

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



JACQUES LACOMBE MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE
NEEME JÄRVI CONDUCTOR LAUREATE

www.njsymphony.org

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Victoria McCabe, Communications and External Affairs Manager
973.624.3713, ext. 234
vmccabe@njsymphony.org

December 1, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NJSO PRESENTS BEST OF ... ITALIAN OPERA

**PROGRAM OF ROUSING OVERTURES AND CHORUSES
CELEBRATES MUSIC OF ITALY AS PART OF THE NJSO'S
2010 WINTER FESTIVAL**

**THU., JAN. 14 IN MORRISTOWN
FRI., JAN. 15 IN TRENTON
SAT., JAN. 16 IN RED BANK
SUN., JAN. 17 IN ENGLEWOOD**

Newark, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra celebrates the grand Italian operatic tradition in **Best of ... Italian Opera**. The program is part of the 2010 Winter Festival—"Italy: Land of Song & Expression." Guest conductor David Wroe and Schola Cantorum on Hudson join the NJSO to present rousing overtures and choruses from opera greats including Verdi, Rossini, Puccini and Leoncavallo.

Performances take place on Thursday, January 14, (7:30 p.m.) at the Community Theatre at Mayo Center for the Performing Arts in Morristown, Friday, January 15, (7:30 p.m.) at The War Memorial in Trenton, Saturday, January 16, (8 p.m.) at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank and Sunday, January 17, (3 p.m.) at bergenPAC in Englewood. Tickets range in price from \$17 to \$55 and are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or online at www.njsymphony.org.

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey is a presenting sponsor of the Englewood series.

About the Music

In **Best of ... Italian Opera**, the NJSO takes its audiences on a whirlwind tour of the composers and operatic works that enchanted a country and captivated the world. Italy was the birthplace for opera in 1600, and ever since, the art form has played a dominant role in the country's history. During the

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Baroque and Romantic periods, opera provided a musical stage for stories and myths, and it let composers add imagination and flair to history. Puccini and Verdi led opera into its golden age in the 19th century.

Overtures from Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* and Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* tell full stories in musical miniatures. Romance, lyricism, action and drama permeate the Verdi overture; Rossini uses percussion to thrilling effect. The *Intermezzo* from Mascagni's one-act opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the Bell Chorus from Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* both invoke the sounds of church worship—the former in a hymn-like meditation, the latter in the sounds of chimes ringing in the beginning of Vespers.

The powerful Hebrew slave chorus “Va, pensiero” from Verdi's *Nabucco* became an unofficial national anthem to Italians during the nationalist *Risorgimento* (“Resurgence”) movement of the 1830s and 1840s, as Italy sought to unify her many regions and free herself from Austrian Hapsburg rule.

“Dance of the Hours” from Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* is delightfully associated with dancing elephants in Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. “Chorus of the Wedding Guests” from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* is unknowingly ironic; wedding guests sing a joyous melody, unaware that the bride is marrying against her will. A pair of Puccini pieces—the *Intermezzo* from *Manon Lescaut* and “Humming Chorus” from *Madama Butterfly*—present some of opera's most poignant, emotional themes.

The Triumphal March from Verdi's *Aida* is the NJSO program's grand finale, uniting exuberant chorus with ceremonial brass and full orchestral splendor.

2010 Winter Festival—“Italy: Land of Song & Expression”

The NJSO celebrates Italy, a land where speech is like singing and melody flows like wine. Audiences can escape the winter cold and bask in the warmth of music by great Italian composers from Vivaldi to Verdi, along with a few musical visitors. It's a month-long voyage of exciting discoveries and welcome reunions. **Sarah Chang and The Four Seasons** opens the Winter Festival from January 8–10; Best of ... Italian Opera is the second program. The festival continues with two additional concert programs:

- **Pines of Rome:** Rome has cast its spell on countless composers. Respighi captures the city's enchanted atmosphere in his picturesque *Pines of Rome*, as does Berlioz in the festive *Roman Carnival Overture*. Liszt's second piano concerto, written after an extended stay in Rome, is filled with Italianate melody and charm. January 22–24.

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- **Verdi Requiem:** Operatic in its expressive intensity, Verdi's majestic Requiem is an unforgettable concert experience. The walls will tremble to *Dies Irae*, while *Agnus Dei* will provide heavenly consolation. In both intimate solo passages and towering choral settings, Verdi's melodic gifts are unsurpassed. Conductor Laureate Neeme Järvi takes the podium for the first time in his new NJSO role. January 29–31.

About the Artists

David Wroe is Music Director of the Westfield Symphony Orchestra in New Jersey and Teatro Grattacielo of New York City, a regular conductor at New York City Opera and Principal Conductor at New York University. He was previously Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of Kansas City Camerata and Principal Guest Conductor at the City Opera of Heidelberg, Germany. He is resident conductor with New York University Symphony Orchestra and was director of orchestras at Montclair State University.

Recent debuts and returns include engagements with L'Orchestre Nationale de Lille, L'Orchestre de Basse-Normandie, L'Orchestra Lamoureux, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Taipei Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan National Symphony, L'Ensemble de Paris, Vorarlberg Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra and Santa Fe Symphony.

He has taught at New England Conservatory and served as judge for the Music Assistance Fund administered by the League of American Orchestras. His credits include an all-Gershwin recording with L'Orchestre National de Lille and national broadcasts on Österreichischer Rundfunk. Wroe's awards include the Seiji Ozawa Fellowship at Tanglewood and recognition in United States Congress for his excellence in contributing to the community in Kansas City.

Schola Cantorum on Hudson (SCH) is a Jersey City-based choral ensemble that performs in New York and New Jersey. Founded in 1995 by Artistic Director Dr. Deborah Simpkin King, SCH is comprised of recent college and conservatory graduates, amateurs and professionals. The ensemble's repertoire encompasses Renaissance through modern works and explores music of many nations through its Ethnic Celebration Series. Music education is a cornerstone of SCH's outreach. Education efforts include Cantorum Young Singers, Choral Scholar and Member In-Reach programs and Schola Sings Solo recital series.

Dr. Deborah Simpkin King, Artistic Director and Founder of SCH, is a choral and vocal performer and educator. She is Director of Music at the First Presbyterian Church in Ramsey, has an independent voice studio in Essex County and is the alto in the professional vocal quartet Chantez!.

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King is an active member of Chorus America, Classical Singer Society, the National Association for Teacher of Singing, Conductors Guild, the Royal School of Church Music and the American Guild of Organists. She has served on the NJ-ACDA Board of Directors since 1991.

The Best of ... Series

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra is unique among major American ensembles in bringing its programs to a diverse array of communities around the state. In keeping with this mission, last season, the NJSO added a new series titled **Best of ...**, creating fresh opportunities for New Jersey listeners to hear the orchestra's core repertoire—along with unknown gems—in a new format. The series has been an immediate success, exceeding projected ticket sales.

Best of ... programs are thematically based, offering both connoisseurs and newcomers an opportunity to experience the joys of classical music. Narrative and theatrical elements provide context and entertainment. Each Best of ... program lasts approximately 75 minutes, offering complete works and movements—some familiar, some rare and unusual. Best of ... programs for the 2009–10 season include “Best of Tchaikovsky,” “Best of Italian Opera,” “Best of Fairy Tales” and “Best of Composers at the Keyboard.”

For more information about Best of ... programs, visit www.njsymphony.org/bestof.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra is comprised of some of the country's finest musicians. The Orchestra is proud to have Jacques Lacombe as its Music Director Designate and Neeme Järvi as its Conductor Laureate. 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 seven 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, presented in part by the Merck Company Foundation, is a syndicated radio program broadcast regionally and throughout North America. Continental Airlines is the official airline of the NJSO.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, visit www.njsymphony.org or e-mail 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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The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's programs are made possible in part by The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, along with many other foundations, corporations and individual donors.

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