

NEWS RELEASE

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NJSO CELEBRATES 'ROMEO AND JULIET' WITH PROGRAM OF BERLIOZ, TCHAIKOVSKY, DELIUS



RAY CHEN PLAYS MENDELSSOHN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

THU., SEP. 30 IN NEWARK
FRI., OCT. 1 IN PRINCETON
SAT., OCT. 2 IN NEW BRUNSWICK
SUN., OCT. 3 IN NEWARK

NEWARK, NJ (AUGUST 31, 2010)—Composers throughout history have paid tribute to the most famous star-crossed lovers in all of literature—William Shakespeare’s tragic couple Romeo and Juliet—with some of the most romantic music in the entire classical canon. On the first weekend of October, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra looks at musical interpretations from three very different composers—Berlioz, Tchaikovsky and Delius.

The program also features dynamic young violinist Ray Chen, a soloist who, at age 21, has already won several international competitions. Canadian conductor Julian Kuerti, fresh off of his final season as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, leads these NJSO concerts.

Performances take place on Thursday, September 30 (1:30 p.m.), and Sunday, October 3 (3 p.m.), at NJPAC in Newark; Friday, October 1 (8 p.m.), at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton and Saturday, October 2 (8 p.m.), at the State Theatre in New Brunswick.

In his NJSO debut, Chen performs the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, a piece that he says fits perfectly with the rest of the program’s Shakespearean leanings.

“It’s all very romantic!” Chen says of the concerto. “Mendelssohn is very communicative within the piece, which is incredible, since he wrote it as such a young age. The piece is almost like a conversation between the soloist and the orchestra—the way that he weaves the music together and creates this dialogue. In certain sections, it’s really a call-and-answer feeling between the solo part and the orchestra—there’s no grand soloist entrance, that it’s more of a chamber feel, a conversation.”

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And the work holds a special significance for the violinist. “The Mendelssohn is so near and dear to my heart,” Chen says. “When I first played it, I was around 9. In Australia, where I grew up, violin training extends beyond Suzuki book 10; there are levels after that, and Mendelssohn was level 10—it was just towering over me as a student, and I kept thinking that I couldn’t wait to play it!

“As a kid it was so exciting, even though I obviously had no idea of how to really perform a piece ... but that excitement is all part of the concerto, that has stayed with me. Subconsciously that is there, even when I was playing this piece in finals of Menuhin competition. I definitely selected to perform that concerto for the love of it.”

Frederick Delius drew the plot for his *A Village Romeo and Juliet* from a late 19th-century German story that took *Romeo and Juliet* as its framework. Delius’ most famous composition is an instrumental piece—“The Walk to the Paradise Garden”—from that opera. The piece follows the story’s star-crossed lovers to a secluded place, where they can share their love away from their feuding families.

Hector Berlioz’s Love Scene from *Romeo and Juliet* embodies the composer’s romantic style, an instrumental expression of the deep feelings between the work’s tragic protagonists. Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture shows a different musical approach. The Russian composer’s 20-minute piece does not follow the play linearly from start to finish; rather, Tchaikovsky presents a musical embodiment of the story’s themes. The resulting work is full of the passion, fighting, romance and tragedy that emanate from *Romeo and Juliet*.

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

ROMEO AND JULIET

Thursday, September 30 at 1:30 pm | NJPAC in Newark
Friday, October 1 at 8 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton
Saturday, October 2 at 8 pm | State Theatre in New Brunswick
Sunday, October 3 at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Julian Kuerti, conductor
Ray Chen, violin

DELIUS	“The Walk to the Paradise Garden”
MENDELSSOHN	Violin Concerto
BERLIOZ	Love Scene from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
TCHAIKOVSKY	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Fantasy Overture

The Artists

One of the most significant conducting talents to emerge in recent years, Canadian conductor **JULIAN KUERTI** has led orchestras including the Houston, National, Montreal and Toronto Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Bochumer Symphoniker. A thrilling last-minute substitution with the Cincinnati Symphony resulted in immediate reengagements for 2010 and 2011. He recently completed his post as assistant conductor at the Boston Symphony Orchestra; he has appeared with the BSO several times since 2008. This season, he makes his New York City Opera debut for Oliver Knussen’s *Where the Wild Things Are*.

The son of pianist Anton Kuerti, he studied conducting at the University of Toronto, Pierre Monteux School for Conductors in Maine, American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, NAC Conductors Programme in Ottawa and University of the Arts Berlin; he was a conducting fellow at Tanglewood in 2005. From 2005 to 2008, he served as founding artistic director and principal conductor of Berlin’s Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop, with whom he recorded an album, “When We Were Trees,” of the music of Giovanni Sollima for Sony/BMG. Kuerti also served as assistant conductor to Ivan Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra.

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RAY CHEN “can do pretty much anything he wants on the violin,” writes Anne Midgette of *The Washington Post*. Winner of the Queen Elisabeth Competition and Yehudi Menuhin Competition, Chen is among the most compelling young violinists today. His recent performances, including debut recitals in the Young Concert Artists Series at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Merkin Hall in New York, have enraptured both the audiences and the critics. Maxim Vengerov, who met Chen while serving on the jury of the Menuhin Competition, immediately engaged him to perform with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra in St. Petersburg, as well as at the opening concert of the next Menuhin Competition in Oslo.

Upcoming engagements include a performance with the Taipei Symphony at this year’s World Expo in Shanghai, his North American orchestral debut with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and concerts with the Orchestre National de Lille, Deutsche Symphonie Berlin and Sydney Symphony. Chen was a featured soloist of this year’s Rostropovich Festival in Moscow.

Chen signed an exclusive multi-year contract with Sony Classical. His first album, slated for release at the end of 2010, will feature works from Bach to Sarasate that reflect Chen’s compelling personality. An orchestral recording of late 19th-century virtuoso repertoire is planned for 2011.

Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, at age 15 Chen was accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music, where he continues to work. Chen plays the “Huggins” Stradivarius, on loan from The Nippon Music Foundation, and “The Macmillan” 1721 Stradivarius provided as part of the award for winning the 2008–09 Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York.

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.

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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