

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra launches interactive *Planets* video adventure

- New Jersey Symphony Orchestra musicians guide fans on a virtual mission to Mars
- Educational experience gives participants insight into Holst's *The Planets*
- njsymphony.org/planets

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra has launched an interactive video adventure to explore the planets—and Gustav Holst's *The Planets*—in a virtual experience designed for young music lovers and space enthusiasts and enjoyable for audiences of all ages.

Fans embarking on this virtual mission to Mars start by taking a quiz that determines which planets they will visit on their adventure. They can then watch their personalized journey through the stars. The experience starts at njsymphony.org/planets.

The adventure stars NJSO Assistant Principal Flute/Piccolo Kathleen Nester and violinist James Tsao as the astronauts who accompany participants through the solar system. An NJSO musician greets virtual travelers arriving to each planet, sharing insight into the planet and Holst's musical rendering of it.

Nester says: "The medium of video has given us the perfect platform on which to share our love of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. Connecting the music to mythology and science, this experience gives a closer look at the instruments of the orchestra—and a chance to meet the wonderful and creative musicians of the NJSO. Every musician cast for this series brought their own unique perspective to their role—I was inspired by my colleagues' creativity and commitment to this project."

Musician "tour guides" include violinist JoAnna Farrer, Assistant Principal Bass Alexander Bickard, Principal Flute Bart Feller, Principal Bassoon Robert Wagner, Principal Horn Chris Komer, Principal Tuba Derek Fenstermacher and Principal Percussion David Fein.

Nester provided concept and script, stage direction and costume design. Nester and Feller produced; Marketing & Video Coordinator Dan Graziano edited.

After completing the quiz and experiencing their video journey, audiences can learn more about the planets and listen to concert audio of the NJSO, Music Director Xian Zhang and Newark Voices performing *The Planets*.

"This series can be enjoyed by audiences young and old, and it will spark a desire to hear the NJSO's recording of *The Planets* and to attend our in-person concerts to hear the NJSO musicians perform live," Nester says.

Start the journey at njsymphony.org/planets.

This NJSO adventure is generously sponsored by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra connects with the people and diverse communities of New Jersey through the power of live symphonic music to inspire, entertain and educate. Internationally renowned Music Director Xian Zhang

has garnered critical acclaim on the podium and has deepened the NJSO's commitment to presenting diverse voices that reflect the communities the Orchestra serves.

The NJSO embraces its legacy as a statewide orchestra through mainstage and chamber performances at venues across New Jersey, as well as partnerships with fellow Garden State arts organizations, universities and civic organizations. The Orchestra's education and community engagement programs promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NJSO has made virtual performances and educational online programs available for free, reaching more than 10 million people across the Orchestra's digital channels. NJSO Concert Films pair world-class NJSO performances with stunning imagery of the people and cityscapes of New Jersey. The NJSO has presented innovative programs with fellow arts organizations, community ensembles and statewide partners. Musicians perform solo and chamber works from iconic New Jersey locations in NJSO Everywhere. NJSO at Home spotlights intimate at-home performances, instrument demonstrations, educational videos and hours of concert recordings.

The NJSO Youth Orchestras have not only continued virtual instruction but have introduced an entirely new dimension to the program. Students are working together on a yearlong creative composition project—a uniquely engaging opportunity for students to explore their own musical voices and shape new works that draw from all the genres that inspire them.

The safety of our patrons, musicians and staff is of the utmost importance to the NJSO. Please visit njsymphony.org for constantly updated details focused on attendees' well-being at our performances.

The Orchestra's online hub for free musical content is njsymphony.org/virtual.

Connect with Us:

Website: njsymphony.org

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @NJSymphony

YouTube: [@NewJerseySymphony](https://www.youtube.com/@NewJerseySymphony)

Email: information@njsymphony.org

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