

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

EMBARGOED UNTIL JANUARY 27 AT 12:01 PM

New Jersey Symphony Announces 2023–24 season

NEWARK, NJ – The New Jersey Symphony is thrilled to announce its 101st season highlighting Music Director Xian Zhang’s ambitious vision to explore the musical heritage of the American orchestral works.

Reflecting on the upcoming season, Zhang notes, “For many years, I’ve dreamed of an American-themed season. We begin with a great kickoff featuring Dvořák’s ‘New World’ Symphony alongside the music of Duke Ellington, William Grant Still and contemporary composer Valerie Coleman. “The American Dream” in January celebrates the music of Leonard Bernstein, and we will also present the world premiere of Rob Kapilow’s *We Came to America* which reflects on the diverse experiences American immigrants. Our season finale will include Daniil Trifonov’s return to perform Gershwin’s Piano Concerto in F, plus music from Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* and a brand-new work by our Resident Artistic Catalyst, Daniel Bernard Roumain. It’s very meaningful as an American orchestra to frame our season around American voices highlighting our musical identity. We are proud that our commitment to diversity and inclusion spotlights many distinct performers, conductors, artists and composers with which we’re so privileged to work.”

President & CEO, Gabriel van Aalst says, “While exploring the works of the entire 2023–24 season, you’ll see what has become the signature of Xian’s artistic leadership of the New Jersey Symphony—exciting programs that blend treasured favorites and new discoveries, thrilling collaborations with arts organizations from across the state, and a commitment to presenting the world’s greatest musicians on our stages. I can’t wait for all of you to join us on our next musical adventure!”

Living Composers, Commissions and Premieres

“One of the most refreshing features of the New Jersey Symphony’s 2023–24 season is our presentation of 12 pieces by 11 living composers, many of whom are women and people of

color” says Zhang. “We’ve commissioned new works from Jessie Montgomery, Daniel Bernard Roumain and Anna Clyne. Plus, we will finally premiere Tyshawn Sorey’s *For Marcos Balter* with Jennifer Koh, which was delayed due to the pandemic. We are also proud to feature music by Kevin Puts, Reena Esmail, Augusta Read Thomas, Gabriela Montero and David Ludwig, among others.”

The symphony embarks on this ambitious lineup starting with Valarie Coleman’s *Umoja* followed by a co-commissioned work by Jessie Montgomery. Time for Three will perform Kevin Puts’ *Contact*, which was nominated for a Grammy for Best Classical Composition. Daniel Bernard Roumain who returns with two pieces—*i am a white person who__black people* and an untitled new work. Rob Kapilow will lead the symphony with the world premiere of his *We Came to America*. The Symphony will also perform two highly anticipated co-commissions; Anna Clyne’s Piano Concerto performed by Jeremy Denk and Tyshawn Sorey’s *For Marco Balter* performed with violinist Jennifer Koh. Xian will lead selections from Augusta Read Thomas’ *Jubilee*, which she premiered with the Juilliard Orchestra in 2010. Gabriela Montero performs her own piece Piano Concerto No. 1, “Latin”. Returning to the stage is David Ludwig’s *NightVision* which the New Jersey Symphony premiered in 2000 when his career was launched. Reena Esmail’s wildly colorful *RE/Member* celebrates the regathering of musicians following the pandemic.

Guest Conductors

“We’re very pleased to welcome a fantastic slate of guest conductors for the New Jersey Symphony’s 2023–24 season, including some debuts. Among them is conductor Ruth Reinhardt, who will be conducting an exciting program featuring Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra. Also debuting on our podium this season is conductor Joseph Young, Music Director of the Berkley Symphony Orchestra. We are thrilled to welcome back conductors our musicians love to work with, including Robert Spano, Jun Märkl, and Markus Stenz,” says Xian Zhang.

Classical Highlights

This season underscores the talents of New Jersey Symphony musicians with some of the world’s most well-known and riveting pieces. “We are thrilled to announce a stellar cast of internationally-renowned soloists including Joshua Bell who leads the orchestra in Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto, Overture to a *Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 4.” says Zhang.

Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9, “From the New World” fittingly kicks off the American-themed season with the piece being inspired by the music of Indigenous and Black people.

In January, violinist Augustin Hadelich returns to perform Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Xian conducts *Pictures at an Exhibition*, accompanied by projections of artwork from The Newark Museum of Art.

Named "the very definition of 'one to watch'" *International Piano* Tom Borrow will take on Mozart's dramatic Piano Concerto No. 24, followed by Tchaikovsky's beloved Symphony No. 5.

The 2023-24 season also features solo turns from New Jersey Symphony musicians. In February, Concertmaster Eric Wyrick will delight audiences with Vivaldi's classic *The Four Seasons*, while Principal Oboe Robert Ingliss will star in Richard Strauss' Oboe Concerto. New Jersey Symphony audiences will also get a rare treat in March—a performance of J.S. Bach's Concerto for Oboe d'amore by Second Oboe and English Horn player Andrew Adelson.

Other highlights of the 2023–24 Classical series include Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, "Eroica," Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and more.

Collaborations and Holiday Traditions

The Symphony triumphantly brings back popular traditions kicking off the holiday season in Princeton and Newark's Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Nicholas McGegan will conduct Handel's incomparable classic *Messiah* joined by long-time symphony collaborator Montclair State University Singers and featuring soprano Sherezade Panthaki, countertenor Key'mon W. Murrah, tenor Thomas Cooley and baritone Tyler Duncan.

Celebrating artists from Newark and beyond, the New Jersey Symphony reprises the Gospel Holiday concert with the New Jersey Symphony Gospel Chorus.

Xian Zhang has invited guest conductor Yue Bao to lead the symphony for the sixth annual Lunar New Year Celebration. Bao will ring in the Year of the Dragon with pianist Tony Siqui Yun.

New Jersey Symphony will collaborate with The Newark Museum of Art. The museum will curate artwork projected during Mussorgsky/Ravel's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The JCC Young People's Chorus @ Thurnauer Young People's Chorus of New York City® will join New Jersey Symphony for our world premiere of Rob Kapilow's *We Came to America*.

Our longtime collaborators Montclair State University Chorale, led by director Heather J. Buchanan, joins New Jersey Symphony in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

Introducing the Discover Series

Inspired by Leonard Bernstein's masterful way of putting young audiences at the center of music-making, the New Jersey Symphony welcomes families to discover what makes a live orchestra concert so special. This interactive concert will feature inside tips, listening cues and fun facts that endeavor to introduce young ones to classical music through Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, "Eroica."

Specialty Concerts

A tribute to the Queen of Soul, Respect: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin features the effervescent Capathia Jenkins and three-time Grammy Award-nominee Ryan Shaw performing iconic hits like "Respect," "Think," "A Natural Woman," "Chain of Fools" and many more.

In the spectacular climactic sixth episode of the Star Wars saga, *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* in Concert, the New Jersey Symphony will be performing John Williams Oscar-winning score live.

The symphony will also perform another iconic John Williams' film, *Jurassic Park*, featuring the epic film with visually stunning imagery and groundbreaking special effects—sheer movie magic 65 million years in the making conducted by Constantine Kitsopoulos.

New Jersey Symphony Everywhere Program

Fulfilling its mission as New Jersey's statewide orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony offers mainstage concert programs in Newark, New Brunswick, Princeton, Red Bank and Morristown. Through the New Jersey Symphony Everywhere program, Symphony musicians perform original chamber music programs at more than 150 community events—many free—for nearly 35,000 young people and adults spanning the 21 counties of the state—in addition to programs presented virtually. The Symphony meets its audiences where they are—in schools, community centers, healthcare facilities, senior living communities, houses of worship, parks and performs a wide variety of music—from classical to Broadway to movie scores. The New Jersey Symphony is proud to be in and of its communities, and to create innovative programs that reflect and resonate with the richly diverse audiences of New Jersey.

Tickets

Classical subscriptions are now on sale for the 2023–24 season. Full information on ticket packages for each series and venue is available at njsymphony.org/subscribe. Subscriptions are available for purchase online at **njsymphony.org/subscribe** or by phone at **1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476)**. Single tickets will go on sale in August.

Season Highlights

- **Premieres & Commissions:** Xian Zhang conducts the world premiere of a New Jersey Symphony commission from Resident Artistic Catalyst Daniel Bernard Roumain (June 7–9); Rob Kapilow conducts the world premiere of *We Came to America, commissioned by the* Thurnauer School of Music at the Kaplan Jewish Community Center on the Palisades (*We Came to America*, January 20–21); Joseph Young conducts Jessie Montgomery’s newest co-commission (October 19–22); Jun Märkl conducts the premiere of Tyshawn Sorey’s co-commission (*For Marcos Balter*, May 4–5); Markus Stenz conducts Anna Clyne’s Piano Concerto (May 17–19).
- **Opening Weekend with Robert Spano and Aaron Diehl:** Aaron Diehl performs Still’s *Out of the Silence* and is joined by his trio on Ellington’s *New World A-Comin’* with Robert Spano at the podium. The Symphony opens the program with a performance of Valerie Coleman’s *Umoja* before closing with Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9, “From the New World” (October 14–15).
- **Season Finale with Daniil Trifonov:** Daniil Trifonov joins Xian Zhang and the Symphony for Gershwin’s Concerto in F. Zhang leads Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture* and the world premiere of a new work by Resident Artistic Catalyst Daniel Bernard Roumain (June 7–9).
- **Contemporary Voices:** Alongside the commissions from Daniel Bernard Roumain and Rob Kapilow and co-commissions by Jessie Montgomery, Anna Clyne and Tyshawn Sorey, the season features music by living composers including Roumain (*I am a white person who __ Black people*, January 12–14), Coleman (*Umoja*, October 14–15), Kevin Puts (*Contact*, November 9–11), Reena Esmail (*RE/Member*, February 22–25), Augusta Read Thomas (Selections from *Jubilee*, March 3–5), David Ludwig (*NightVision*, March 14–17) and Gabriela Montero, with Montero performing her own piece alongside the Symphony (Piano Concerto No. 1, “Latin”, May 30–June 2). Through the New Jersey Symphony Edward T. Cone Composition Institute, the orchestra premieres the work of four emerging composers under the baton of Case Scaglione (July 15, 2023).
- **Star Guest Conductors:** Robert Spano (October 14–15) kicks off the New Jersey Symphony season, with Joseph Young (October 19–22), Ruth Reinhardt (November 9–11), Jun Märkl (May 4–5) and Markus Stenz (May 17–19) joining for select performances.

- **World-Class Soloists:** The season features performances by guest artists including Joshua Bell (Mendelssohn's Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Violin Concerto and Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, November 30–December 3), Aaron Diehl (Still's *Out of the Silence*, October 14–15), Sterling Elliott (R. Schumann's Cello Concerto, October 19–22), Augustin Hadelich (Beethoven's Violin Concerto, January 12–14), Gil Shaham (Chevalier de Saint-Georges' Violin Concerto No. 9 and J.S. Bach's Violin Concerto No. 1, March 22–24), Jennifer Koh (Tyshawn Sorey's *For Marcos Balter*, May 4–5), Gabriela Montero (her own Piano Concerto No. 1, "Latin", May 30–June 2) and Daniil Trifonov (Gershwin's Concerto in F, June 7–9).
- **Collaborations:** Choirs from longtime choral partner Montclair State University join the orchestra for Orff's *Carmina Burana* (March 1–3) and Handel's *Messiah* (December 15–17). The JCC Young People's Chorus @ Thurnauer with the Young People's Chorus of New York City® to perform Rob Kapilow's *We Came to America* with the orchestra (January 20–21). The Symphony welcomes the Aaron Diehl Trio for Ellington's *New World A-Comin'* (October 14–15) and classically trained string trio Time for Three for Kevin Puts' *Contact* (November 9–11). The Newark Museum of Art will curate artwork during the *Pictures at an Exhibition* performances in Red Bank and Newark (January 13–14).
- **Iconic Films Live to Picture:** The Symphony performs *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* (April 4–7) and *Jurassic Park* (October 27–29). State Theatre New Jersey co-presents the October 29 and April 7 performances.
- **Cultural Celebrations & Family Concerts:** The Symphony celebrates diverse traditions in family-friendly programs including the orchestra's signature Lunar New Year Celebration (February 3). Family programs include a gospel music-inspired holiday extravaganza (December 9) and discovery of Beethoven's "Eroica" (May 18).
- **Statewide Performances:** The New Jersey Symphony presents classical programming at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank. The Symphony offers film concerts in Newark, New Brunswick, Red Bank and Morristown and presents family programs in Newark.

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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