

## **New Jersey Symphony Orchestra presents Handel's *Messiah***



**Montclair State University Singers, quartet of vocal soloists  
join members of NJSO for Christmastime masterwork**

**George Manahan returns to conduct**

***Princeton performance at Richardson Auditorium presented in collaboration with  
McCarter Theatre; Newark performance presented in collaboration with NJPAC***

**Fri, Dec 16, at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton  
Sun, Dec 18, at NJPAC in Newark**

NEWARK, NJ (November 8, 2016)—Members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra perform Handel's *Messiah* with the Montclair State University Singers and a quartet of vocal soloists December 16 and 18 in Princeton and Newark, respectively. George Manahan, the NJSO's interim Music Director from 1983–85, returns to conduct Handel's masterwork—a Christmastime tradition in concert halls across the world. Soprano Patricia Schuman, mezzo-soprano Mary Phillips, tenor Ryan MacPherson and bass-baritone David Pittsinger join the Orchestra and choir.

Performances take place on Friday, December 16, at 7:30 pm at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton and Sunday, December 18, at 3 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark.

*The Star-Ledger* praised the NJSO's 2014 performances of the masterwork with the Montclair State University Singers, writing that the choir "sounded stunningly professional under the direction of Heather J. Buchanan" and praising the Orchestra for "an elegant, heartfelt performance [that] maintained a streamlined, polished quality that respected tradition while offering glowing tones that projected easily ... Adding to the sense of authenticity was the accompaniment of recitative and arias on a mix of harpsichord and organ.

“The NJSO played with lithe, pliant sound. The demands of the work, however, fall largely on the chorus, and they surpassed expectations with excellent diction and musicianship from the lilting ‘O thou that tellest good tidings of Zion’ and ‘All we like sheep,’ to the exuberant description of the birth and the clean, unified fugue ‘And With His Stripes.’ Together, orchestra, chorus, conductor and soloists brought out the work’s many shades, and delivered that one particular seasonal requirement, a rousing ‘Hallelujah.’”

### **TICKETS**

Tickets start at \$25 for the December 16 performance and \$24 for the December 18 performance. They are available for purchase online at [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

### **THE PROGRAM**

#### **Handel's *Messiah***

Friday, December 16 at 7:30 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

Sunday, December 18 at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark

George Manahan, conductor

Patricia Schuman, soprano

Mary Phillips, mezzo-soprano

Ryan MacPherson, tenor

David Pittsinger, bass-baritone

Montclair State University Singers | Heather J. Buchanan, director

Members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

#### *HANDEL Messiah*

The Orchestra invites the audience to participate in the centuries-old tradition of standing at the beginning of the *Messiah's* “Hallelujah Chorus.”

*These performances are approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes in length, including intermission.*

Full concert information is available at [www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/handels-messiah-2](http://www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/handels-messiah-2).

*The December 16 performance is presented in collaboration with McCarter Theatre. The December 18 performance is presented in collaboration with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.*

### **THE ARTISTS**

#### **George Manahan, conductor**

Wide-ranging and versatile conductor George Manahan has had an esteemed career embracing everything from opera to the concert stage, traditional to contemporary. American Composers Orchestra and Portland Opera music director, he was also New York City Opera music director for 14 seasons and NJSO interim music director from 1983–85. He has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Santa Fe and Chicago; Opera National du Paris; National, Atlanta and San Francisco symphonies and Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, among others. He received Columbia University's Ditson Conducting Award; ASCAP honored him four times for his commitment to 20th-century music during his tenure as Richmond Symphony music director.

He has led premieres by Tobias Picker, Charles Wuorinen, David Lang, Hans Werner Henze and Terence Blanchard; the New York premiere of Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner* and Emmy Award winner Laura Karpman's Grammy Award-winning *Ask Your Mama* with Jessye Norman, The Roots and Orchestra of St. Luke's.

His “Live from Lincoln Center” broadcast of *Madame Butterfly* with New York City Opera won an Emmy Award; he conducted the Grammy-nominated recording of Edward Thomas' *Desire Under the Elms* with the London Symphony. He is director of orchestral activities at the Manhattan School of Music.

**Patricia Schuman, soprano**

Enjoying a career at the highest international level, Patricia Schuman has sung leading roles at opera houses and festivals including the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence and Glyndebourne, under the batons of James Levine, Riccardo Muti, Nikolaus Harnencourt, Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink and others. Schuman has sung contemporary works and world premieres including Carlotta O'Neill in Jeanine Tesori's *Blizzard on Marblehead Neck*, Elvira Griffiths in Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*, Estelle Oglethorpe in John Musto's *Later the same evening*, Sarah Meneely-Kyder's *Letter from Italy* and The Mother in Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at Opera Philadelphia. She sang The Duchess in Thomas Ades' *Powder her Face* at Opera Philadelphia to great critical acclaim.

Schuman appears on film as Poppea in *The Coronation of Poppea*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Royal Opera and Contessa Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Madrid Opera. Recordings include Handel's *Messiah* (Koch), Berton's *Veni Creator* (Erato), Rossini's *Tancredi* (Sony) and, in the title role, Catán's *Florencia in the Amazon* (Albany Records).

**Mary Phillips, mezzo-soprano**

With a voice that has been called "pure gold" and dramatic gifts that place her in the first rank of singer-actors, American mezzo-soprano Mary Phillips is closely associated with the music of Wagner and Verdi. She sings many mezzo roles in the *Ring* cycle, including appearances at the Metropolitan, Seattle, Scottish and Canadian operas. She made an acclaimed role debut as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* with Dallas Opera. She made her Met debut in Verdi's *La forza del destino* and her San Francisco Opera debut in *Rigoletto*.

Much in demand for Mahler, she sang his Eighth Symphony with the New York Philharmonic and Second Symphony with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Atlanta Symphony. She has performed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Utah Symphony and Opera and National Symphony, among others.

Phillips maintains a strong interest in baroque repertoire, with roles as Sesto in *Julius Caesar* in Barcelona and Eduige in *Rodelinda* with Dallas Opera. She has appeared in Handel's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall and with the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Portugal and Atlanta and Seattle symphonies. She has sung Vivaldi's *Gloria* at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and has recorded Bach's *Magnificat* with Boston Baroque.

**Ryan MacPherson, tenor**

Described by *Opera News* as a "warm and lively tenor up to all demands," tenor Ryan MacPherson has a prestigious international career. This season, he creates the role of Rochester in Louis Karchin's *Jane Eyre* with New York's Center for Contemporary Opera and appears with Firelands Symphony Orchestra. He has performed Liszt's *Faust Symphony* with American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; Handel's *Messiah* with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Central City Opera; Iff in the world premiere of Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* with New York City Opera; Roderick Usher in Glass' *The Fall of the House of Usher* with Chicago Opera Theater and Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* with Glimmerglass Opera; the title role in Van de Vate's *Hamlet* at Vinohrady Theatre in Prague; Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* and Don José in *Carmen* with Lyric Opera Dublin; Horace in Gounod's *La colombe* and Kornélis in Saint-Saëns' *La princesse jaune* at the Buxton Festival and The Apparition of a Youth in Strauss' *The Woman without a Shadow* with Opéra National de Paris. Recordings include in Philip Glass' *Orphée* (as Heurtebise) with Portland Opera and the world premiere of Wuorinen's *Brokeback Mountain* (as Jack's Father) with Teatro Real in Madrid.

**David Pittsinger, bass-baritone**

American bass-baritone David Pittsinger is renowned for his dramatic portrayals in the world's major opera houses. *The Washington Times* called his Helen Hayes Award-nominated performance as Emile de Becque in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* "perhaps the definitive interpretation of this role in our time."

This season, Pittsinger returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Le Bret in Alfano's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, reprises his celebrated assumption of Fred Graham in *Kiss Me, Kate* at the Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg, makes his role debut

as Cervantes/Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha* at the Ivoryton Playhouse and appears in a semi-staged production and recording of Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Pittsinger and his wife, soprano Patricia Schuman, premiered Jeanine Tesori's *A Blizzard at Marblehead Neck* with Glimmerglass Opera. He has appeared with the Portland, San Francisco, Glimmerglass, New York City and English National operas; Opera Philadelphia; l'Opéra de Montréal; Los Angeles and Vienna philharmonics and St. Louis, Boston and National symphony orchestras, among others.

He appears on the world-premiere recording of Scott Eylerly's *Arlington Sons*—composed for Pittsinger and his son, Richard—with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Grammy Award-winning Virgin Classics recording of Carlyle Floyd's *Susannah* and Opus Arte's DVD of the world premiere of Philip Glass's *The Perfect American*.

### **Montclair State University Singers**

Over the last decade, the Montclair State University (MSU) choral program has been recognized for its successful collaborations with numerous world-renowned artists and celebrated professional musicians in national and international venues. The Montclair State University Singers is a mixed-voice elective choir comprising undergraduate and graduate students, accompanied by pianist Steven W. Ryan. Its repertoire encompasses sacred and secular genres from the Renaissance to the 21st century, with special interest in contemporary composers.

MSU choirs regularly appear with the NJSO. Previous highlights include performances of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Howard Shore's Academy Award-winning *The Lord of the Rings* Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Verdi's epic *Requiem*—twice, under the batons of Neeme Järvi and Jacques Lacombe. In 2011, the women of the Chorale performed Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with the NJSO and the American Boychoir. The MSU Chorale's highly acclaimed performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Verdi's *Requiem* with Lacombe were celebrated with CD releases in 2011 and 2014. Founded in 1908, MSU is proud to be a leading institution of higher education in New Jersey. More information is available at [www.montclair.edu](http://www.montclair.edu).

Australian-born conductor **Heather J. Buchanan**, PhD, is professor of music and director of choral activities at Montclair State University, where she conducts the Chorale, University Singers, Vocal Accord and Prima Voce. Choirs under her direction have won critical acclaim and have collaborated with world-renowned artists including Meredith Monk, Richard Alston Dance Company, Vienna Philharmonic Strings, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Tarik O'Regan and Chen Yi. Her publications include the landmark GIA choral series *Teaching Music through Performance in Choir*, vols. 1–3. She has released a DVD, *Evoking Sound: Body Mapping & Gesture Fundamentals*. A licensed Andover educator, Buchanan specializes in the teaching of body mapping for musicians and holds degrees from the University of New England in Australia, Westminster Choir College of Rider University and the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University in Australia. A vibrant teacher, dynamic performer and passionate advocate for musicians' health, she is in demand as a guest conductor, somatic educator and choral clinician in the United States and abroad.

### **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.

The NJSO welcomes new Music Director Xian Zhang in the 2016–17 season. The Orchestra 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 New Jersey 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. In the 2015–16 season, Orchestra musicians performed at nearly 200 events, reaching more than 34,000 people in nearly all of New Jersey's 21 counties.

For more information about the NJSO, visit [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or email [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org). Tickets are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

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