

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Xian Zhang announce 2019–20 season



'Front & Center': Season highlights artistry of NJSO

2020 Winter Festival features works from ballet and opera, including selections from Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

Opening weekend pairs Holst's *The Planets* and Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Hiraeth* with film

NJSO gives US premiere of Qigang Chen's *La joie de la souffrance* and East-Coast premiere of Christopher Rouse's *Bassoon Concerto*

Artist-in-residence Louis Lortie performs all five Beethoven piano concertos

Zhang leads Lunar New Year Celebration in Newark

Season features major symphonic works from Mahler, Bruckner and Shostakovich

Artistic partnerships include Sphinx Organization, Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Montclair State University Singers and Newark Voices

George Li, Ning Feng, Simon Trpčeski, Inon Barnatan, Christoph König, Nicholas McGegan make return engagements

NJSO performs mainstage productions in six communities across the state

NEWARK, NJ (January 25, 2019)—The artistry of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Xian Zhang is “Front & Center” in the Orchestra’s 2019–20 season, announced today. Classical highlights include a Winter Festival featuring works from the stage—including Wagner’s *The Ring Without Words*, Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* and Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*—performances of co-commissions from Qigang Chen and Christopher Rouse, a weekend of Beethoven’s complete piano concertos, key artistic partnerships with diverse organizations, return engagements by audience-favorite guest artists and solo turns by multiple NJSO musicians.

Fulfilling its mission as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO offers classical series in Newark, New Brunswick, Princeton, Morristown, Red Bank and Englewood, with 14 weeks of subscription classical programs and two family programs. Special concerts in Newark include Handel’s *Messiah* at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart and a Lunar New Year Celebration at NJPAC. 2019–20 pops concerts will be announced at a later date.

Zhang says: “Diverse musical voices are front and center in the 2019–20 season. From the Baroque to modern eras, we feature women composers of the past and present, a Winter Festival of dramatic scores from ballet and opera stages, artists from Europe, Asia and America—plus our own talented NJSO musicians—and young-artist collaborations with the Metropolitan Opera and Sphinx Organization.”

As part of its ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion on stage and in concert programming, the Orchestra’s partnership with the Sphinx Organization brings two Sphinx Competition winners to NJSO stages, and a cultural tradition continues with a festive Lunar New Year Celebration in Newark. The Orchestra highlights the voices of women composers from Clara Schumann (Piano Concerto with Inon Barnatan) to New Jersey resident Sarah Kirkland Snider (*Hiraeth*) and Brooklyn-based Anna Clyne (*Within Her Arms*).

The Opening Weekend program pairs music and film. The Orchestra performs Snider’s *Hiraeth* with a film by Mark DeChiazza; NASA visuals accompany Holst’s masterpiece in *The Planets—An HD Odyssey*. The program opens with Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 1. The NJSO welcomes back the women of Newark Voices, a Newark-based community choir the NJSO established to celebrate the voices of its own communities, for Holst’s *The Planets*.

Artist-in-residence Louis Lortie headlines a special weekend honoring the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth; he performs all five of the composer’s piano concertos across two concert programs. Lortie returns for the NJSO’s season finale, performing Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 24.

In a new collaboration, singers from the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program join the NJSO for a concert performance of scenes from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Showcasing the talent within the Orchestra, several NJSO musicians take center stage as featured soloists. Principal Bassoon Robert Wagner gives the East-Coast premiere of Christopher Rouse’s Bassoon Concerto—a work the NJSO co-commissioned in honor of Wagner’s 40th season with the Orchestra. Concertmaster Eric Wyrick performs Mozart’s Fourth Violin Concerto during the Winter Festival. Assistant Concertmaster Adriana Rosin and Assistant Principal Cello Na-Young Baek join a pair of Sphinx Competition winners for concertos by Vivaldi.

2020 WINTER FESTIVAL

Zhang’s love of music from opera and ballet inspires three weeks of works from the stage in the 2020 Winter Festival. Her handpicked scenes and arias from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* tell the opera’s story, featuring singers from the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. The music is front and center in Wagner’s *The Ring Without Words*, arranged by Zhang’s mentor Lorin Maazel, and Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* provides crowd-pleasing drama in this timeless story of star-crossed lovers.

PREMIERES & COMMISSIONS

Continuing her commitment to introducing new works to NJSO audiences, Zhang conducts the US premiere of Qigang Chen’s *La joie de la souffrance* and the East-Coast premiere of Rouse’s Bassoon Concerto—both NJSO co-commissions.

The season also features several works new to the NJSO, including Snider's *Hiraeth*, Rebel's "Chaos" from *Les éléments*, Clyne's *Within Her Arms*, Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto, Wagner's *The Ring Without Words* arranged by Lorin Maazel, Mason Bates' *Attack Decay Sustain Release* and Mahler's Symphony No. 7.

INSPIRED PRESENTATIONS OF CORE REPERTOIRE

Season highlights include Grieg's Piano Concerto, Brahms' Second Symphony and *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto, Dvořák's Eighth Symphony, Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto, Liszt's Second Piano Concerto, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, Bruckner's Sixth Symphony, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Fifth Symphony and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24.

In honor of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, the NJSO presents all five of the composer's piano concertos, as well as his Second and Third Symphonies.

FEATURED ARTISTS

The 2019–20 season sees the return of audience-favorite guest artists, including pianists Inon Barnatan, George Li and Simon Trpčeski; violinist Ning Feng; mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges and conductors Christoph König and Nicholas McGegan.

Pianist Juho Pohjonen, violinists Simone Porter and Akiko Suwanai and conductors Markus Stenz, Andrey Boreyko, Henrik Nánási and Roderick Cox make their NJSO debuts.

Showcasing its own musicians, the NJSO presents Principal Bassoon Robert Wagner in the East-Coast premiere of Rouse's Bassoon Concerto and Concertmaster Eric Wyrick in Mozart's Fourth Violin Concerto. Associate Concertmaster Adriana Rosin and Assistant Principal Cello Na-Young Baek each perform a Vivaldi double concerto with a Sphinx Competition winner; Rosin also performs Vivaldi's Concerto for Three Violins in F Major, RV 551, with the two Sphinx violinists.

COLLABORATIONS

The NJSO partners with the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program for scenes from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Montclair State University Singers for Handel's *Messiah* and women of Newark Voices for Holst's *The Planets—An HD Odyssey*. In a partnership with the Sphinx Organization, the NJSO welcomes Sphinx competition winners Rubén Rengel and Eduardo Rios for concertos by Vivaldi. The Orchestra brings Handel's *Messiah* to the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, a longtime collaborative partner.

GALA OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATION

Special Opening Night Celebration Gala festivities surround Zhang and the NJSO's October 11 performance of Holst's *The Planets—An HD Odyssey*, Snider's *Hiraeth* and Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 1. Gala packages include a pre-concert cocktail party and post-concert dinner with Zhang, NJSO musicians and special guests at NJPAC in Newark.

FAMILY

The NJSO presents a pair of engaging family programs—*Peter and the Wolf* and a concert of Dvořák's "New World" Symphony and American-inspired music from Florence Price, Leonard Bernstein and more—in the Victoria Theater at NJPAC in Newark. Each concert has two showtimes and features special pre-concert events designed to bring young audiences closer to the music and music makers.

NJSO EDWARD T. CONE COMPOSITION INSTITUTE

The Orchestra continues the NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute—a partnership between the Edward T. Cone Foundation, Princeton University and the NJSO—July 15–20, 2019. Promising emerging composers will have their work rehearsed by the NJSO and guest conductor Cristian Măcelaru, participate in masterclasses with Institute Director Steven Mackey and receive feedback from NJSO musicians. The Institute will provide sessions with industry leaders in publishing, licensing, promotion and music preparation to give participants a foundation for a successful career in composition. It concludes with an NJSO performance of the participants' works on July 20 at Richardson Auditorium on the campus of Princeton University. Learn more at njsymphony.org/institute.


TICKETS

Classical and family subscriptions are now on sale for the 2019–20 season. Full information on ticket packages for each series and venue is available at njsymphony.org/subscribe; subscriptions are available for purchase online or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476). Single tickets will go on sale in August.

2019–20 pops concerts will be announced at a later date.

PRESS KIT

The full 2019–20 press kit—including the season schedule, high-resolution photos and more—is available at njsymphony.org/presskit.



NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: 2019–20 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- **Opening Weekend:** For Opening Weekend, Xian Zhang and the NJSO perform Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Hiraeth* with a film by Mark DeChiazza; NASA visuals accompany Holst's masterpiece in *The Planets—An HD Odyssey*. The program opens with Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 1. The NJSO welcomes back the women of Newark Voices, a Newark-based community choir the NJSO established to celebrate the voices of its own communities, for *The Planets*. Oct 11–13. Special Opening Night Celebration Gala packages include a pre-concert cocktail party and a post-concert gala dinner on Oct 11 at NJPAC in Newark.
- **2020 Winter Festival: Front & Center.** Zhang's love of music from opera and ballet inspires three weeks of works from the stage in the 2020 Winter Festival. Her handpicked scenes and arias from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* tell the opera's story, featuring singers from the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. The music is front and center in Wagner's *The Ring Without Words*, arranged by Lorin Maazel, and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* provides crowd-pleasing drama in this timeless story of star-crossed lovers.

Week I – Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Powerhouse pianist Inon Barnatan makes a stunning case for 19th-century composer Clara Schumann. Xian Zhang's own passion for dance leaps onto center stage as she conducts Prokofiev's dynamic ballet. Jan 3–5.

Week II – Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. *Don Giovanni* is a one-of-a-kind mix of comedy, tragedy and the supernatural, and it's on the shortlist of every opera fan's favorites. Enjoy highlights from Mozart's masterpiece, preceded by music composed for the church and the concert hall. Jan 9–12.

Week III – Wagner's *The Ring Without Words*. If you like your music larger than life, this is your concert. You'll hear Simon Trpčeski's towering talent in Liszt's Second Piano Concerto, and the strength of a massive orchestra in selections from Wagner's epic opera cycle. Jan 17–19.

njsymphony.org/winterfestival

- **Premieres, Commissions & Works New to the NJSO:** Xian Zhang conducts the US premiere of Qigang Chen's *La joie de la souffrance* (Nov 7–10) and the East-Coast premiere of Christopher Rouse's Bassoon Concerto (Mar 26–29)—both NJSO co-commissions. Works new to the NJSO include Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Hiraeth* (Oct 11–13), Rebel's "Chaos" from *Les éléments* (Oct 31–Nov 3), Anna Clyne's *Within Her Arms* (Dec 5–8), Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto (Jan 3–5), Wagner's *The Ring Without Words* arranged by Lorin Maazel (Jan 17–19), Mason Bates' *Attack Decay Sustain Release* (May 15–17) and Mahler's Symphony No. 7 (June 4–7).
- **Collaborations:** The NJSO partners with the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program for scenes from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Jan 9–12), Montclair State University Singers for Handel's *Messiah* (Dec 20–22) and women of Newark Voices for Holst's *The Planets—An HD Odyssey* (Oct 11–13). In a partnership with the Sphinx Organization, the NJSO welcomes Sphinx Competition winners Rubén Rengel and Eduardo Rios for concertos by Vivaldi (May 1–3). The NJSO brings Handel's *Messiah* to the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, a longtime collaborative partner (Dec 22).
- **Beethoven 250:** In honor of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, artist-in-residence Louis Lortie performs all five of the composer's piano concertos across two programs in one weekend (Mar 19–22). The Orchestra also performs Beethoven's Second (May 1–3) and Third (Mar 26–29) Symphonies.
- **Great works of core repertoire:** Highlights include Grieg's Piano Concerto (Oct 31–Nov 3), Brahms' Second Symphony (Oct 31–Nov 3) and *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* (May 1–3), Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto (Dec 5–8), Dvořák's Eighth Symphony (Dec 5–8), Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto (Jan 3–5), Liszt's Second Piano Concerto (Jan 17–19), Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto (Feb 27–Mar 1), Bruckner's Sixth Symphony (Feb 27–Mar 1), Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (May 15–17) and Fifth Symphony (Apr 2–5) and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 (June 4–7).
- **Women composers:** The NJSO performs works by women composers of the past and present, including Sarah Kirkland Snider (*Hiraeth*, Oct 11–13), Anna Clyne (*Within Her Arms*, Dec 5–8) and Clara Schumann (Piano Concerto, Jan 3–5).

- **Statewide performances:** Fulfilling its mission as New Jersey's state orchestra, the NJSO presents classical programming at NJPAC in Newark, State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank and bergenPAC in Englewood. The Orchestra performs pops concerts at NJPAC, State Theatre New Jersey and Count Basie Center for the Arts, presents family concerts and a Lunar New Year Celebration at NJPAC and gives performances of Handel's *Messiah* at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark and Richardson Auditorium in Princeton.
- **NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute:** The Orchestra continues the NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute—a partnership between the Edward T. Cone Foundation, Princeton University and the NJSO—in July 2019. Promising emerging composers will have their work rehearsed by the NJSO and guest conductor Cristian Măcelaru, participate in masterclasses with Institute Director Steven Mackey and receive feedback from NJSO musicians. The Institute will provide sessions with industry leaders in publishing, licensing, promotion and music preparation to give participants a foundation for a successful career in composition. It concludes with an NJSO performance of the participants' works at Richardson Auditorium on the campus of Princeton University. July 15–20.

GUEST AND FEATURED ARTISTS

The NJSO welcomes world-class soloists, rising young virtuosos and gifted players from the Orchestra itself—to headline its concert programs.

Guest artists:

- **Louis Lortie** is 2019–20 artist-in-residence, performing all five of Beethoven's piano concertos (Mar 19–22) and Mozart's 24th Piano Concerto (June 4–7).
- In his 2018 NJSO debut, **Ning Feng** "[let] the music speak for itself," wrote *The Star-Ledger*. "Feng was fearless. He handled the fast scales, the arpeggios, all of the technical hurdles with skill." Feng returns for the US premiere of Qigang Chen's *La joie de la souffrance*. Nov 7–10.
- 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition silver medalist **George Li**—"a major talent to whom it is simply a pleasure to listen" (*Gramophone*) returns for Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. Dec 5–8.
- "One of the most admired pianists of his generation" (*The New York Times*), **Inon Barnatan** opens the 2020 Winter Festival with Clara Schumann's Piano Concerto. Jan 3–5.
- **Simon Trpčeski**, the "wondrously talented" (*The Guardian*) pianist who made his NJSO debut on Xian Zhang's first program after being named NJSO Music Director, returns for Liszt's Second Piano Concerto. Jan 17–19.
- **Juho Pohjonen**, whose Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center recitals drew raves from *The New York Times*, makes his NJSO debut with Grieg's Piano Concerto. Oct 31–Nov 3.
- Praised by *The Times* for her "noble playing, with its rhythmic life taut and rigorous," **Akiko Suwanai** performs Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in her NJSO debut. May 15–17.
- **Roderick Cox**, winner of the 2018 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, has garnered praise for his "ability to wring interesting detail" from familiar pieces (*Star Tribune*). He leads Handel's *Messiah* in his NJSO debut. Dec 20–22.
- After making a splash in his Metropolitan Opera debut, conductor **Henrik Nánási** makes his first NJSO appearance, leading Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta. Apr 2–5.
- Conductor **Andrey Boreyko** "is a Shostakovich expert, and that was obvious from the first minute" (Kultur Radio RBB). He leads Shostakovich's 10th Symphony, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Mason Bates' *Attack Decay Sustain Release*. May 15–17.

NJSO artists:

- Principal Bassoon **Robert Wagner** gives the East-Coast premiere of Christopher Rouse's Bassoon Concerto, a work the NJSO co-commissioned in honor of Wagner's 40th season with the Orchestra. Mar 26–29.
- Concertmaster **Eric Wyrick** performs Mozart's Fourth Violin Concerto. Jan 9–12.
- Assistant Concertmaster **Adriana Rosin** performs Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Violins in B-flat Major, RV 529, with 2018 Sphinx Competition winner Rubén Rengel and Vivaldi's Concerto for Three Violins in F Major, RV 551, with Rengel and 2015 Sphinx Competition winner Eduardo Rios. May 1–3.
- Assistant Principal Cello **Na-Young Baek** performs Vivaldi's Concerto for Violin and Cello in B-flat Major, RV 547, with Rios. May 1–3.

NJSO FAMILY SERIES

The young and the young at heart will enjoy discovering the instruments of the orchestra, great stories told through music and rich orchestral repertoire featured in this magical and interactive series, which the NJSO presents on Saturday afternoons in the Victoria Theater at NJPAC in Newark. *The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey presents the NJSO Family Series.* njsymphony.org/family

- ***Peter and the Wolf***: Join the NJSO and a guest narrator for this timeless fairy tale, in which charming melodies and fantastical characters introduce the different instruments of the orchestra. Nov 16.
- **The 'New World' Symphony & Beyond!** Hear how the rich tapestry of America has inspired music of dizzying diversity—from Dvořák's first encounters with the "New World," to Florence Price, Leonard Bernstein and more. May 9.

Pre-Concert Adventures—specially created interactive programs perfect for the whole family—are an opportunity to learn more about the music, participate in fun activities and play games in the NJPAC lobby an hour before each concert.

NON-SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS

- **Handel's *Messiah***: Do not miss Roderick Cox—one of today's most exciting young American conductors—leading Handel's classic. His choice of soloists and the fantastic Montclair State University Singers are an inspiration. In the rush of the holiday season, set aside time for glorious music that touches the soul. Dec 20–22 at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton and Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark.
- **Lunar New Year Celebration**: Celebrate the Year of the Rat with us! Join Music Director Xian Zhang and the NJSO for a joyful Lunar New Year concert blending Eastern and Western musical traditions—an unmissable celebration of community and culture. The evening begins with a pre-concert festival of entertainment and activities in the Prudential Hall lobby. *Soloists, performers and program details to be announced.* Jan 25 at NJPAC in Newark.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by *The Wall Street Journal*, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence, critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb musicians.

Music Director Xian Zhang—a "dynamic podium presence" *The New York Times* has praised for her "technical abilities, musicianship and maturity"—continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People; NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez; and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners Program.

For more information about the NJSO, visit njsymphony.org or email information@njsymphony.org. Tickets are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's programs are made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, along with many other foundations, corporations and individual donors.

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