

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra: 2017–18 Season Highlights

- **Opening Weekend:** Xian Zhang kicks off a multi-concert tribute to Beethoven with the composer’s “Emperor” Concerto, starring phenomenal pianist and MacArthur “Genius” Fellow Jeremy Denk. The NJSO shows its virtuosity in Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, a fantastic tale of thwarted love, opium dreams and witchcraft. Oct 7–8. Special Opening Night Celebration Gala packages include a pre-concert cocktail party and a post-concert gala dinner on Oct 7 at NJPAC in Newark.
- **2018 Winter Festival: America, Inspiring.** America has always been a place of monumental inspiration, feeding the ideals of people from all over the world. The 2018 Winter Festival celebrates foreign artists and composers who found creative inventiveness within this great nation, featuring works from Britten, Ravel, Korngold and more. The Festival closes with the treasured symphony that embodies America’s embrace of creativity, Dvořák’s “New World.”

Leveraging the power of art to transcend differences, NJSO Accents and special Winter Festival events explore, through multiple art forms, the immigrant experience and how foreign artists have illustrated American inspiration in their work.

Week I – America, Inspiring: Respighi & Prokofiev. Just as American concertgoers of another era cheered Prokofiev and Respighi, audiences are raining accolades on 21-year-old Chinese pianist George Li, silver medalist in the XV International Tchaikovsky Competition, and NJSO’s Xian Zhang. Featuring the NJSO premieres of Chen Yi’s *Ge Xu* and Respighi’s *Fountains of Rome*, as well as Respighi’s *Pines of Rome* and Prokofiev’s Third Piano Concerto. Jan 11–14.

Week II – America, Inspiring: Ravel & Rachmaninoff. The searing energy of jazz, the speed and power of a fighter plane – these emblems of American ingenuity captured the imagination of Ravel and Martinů. Internationally acclaimed pianist Terrence Wilson, a Montclair resident, dazzles in Ravel’s colorful Piano Concerto in G Major. Featuring Rachmaninoff’s *Symphonic Dances* and the NJSO premiere of Martinů’s *Thunderbolt P-47*. Jan 19–21.

Week III – America, Inspiring: Dvořák’s “New World” Symphony. Hear the piece that embodies and inspired the Winter Festival: Dvořák’s Ninth. Chloë Hanslip, praised by BBC Music Magazine for her “panache, poise and laser-like accuracy,” will shine in Austrian émigré Korngold’s resplendent violin concerto. Featuring Britten’s *Simple Symphony*. Jan 26–28.

www.njsymphony.org/winterfestival

- **World premiere of Danielpour’s *Carnival of the Ancients*:** Zhang and the NJSO give the world premiere of American composer Richard Danielpour’s *Carnival of the Ancients* for Piano and Orchestra with pianist Sara Daneshpour (Mar 9–11). The NJSO has performed and commissioned several works from the American composer, including five world premieres and two New Jersey premieres since 1993.
- **Works new to the NJSO:** The season features works that will be new to NJSO audiences. In addition to the world premiere of Danielpour’s *Carnival of the Ancients* (Mar 9–11), the Orchestra performs for the first time Kernis’ *Musica celestis* (Oct 12–15), Prokofiev’s Sixth Symphony (Nov 30–Dec 3), Chen Yi’s *Ge Xu* (Jan 11–14), Respighi’s *Fountains of Rome* (Jan 11–14), Martinů’s *Thunderbolt P-47* (Jan 19–21) and Fagerlund’s *Isola* (May 3–6).

- **Compelling voices:** Zhang has crafted programs that demonstrate a strong affinity between artists and music. Dima Slobodeniouk has recorded Finnish composer Fagerlund's *Isola*; the conductor leads the work's NJSO premiere, along with Sibelius' Fifth Symphony (May 3–6). British conductor and Baroque specialist Nicholas McGegan leads Suite No. 2 in D Major from Handel's *Water Music* (Apr 20–22). Concertmaster Eric Wyrick explores performance practices from Baroque to contemporary as he leads his NJSO colleagues in performances of Bach's complete Brandenburg Concertos (May 17–20). In a program of unusual textures, the Montclair State University Singers perform two intimate *a cappella* works paired with Mozart's epic *Requiem* (Mar 15–18).
- **Great works of the repertoire:** The 2017–18 season includes masterworks and gems of the classical repertoire, including Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth ("Pastoral") Symphonies and First and Fifth ("Emperor") Piano Concertos; Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*; Mozart's *Requiem*; Mahler's First Symphony and *Songs of a Wayfarer*; Brahms' Violin Concerto and First Symphony; Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major; Bach's complete Brandenburg Concertos; Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto and Sixth Symphony; Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*, *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and *Vocalise*; Handel's *Messiah*; and Mendelssohn's "Reformation" Symphony.
- **Performances statewide:** Fulfilling its mission as New Jersey's state orchestra, the NJSO presents classical subscription programming at NJPAC in Newark, State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown, Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank and bergenPAC in Englewood. The Orchestra performs pops concerts at NJPAC, State Theatre New Jersey and Count Basie Theatre and presents family concerts at NJPAC.
- **Collaborations:** The NJSO partners with the Montclair State University Singers (Handel's *Messiah*, Dec 15–17; Mozart's *Requiem*, Mar 15–18) and features soloists from the Curtis Institute of Music (Mozart's *Requiem*, Mar 15–18). The Orchestra presents programs in collaboration with NJPAC (Handel's *Messiah*, Dec 17); State Theatre New Jersey ("Radio Hits Live: Music of Abba, Simon & Garfunkel, Chicago & More," Nov 26; "Sci-Fi Spectacular: Music from *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* & Beyond," Jan 7; "Hot Latin Nights with the Mambo Kings," Feb 18; "Jason Alexander: The Broadway Boy," Apr 15; "*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* in Concert with the NJSO," June 3) and McCarter Theatre (Handel's *Messiah*, Dec 15).
- **NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute:** The Orchestra continues the NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute—a partnership between the Edward T. Cone Foundation, Princeton University and the NJSO—in July 2017. Promising graduate-level composers will have their work rehearsed by the NJSO and guest conductor JoAnn Falletta, participate in masterclasses with Institute Director Steven Mackey and receive feedback from NJSO musicians. The Institute will provide sessions with industry leaders in publishing, licensing, promotion and music preparation to give participants a foundation for a successful career in composition. It concludes with an NJSO performance of the participants' works. July 10–15.

GUEST AND FEATURED ARTISTS

The NJSO welcomes world-class soloists—superstars, rising young virtuosos and gifted players from the Orchestra itself—to headline its concert programs.

Guest artists:

- **Jeremy Denk** “truly made the piano sing,” *The Telegraph* writes, while *The Boston Globe* praises his “ceaseless invention.” The pianist opens the NJSO season with Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto. Oct 7–8.
- *The New York Times* praises the “brilliant” **Gil Shaham** for his “flawless precision and gleeful command.” The NJSO audience favorite scales the heights of Brahms’ Violin Concerto in the season finale. June 7–10.
- “The calm authority and probing insight that **Alban Gerhardt** brings to his performances make him one of the finest cellists around,” *The Guardian* writes. Gerhardt joins the NJSO for Tchaikovsky’s *Variations on a Rococo Theme*. Oct 12–15.
- 22-year-old rising star **Conrad Tao** is “a stunning soloist,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* writes of the pianist who performs Bartók’s Third Piano Concerto. Nov 2–5.
- **Stephen Hough**—whom *The Times of London* calls “one of the greatest living pianists”—brings virtuosic fireworks to Tchaikovsky’s kaleidoscopic *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Nov 30–Dec 3.
- **Chloë Hanslip**, praised by *BBC Music Magazine* for her “panache, poise and laser-like accuracy,” performs Austrian émigré Korngold’s violin concerto during the Winter Festival. Jan 26–28.
- Pianist **Sara Daneshpour**, cited by *The Washington Post* for creating “transfixing poetry,” gives the world premiere of Danielpour’s *Carnival of the Ancients* for Piano and Orchestra. Mar 9–11.
- NPR writes, “A performer’s ability to spontaneously summon an improvisation requires a combination of discipline and fantasy, as well as a willingness to share and communicate with the audience in a magical way,” in a feature on pianist **Robert Levin**, who performs both his own improvisations—created from themes submitted by audience members—and Beethoven’s First Piano Concerto. Apr 20–22.
- Conductor **Dima Slobodeniouk** “performed perfectly, acting with great precision but strong enough expression to communicate even the subtlest nuances to the orchestra,” *European Culture News* writes. The conductor leads a pair of Finnish works—Sibelius’ Fifth Symphony and the NJSO premiere of Fagerlund’s *Isola*—as well as Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto. May 3–6.
- “A huge standing ovation ended this incredible evening which I will never, ever forget,” *Broadway World* writes of Tony Award-winning star **Jason Alexander’s** program of great music from the theater, comedy and audience interaction. “If you get a chance to see Alexander in person, do not miss him. It was one of the best concerts I’ve ever seen.” Apr 14–15.

NJSO artists:

- Concertmaster **Eric Wyrick**, Principal Cello **Jonathan Spitz**, Principal Oboe **Robert Ingliss** and Principal Bassoon **Robert Wagner** perform Haydn’s *Sinfonia concertante*. Mar 9–11.
- Wyrick leads his NJSO colleagues in performances of Bach’s complete Brandenburg Concertos, exploring performance practices from Baroque to contemporary. May 17–20.

NJSO POPS

The NJSO performs a five-concert pops series on Saturday evenings at NJPAC in Newark and, in collaboration with the State Theatre New Jersey, on Sunday afternoons at the State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick. The Orchestra presents two pops concerts on Friday evenings at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank.

www.njsymphony.org/pops

- **Radio Hits Live: Music of Abba, Simon & Garfunkel, Chicago & More:** Admit it—you’ve belted out these songs in the car, in your room, even in the shower. Now, here are hits you love, in one rollicking, feel-good concert with a quintet of vocalists joining the NJSO! It’s all of your favorite songs, including “Graceland,” “I Will Survive,” “Can’t Buy Me Love,” “Working My Way Back to You,” “Dancing Queen,” “Sweet Caroline” and so many more. Nov 25–26 in Newark and New Brunswick. *The Nov 26 performance is presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*
- **Sci-Fi Spectacular: Music from *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* & Beyond:** Marina Sirtis, best known as counselor Deanna Troi on the television series “Star Trek: The Next Generation” and the four feature films that followed, hosts an out-of-this-world night of film music. Blast off to music from *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and more! Highlights the music of John Williams, Bernard Hermann and other composers who have made great moments in science fiction come alive! Jan 6–7 in Newark and New Brunswick. *The Jan 7 performance is presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*
- **Hot Latin Nights with the Mambo Kings:** The Mambo Kings bring some serious heat as they celebrate sizzling music of Latin America and the United States. From the sultry melancholy of Astor Piazzolla and the burning Afro-Cuban rhythms of Tito Puente to the rhythmic playfulness of jazz great Dave Brubeck and the pop strains of The Beatles, the Mambo Kings take you on a Latin jazz tour that will drive you to your feet! Feb 16–18 in Red Bank, Newark and New Brunswick. *The Feb 18 performance is presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*
- **Jason Alexander: The Broadway Boy:** Long before becoming world renowned as the iconic George Costanza on “Seinfeld,” Jason Alexander was a Tony Award-winning Broadway song-and-dance man. His concert with the NJSO brings a hilarious re-telling of his journey to and on the Broadway stage and features a program of great music from the theater along with comedy and audience interaction. It’s a much-heralded event of music, laughter and fun. Apr 14–15 in Newark and New Brunswick. *The Apr 15 performance is presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*
- ***E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* in Concert with the NJSO:** Don’t miss Steven Spielberg’s cinematic masterpiece *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* with John Williams’ Academy Award®-winning score performed live to picture by the NJSO. Experience the magic once more. June 1–3 in Red Bank, Newark and New Brunswick. *The June 3 performance is presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*
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NJSO FAMILY SERIES

The young and the young at heart will enjoy discovering the instruments of the orchestra, great stories told through music and rich orchestral repertoire featured in this magical and interactive series, which the NJSO presents on Saturday afternoons in the Victoria Theater at NJPAC in Newark. *The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey presents the NJSO Family Series.*

www.njsymphony.org/family

- **Shooting for the Stars:** Blast off with a concert-going experience of astronomical proportions! Hear music inspired by the far reaches of space, including Holst’s *The Planets*, the otherworldly main theme from *Star Trek* and more. Your little astronauts can reach for the stars and dream their own dreams. Nov 18.
- **Panda-monium: Music from the Animal Kingdom:** It’s a purr-fect arf-ternoon at the NJSO, when we take you on a wild and woolly concert adventure. You’ll be buzzing in delight as you listen to music inspired by the animal kingdom, featuring tunes from Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* ballet, Stravinsky’s *Firebird* and more! We’re not lion—ewe’ll have a whale of a time! May 12.

Pre-Concert Adventures—specially created interactive programs perfect for the whole family—are an opportunity to learn more about the music, participate in fun activities and play games in the NJPAC lobby an hour before each concert.

NON-SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS

- **Handel's *Messiah*:** Xian Zhang conducts her first NJSO *Messiah* with a marvelous quartet of soloists and the superb Montclair State University Singers, adding her remarkable sensibility and style to this adored treasure. Dec 15 & 17. *The Dec 15 performance at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton is presented in collaboration with the McCarter Theatre; the Dec 17 performance is presented in collaboration with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.*

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