

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Jersey Symphony, Celebrating its Centennial Season, and Northern New Jersey Musicians Guild Announce Five-year Musicians Contract Agreement

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Board of Trustees and Northern New Jersey Musicians Guild, Local 16-248 of the American Federation of Musicians, have ratified a five-year contract agreement. The agreement comes at the start of the Symphony's Centennial Season and on the heels of [two Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards](#) for New Jersey Symphony concert films produced during the pandemic. The agreement between the New Jersey Symphony and the musicians union is retroactive to September 1, 2022, and runs through August 31, 2027.

New Jersey Symphony President & CEO Gabriel van Aalst says: "This new five-year contract is a terrific reflection of the cooperation and stability that the New Jersey Symphony can be proud of as we celebrate our centennial season, and usher the Symphony into its second century. I'd like to thank the Orchestra Committee, the Union and the musicians of the New Jersey Symphony for their collaborative approach to this process and their continued and steadfast commitment to the future of the Symphony. This new contract, along with the five-year contract recently signed with our music director Xian Zhang, reinforces the Symphony's strong artistic and organizational foundation, from which we can continue to serve the diverse communities of New Jersey."

The Musicians' Orchestra Committee Chair Martin Andersen says: "From the beginning of negotiations in May, the musicians sought a long-term agreement to provide stability as the organization emerges from the pandemic, celebrates its Centennial, and looks forward to a strong future. We are eager to continue our mission of artistic excellence under the leadership of our Music Director, Xian Zhang, with ever greater service to our communities. The Orchestra Committee must also gratefully acknowledge American Federation of Musicians Local 16-248 President Anthony Scally and AFM Negotiator Todd Jelen for their guidance and expertise at the bargaining table."

The President of Local 16-248 of the American Federation of Musicians Anthony Scally says: "Local 16-248 of the American Federation of Musicians was happy to be able to help the Musicians and the Symphony come to an agreement which will foster growth and creativity through the next five years. We applaud the Symphony as they celebrate their 100th anniversary season!"

Under the five-year contract, musician base pay will increase 2 percent during the first year of the agreement, followed by a 3 percent base wage increase in the second, third and fourth years, and a 3.05

percent base wage increase fifth year. The Symphony's season remains at 28 weeks during the current 2022–23 season and expands to its pre-pandemic schedule of 29 weeks beginning in 2023–24.

To further the efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion on the Symphony's stages, the agreement is accompanied by a Letter of Intention to be signed by the Union and the Symphony to address the process and policies surrounding audition procedures, with the goal of drafting new audition language by June 15, 2023, to support a more racially diverse and equitable hiring process.

Underscoring a mutual commitment to providing performances of the highest artistic quality and connecting musicians with communities, the contract also increases scheduling flexibility and defines rehearsal time for education and community engagement services, including performances through the New Jersey Symphony Community Partners program.

New Jersey Symphony

The Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony, celebrating its Centennial Season in 2022–23, is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. We are renewing our deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be new; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of our organization—all to better reflect and serve our vibrant communities. Since 2021, Music Director Xian Zhang has worked together with composer, violinist, educator and social-justice advocate Daniel Bernard Roumain, the orchestra's resident artistic catalyst, to offer programming that connects with diverse communities in Newark and throughout New Jersey.

Internationally renowned Chinese-American conductor Xian Zhang began her tenure as the New Jersey Symphony's current Music Director in 2016. Since her arrival at the New Jersey Symphony, Zhang has revitalized programming with an industry-leading commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in mainstage concerts. The centennial season opened in October with concerts featuring Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with soloist Yefim Bronfman; Jessie Montgomery's *Banner*, Nimbus Dance performing original choreography to Copland's *Appalachian Spring* Suite; Strauss' *Burleske* for Piano and Orchestra with soloist Michelle Cann; Brahms' Fourth Symphony; and Dorothy Chang's *Northern Star*. The centennial season will conclude in June 2023 with Zhang leading the orchestra and violinist Joshua Bell in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and a commissioned world premiere by Daniel Bernard Roumain.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, 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.

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