

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra welcomes next Music Director Xian Zhang for Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4



Jennifer Frautschi performs Barber's Violin Concerto Program also features Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave* *NJSO Accents include #OrchestraYou, Classical Conversations*

**Thu, Apr 7, at NJPAC in Newark
Fri, Apr 8, at NJPAC in Newark
Sat, Apr 9, at Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank
Sun, Apr 10, at Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown**

NEWARK, NJ (March 2, 2016)—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra welcomes next Music Director Xian Zhang for concerts featuring Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, April 7–10 in Newark, Red Bank and Morristown. Jennifer Frautschi performs Barber's Violin Concerto on a program that opens with Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave*.

Performances take place on Thursday, April 7, at 1:30 pm and Friday, April 8, at 8 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark; Saturday, April 9, at 8 pm at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank and Sunday, April 10, at 3 pm at the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown.

These performances mark Zhang's first with the NJSO since her appointment as the Orchestra's next music director—a position she will assume in September.

"I'm very excited for these concerts for many reasons," Zhang says. "These are my first concerts after the announcement, and Tchaikovsky is one of my favorite composers. This program is very passionate, emotional and lyrical. I think melodies are important, and this program is filled with beautiful romantic ones."

“Tchaikovsky wrote *Marche Slave* to celebrate the Russians helping the Serbians in the war at the time, just one year before he wrote the Fourth Symphony. He used two Serbian folk songs at the beginning of the piece. There is a great moment at the end with brass playing the ‘God Save the Tsar’ theme.

“Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony features brass, and I believe the NJSO has a fantastic brass section. The second movement has one of the most famous oboe solos in all literature, and I think you will be really touched. In the third movement, you will see the string players put down their bows like they’ve stopped playing, but they will be playing pizzicato for a very long section, which is rare.

“I believe Barber’s Violin Concerto is the greatest American concerto. It’s so romantic—on an emotional level, it matches really well to the sensibility and the passion of Tchaikovsky.”

The NJSO invites amateur instrumentalists to join fellow audience members and NJSO musicians in the third annual #OrchestraYou—a post-concert pro-am session free to ticketholders of the NJSO’s April 8. Other NJSO Accents include Classical Conversations preceding the April 9 and 10 performances. The Orchestra presents an insider’s look at the 2016–17 season one hour before the April 8 concert.

The NJSO announced Zhang’s appointment as its 14th music director in November, to critical and audience acclaim. WQXR placed her impending arrival in New Jersey in the top two of its classical stories to watch in 2016. *The Star-Ledger* has hailed Zhang’s artistry and relationship with the NJSO, praising her as “a thrilling leader who has already established a strong rapport with the orchestra.” *The Asbury Park Press* deems her “absurdly talented” and “perfect for the role.”

Of her last performances with the NJSO, *The Star-Ledger* writes, “[Zhang’s] innate musicality and ability to communicate intention with clarity invested every gesture. Nothing seemed extraneous or glossed over, even as her whole body seemed to contract and release with explosive energy.”

NJSO Principal Viola Frank Foerster says: “Xian Zhang’s past concerts with the NJSO were always joyous and memorable events for me—her musical enthusiasm and sensitivity are contagious. The excitement that we players experience will in turn be shared by our audiences during our concerts together.”

Watch Zhang preview the Tchaikovsky program at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/zhang-conducts-tchaikovsky-4.

For more on the NJSO’s next music director—including video, photos, press and audience quotes and more—visit www.njsymphony.org/zhang.

TICKETS

Concert tickets start at \$20 and are available for purchase online at www.njsymphony.org or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

CONCERT PROGRAM

Zhang Conducts Tchaikovsky

Thursday, April 7, at 1:30 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Friday, April 8, at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark *

Saturday, April 9, at 8 pm | Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank

Sunday, April 10, at 3 pm | Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown

Xian Zhang, conductor

Jennifer Frautschi, violin

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

TCHAIKOVSKY *Marche Slave*
BARBER Violin Concerto
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 4

Full concert information and program notes are available at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/zhang-conducts-tchaikovsky-4.

* 2016–17 preview: Get an insider's view of the NJSO's new season, beginning one hour before the performance.

Northern Trust is concert sponsor of the April 9 performance. The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey is concert sponsor of the April 10 performance.

NJSO ACCENTS

Inspired by the concerts and designed to inspire audiences, NJSO Accents are pre- or post-concert events that complement the concert experience and provide audience members with more opportunities to personally connect with the music and music makers. Learn more at www.njsymphony.org/accents.

#OrchestraYou—Fri, Apr 8, after the concert

Find your flute, tune up your trombone or dust off your double bass and join forces with conductor Jeffrey Grogan, other audience members and NJSO players right in the lobby of NJPAC. Advance registration for participants is required by April 1; spectators are invited to stay and applaud this talented group. [More information](#).

Classical Conversation

Enjoy a lively Classical Conversation beginning one hour before the April 9 & 10 performances. Learn more about the music from NJSO musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders.

The Prudential Foundation generously sponsors NJSO Accents in Newark.

#OrchestraYou

The NJSO invites amateur instrumentalists attending the April 8 concert to participate in #OrchestraYou, the Orchestra's pro-am orchestra experience that celebrates music's power to enrich and inspire music lovers of all ages, with NJSO musicians in the NJPAC lobby following the concert.

Everyone who plays a standard orchestral instrument can participate in #OrchestraYou. Education & Community Engagement Conductor Jeff Grogan will lead #OrchestraYou players in Tchaikovsky's Waltz from *Sleeping Beauty*, a rousing crowd-pleaser you'll love to play. A little rehearsal, a little performance and a whole lot of fun.

After participating in the NJSO's first #OrchestraYou session, NPR's Anastasia Tsioulcas recounted a young participant telling her that "playing with this group, even for literally just a few minutes, was simply amazing. 'I got such a feeling of ... euphoria,' he told me, searching for just the right word. 'There's nothing like this. There's so much energy here, so much of a sense that you're part of something much bigger than yourself.'"

Tsioulcas continued: "Not only was it incredibly fun, but it served as a good reminder that music-making shouldn't be divided into producers and consumers, with most people locked into a passive experience."

Advance registration is required; patrons can register for #OrchestraYou by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476). Performers must hold or purchase a ticket to the April 8 concert; there is no additional charge to participate, and there are no auditions.

To learn more, download PDF instrumental parts and view press coverage and photos from previous #OrchestraYou events, visit www.njsymphony.org/orchestrayou.

THE ARTISTS

Xian Zhang, conductor

Internationally renowned conductor Xian Zhang—whom *The New York Times* has praised for her “passionate musicality [and] boundless energy” and *The Telegraph* has hailed for her “Muti-like dynamism, agility and precision”—will become the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra’s 14th music director in September 2016, leading the NJSO in seven subscription classical programs. *The Star-Ledger* calls the conductor “a thrilling leader who has already established a strong rapport with the orchestra.”

In September 2016, Zhang will become the first female conductor to have a titled role with a BBC orchestra when she takes on the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales. She has served as Music Director of the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi since September 2009; highlights of her tenure include the orchestra’s televised debut at the BBC Proms with Joseph Calleja in September 2013 and taking part in EXPO in May 2015.

A regular conductor with the London Symphony and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras, Zhang’s recent highlights include her return to the BBC Proms with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, as well as performances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Gothenburg Symphony orchestras. This season, she debuts with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, and she returns to the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic and Orchestre National de Belgique. Zhang continues to work frequently in North America; recent performances have included a week of Chinese New Year concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

This season’s operatic performances include a return to English National Opera for *La bohème* and her debut with Den Norske Opera conducting *La traviata* in January. Following Zhang’s hugely successful production of *Nabucco* with Welsh National Opera in June 2014, which subsequently transferred to the Savonlinna Festival, she returns to the festival in summer 2016 to conduct *Otello*, marking her debut with the opera company itself.

Zhang frequently returns to her native China, where she is a regular conductor with the China Philharmonic, Beijing Symphony and Guangzhou Symphony. A champion for Chinese composers, she recently conducted the world premiere of Qigang Chen’s *Luan Tan*—a Hong Kong Philharmonic commission. She also conducted Qigang Chen’s *Iris Devoilee* with the National Centre for the Performing Arts and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, as well as Tan Dun’s *Resurrection Concerto* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, last season.

Working with young talented musicians continues to play a major part in Zhang’s life. She has held the position of Artistic Director of the NJO, Dutch Orchestra and Ensemble Academy since 2011, and this summer, she made a hugely successful debut with the European Union Youth Orchestra, conducting them in Grafenegg, Amsterdam, Berlin, Rheingau and Bolzano.

Born in Dandong, China, Zhang made her professional debut conducting *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Central Opera House in Beijing at the age of 20. She trained at Beijing’s Central Conservatory, earning both Bachelor and Master of Music degrees, and she served one year on its conducting faculty before moving to the United States in 1998. She was appointed the New York Philharmonic’s Assistant Conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming their Associate Conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.

Jennifer Frautschi, violin

Two-time Grammy nominee and Avery Fisher career grant recipient Jennifer Frautschi has garnered worldwide acclaim as an adventurous musician with a remarkably wide-ranging repertoire.

Frautschi has appeared as soloist with the late Pierre Boulez and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Christoph Eschenbach and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival, and at Wigmore Hall and Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival. She has given recitals at the Ravinia Festival, Washington's Phillips Collection and Boston's Gardner Museum. In recent summers, she has performed at the Ojai, La Jolla, Santa Fe, Moab, Bridgehampton and SaltBay music festivals.

Frautschi's 2015–16 season features performances with the Boston Philharmonic; re-engagements with the Austin, Boise, Pasadena, Pensacola and Toledo symphonies; and chamber music appearances at the Library of Congress and Duke University.

Highlights of recent seasons include the world premiere of James Stephenson's Violin Concerto, a piece written for her, with the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä; Barber's concerto with the orchestra of the Teatro di San Carlo Opera House in Naples with conductor James Conlon; and performances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic and the Eugene, Jacksonville, Milwaukee, Tucson and Utah symphonies.

Born in Pasadena, California, Frautschi began studying the violin at age 3. She was a student of Robert Lipsett at the Colburn School for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles. She also attended Harvard, New England Conservatory of Music and The Juilliard School, where she studied with Robert Mann. She currently teaches violin in the graduate program at Stony Brook University. She performs on the 1722 "ex-Cadiz" Antonio Stradivarius violin on generous loan to her from a private American foundation.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by *The Wall Street Journal*, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb musicians.

Under the bold leadership of Music Director Jacques Lacombe, the NJSO presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at the State Theatre in New Brunswick, Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People performances, NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). The NJSO's REACH (Resources for Education and Community Harmony) chamber music program annually brings original programs—designed and performed by NJSO musicians—to a variety of settings, reaching as more than 22,000 people in nearly all of New Jersey's 21 counties.

For more information about the NJSO, visit www.njsymphony.org or email 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, along with many other foundations, corporations and individual donors.

PRESS CONTACT

National & NYC Press Representative:

Dan Dutcher, Dan Dutcher Public Relations | 917.566.8413 | dan@dandutcherpr.com

Regional Press Representative:

Victoria McCabe, NJSO Communications and External Affairs | 973.735.1715 | vmccabe@njsymphony.org

###