

# NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## New Jersey Symphony's Season Finale with Joshua Bell

- World premiere of Daniel Bernard Roumain's *Farah (Joy)* for Voice and Orchestra featuring vocalist Becky Bass
- Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell plays Bruch's First Violin Concerto
- Program to conclude with Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*
- Music Director Xian Zhang conducts
- June 9–11 in Newark and Red Bank
- [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org)

NEWARK, NJ – Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell returns to perform Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1 with the New Jersey Symphony June 9–11 led by Music Director Xian Zhang. The program also features the world premiere of Daniel Bernard Roumain's *Farah (Joy)* for Voice and Orchestra, as well as Stravinsky's landmark masterpiece *The Rite of Spring*.

Violinist and composer Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR) is a musical polymath who has embraced electronica, jazz, R&B, pop, hip-hop, gospel and traditional African American music, in addition to classical. *Farah (Joy)* is Roumain's second work commissioned by the New Jersey Symphony in his capacity as the orchestra's first Resident Artistic Catalyst. Scored for solo vocalist and orchestra, *Farah (Joy)* is in complete contrast to DBR's commission last year, *Symphonic Scenes and Samples from We Shall Not Be Moved*, a work that centered on protest. Collaborating again with librettist Marc Bamuthi Joseph, DBR chose to focus on joy.

Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell brings life to Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1. With a renowned career spanning decades, Bell has established himself as one of the most celebrated and influential musicians of our time, captivating audiences worldwide with his performances.

The program continues with *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky's energetic and dark tale based on pagan rituals in Russia – a truly groundbreaking piece that has become one of the most important musical works of the 20th century.

Performances take place June 9 at New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark (8 pm), June 10 at Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank (8 pm) and June 11 at New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark (3 pm).

Tickets are available online at [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

More information is available at [njsymphony.org/season-finale-with-joshua-bell](http://njsymphony.org/season-finale-with-joshua-bell)

*Bank of America is proud to sponsor the New Jersey Symphony Resident Artistic Catalyst.*

*Daniel Bernard Roumain's Farah (Joy) for Voice and Orchestra is generously sponsored in part by Judith Musser.*

## Season Finale with Joshua Bell

Friday, June 9, 8 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark

Saturday, June 10, 8 pm | Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank

Sunday, June 11, 3 pm | New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark

**Xian Zhang** conductor

**Joshua Bell** violin

**Becky Bass** vocalist

**New Jersey Symphony**

## New Century Gala

Sunday, June 11, at 1:30 pm

The New Jersey Symphony is excited to present the culminating event of our centennial season and launch of our next century in conjunction with the New Century Gala. The event includes a pre-concert reception, premiere seating for the Season Finale with Joshua Bell concert, a post-concert dinner and Young Professionals after party.

## Classical Conversation

Friday, June 9, at 7 pm and Saturday, June 10, at 7 pm

Enjoy a lively Classical Conversation before the performance. Learn more about the music from New Jersey Symphony musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders.

## Xian Zhang

Grammy Awards-Winning Conductor Xian Zhang's recording with Time for Three and The Philadelphia Orchestra, *Letters for The Future* (on Deutsche Grammophon), won awards in both the Best Contemporary Classical Composition (specifically Kevin Puts' *Contact*), and Best Classical Instrumental Solo categories in 2023.

Xian Zhang is currently in her seventh season as Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony, which marks its 100th anniversary season in 2022–23. She is also Principal Guest Conductor of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Conductor Emeritus of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, following her tenure as their Music Director 2009–16. With New Jersey Symphony, Zhang has commissioned composers such as Wynton Marsalis, Jessie Montgomery, Qigang Chen, Chen Yi, Steven Mackey, Thomas Adès, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Christopher Rouse, Vivian Li, Gary Morgan, Christian McBride and Paquito D'Rivera. She is also responsible for introducing their annual Lunar New Year celebrations.

2022–23 US engagements include Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood Festival and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Xian Zhang remains a popular guest of the Detroit, Montreal, NAC Ottawa and Toronto Symphony orchestras.

Beyond the US, this season Zhang will conduct the Singapore Symphony and Orchestre National de Lille, and has recently conducted the London Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, Spanish National Orchestra, Komische Oper Berlin, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Orchestre National de Lyon and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Zhang previously served as Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales, the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra. In 2002, she won first prize in the Maazel-Vilar Conductor's Competition. She was appointed New York Philharmonic's Assistant Conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming their Associate Conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.

## Daniel Bernard Roumain

Daniel Bernard Roumain's acclaimed work as a composer, performer, educator and activist spans more than two decades, and he has been commissioned by venerable artists and institutions worldwide. "About as omnivorous as a

contemporary artist gets” (*New York Times*), DBR is perhaps the only composer whose collaborations span Philip Glass, Bill T. Jones, Savion Glover and Lady Gaga.

Known for his signature violin sounds infused with myriad electronic, urban and African American music influences, DBR takes his genre-bending music beyond the proscenium. He is a composer of chamber, orchestral and operatic works; has won an Emmy for Outstanding Musical Composition for his collaborations with ESPN; has been featured as keynote performer at technology conferences; and created large-scale, site-specific musical events for public spaces. DBR earned his doctorate in Music Composition from the University of Michigan and is currently Institute Professor and Professor of Practice at Arizona State University.

An avid arts industry leader, DBR serves on the board of directors of the League of American Orchestras, Association of Performing Arts Presenters and Creative Capital and the advisory committee of the Sphinx Organization, and he was co-chair of 2015 and 2016 APAP Conferences.

DBR most recently scored the film *Ailey* (d. Jamila Wignot), which premiered at Sundance Film Festival in 2021. He also created the musical score for *The Just and The Blind*, a collaboration with spoken word artist and writer Marc Bamuthi Joseph, commissioned by Carnegie Hall; and a new work for Washington State University’s Symphonic Band, *Falling Black Into The Sky*, based on the work of the artist James Turrell and his “light work” at Roden Crater.

### **Joshua Bell**

With a career spanning almost four decades, Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell is one of the most celebrated artists of his era. Having performed with virtually every major orchestra in the world, Bell continues to maintain engagements as soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, conductor and Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

Bell’s highlights in the 2022–23 season include leading the Academy of St Martin in the Fields on tour in South America to Sao Paulo, Bogotá, and Montevideo as well in Europe, in Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. Joshua appears in guest performances with the Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Sofia Philharmonic, Franz Schubert Filharmonia as well as a European tour with pianist Peter Dugan. This season in the U.S., Bell will perform alongside the New York Philharmonic; the Houston, San Francisco and New Jersey Symphonies; and the Pittsburgh and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Bell began the violin at age four, and at age twelve, began studies with his mentor, Josef Gingold. At age 14, Bell debuted with Riccardo Muti and The Philadelphia Orchestra, and made his Carnegie Hall debut at age 17 with the St. Louis Symphony. At age 18, Bell signed with his first label, London Decca, and received the Avery Fisher Career Grant. In the years following, Bell has been named 2010 “Instrumentalist of the Year” by Musical America, a 2007 “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum, nominated for six Grammy awards, and received the 2007 Avery Fisher Prize. He has also received the 2003 Indiana Governor’s Arts Award and a Distinguished Alumni Service Award in 1991 from the Jacobs School of Music. In 2000, he was named an “Indiana Living Legend.”

Bell has performed for three American presidents and the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. He participated in former president Barack Obama’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities’ first cultural mission to Cuba, joining Cuban and American musicians on a 2017 Live from Lincoln Center Emmy nominated PBS special, *Joshua Bell: Seasons of Cuba*, celebrating renewed cultural diplomacy between Cuba and the United States.

### **Becky Bass**

Becky Bass is an award-winning vocalist, steel pannist and actor from St. Croix, US Virgin Islands, currently based in Providence, Rhode Island. A graduate of Brown University in 2013 in Theatre Arts & Performance Studies, Bass was awarded the prestigious Weston Award for Excellence in Musical Theatre upon graduation.

Since the start of her career, Bass has performed in many professional theaters across New England as well as in a few films, TV shows and commercials, including a national commercial for Kohl's & Hulu and a regional commercial for AAA. Bass' favorite regional credits include *Once on this Island* (Pray Soloist & Steel Pannist), *Ain't Misbehavin* (Armelia McQueen), *Hairspray* (Motormouth Maybelle), *A Night with Lady Day* (Billie Holiday), *The Sun is Shining: Sissieretta Jones* (Sissieretta Jones), *Aida* (Nehebka) and *Clyde's* at The Huntington. Her film credits include *Julia* (HBOMax), *Kevin Can F\*\*k Himself* (AMC), *Love, Weddings & Other Disasters* (Amazon) and *Space Oddity* directed by Kyra Sedgwick (Amazon).

As a multi-award winner, Bass performs her Caribbean Soul music as a solo artist and with several bands including Zili Musik and Sidy Maiga & Afrimanding. She also lends her talents to RPM Voices, a cross-cultural multi-generational gospel choir.

Bass opened for and performed with international Grammy & Emmy-Award winning artists including Oumou Sangare, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Yellowman, Warrior King and Wyclef Jean. She also performed at the National Gallery of Art's *Jazz in the Garden* concert series, Lincoln Center, Off-Broadway theater LaMaMa and numerous festivals.

### **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 *The Rite of Spring* and a commissioned world premiere by Daniel Bernard Roumain.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or email [information@njsymphony.org](mailto: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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