

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gemma New returns to the New Jersey Symphony to conduct *Symphonie fantastique*

- Program features Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Sarah Gibson's *warp & weft*
- Pianist George Li performs Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
- April 27–30 in Newark, Red Bank and Morristown
- njsymphony.org

NEWARK, NJ– On April 27-30, Gemma New reunites with the New Jersey Symphony to conduct Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* featuring internationally-renowned pianist George Li, and Sarah Gibson's *warp & weft*. Known for her dynamic and engaging performances, New served as both the Assistant Conductor from 2009 to 2013 and then as the Associate Conductor from 2013 to 2016 for the Symphony and was recently appointed Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Marking a turning point in Hector Berlioz's career, *Symphonie fantastique* is a programmatic symphony that tells the story of an artist's dreams of his beloved. The work is known for its innovative and daring use of orchestration, including the use of a large orchestra, two harps and an expanded percussion section.

Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* is a piano concerto known for its beautiful and haunting melodies, which are based on variations of the twenty-fourth and final caprice of Niccolò Paganini's solo violin works. The concerto is divided into 24 variations, each with its own unique character and mood.

Inspired by the art of weaving, Sarah Gibson's *warp & weft* is a stunning exploration of texture and color through the medium of woven wool. The intricate patterns and shifting hues create a sense of movement and depth that draws the viewer into the piece.

Performances take place at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark on April 27 at 1:30 pm, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank on April 29 at 8 pm and at Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown on April 30 at 3 pm. Tickets are available online at njsymphony.org or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

More information is available at <https://www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/fantastique>

Symphonie fantastique

Thursday, April 27, 1:30 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark

Saturday, April 29, 8 pm | Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank

Sunday, April 30, 3 pm | Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown

Gemma New conductor

George Li piano

New Jersey Symphony

Sarah Gibson *warp & weft*

Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*

Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*

The return of past musical leaders of the New Jersey Symphony is generously supported by Dr. Morris and Mrs. Charlotte Tanenbaum.

Gemma New's conducting appearance is supported by Kitty and Dave Hartman.

Gemma New

Sought after for her insightful interpretations and dynamic presence, New Zealand-born Gemma New is the newly appointed Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. New is the recipient of the prestigious 2021 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award.

In New's inaugural season with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, she leads the 2022 Winter Festival with Hilary Hahn and Paul Lewis, Mozart Requiem with Voices New Zealand and contemporary works by New Zealand composers John Psathas, John Rimmer, Tabea Squire and Anthony Ritchie in the orchestra's 75th anniversary season.

In the 2022/23 season, New leads the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Royal Northern Sinfonia. Increasingly in demand in Europe, she leads Ireland's National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, Berner Symphonieorchester, Gävle Symphony, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, Orchestra della Toscana and the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg in the final concert of Mozartwoche 2023. New makes her debuts with the Houston Symphony and Melbourne Symphony in Australia and returns to lead the New Jersey Symphony, Toronto Symphony and the New World Symphony. In June 2023, she returns to St. Louis to lead Opera Theatre of Saint Louis's production of Susannah.

New's work as Music Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic has been committed to deepening the artistic level of the orchestra and expanding its reach into the community. New launched the HPO's first "Intimate and Immersive" concert series, a Family Series and regular side-by-sides with the HPO Youth Orchestra. Her programs present works by core masters such as Beethoven and Mahler, as well as works by today's most active composers from Canada and New Zealand, such as Zosha di Castri, José Evangelista, Salina Fisher and Kevin Lau.

New previously served as Resident Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and as Associate Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony. A former Dudamel Conducting Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gemma New was a 2018 Conducting Fellow at Tanglewood Music Center and Conducting Fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. She studied conducting at the Peabody Institute with Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar.

George Li

Since winning the Silver Medal at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition, George Li has rapidly established a major international reputation and performs regularly with some of the world's leading orchestras and conductors. Highlights for the 2022–2023 season include concerto engagements with The Cleveland Orchestra; Dallas, Detroit, Kansas City, New Jersey and Indianapolis Symphonies; and the Vienna Radio Symphony and Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège. In recital, Li returns to Carnegie Hall and appears in El Cajon, Santa Rosa, and Carmel, Richmond, New Orleans, Rochester, Middlebury, Williamstown and Chapel Hill.

Recent orchestral highlights include performances with the New York, Los Angeles, London, Rotterdam, Oslo, St. Petersburg and Buffalo Philharmonics; the San Francisco, Tokyo, Frankfurt Radio, Sydney, Nashville, New World, North Carolina, Valencia, Montreal and Baltimore Symphonies; as well as the Philharmonia, DSO Berlin and Orchestre National de Lyon.

George Li is an exclusive Warner Classics recording artist, His debut recital album released in October 2017 was recorded live from the Mariinsky. His second recording for the label features Liszt solo works and Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1. which was recorded live with Vasily Petrenko and the London Philharmonic and was released in October 2019.

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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