

LACOMBE BRINGS BEETHOVEN'S NINTH TO LIFE IN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM



**MUSIC DIRECTOR PAIRS FAMOUS HISTORICAL
SPEECHES WITH IMMORTAL SYMPHONY**
**WESTMINSTER SYMPHONIC CHOIR, QUARTET OF EXCITING
VOCALISTS JOIN NJSO ON STAGE**
PROGRAM FEATURES COPLAND'S *CANTICLE OF FREEDOM*

FRI., SEPT. 24 IN NEWARK
SAT., SEPT. 25 IN MORRISTOWN
SUN., SEPT. 26 IN NEWARK

NEWARK, NJ (AUGUST 16, 2010)—For its first subscription program of the 2010–11 season, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, led by new Music Director Jacques Lacombe, presents Beethoven's immortal Ninth Symphony in a unique programming format. Between movements of the Ninth, the NJSO adds a distinctive element—excerpts from touchstone speeches by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, John F. Kennedy and Susan B. Anthony—to emphasize the symphony's themes of liberty, the human spirit, fraternity and compassion.

Performances take place on Friday, September 24 (8 p.m.), and Sunday, September 26 (3 p.m.), at NJPAC in Newark and Saturday, September 25 (3 p.m.) at the Community Theatre at Mayo Center for the Performing Arts in Morristown. The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey is a presenting sponsor of the Morristown series.

To commemorate the subscription season's opening weekend, the NJSO partners with other arts organizations and musical entities in Newark for a community-wide event featuring music, food and other activities immediately following the September 26 performance.

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A quartet of guest vocalists—soprano Twyla Robinson, mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong, tenor Bryan Griffin and bass-baritone Jason Grant—perform alongside the Westminster Symphonic Choir, one of New Jersey's finest vocal ensembles, for Beethoven's epic work.

"Beethoven's Ninth is *the* symphony—it's one of the most amazing masterworks ever written by one of the most important geniuses of all time, and I wanted to present it in a different context," Lacombe says. "I love that music has a major effect on our lives, even outside of the concert hall. The emotions in the music give us a message. I decided to link the work's message of brotherhood and peace with great speeches by great modern human beings who have had a profound impact on our society."

With the Ninth, Beethoven became the first composer to incorporate voices into a symphony; the major vocal melody, the "Ode to Joy," is among the most enduring classical themes in history.

"The Ninth was written in 1824, but when you play this music and put it next to those speeches, it makes it a current affair," the Music Director says. "We still have to deal with some of those speeches' issues, such as racism and borders, on a daily basis, and I think this combination of speeches and music can help people understand on a deeper level."

The Orchestra, joined by the Westminster Symphonic Choir, opens the program with *Canticle of Freedom*, a lesser-known Copland piece that celebrates the human spirit from a contemporary American perspective. The one-movement work, composed for the dedication of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's new auditorium in 1955, incorporates voices in its final section, with lyrics drawn from a 14th-century text by John Barbour.

"This will be my first time working with one of the greatest artistic ensembles in New Jersey," Lacombe says of the Westminster Symphonic Choir. "My first contact with music was as a choir singer, and I have a special place in my heart for conducting choirs. The Copland is a piece that is rarely known; I'm looking forward to hearing the Westminster Symphonic Choir perform this stirring piece."

TICKETS

Tickets range in price from \$20 to \$82 and are available for purchase online at www.njsymphony.org or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

THE PROGRAM

BEETHOVEN'S NINTH

Friday, September 24 at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Saturday, September 25 at 3 pm | Community Theatre in Morristown

Sunday, September 26 at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Jacques Lacombe, conductor

Twyla Robinson, soprano

Elizabeth DeShong, mezzo-soprano

Bryan Griffin, tenor

Jason Grant, bass-baritone

Westminster Symphonic Choir

COPLAND

Canticle of Freedom

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 9, "Choral"

This program will be performed without intermission.

THE ARTISTS

From the beginning of his career, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Music Director **JACQUES LACOMBE** has been highly praised as a remarkable conductor whose artistic integrity and rapport with orchestras have propelled him to international stature.

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Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal from 2002 to 2006, he led the orchestra in more than 100 performances, including programs from the central European classics to the French and Russian literature, as well as several world premieres. He served for three years as Music Director of both orchestra and opera with the Philharmonie de Lorraine in France; he has been Music Director of the Orchestre Symphonique de Trois-Rivières since 2006.

In addition to his collaborations with all the major Canadian orchestras, including several tours and recordings with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Lacombe has worked abroad with orchestras in Monte-Carlo, Nice, Toulouse and Halle, as well as Orchestre Lamoureux in Paris, Slovakia Philharmonic, Budapest Symphony, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, Victoria Orchestra Melbourne and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

A regular guest at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, where he has led numerous productions, including Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge* and von Walterhausen's rarely performed *Oberst Chabert*, Lacombe conducted the world premiere of Vladimir Cosma's *Marius et Fanny* at the Opéra de Marseille starring Angela Gheorghiu and Roberto Alagna. He has also led operatic productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Teatro Regio in Turin and Opéra de Monte-Carlo, along with opera companies in Milwaukee, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Montreal, Québec and Vancouver.

He has recorded for the Analekta label and has been broadcast on PBS, the CBC, Arte TV in France and on Hungarian Radio-Television.

Born in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Québec, Lacombe received his musical training at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal and at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna.

Composed of students at Westminster Choir College of Rider University, the **WESTMINSTER SYMPHONIC CHOIR** has recorded and performed with major orchestras under many internationally known conductors of the last 75 years. The choir is recognized as one of the world's leading choral ensembles.

In addition to these performances with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the ensemble's 2010–11 season includes a performance of Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Dresden Staatskapelle at Lincoln Center in New York and the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, as well as performances with their conductor, Joe Miller, in Princeton.

Last season, the choir performed Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Alan Gilbert, John Adams' *El Niño* with the Orchestra of St. Luke's conducted by the composer, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Orchestra of St. Luke's conducted by Sir Roger Norrington, and Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection," with the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. With Miller, the ensemble performed Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the Westminster Festival Orchestra and Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil.

Westminster Choir College is a division of Rider University's Westminster College of the Arts, which has campuses in Princeton and Lawrenceville. A professional college of music with a unique choral emphasis, Westminster prepares students at the undergraduate and graduate levels for careers in teaching, sacred music and performance.

TWYLA ROBINSON regularly performs with top orchestras throughout North America and Europe including the London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Staatskapelle, Cleveland Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra. This season, in addition to her appearance with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, she returns to the Atlanta Symphony for Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and to the National Symphony Orchestra for performances of Zemlinsky's Lyric Symphony. She performs Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the St. Louis Symphony and Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony with the Milwaukee Symphony and Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig.

Previous engagements include appearances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Orchestre National de Paris. She is in demand for Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, which she has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra and Opéra National de Paris. On the opera stage, Robinson is recognized for her portrayal of Mozart heroines, including Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Countess Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*.

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Young American mezzo **ELIZABETH DESHONG** has garnered praise for her “well-cultivated mezzo-soprano voice.” She has appeared on opera and concert stages throughout the United States and Europe, including appearances with the Metropolitan Opera. A graduate of Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center, she returns to the Lyric stage as Hermia in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* this season. DeShong makes her London debut as Mafia Orsini in *Lucrezia Borgia* for English National Opera, returns to the Canadian Opera Company to sing the title role in *La Cenerentola* and appears as the Kitchen Girl in *Rusalka* for the prestigious Glyndebourne Festival.

Last season, DeShong debuted with San Francisco, Arizona and Santa Fe Operas. She was named Washington National Opera’s Artist of the Year for her performances as the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. DeShong’s concert career includes Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Cleveland Orchestra and Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* in Paris at the famed Cathedral of Notre Dame and at the Gulbenkian in Lisbon with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. The Lisbon performances were broadcast worldwide on Medici.tv and will be released on DVD by Ideale Audience.

This season, American tenor **BRYAN GRIFFIN** sings Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica and Santa Barbara Symphony. He returns to the Nashville Symphony for Handel’s *Messiah*. Operatic appearances include *La Traviata* for Toledo Opera and Pong in *Turandot* for Arizona Opera. This summer, Griffin appeared at the Grant Park Music Festival for Beethoven’s Mass in C and with Opera North as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*.

Recent highlights include Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Mozarteum Orchestra of Salzburg, the Austin Symphony premiere of Cary Ratcliff’s *Ode To Common Things*, Rachmaninoff’s *The Bells* with the Nashville Symphony and the Mozart *Requiem* with Phoenix Symphony. Griffin made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*; his appearances there include Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* and Fenton in *Falstaff*. He has sung Nemorino in *L’elisir d’amore* with Toledo Opera and Malcolm in *Macbeth* at Glyndebourne. Griffin received his undergraduate degree from The Juilliard School and was an apprentice artist at the Santa Fe Opera, Florida Grand Opera and Ryan Center for American Artists at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

A native of Los Angeles, bass-baritone **JASON GRANT** has won acclaim for his elegantly expressive, richly hued voice. This season, Grant sings Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the New Jersey, Detroit and Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestras. He returns to the Alabama Symphony for Handel’s *Messiah* and the Buffalo Philharmonic for Verdi’s Requiem.

Recent highlights include Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 for Lorin Maazel’s final concerts as music director of the New York Philharmonic, following concert performances of *Tosca* led by Maazel and a debut in the Bach *St. Matthew Passion* led by Kurt Masur; Stravinsky’s *Le Rossignol* with the Atlanta Symphony in Atlanta and at Carnegie Hall; Mozart’s Mass in C Minor at the Mostly Mozart Festival; Don Fernando in *Fidelio* with the Saint Louis Symphony; Bach’s Mass in B Minor with the Milwaukee Symphony and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Grant Park Music Festival. Grant attended The Juilliard School and the Eastman School of Music, where he received the Performer’s Certificate.

For high-resolution artist photos, full bios and program notes, visit www.njsymphony.org/pressroom.

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 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 outstanding venues throughout the state. Education and community engagement programs enrich the listening experience for children and adults alike. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Broadcast Series is a syndicated radio program broadcast regionally on WWFM 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.

NJSO VENUES

For venue contact information, directions and information about public transportation, parking, dining options and more, visit www.njsymphony.org/venues.

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