

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Broadway, film and TV star Jason Alexander headlines performances of song and comedy with the NJSO**



**World renowned as George Costanza on ‘Seinfeld,’ the Tony Award winner sings and retells his journey to and on the Broadway stage**

**Spring into Music Gala is Apr 14 at NJPAC in Newark**

***State Theatre New Jersey co-presents New Brunswick performance***

**Sat, Apr 14, at NJPAC in Newark**

**Sun, Apr 15, at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick**

NEWARK, NJ—Tony Award-winning Broadway, film and television star Jason Alexander—world renowned as the iconic George Costanza on “Seinfeld”—headlines performances of song and comedy with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, April 14–15 in Newark and New Brunswick.

The award-winning Broadway song-and-dance man’s concerts with the Orchestra bring a hilarious re-telling of his journey to and on the Broadway stage, featuring a program of great music from the theater along with comedy and audience interaction.

Performances take place on Saturday, April 14, at 8 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and Sunday, April 15, at 3 pm at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick. State Theatre New Jersey co-presents the April 15 performance.

Alexander has won praise for his orchestral performances. *The Star-Telegram* writes: “Alexander not only has an exceptional voice and a thoroughly honed gift for selling a song, but he can also be surprisingly light on his feet and work a room with an ease that any standup comedian would envy.”

A highlight of the orchestral program is a medley of Bruce Springsteen hits that the NJSO debuted at parks concerts last summer.

At free NJSO Accent events before each concert, audiences can enjoy a performance from Casual Harmony, Rutgers University’s award-winning all-male a cappella group.

The NJSO’s annual Spring into Music Gala at NJPAC includes the April 14 performance, plus pre-concert cocktails, dinner and a silent auction.

### **CONCERT PROGRAM**

#### **Jason Alexander: The Broadway Boy**

Sat, Apr 14, at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Sun, Apr 15, at 3 pm | State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick

Jason Alexander

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

### **NJSO ACCENTS:**

#### **Prelude Performance—Sat, Apr 14 at 7 pm and Sun, Apr 15 at 2 pm**

It’s *Pitch Perfect* come to life! Enjoy an entertaining pre-concert set from Casual Harmony, Rutgers University’s award-winning all-male *a cappella* group.

*The April 15 performance is presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*

Full concert information is available at [www.njsymphony.org/jasonalexander](http://www.njsymphony.org/jasonalexander).

### **SPRING INTO MUSIC GALA**

The Orchestra hosts its 2018 Spring into Music Gala on Saturday, April 14, at NJPAC in Newark. Gala ticket packages include the NJSO performance, plus pre-concert cocktails, dinner and a silent auction. The gala’s honoree is Merck & Co., Inc., Chairman of the Board and CEO Kenneth C. Frazier.

More information about the gala event is available at [www.njsymphony.org/spring](http://www.njsymphony.org/spring).

*The NJSO gratefully acknowledges honoree sponsor Merck & Co., Inc., and dinner sponsor Northern Trust.*

### **ARTIST BIOS**

#### **Jason Alexander**

Though best known for his award-winning, nine year stint as the now iconic George Costanza of television’s “Seinfeld,” Jason Alexander has achieved international recognition for a career noted for its extraordinary diversity. Aside from his performances on stage, screen and television, he has worked extensively as a writer, composer, director, producer and teacher of acting. In between all that, he has also become an award-winning magician, a notorious poker player and a respected advocate on social and political issues.

Alexander began his professional career as a young teenager doing commercials for television and radio. While still in college, his desire to work as a stage actor in New York came to be with his debut in the original Broadway cast of the Hal Prince/Stephen Sondheim musical *Merrily We Roll Along*. He continued starring on Broadway in the original casts of Kander and Ebb’s *The Rink*, Neil Simon’s *Broadway Bound*, Rupert Holmes’ *Accomplice* and his Tony Award-winning

performance in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*. Alexander also authored the libretto for that show which went on to win the Tony Award for Best Musical. After moving to LA, Alexander continued working in the theater, notably serving as the artistic director for the Reprise Theatre Company and starring in the hit West Coast production of Mel Brook's *The Producers* with Martin Short. In 2015, Alexander returned to Broadway to star in the Larry David comedy *Fish in the Dark* and recently appeared in John Patrick Shanley's *The Portuguese Kid* at Manhattan Theatre Club.

His many films include *Pretty Woman*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Love Valor Compassion*, *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, *Dunston Checks In*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Shallow Hal*. In addition, he directed the feature films *For Better or Worse* and *Just Looking*. He is also a distinguished television director, overseeing episodes of "Seinfeld," "Til Death," "Everybody Hates Chris," "Mike and Molly," "Criminal Minds" and "Franklin and Bash." He won the American Country Music Award for his direction of Brad Paisley's video "Online," and he has helmed a number of stage productions including *The God of Hell* at the Geffen Playhouse, *Broadway Bound* at the Odyssey, an updated revival of *Damn Yankees* and *The Fantasticks*, as well as *Sunday in the Park with George* for Reprise and most recently the world premiere of *Windfall* by Scooter Pietsch for the Arkansas Repertory Theater.

Aside from "Seinfeld," Alexander has starred and guested in shows including "The Grinder," "Drunk History," "Friends," "Two and a Half Men," "The New Adventures of Old Christine," "Criminal Minds," "Monk," "Franklin and Bash," "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Bob Patterson" and "Listen Up." He was recently seen in "Hit the Road" a show he co-created, executive produced and starred in on DirecTV's Audience network. He also starred in the television films of *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Cinderella*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Man Who Saved Xmas*. Additionally, his voice has been heard most notably in "Duckman," "The Cleveland Show," "American Dad," "Tom and Jerry" and the children's animated series "Kody Kapow."

For his depiction of George on "Seinfeld," Alexander garnered six Emmy nominations, four Golden Globe nominations, an American Television Award and two American Comedy Awards. He won two Screen Actors Guild Awards as the best actor in a television comedy despite playing a supporting role, and in 2012 he was honored to receive the "Julie Harris Award for Lifetime Achievement" from The Actors Fund.

Alexander tours the country and the world performing his one-man show, "As Long As You're Asking, a Conversation with Jason Alexander," which contains a mix of comedy, music and surprising conversation. He can also be seen in his much-heralded salute to Broadway musicals with some of the finest symphony orchestras throughout the United States. You can stay in touch with Alexander via Twitter (@JasonAlexander).

### **Bob Bernhardt, conductor**

With 31 years of experience as a music director, 35 years as a pops conductor and 33 years in the opera pit, Bob Bernhardt brings a unique perspective and ability each time he is on the podium.

In 2015, Bernhardt was named principal pops conductor of the Grand Rapids Symphony. This season is his 21st year as principal pops conductor of the Louisville Orchestra, as well as his 36th consecutive year with the orchestra. It's also his sixth season as music director emeritus and principal pops conductor of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, where he was music director for 19 seasons.

In the world of pops, he has worked with scores of stars from Broadway, rock & roll and the American Songbook, from Brian Stokes Mitchell and Kelli O'Hara to the Beach Boys and Wynonna to Jason Alexander and Megan Hilty.

He received his master's degree with honors from the University of Southern California's School of Music, studying primarily with Daniel Lewis. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Union College in Schenectady, NY.

### **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.

Music Director Xian Zhang—a “dynamic podium presence” *The New York Times* has praised for her “technical abilities, musicianship and maturity”—continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO. 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 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, 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 community events in a variety of settings statewide.

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.

*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.*

### **STATE THEATRE NEW JERSEY**

State Theatre New Jersey—creating extraordinary experiences through the power of live performance. The theater exists to enrich people’s lives, contribute to a vital urban environment and build future audiences by presenting the finest performing artists and entertainers and fostering lifetime appreciation for the performing arts through education. State Theatre New Jersey’s programs are made possible in part by funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and contributions from numerous corporations, foundations and individuals.

### **PRESS CONTACT**

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