the past 30 years, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra has presented over 500 admission-free concerts throughout the Bay Area. Under the direction of Maestro Edgar Braun, these concerts have provided superb classical chamber music performances for music lovers, frequently senior citizens, who could not otherwise afford to attend such events. This summer, the orchestra will present its Second Annual Lake Tahoe Music Festival.

Edgar Braun, musical director of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra announced that "we are excited to participate with the Film Festival in this remarkable event and to be performing the West Coast Premiere of the lost Shostakovich score under our guest conductor, Omri Hadari, who is so closely associated with this work."

P. S.

You are invited to the press preview of The New Babylon with the live performance of the score by the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. 1:30 pm, April 11, Castro Theatre: Contact Zohn Artman: 861-4794

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