



# NEWS RELEASE

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
PRESENTS

## JÄRVI'S FAREWELL

MAESTRO COMPLETES TENURE AS MUSIC DIRECTOR  
WITH TWO MASTERWORKS:

**BEETHOVEN'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 5, "EMPEROR"**  
**BRUCKNER'S SYMPHONY NO. 7**

FRI., MAY 1 IN PRINCETON  
SAT., MAY 2 AND TUE., MAY 5 IN NEWARK  
SUN., MAY 3 IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Newark, NJ—For his final subscription concerts as the Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Maestro **Neeme Järvi** has chosen a spectacular program: **Beethoven's** immortal **Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor,"** with Swedish virtuoso **Per Tengstrand** as soloist, and **Bruckner's** towering **Symphony No. 7**—works that not only display the maestro's artistry on the podium but also testify to his deep affinity with the orchestra he has done so much to strengthen during the past four seasons.

Performances take place Friday, May 1, (8 p.m.) at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton; Saturday, May 2, (8 p.m.) and Tuesday, May 5, (1:30 p.m.) at NJPAC in Newark and Sunday, May 3, (3 p.m.) at the State Theatre in New Brunswick. Tickets range in price from \$20 to \$82 and are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or online at [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org).

## **NJSO: JÄRVI'S FAREWELL – page 2**

Maestro Järvi will maintain an active relationship with the NJSO after his tenure as music director. Next season, he will serve the Orchestra in a new capacity as Conductor Laureate & Artistic Advisor. He returns to the NJSO podium for Verdi's *Requiem* (January 29–31, 2010) as part of the orchestra's annual Winter Festival. As artistic advisor, he will also take an active role in shaping the NJSO's programming and providing artistic guidance.

### **About the music**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**, a staunch upholder of egalitarian ideals, never referred to his **Piano Concerto No. 5** as the “Emperor.” In fact, that nickname—which is used mostly in English-speaking countries—would have probably appalled him.

In 1803, furious that Napoleon had declared himself Emperor of France, Beethoven rescinded his original dedication of Symphony No. 3 (“Eroica”) to Napoleon. Six years later, as Beethoven was working on his fifth piano concerto, the Emperor's troops were marching through Beethoven's adopted homeland. In May 1809, he wrote to his publisher, “We have passed through a great deal of misery...The whole course of events has affected both my body and soul...what a destructive and desolate life surrounds me! Nothing but drums, cannons and human suffering in every form!” A friend reported Beethoven sitting in a café, shaking his fist at the back of a French officer and muttering, “If I were a general, and knew as much about strategy as I do about counterpoint, I'd give you fellows something to think about.”

Small wonder, perhaps, that the “Emperor” concerto strikes a note of defiance. Significantly, it shares its key signature of E-flat with the “Eroica.” Musicologist Maynard Solomon has commented on “the warlike rhythms, victory motives, thrusting melodies and affirmative character” of the concerto. Like a military march, the indelible principal theme of the first movement alternates simple tonic and dominant harmonies, outlined in bugle-like arpeggios. By the time one gets to that theme, however, Beethoven has already sprung a surprise attack in the form of an excitingly unorthodox opening. After a single, bold *tutti* E-flat chord, the piano enters—not with the theme, but with an elaborately ornamented mini-cadenza. That leads into a similar *tutti* chord on the subdominant, followed by another cadenza that leads into a *tutti* on the dominant. A final cadenza leads back to the tonic, and the theme is stated by the orchestra at last. To be fair, it is a grand, majestic, almost pompous introduction; one could justifiably call it “imperial” (or “imperious,” at least). Nearly 100 measures pass before the piano enters with the theme, stated with nobility and a touch of flash. Subsidiary ideas bring changes of orchestral texture, as in the stately motif announced by the winds. Prior to the coda, where the soloist would generally improvise his own cadenza, Beethoven took the revolutionary step

of writing in the score, “*Non si fa una cadenza, ma s’attacca subito il seguente*,” i.e., “Do not play a cadenza, but immediately proceed to the following”—the following being Beethoven’s own written-out cadenza. In doing so, he took control of every note played in the concerto, asserting his authorial prerogatives over the whims of potential performers. It is no accident that this was the only concerto in which Beethoven, being too deaf to take the solo role himself, was obliged to entrust solo duties to another player in the work’s premiere.

The second movement Adagio, in the magically distant key of B major, contains one of Beethoven’s most gorgeous melodies, stated with almost hymn-like serenity. One of many the striking things about this concerto as a whole is its pervasive air of affirmation—most unusual for Beethoven’s music, in moments of triumph and joy are generally hard-won. Here in the Adagio, there are moments of harmonic instability, but they resolve placidly into new episodes. Throughout, the piano engages in a series of conversations with the orchestra, setting the stage for the movement’s final flourish: a single, suspended note that would ordinarily lead to another cadenza. Instead, the piano enters with the theme to the last movement—stated first as a kind of question, and then as a triumphant exclamation of pure joy.

The finale’s principal theme recalls that of the first movement in its use of simple, triadic arpeggios, but the effect is that of a folk dance tune rather than a call to arms. Throughout, the solo part moves brilliantly through a wide range of figurations; each new episode brings another set of pianistic marvels. Near the work’s ending, an eccentric passage, scored for the odd, but arresting, combination of piano and pianissimo timpani, gives way to a thunderclap conclusion.

There is something distinctly otherworldly about the music of **Anton Bruckner** (1824-96), as there was about the man himself. Born in a small Austrian town, he was pious and devout: even while teaching a counterpoint class, if he heard the Angelus bell in a nearby church, he would drop to his knees in prayer. He suffered bouts of arithmania, an obsession with counting and numbers. Socially awkward, he never married, nor had any genuine liaisons. Yet in spite of his eccentricities and his sometimes-crushing insecurity, he became one of the most influential symphonists of his century. A church organist by training, he was attuned to the powerful effect of massed sonorities in a resonant space, and brought that sonic insight to bear on his orchestral writing. His massive slow movements, unprecedented in scale, unfolding in rapt repetitions, have even been cited as precursors to Minimalism. At the same time, he held on to the structural lessons of the Classical era, breathing new life into the symphonic form at a time when it was decidedly in eclipse.

Bruckner's **Symphony No. 7**, premiered in 1884, was by far his most successful piece. It traveled widely following its debut in Leipzig, establishing the composer (at last) as a major figure in Viennese musical life. Like all of Bruckner's symphonies, Symphony No. 7 begins quietly. Under pianissimo tremolos in the upper strings, a yearning, 21-measure theme unfolds. Composer Robert Simpson likens the effect to the dark entrance of a cathedral that "leads to a very lofty and light interior." Although marked "Allegro moderato," this spacious movement progresses deliberately, savoring each of its three themes as it unveils them. (In this regard, as in many others, Mahler's symphonies would surely be unthinkable without Bruckner.)

The work's celebrated Adagio originated in a premonition of death—that of Richard Wagner, who Bruckner revered, calling him "The Master." In January 1883, Bruckner wrote to the conductor Felix Mottl, "One day I came home and felt very sad. The thought had crossed my mind that before long the Master would die, and then the C-sharp minor theme of the Adagio came to me." Bruckner's heartfelt elegy owes much to Wagner, especially in its repeated use of harmonic misdirection: cadences that "ought" to resolve in a certain way, yet lead elsewhere. For the first time in any symphony, Bruckner incorporates "Wagner tubas:" instruments that Wagner had created for his Ring cycle, designed to combine the mellowness of horns with the tuba's greater heft of sound. Coming at the movement's climactic moments, the astonishing sound of Bruckner's enhanced brass section—cadencing in the distant key of C major—is unforgettable.

Bruckner's third movement scherzo has touches of humor, such as the incongruous, seemingly off-key woodwind tweets that pop up in the first episode. Yet its minor-key principal theme—skipingly ponderous, like a giant dancing a jig—contains a hint of menace (anticipating Mahler here as well). The finale, to quote Simpson again, "blends solemnity and humor in festive grandeur." It ranges widely, opening with a delicately scored and cheerful theme that Bruckner develops in an unexpectedly taut fashion. In the work's closing measures, the composer returns to the symphony's opening theme, bringing the score to a bracing conclusion. Symphony No. 7 had its premiere 15 months after Bruckner drew his double bar; the occasion was a benefit concert to raise funds for a Wagner monument.

### **About the Artists**

The 2008–09 season marks **NEEME JÄRVI's** final season as Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, a tenure highlighted by acclaimed performances that have delighted critics and audiences alike. Next season, he returns to the NJSO as Conductor Laureate & Artistic Advisor. His engaging presence and masterful conducting have earned him the highest honors throughout the

world. Järvi continues to champion new artists and has brought some of the brightest new stars in classical music to New Jersey's concert halls while presenting great artists with established reputations.

Born in Tallinn, Estonia, and an American citizen since 1987, Järvi has conducted many of the world's most prominent orchestras. He is Chief Conductor of The Hague Residentie Orchestra in the Netherlands, Music Director Emeritus of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor Emeritus of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra (National Orchestra of Sweden), Conductor Laureate of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and First Principal Guest Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. He has led performances of the Berlin Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Zürich Tonhalle and BBC Symphony Orchestras, the Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the major orchestras of Scandinavia and the symphony orchestras of Sydney and Melbourne in Australia. In the United States, he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Boston Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra. His operatic engagements have included the Metropolitan Opera, the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, the Opéra de Paris (Bastille) and the San Francisco Opera.

The Maestro has amassed a distinguished discography repertoire that includes more than 400 recordings on the Deutsche Grammophon, Chandos, BIS, Orfeo, EMI and BMG labels. In addition to a number of operas, he has recorded complete symphony cycles of Wilhelm Stenhammar and Hugo Alfvén, Niels Gade and Carl Nielsen, Sibelius, Brahms and Franz Schmidt, Martinů and Dvorák, Estonian composers Arvo Pärt and Eduard Tubin, Glazunov, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and many others. He received the designation of Commander of the North Star Order from King Karl Gustav XVI of Sweden.

*The Washington Post* calls pianist **PER TENGSTRAND** “technically resplendent, powerful [and] intuitively secure.” He is the subject of the acclaimed Swedish documentary *Solisten* (“The Soloist”). In 2005, he became the youngest individual decorated by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden with the Royal Medal *Litteris et Artibus* for outstanding service to the arts.

Recent performances have included engagements with the National Symphony Orchestra, Hague Residentie Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic in Stockholm and Madison Symphony. Upcoming engagements include a performance with the Rotterdam Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Kristjan Järvi. Additionally, Tengstrand will record and perform the complete cycle of Beethoven sonatas in the coming season.

An advocate of Scandinavian repertoire, Tengstrand inaugurated the Nordic Music Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia, and performed in the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's Northern Lights Festival in January 2005. He is artistic director of the Helsingborg and Giresta Piano festivals and Vaxjo Chamber Music Festival, all in Sweden, as well as the New Nordic Music Festival at Scandinavia House in New York City.

Tengstrand has received honors and awards including first prize at the 1997 Cleveland International Piano Competition and the 1996 Geneva competition. He was a Laureate of the Paris International Long-Thibaud Competition and has been a recipient of the Anders Wall Foundation Scholarship and Swedish Arts Grants Committee's Musician Award. He and his wife, pianist Shan-shan Sun, comprise the Tengstrand-Sun Piano Duo, which has enjoyed great success following their first prize at the 2003 Murray Dranoff International Two-Piano Competition. He released a solo album for ProPiano of Glazunov's *The Seasons* and *Konzertwalzer* (a world premiere).

### **The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra**

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra is comprised of some of the country's finest musicians, led by Music Director Neeme Järvi. Artistic excellence, innovative programming and community engagement are hallmarks of its mission. To best serve the people of New Jersey, the orchestra brings its programs to eight different venues throughout the state. Education and outreach programs enrich the listening experience for children and adults alike. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Broadcast Series airs regionally and on the Internet by 96.3FM WQXR (New York) and is a syndicated program carried throughout North America.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, visit [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or e-mail [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org). Tickets are available for purchase by phone 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

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