

WWFM to air three NJSO concert broadcasts on 89.1 FM and www.wwfm.org Mar 31, Apr 27 and June 2 at 8 pm



Broadcasts feature performances led by Music Director Xian Zhang
Programs include music by Tchaikovsky, Haydn, Strauss and more
Broadcasts to become available online for on-demand listening

NEWARK, NJ (March 27, 2017)—In a new partnership, WWFM The Classical Network will air New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concert broadcasts on Friday, March 31; Thursday, April 27; and Friday, June 2. Each broadcast airs at 8 pm on 89.1 FM and streams simultaneously online at www.wwfm.org. The programs will feature music by Tchaikovsky, Haydn, Strauss and more in performances led by Music Director Xian Zhang, recorded live at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. Webcasts will become available for on-demand listening on the NJSO and WWFM websites.

On March 31, WWFM airs Zhang's debut program as Music Director, featuring a trio of Tchaikovsky scores—the Fifth Symphony, First Piano Concerto (with pianist Simon Trpčeski) and Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin*. Zhang "showed complete command of these scores and a deep feeling for them," *The New York Times* wrote in its concert review. The performance "spoke to meticulous preparation by Ms. Zhang, but also to a certain freedom and risk-taking on the part of the players that suggested an enthusiastic and confident response to her direction."

The April 27 broadcast features Haydn's Symphony No. 102 and Strauss' Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, recorded in November 2016, and Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony and *Marche Slave*, recorded in April 2016. *The Star-Ledger* praised the chemistry between orchestra and conductor in April: "Employing her theatrical conducting style, poised on the balls

of her feet, often leaping with arms outstretched and making compact but forceful baton gestures, Zhang coaxed precise pizzicato playing from the strings, various emotional shadings from the woodwinds, and Wagnerian crescendos from the horns.” Zhang brought “not just skill but also heart,” the paper wrote in its November review.

Program details for the June 2 broadcast will become available at www.njsymphony.org/broadcasts at a later date.

NJSO President & CEO Gabriel van Aalst says: “We are delighted that WWFM will present these concert broadcasts, bringing some of the NJSO and Xian Zhang’s standout performances from the past year to its wide network of listeners.”

Recordings engineered and produced by Tim Martyn.

MUSIC DIRECTOR XIAN ZHANG

Conductor Xian Zhang begins her critically anticipated tenure as NJSO Music Director in the 2016–17 season. Zhang is internationally renowned for “dynamic performances [that prove] hers is a name worth memorizing” (*The New York Times*) and “dynamism, agility and precision” (*The Telegraph*). WQXR placed her arrival in New Jersey in the top two of 2016’s classical stories to watch, and *The Star-Ledger* calls the conductor “a thrilling leader who has already established a strong rapport with the orchestra.”

Zhang has served as Music Director of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi since September 2009, with highlights including their televised debut at the BBC Proms in 2013 with Joseph Calleja. This season, Zhang takes on the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales (BBC NOW), thereby becoming the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra.

A regular conductor with the London Symphony and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras, Zhang’s recent highlights include debuts with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, as well as performances with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, BBC NOW at the BBC Proms and Orchestre National de Belgique, where she will appear again this season.

Recent operatic performances include a return to English National Opera conducting *La Bohème* and her debut with Den Norske Opera conducting *La Traviata*. Following Zhang’s hugely successful production of *Nabucco* with Welsh National Opera in 2014, which subsequently transferred to the Savonlinna Festival, she returned 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 and the Beijing and Guangzhou symphony orchestras. A champion for Chinese composers, she conducted Qigang Chen’s *Iris Devoilee* with the BBC NOW and National Centre for the Performing Arts, where she will return in 2017. She led the world premiere of Qigang Chen’s *Luan Tan* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic—a work commissioned by the orchestra—and the West Coast premiere of Tan Dun’s *The Triple Resurrection* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Working with young talented musicians continues to play a major part in Zhang’s life. She has been Artistic Director of the NJO Dutch Orchestra and Ensemble Academy since 2011, and last summer she made her 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.

Learn more about Zhang at www.njsymphony.org/zhang.

WWFM THE CLASSICAL NETWORK

WWFM The Classical Network began broadcasting on September 6, 1982, and is a full-time classical music station serving New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania via FM, Philadelphia via HD Radio and worldwide via live internet stream at www.wwfm.org.

WWFM is licensed to Mercer County Community College and is located on the college's West Windsor Campus. The Classical Network is New Jersey's only full-time classical music station providing programming 24 hours each day. The Classical Network is at the forefront of live concert broadcasts engaged with music partners across the tri-state region. The Classical Network's unique and proprietary programming covers all periods and styles of classical music including educational and adventurous programs that highlight today's vibrant and changing classical music scene. WWFM The Classical Network was the 2014 recipient of the ASCAP Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award for broadcasting.

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 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 or email information@njsymphony.org. Tickets are available for purchase by phone at 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.

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