

# NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **New Jersey Symphony Presents *Respect: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin* Featuring Capathia Jenkins and Ryan Shaw**

Newark, NJ – The New Jersey Symphony will present a concert dedicated to the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, featuring Capathia Jenkins and three-time GRAMMY® Award-nominee Ryan Shaw, with Lucas Waldin conducting.

Audiences will have four chances to hear the exciting performance of *Respect: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin*, featuring hit songs like “A Natural Woman,” “Chain of Fools,” and the titular “Respect”: Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 7:30 pm at Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown; Friday, February 16, 2024, at 8 pm at Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank; Saturday, February 17, 2024, at 8 pm at New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark; and Sunday, February 18, 2024, at 3 pm at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick.

Franklin, known world-wide as the reigning Queen of Soul, is one of the best-selling musical artists of all time with global sales of more than 75 million records. She also won 18 GRAMMY® Awards out of her 44 nominations. In 1987, she was the first female musical artist inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The show was partially developed by Capathia Jenkins, who is a singer and actor with credits on Broadway and television, as well as a highly regarded concert singer who has appeared with numerous orchestras across the US. She has said of the show, “I do not try to emulate her. But what I do is bring myself to all the material. I think one of the things Aretha did so brilliantly was that no matter what she was singing she was always able to bring her soul and her honesty and her gospel roots to everything.”  
(*Philadelphia Tribune*)

Joining Jenkins on stage is Ryan Shaw, a singer, songwriter and recording artist whose credits include roles on stage in London’s West End and Broadway, along with his GRAMMY® nominations for his albums *This is Ryan Shaw*, *In Between* and Dynotone’s *Real Love*. His latest album, *Imagining Marvin*, includes original songs alongside hits from the legendary Marvin Gaye.

Conductor Lucas Waldin has conducted many orchestras across the US and his native Canada, including The Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Dallas Symphony and Toronto Symphony, among others. He has also collaborated with artists including Carly Rae Jepsen, The Barenaked Ladies and Ben Folds.

## ***Respect: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin***

### **New Jersey Symphony Special Concert – Symphony Celebration**

**Lucas Waldin** conductor

**Capathia Jenkins** vocalist

**Ryan Shaw** vocalist

**New Jersey Symphony**

**Morristown** → Thursday, February 15, 2024, 7:30 pm Mayo Performing Arts Center

**Red Bank** → Friday, February 16, 2024, 8 pm Count Basie Center for the Arts

**Newark** → Saturday, February 17, 2024, 8 pm New Jersey Performing Arts Center

**New Brunswick** → Sunday, February 18, 2024, 3 pm State Theatre New Jersey

*February 18 concert presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.*

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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 Dvorak's "New World"

Symphony, 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 works by internationally-renowned living composers: Anna Clyne's *ATLAS* and Jessie Montgomery's *Snapshots*. Composers Rob Kapilow and Daniel Bernard Roumain will present world premieres.

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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Email: [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org)

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**Press Contact**

Geoffrey Anderson

Vice President of Marketing & External Affairs

New Jersey Symphony

973.735.1713

[ganderson@njsymphony.org](mailto:ganderson@njsymphony.org)

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