

NJSO presents Spring into Music Gala with performance by Jason Alexander



**Gala honors Kenneth C. Frazier, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Merck & Co., Inc.
Sat, Apr 14, at NJPAC in Newark**

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra hosts its 2018 Spring into Music Gala on Saturday, April 14, at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. Tony Award-winning Broadway, film and television star Jason Alexander—world renowned as the iconic George Costanza on “Seinfeld”—headlines a performance of song and comedy at an event that includes cocktails, dinner and a silent auction. The gala’s honoree is Merck & Co., Inc., Chairman of the Board and CEO Kenneth C. Frazier.

The event begins with a cocktail reception and silent auction at 4:30 pm, followed by a gala dinner at 6 pm. The evening concludes with “Jason Alexander: The Broadway Boy”—the NJSO’s 8 pm performance.

The award-winning Broadway song-and-dance man’s concert with the Orchestra brings 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.

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.

All proceeds from the gala event will support the NJSO as it enriches lives through its artistic, music education and community engagement programs.

More information about the gala is available at www.njsymphony.org/spring. More information about the concert program is available at www.njsymphony.org/jasonalexander.

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

EVENT PACKAGES

Silver Event Ticket—\$2,500

Admission for one to the cocktail reception, silent auction, dinner and performance; black and white quarter page ad in the event journal. (*Includes a \$2,200 charitable donation.*)

Bronze Event Ticket—\$1,250

Admission for one to the cocktail reception, silent auction, dinner and performance. (*Includes a \$950 charitable donation.*)

CONCERT PROGRAM

Jason Alexander: The Broadway Boy

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

Jason Alexander

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

The NJSO presents an additional performance of this concert program on Sunday, April 15, at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey. Full concert information is available at www.njsymphony.org/jasonalexander.

KENNETH C. FRAZIER

Kenneth C. Frazier is Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Merck & Co., Inc. Under Frazier's leadership, Merck is delivering innovative lifesaving medicines and vaccines as well as long-term and sustainable value to its multiple stakeholders. Frazier has substantially increased Merck's investment in research, including early research, while refocusing the organization on the launch and growth of key products that provide benefit to society. He has also led the formation of philanthropic and other initiatives that build on Merck's 125-year-plus legacy.

Frazier joined the company in 1992 as Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of the company's joint venture with Astra AB. He became Vice President of Public Affairs in 1994, and in 1997 was also named Assistant General Counsel. In 1999, Frazier was promoted to General Counsel of Merck. From 2007 to 2010, he served as President of Global Human Health, Merck's sales and marketing division. In 2010, Frazier became President of Merck. He was appointed CEO and a member of Merck's Board of Directors in January 2011 and became Chairman of the Board in December 2011.

Prior to joining Merck, Frazier was a partner with the Philadelphia law firm of Drinker Biddle & Reath. He sits on the boards of PhRMA, Weill Cornell Medicine, Exxon Mobil Corporation and Cornerstone Christian Academy in Philadelphia. He also is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The Business Council, Council of the American Law Institute and American Bar Association.

Frazier received his bachelor's degree from The Pennsylvania State University and holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

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).

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, currently led by José Luis Domínguez; 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 through the NJSO Community Partners Program.

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.

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