

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Xian Zhang present season finale of Brahms and Shostakovich



**Renowned pianist Yefim Bronfman performs Brahms’
Second Piano Concerto**

Program features Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony

**Four performances close Zhang’s critically acclaimed first season
as NJSO Music Director**

**NJSO Accents include BBQ on the patio at Count Basie Theatre,
Prelude Performance at NJPAC**

Thu, June 8, at NJPAC in Newark

Fri, June 9, at NJPAC in Newark

Sat, June 10, at Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank

Sun, June 11, at NJPAC in Newark

NEWARK, NJ (May 4, 2017)—Music Director Xian Zhang and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra present the 2016–17 classical season finale, June 8–11 in Newark and Red Bank. Pianist Yefim Bronfman, described by the *Chicago Tribune* as “a marvel of digital dexterity, warmly romantic sentiment and jaw-dropping bravura,” performs Brahms’ Second Piano Concerto. Zhang closes her acclaimed first season as the NJSO’s artistic leader with Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony.

Performances take place on Thursday, June 8, at 1:30 pm; Friday, June 9, at 8 pm and Sunday, June 11, at 3 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark; and Saturday, June 10, at 8 pm at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank.

“Fima [Bronfman] has such power,” Zhang says, “and I am looking forward to finishing the season with him with Brahms’ Second Piano Concerto. Shostakovich’s Fifth is a fantastic symphony. It’s one of those symphonies that conductors love and orchestras love [to play]. It’s really fulfilling.”

NJSO Accent events include a pre-concert BBQ party on the Count Basie Theatre's private patio on June 10. Rumson's Surf BBQ will provide pulled pork, ribs, Oaxaca chicken and sides. A special all-inclusive package includes concert tickets, dinner and a drink; advance registrations are required by June 2. Additional information is available at www.njsymphony.org/bbqparty.

The Anne Lieberon Ensemble—a string quartet from the NJSO Academy Orchestra, coached by NJSO violist Martin Anderson—gives a Prelude Performance in NJPAC's Prudential Hall lobby one hour before the concert on June 11.

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).

A special all-inclusive package for the June 10 BBQ Party on the Patio includes concert tickets, dinner and a drink for \$85 per person (\$120 value). Packages are available for purchase online or by phone using promo code BBQPARTY. Patrons who already have June 10 concert tickets can add on BBQ party tickets for \$55 by calling 1.800.ALLEGRO.

THE PROGRAM

Season Finale with Zhang and Bronfman

Thursday, June 8, at 1:30 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Friday, June 9, at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Saturday, June 10, at 8 pm | Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank

Sunday, June 11, at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Xian Zhang, conductor

Yefim Bronfman, piano

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 2

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 5

Full concert information is available at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/season-finale-with-zhang-bronfman.

The June 10 & 11 performances are generously sponsored by Bank of America.

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.

Party on the Patio—Sat, June 10, before the concert

Enjoy a tasty BBQ dinner with friends and other concertgoers, served on Count Basie Theatre's beautiful outdoor covered patio! Additional charge; reservations required by June 2. [More information](#).

Prelude Performance—Sun, June 11, before the concert

Enjoy live music in the lobby, performed by the NJSO Academy Orchestra's Anne Lieberon Ensemble. Free for ticketholders.

NJSO Accents in Newark are generously sponsored by the Prudential Foundation.

THE ARTISTS

Xian Zhang, conductor

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 Cleveland Orchestra, 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. Zhang studied at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music’s DMA orchestral conducting program with Mark Gibson for two years and later served on its conducting faculty before joining the New York Philharmonic. 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.

Yefim Bronfman, piano

Internationally recognized as one of today’s most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors and recital series. His commanding technique, power and exceptional lyrical gifts are consistently acknowledged by the press and audiences alike.

Bronfman works regularly with world-renowned conductors and orchestras. Acknowledging a relationship of more than 30 years, he opened the Israel Philharmonic’s season with Zubin Mehta last October and participated in the orchestra’s 80th birthday celebrations in December.

This season, he returns to the orchestras of New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, Houston and Dallas, among many others. A cross-country series of recitals culminated this spring with a program at Carnegie Hall.

In Europe, he toured extensively in recital and with orchestras in Rome, Vienna, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Brussels, Bologna, Milan and Leipzig. Continuing his long-standing partnership with Pinchas Zukerman, the duo appeared in Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Milan, Naples, Barcelona and Berlin.

Bronfman was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize in 1991, and the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in piano performance from Northwestern University in 2010. He has been nominated for three Grammy® Awards, one of which he won with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for their recording of the three Bartók piano concertos.

Born in the Soviet Union, Bronfman immigrated with his family to Israel, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the US, he studied at The Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music and the Curtis Institute of Music, under Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher and Rudolf Serkin. He is a 2015 recipient of an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.

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). NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at nearly 200 community events in a variety of settings through the NJSO’s REACH (Resources for Education and Community Harmony) program. The Orchestra’s ECE programs annually serve more than 60,000 New Jerseyans in nearly 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.

PRESS CONTACT

Victoria McCabe, NJSO Senior Manager of Public Relations & Communications | 973.735.1715 | vmccabe@njsymphony.org

###