

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS MENDELSSOHN'S 'ITALIAN' SYMPHONY**



**PROGRAM INCLUDES ITALIAN ARIAS BY VERDI, BELLINI AND  
DONIZETTI WITH WORKS BY ROSSINI AND PUCCINI**

**MARCELO LEHNINGER CONDUCTS**

**FRI, MAR 8, AT WAR MEMORIAL IN TRENTON  
SAT, MAR 9, AT COUNT BASIE THEATRE IN RED BANK  
SUN, MAR 10, AT BERGENPAC IN ENGLEWOOD**

NEWARK, NJ (February 4, 2013)—**The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra** presents Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony on a program that also features gems from the Italian opera repertoire, including arias by Verdi, Bellini and Donizetti, along with Puccini's *Chrysanthemums* and Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* Overture. Soprano Joanna Mongiardo returns to the NJSO stage to perform the aria selections; Marcelo Lehninger conducts.

"Mendelssohn had this quality to be able to describe the essence of things," says NJSO Music Director Jacques Lacombe. "The 'Italian' Symphony is so fresh and so joyful with these typical Italian rhythms [that are] almost like dances. [It seemed natural] to pair the symphony with some of the greatest arias written for coloratura soprano—Italy is a country that sings."

Of the bel canto style featured in the arias on the program, Lacombe says: "Those composers knew how to write a phrase for the voice and to choose which vowel fit best with which note—[the music] is so perfect. Mendelssohn—despite the fact that he was a Romantic-era composer—had something of a classical aspect to his music: light, pure rhythms and very defined structure. You find all of those qualities in these arias, too."

Performances take place on Friday, March 8, (7:30 pm) at the War Memorial in Trenton, Saturday, March 9, (8 pm) at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank and Sunday, March 10, (3 pm) at bergenPAC in Englewood. A Classical Conversation begins one hour before the performances on March 9 in Red Bank and March 10 in Englewood.

### **TICKETS**

Tickets start at \$20 and are available for purchase online at [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

### **THE PROGRAM**

#### **MENDELSSOHN'S "ITALIAN"**

Friday, March 8 at 7:30 pm | War Memorial in Trenton  
Saturday, March 9 at 8 pm | Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank +  
Sunday, March 10 at 3 pm | bergenPAC in Englewood +

Marcelo Lehninger, conductor  
Joanna Mongiardo, soprano  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

ROSSINI	<i>The Italian Girl in Algiers Overture</i>
VERDI	"Caro nome" from <i>Rigoletto</i>
VERDI	"E strano" and "Ah, fors'è lui" from <i>La traviata</i>
PUCCINI	<i>Chrysanthemums</i>
BELLINI	"Ah! non credea mirarti" from <i>La Sonnambula</i>
DONIZETTI	"O luce di quest'anima" from <i>Linda di Chamounix</i>
MENDELSSOHN	Symphony No. 4, "Italian"

+ *Classical Conversation begins one hour prior to the performance (free to ticketholders).*

*The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey is concert sponsor of the March 9 performance.*

### **THE ARTISTS**

#### **Marcelo Lehninger, conductor**

Marcelo Lehninger, Music Director of the New West Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles, is increasingly recognized as one of the most gifted conductors of his generation. Selected by James Levine to be Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO), the Brazil native's tenure was extended through 2013.

Lehninger made his BSO debut in 2010; highlights have included the world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's Violin Concerto and his Tanglewood debut. *The New York Times* praised his "impressive technique, musical insight and youthful energy" in his Carnegie Hall debut with the BSO.

He has conducted the Houston, National, Hartford, Fairfax and Jacksonville Symphony Orchestras. Upcoming appearances include return engagements with the Brazilian and São Paulo Symphony Orchestras, Minas Gerais and Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as debuts with the Florida and Seattle Symphonies and Deutsches Symphonie Orchester at the Philharmonie in Berlin.

In 2008, Kurt Masur chose Lehninger as the recipient of the first Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Scholarship sponsored by the American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation; he was Masur's assistant with the Orchestre National de France, Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig and New York Philharmonic. Lehninger participated in the 2009 Malko Competition in Denmark and the 2011 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview. In 2001, he placed second in the first Eleazar de Carvalho National Conducting Competition in Rio de Janeiro, subsequently conducting top orchestras in Brazil and Argentina.

An alumnus of the National Conducting Institute, he holds a master's degree from the Conductors Institute at Bard College. He was music advisor of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas for the 2007–08 season.

**Joanna Mongiardo, soprano**

Internationally acclaimed soprano Joanna Mongiardo “radiates warmth through her unforced, pearly fresh timbre,” writes *Opera News*. Recognized for her effortless coloratura and spellbinding charisma on stage, she is in high demand for both operatic and symphonic repertoire. Mongiardo performed a last-minute Blonde in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* for Grand Théâtre de Genève; she reprised the role for both Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf and Opéra de Nice. She appeared as Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* for Dayton Opera, and she joins the Metropolitan Opera for *Manon*.

Mongiardo made a critically acclaimed Teatro Grattacielo debut at Lincoln Center as Rosalina in Giordano's *The King*. A Central City Opera favorite, she performed the title role in their 50th-anniversary production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Eurydice in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Thérèse in *Les Mamelles De Tirésias* and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*.

She has appeared with the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Indianapolis, Minnesota and National Symphony Orchestras and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México.

Mongiardo was on fest contract with Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf for two years, which culminated in 2007 in Taipei, where she sang Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* with the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan. Other notable operatic roles include Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Oscar in *A Masked Ball*, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Adina in *The Elixir of Love* and Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*. She is a 2003 Sullivan Award recipient and received a master's degree in music from Yale University.

For high-resolution artist photos, full bios and program notes, visit the new NJSO website's pressroom at [www.njsymphony.org/pressroom](http://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. 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. Select performances of the NJSO are broadcast regionally and throughout North America.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, visit [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or email [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.

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. United is the official airline of the NJSO.

**PRESS CONTACT**

*National & NYC Press Representative:*

Dan Dutcher, Dan Dutcher Public Relations | 917.566.8413 | [dan@dandutcherpr.com](mailto:dan@dandutcherpr.com)

*Regional Press Representative:*

Victoria McCabe, NJSO Communications and External Affairs | 973.735.1715 | [vmccabe@njsymphony.org](mailto:vmccabe@njsymphony.org)