

## **NJSO to premiere Youth Orchestras student composition at Spring into Music Gala on May 12**

- VIP pre-show party for gala supporters offers interactive virtual experience with NJSO musicians and special guests, appetizer demo with Iachetti's Kitchen in Glen Rock
- José Luis Domínguez conducts NJSO gala concert open to the public, featuring world premiere of *The Enchanted Forest*—a work NJSO Youth Orchestras students composed through creative composition project
- NJSO Youth Orchestras' Henry Lewis Concerto Competition winner Hannah Lee performs Mozart
- Concert includes chamber performances by Youth Orchestras ensembles, special guest appearances and a signature cocktail demonstration from Newark's All Points West Distillery
- Online auction (May 3–12) offers items from restaurant gift cards to vacation getaways
- Gala honors BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company)
- Gala honorees include NJSO musicians and founding Youth Orchestras coaches Martin Andersen and Robert Wagner
- [njsymphony.org/springintomusic](http://njsymphony.org/springintomusic)

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra celebrates the 30th anniversary of the NJSO Youth Orchestras and highlights the program's talented students at the virtual Spring into Music Gala on May 12. The event features a free NJSO concert available to the public and a VIP pre-show party for gala supporters.

In the 7:30 pm concert, the Orchestra gives the world premiere of *The Enchanted Forest*—a piece composed by Youth Orchestras students through a creative composition project—and showcases concerto competition winner Hannah Lee, an East Brunswick 12th grader, in the Allegro maestoso from Mozart's Flute Concerto in G Major, K. 313. NJSO Youth Orchestras Artistic Director José Luis Domínguez conducts.

The program also includes chamber performances by the Youth Orchestras' Anne Lieberman Ensemble (with NJSO Music Director Xian Zhang on piano) and Curtland E. Fields Ensemble, plus special guest appearances and a signature cocktail demonstration from Newark's All Points West Distillery.

The concert will be available on demand at [njsymphony.org/springintomusic](http://njsymphony.org/springintomusic) and on the NJSO's YouTube channel beginning at 7:30 pm.

*The Enchanted Forest* grew out of a season-long NJSO Youth Orchestras creative composition project in which all students collaborated in small groups to explore their own musical voices and compose new works drawing from all the genres that inspire them. NJSO musician coaches guided each group, and Domínguez orchestrated and arranged the works.

Domínguez says: "The fact that the professional orchestra approached me with the idea to perform one of the student pieces sends such a powerful message about the kind of institution I am privileged and grateful to be a part of. The NJSO created an entire concert for this composition by our students and for our soloist, Hannah. The professional orchestra, the hall, the scores, the lights, the cameras—so many people dedicated so much work to these students' ideas. That is touching beyond description. That is unforgettable."

Self-dubbed the Chromatic Creators, the young composers who teamed up to pen *The Enchanted Forest* include Ameya Srinivasan (seventh grade, Edison), Amy Zarebczan (11th grade, Passaic), Ashita Birla (10th grade, Jersey City), Kevin

Yang (sixth grade, Edison), Natalie Sokolov (ninth grade, Holmdel), Samantha Huerta (10th grade, Wayne). NJSO flutist and piccolo player Kathleen Nester coached the group.

Birla says: “Composing an original piece by collaborating with my peers in the Chromatic Creators was an experience of a lifetime. Samantha, Natalie, Kevin, Ameya, Amy and I brought our different backgrounds and perspectives to paint a collective, beautiful story. Ms. Nester and Maestro Domínguez guided us throughout the exciting process by encouraging our creative ideas and transforming our melodies into orchestral music. When I heard that the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra would be playing *The Enchanted Forest*, it felt surreal. I was amazed and honored to hear that our piece would come to life at the hands of accomplished musicians. It inspires me to continue composing and playing violin to express my voice through music.”

The winner of the annual NJSO Youth Orchestras’ Henry Lewis Concerto Competition traditionally gives a solo performance with the Youth Orchestras’ most advanced orchestra at its annual spring concert. Lee won the 2020 competition, but the Youth Orchestras’ spring concert was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the NJSO invited her to perform with the professional orchestra for this year’s gala.

“I am so thankful that in spite of the pandemic I had a chance to perform with the NJSO. It was such an honor,” Lee says. “It still feels like a dream that I performed, and I’ll definitely feel that way watching the performance as well!”

“Hannah gave such a professional, musical performance. She has a brilliant future with the flute,” Domínguez says. “I can only imagine how encouraged she must feel as she embarks on her path towards a professional future.”

A 7 pm VIP pre-show party offers opportunities for gala supporters to virtually mingle with NJSO musicians and special guests. Iachetti’s Kitchen in Glen Rock will demonstrate how to make a delicious appetizer to savor.

The Spring into Music Gala online auction, open from May 3–12, offers items from restaurant gift cards to vacation getaways.

The gala honorees are BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a longtime NJSO Youth Orchestras funder, as well as NJSO musicians and founding Youth Orchestras coaches Martin Andersen and Robert Wagner. Michelle Merchant, an NJSO supporter and NJSO Youth Orchestras parent, and Dr. Philip Neches, an NJSO trustee and Amadeus Circle leader, co-chair the event.

Opportunities to support the gala start at \$100. For more information, visit [njsymphony.org/springintomusic](https://njsymphony.org/springintomusic).

NJSO President & CEO Gabriel van Aalst says: “We celebrate a major anniversary in the life of the NJSO Youth Orchestras at an extraordinary time. For 30 years, this program has been a cornerstone of our educational offerings, giving students—and particularly Newark-area instrumentalists—unparalleled opportunities to learn from the professional musicians of the NJSO and to perform in a variety of ensemble settings. The students’ triumphs in the past year—from virtual learning and performances to the impressive new works they have composed—are an incredible testament to their talent and perseverance, and we are proud to showcase the students at this gala.”

NJSO Music Director Xian Zhang says: “This gala concert is a true showcase for the incredible achievements of the NJSO Youth Orchestras students. The youth orchestras are so important for the musical lives of these young musicians, and this program is so meaningful to all of us at the NJSO. Our musicians have a deep love for coaching and working with students, and the program has reached new heights under the leadership of José Luis Domínguez. I am thrilled to see these young musicians blossoming and sharing their own musical voices.”

Spring into Music is part of NJSO Virtual 20–21, the Orchestra’s digital season. For more information, visit [njsymphony.org/virtual](https://njsymphony.org/virtual).

## Spring into Music Gala

### Virtual VIP Pre-Show Party | Exclusive to Gala Supporters

Wed, May 12, at 7 pm on Zoom

### Gala Concert | Free to the Public

Wed, May 12, at 7:30 pm

José Luis Domínguez, conductor

Hannah Lee, flute

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

**MOZART** Allegro maestoso from Flute Concerto in G Major, K. 313

**CHROMATIC CREATORS OF THE NJSO YOUTH ORCHESTRAS** *The Enchanted Forest*

Anne Lieberman Ensemble

Xian Zhang, piano

**DVOŘÁK** Allegretto scherzando from Bagatelles, Op. 47

Curtland E. Fields Ensemble

**DAY** "Tango D'amour"

### Online Auction | Open to the Public

May 3–12

Our online auction offers fabulous items for everyone—from restaurant gift cards to vacation getaways.

*Gala Underwriting Sponsor: BD*

*NJSO Youth Orchestras 30th anniversary season sponsor: M&T Bank*

*Diamond Sponsor: Merck*

*Gold Sponsors: PNC Bank, PSEG*

[njsymphony.org/springintomusic](https://njsymphony.org/springintomusic)

### New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra connects with the people and diverse communities of New Jersey through the power of live symphonic music to inspire, entertain and educate. Internationally renowned Music Director Xian Zhang has garnered critical acclaim on the podium and has deepened the NJSO's commitment to presenting diverse voices that reflect the communities the Orchestra serves.

The NJSO embraces its legacy as a statewide orchestra through mainstage and chamber performances at venues across New Jersey, as well as partnerships with fellow Garden State arts organizations, universities and civic organizations. The Orchestra's education and community engagement programs promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NJSO has made virtual performances and educational online programs available for free, reaching more than 10 million people across the Orchestra's digital channels. NJSO Concert Films pair world-class NJSO performances with stunning imagery of the people and cityscapes of New Jersey. The NJSO has presented innovative programs with fellow arts organizations, community ensembles and statewide partners. Musicians perform solo and chamber works from iconic New Jersey locations in NJSO Everywhere. NJSO at Home spotlights intimate at-home performances, instrument demonstrations, educational videos and hours of concert recordings.

The NJSO Youth Orchestras have not only continued virtual instruction but have introduced an entirely new dimension to the program. Students are working together on a yearlong creative composition project—a uniquely engaging

opportunity for students to explore their own musical voices and shape new works that draw from all the genres that inspire them.

The Orchestra's online hub for free musical content is [njsymphony.org/virtual](https://njsymphony.org/virtual).

**Connect with Us:**

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Email: [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org)

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