

# NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **New Jersey Symphony Presents Holiday Classic Handel's *Messiah***

Newark, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony will present two performances of the beloved holiday tradition, Handel's *Messiah*, Friday, December 15 at 8 pm, and Sunday, December 17 at 7 pm. The Symphony will perform the entire Oratorio, including Part I (popularly known as the Christmas portion) as well as the familiar 'Hallelujah Chorus.'

The concerts will be conducted by Nicholas McGegan, Music Director Laureate of the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, and Principal Guest Conductor of Capella Savaria in Hungary. With a career spanning more than five decades, McGegan is considered an expert in 18<sup>th</sup>-century music, of which *Messiah* might be the most famous example.

Joining the Symphony and McGegan are a host of guest vocalists, including Sherezade Panthaki, soprano; Key'mon W. Murrah, countertenor; Thomas Cooley, tenor; and Tyler Duncan, baritone. Singing the well-known choral sections are the Montclair State University Singers, under the direction of Heather J. Buchanan.

The performance on Friday, December 15 takes place at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, located on the Princeton University campus, directly across from Palmer Square in downtown Princeton. Preceding the performance, at 7 pm, audiences are invited to join Buchanan and the Montclair State University Singers as they lead a festive singalong of holiday songs and carols, which includes a brief rehearsal of the famous "Hallelujah Chorus."

The Sunday, December 17 performance takes place at Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark. Seating is general admission and priced based on location inside the basilica.

Handel composed the famous oratorio in just 24 days. *Messiah* was premiered in Dublin, Ireland, in April of 1742. It became an annual tradition in London after 1750 and has been performed countless times by orchestras and choruses around the world since.

## **Handel's *Messiah*** **New Jersey Symphony Holiday Tradition**

**Nicholas McGegan** conductor

**Sherezade Panthaki** soprano

**Key'mon W. Murrah** countertenor

**Thomas Cooley** tenor

**Tyler Duncan** baritone

**Montclair State University Singers** | Heather J. Buchanan, director

**New Jersey Symphony**

**Princeton** → Friday, December 15, 8 pm, Richardson Auditorium

**Newark** → Sunday, December 17, 7 pm, Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart

### **Holiday Singalong**

**Princeton** → Friday, December 15, 7 pm, Richardson Auditorium

More information on concerts and tickets: [njsymphony.org/events](https://njsymphony.org/events)

### **New Jersey Symphony**

The Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. The Symphony is renewing its 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 a new experience; 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. In its second century of bringing concerts to the people of New Jersey, the Symphony will present audience favorites in 2023–24 including Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, violinist Joshua Bell leading the orchestra in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and pianist Daniil Trifonov playing Gershwin's Concerto in F. New Jersey Symphony co-commissions include Anna Clyne's *ATLAS*. Composers Rob Kapilow and Daniel Bernard Roumain will present world premieres.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit [www.njsymphony.org](https://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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