

**2008 AVERY FISHER PRIZE Awarded to GIL SHAHAM**  
**Complete Surprise Unveiled During “Live From Lincoln Center” Presentation**

As a “Live From Lincoln Center” presentation of Gil Shaham’s evening of music by Sarasate at the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse came to a close tonight (Thursday, November 20), **Gil Shaham** was presented with a complete surprise. His friend and colleague, conductor Gustavo Dudamel, emerged through the invited audience, interrupting the festivities on air to present him with the coveted **Avery Fisher Prize for 2008**. Calling out, “Hola Gil, I have a message for you,” the ebullient Dudamel presented the Avery Fisher Prize to Gil Shaham before the invited audience of 100 people, and a television audience of millions. The Prize, Dudamel explained, was being given to Gil Shaham for his outstanding achievement and excellence in music. Present to congratulate Shaham were Avery Fisher Artist Program Chairman, Nathan Leventhal, and Fisher family members Charles Avery Fisher and Nancy Fisher.

As the recipient of the coveted 2008 Avery Fisher Prize, Gil Shaham receives a monetary award of \$75,000. On a marble plaque in Avery Fisher Hall, his name will join the nineteen previous Prize recipients: Lynn Harrell, cellist and Murray Perahia, pianist (1975); Yo-Yo Ma, cellist (1978); Emanuel Ax, pianist (1979); Richard Goode, pianist (1980); Horacio Gutiérrez, pianist (1982); Elmar Oliveira, violinist (1983); Richard Stoltzman, clarinetist (1986); André Watts, pianist (1988); Yefim Bronfman, pianist (1991); Garrick Ohlsson, pianist (1994); violinists Sarah Chang, Pamela Frank and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg (1999); double bassist Edgar Meyer and clarinetist David Shifrin (2000); violinist Midori (2001); Emerson String Quartet (2004); and Joshua Bell (2007).

The prestigious Avery Fisher Prize is awarded for outstanding achievement and excellence in music. The late Mr. Fisher’s devotion to music and performers was immortalized with a gift to Lincoln Center in 1974, establishing the Avery Fisher Artist Program. Thirty-four years later, this Program continues to provide recognition to outstanding U.S. instrumentalists and, since 2004, chamber ensembles, in two categories: the Prize and Career Grants. The Prize recipients are chosen by the Executive Committee of the Program: Emanuel Ax, pianist; David Finckel and Wu Han, Artistic Directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Henry Fogel, Senior Advisor to the League of American Orchestras; Anthony Fogg, Artistic Administrator, Boston Symphony Orchestra; Pamela Frank, violinist; Ara Guzelimian, Provost and Dean of The Juilliard School; Nathan Leventhal, Chairman of the Avery Fisher Artist Program; Reynold Levy, President, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; Yo-Yo Ma, cellist; Zarin Mehta, President and Executive Director of the New York Philharmonic; Jane S. Moss, Vice-President of Programming at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; and Joseph W. Polisi, President of The Juilliard School; Mrs. Avery Fisher, Charles Avery Fisher and Nancy Fisher are advisors. The Avery Fisher Artist Program is grateful to Lincoln Center, Inc., and its president Reynold Levy for continued support.

**Gil Shaham** is recognized internationally by audiences and critics alike as one of today’s most virtuosic and engaging classical artists, and is sought after worldwide for concerto appearances with celebrated orchestras and conductors, as well as for recital and ensemble appearances on the great concert stages and at the most prestigious festivals. Highlights of the 08/09 season include appearances with the orchestras of New York, Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia and Los Angeles, among others, as well as in Europe in Berlin, London and Munich. Among Mr. Shaham’s many concerto and solo CDs are a number of best sellers that have earned prestigious awards, including multiple Grammys, a Grand Prix du Disque, a Diapason d’or and Gramophone Editor’s Choice. In 2004, Mr. Shaham founded his own record label, “Canary Classics.” His most recent recording for this label, featuring Tchaikovsky’s Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50, with Yefim Bronfman, pianist, and Truls Mørk, cellist, was released in August 2008. A recording of Elgar’s Violin Concerto is due for release this fall.

Mr. Shaham was born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois in 1971, and at the age of 7 moved with his parents to Israel where, with annual scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, he began violin studies with Samuel Bernstein of the Rubin Academy of Music. In 1981 he began studying with Dorothy DeLay and Jens Ellerman at Aspen, and in 1982, after taking first prize in Israel’s Claremont Competition, he became a scholarship student at Juilliard, studying with Ms. DeLay and Hyo Kang. He has also studied at Columbia University. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient in 1990, Gil Shaham plays the 1699 “Countess Polignac” Stradivarius. He lives in New York with his wife, violinist Adele Anthony, and their two children.