

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

2024–25 Full Season Listing

Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene with Renée Fleming

Includes visuals from National Geographic Society! | Season Opening Gala Concert

Newark → Sunday, Oct 6, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Renée Fleming soprano

New Jersey Symphony

A breathtaking start to the 2024–25 season with international superstar Renée Fleming. As fall colors flare, America's most celebrated soprano adds the exquisite hues of her own voice to this concert, inspired by her 2023 GRAMMY Award-winning album, *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene*. Come be immersed in the majesty of nature, as the music will be accompanied by stunning film by the National Geographic Society. This special performance includes an eclectic mix of nature-inspired songs, plus arias by Handel and Puccini, music from *Lord of the Rings* and *Carousel*, contemporary hits by Björk, Kevin Puts and Nico Muhly, and selections by famed film composer Ennio Morricone.

Presented in collaboration with New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Opening Weekend: Xian Conducts *Scheherazade*

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Princeton → Friday, Nov 1, 8 pm

Red Bank → Saturday, Nov 2, 8 pm

Newark → Sunday, Nov 3, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Inon Barnatan piano

New Jersey Symphony

Gabriela Ortiz *Kauyumari*

Mexico's most celebrated composer today created her *Kauyumari* based on an ancient rite of her homeland, which starts with a whisper and becomes a whirling, joyous dance.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Piano Concerto No. 17

Mozart at his sunniest, and pianist Inon Barnatan turns this elegant piece into poetry with his "penetrating musicianship" (*BBC Music*).

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade*

Rimsky-Korsakov's heroine Scheherazade—here in the voice of the solo violin—tells tale after tale of adventure, beginning aboard the pirate Sinbad's storm-tossed ship.

Paquito D'Rivera with New Jersey Symphony

Part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival

Newark → Thursday, Nov 7, 1:30 pm

Newark → Friday, Nov 8, 8 pm

Morristown → Sunday, Nov 10, 3 pm

Carlos Miguel Prieto conductor

Paquito D'Rivera guest artist & co-curator

Paquito D'Rivera Jazz Quintet

Amber Monroe soprano

New Jersey Symphony

Daniel Freiberg *Latin American Chronicles*

Lush and intimate music for D'Rivera's soulful clarinet one moment, and jaw-dropping virtuosity the next.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart/Paquito D'Rivera Adagio on a Mozart Theme

Paquito D'Rivera puts his own signature jazzy swing on this enchanting theme from the middle movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto.

George Gershwin/Paquito D'Rivera Medley for Jazz Quintet and Orchestra

Paquito D'Rivera, his phenomenal Quintet and the New Jersey Symphony spin a medley of Gershwin's unforgettable hits.

Carlos Chávez Symphony No. 2, "Sinfonía India"

Mexico's Chávez scored a global hit with his Second Symphony, based on the power of his country's folk melodies.

Aaron Copland *El Salón México*

One night in Mexico City, Aaron Copland was brought by Carlos Chávez to a dance hall, throbbing with joy. Back home, Copland poured it all into this music.

Arturo Márquez Danzón No. 2

This will ring a bell for “Mozart in the Jungle” fans. Featured in Season Two, Márquez’s Danzón guarantees your feet gotta move.

José Pablo Moncayo *Huapango*

It starts so quietly you may miss it, then becomes a locomotive of delight filled with bright Mexican folk tunes.

The November 7 Relaxed Performance is sponsored by the PSEG Foundation and is promoted in partnership with Best Buddies New Jersey, Lifelong Montclair and the P.G. Chambers School.

The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert **New Jersey Symphony at the Movies**

Morristown → Thursday, Dec 5, 7:30 pm

Red Bank → Friday, Dec 6, 7:30 pm

Newark → Saturday, Dec 7, 3 pm & 7:30 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, Dec 8, 3 pm

Constantine Kitsopoulos conductor

New Jersey Symphony

The New Jersey Symphony presents Disney's *The Muppet Christmas Carol* in Concert featuring a screening of the complete film with the musical score performed live to the film. The Muppets perform Charles Dickens' classic holiday tale, with Kermit the Frog playing Bob Cratchit, the put-upon clerk of stingy Ebenezer Scrooge (Michael Caine), and features many more of your favorite Muppet characters. This special holiday event is fun for the whole family!

Presentation licensed by Disney Concerts.

December 8 performance presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.

A Gospel Holiday

New Jersey Symphony Family Concert

Newark → Saturday, Dec 14, 2 pm – Science Park High School

Gregory D. McDaniel conductor

New Jersey Symphony Gospel Chorus | Gwen Moten, director

New Jersey Symphony

Spotlighting celebrated artists from Newark and beyond, the New Jersey Symphony lauds the power of the first instrument—the human voice—with a gospel music-inspired holiday extravaganza. Come ready to sing, dance and clap along!

Gregory D. McDaniel is the 2024–25 Colton Conducting Fellow, made possible by the generous support of Judy and Stewart Colton.

Handel's *Messiah*

New Jersey Symphony Holiday Tradition

Princeton → Friday, Dec 20, 8 pm - Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

Princeton → Saturday, Dec 21, 8 pm - Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

Newark → Sunday, Dec 22, 7 pm - Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Jeannette Sorrell conductor

Sonya Headlam soprano

John Holiday countertenor

Ed Lyons tenor

Kevin Deas bass-baritone

Montclair State University Singers | Heather J. Buchanan, director

New Jersey Symphony

George Frideric Handel *Messiah*

Spirits will soar at “For Unto Us a Child is Born” and the “Hallelujah Chorus” as well as the treasured arias that make Handel’s *Messiah* the must-hear classic of the holidays. Jeannette Sorrell, who “brings revelations” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) to everything she conducts, leads the New Jersey Symphony and phenomenal Montclair University Singers.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet Plays Ravel

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Newark → Thursday, Jan 9, 1:30 pm

Princeton → Friday, Jan 10, 8 pm

Newark → Saturday, Jan 11, 8 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, Jan 12, 3 pm

Kevin John Edusei conductor

Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

New Jersey Symphony

Donghoon Shin *Of Rats and Men*

Come hear what audiences in London, Helsinki, and Dresden have all thrilled to: music from one of the most imaginative young composers today, Korea's Donghoon Shin.

Maurice Ravel Piano Concerto in G

Ravel's Concerto is both jazzy and touching, and no pianist makes it swing and sing like the incomparable Jean-Yves Thibaudet.

Jean Sibelius Symphony No. 2

A showpiece for virtuoso orchestra, the final moments alone are worth the ticket as the New Jersey Symphony's trumpets blaze forth in glory.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet's appearance is dedicated to the memory of Stanlee and Florence Kissel.

Lunar New Year Celebration with Xian Zhang

Celebration of the Year of the Snake

Newark → Saturday, Jan 25, 7:30 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Min Kwon piano

Michael Fabiano tenor

Peking University Alumni Chorus

Starry Arts Children's Chorus | Rebecca Shen, director

Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team

New Jersey Symphony

Join us for this evening of community and cultural exchange that is wonderful for families and children, as we celebrate the Year of the Snake. Music Director Xian Zhang, pianist Min Kwon, the Peking University Alumni Chorus, the Starry Arts Children's Chorus, and the Edison Chinese School Lion Dance Team all return for this joyous concert—plus a special appearance by opera star Michael Fabiano! Revel in Xian's signature blend of East and West in this celebratory performance, including favorites like *Spring Festival Overture* and "The Red Dragonfly" alongside selections from Puccini's most beloved operas.

Holst's *The Planets*—An HD Odyssey

New Jersey Symphony Classical

New Brunswick → Thursday, Jan 30, 7:30 pm

Newark → Friday, Jan 31, 8 pm

Newark → Saturday, Feb 1, 8 pm

Morristown → Sunday, Feb 2, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Nancy Zhou violin

Montclair State University Prima Voce | Heather J. Buchanan, Director

New Jersey Symphony

Caroline Shaw *The Observatory*

Shaw's luminous concert-opener was inspired by scientists who study the night sky's deepest reaches.

Ralph Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*

Hailed by music lovers everywhere year after year as a desert-island necessity, *The Lark Ascending* is a wonder of flight in sound.

Gustav Holst *The Planets*—An HD Odyssey

While Holst's orchestral spectacular works its magic in the ear, a giant screen over the stage becomes a canvas for NASA's jaw-dropping images. A feast for the soul.

Warner Bros. Discovery presents *Bugs Bunny at the Symphony*

New Jersey Symphony Special Concert | 30th Anniversary Concert

Red Bank → Friday, Feb 14, 8 pm

Newark → Saturday, Feb 15, 8 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, Feb 16, 3 pm

George Daugherty conductor

George Daugherty & David Ka Lik Wong creators

New Jersey Symphony

Bugs Bunny at the Symphony is back! Celebrate **Looney Tunes** and its legendary stars, including Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Sylvester, Wile E. Coyote, Road Runner and of course Bugs Bunny, our very favorite “wascally wabbit.” Enjoy classics including “Baton Bunny,” “The Rabbit of Seville” and “What’s Opera, Doc?” alongside Warner Bros. Discovery 3D theatrical shorts “Rabid Rider,” “Coyote Falls” and “Fur of Flying.” Don’t miss these extraordinary musical scores performed live by the New Jersey Symphony as all the action unfolds on the big screen.

More information on the program is available at www.bugsbunnyatthesymphony.net.

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February 16 performance presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.

Brahms and Chopin

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Newark → Thursday, Feb 20, 1:30 pm

Red Bank → Saturday, Feb 22, 8 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, Feb 23, 3 pm

Christoph König conductor

Tony Siqi Yun piano

New Jersey Symphony

Allison Loggins-Hull *Can You See?*

Originally written for the New Jersey Symphony Chamber Players and now re-written for full orchestra, *Can You See?* is cool and glassy on its surface, but the waters underneath are rolling in this tour-de-force concert opener by the Symphony’s new Resident Artistic Partner.

Frédéric Chopin Piano Concerto No. 1

One of the most astonishing creations of any 19-year-old, Chopin poured beyond-his-years splendor into his First Concerto, and it has stayed an audience favorite around the world for 200 years.

Johannes Brahms Symphony No. 1

A König specialty, Brahms' First was decades in the making—but oh, it became a triumph of drama and soaring lyricism well worth the wait.

***The Firebird* with Xian Zhang**

Featuring Nimbus Dance | New Jersey Symphony Classical

Newark → Friday, Mar 7, 8 pm

Red Bank → Saturday, Mar 8, 8 pm

Newark → Sunday, Mar 9, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Jonathan Spitz cello

Nimbus Dance | Samuel Pott, artistic director & choreographer

New Jersey Symphony

Johann Sebastian Bach Prelude from Cello Suite No. 2

Behold the majesty and wonder of solo Bach, as Principal Cello Jonathan Spitz spins this mesmerizing theme from thin air.

Caroline Shaw *Valencia*

The valencia orange, described as “a thing of nature, yet so complex and extraordinary” inspired this expertly-crafted spring quartet.

Qasim Naqvi *God Docks at Death Harbor* (Piano Quintet Version)

Shimmering chamber music—which Naqvi calls “a vision of our planet years from now...the quiet and peacefulness of a world restoring itself.” The first of Nimbus Dance’s two world premieres in this concert.

Igor Stravinsky Divertimento from *The Fairy’s Kiss*

Stravinsky was one of the 20th century’s musical revolutionaries, but he loved the Romantics like Tchaikovsky, and created this charming and lilting Divertimento after him.

Igor Stravinsky Suite from *The Firebird*

Nimbus Dance joins the Symphony to bring to life the tale of a deathless, tyrannical overlord in battle with a handsome young prince who’s aided by a magical bird with brand-new choreography. *The Firebird* launched the rocket of Stravinsky’s career with one of the most exciting finales in all classical music.

Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Newark → Thursday, Mar 13, 1:30 pm

Princeton → Friday, Mar 14, 8 pm

Newark → Saturday, Mar 15, 8 pm

Morristown → Sunday, Mar 16, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Gregory D. McDaniel conductor

Adam Tandler piano

New Jersey Symphony

Claude Debussy *Clair de Lune*

Debussy's original piano solo, *Clair de Lune*, probably exists in more versions than the Beatles' "Yesterday" and for good reason, as none before or since have captured in music the true magic of moonlight.

Nico Muhly *Sounding* for Piano and Orchestra (New Jersey Symphony Co-Commission)

New York-based pianist Adam Tandler, "currently the hottest pianist on the American contemporary classical scene" (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*), makes his New Jersey Symphony debut in this hymn tune-filled concerto by broadly popular contemporary composer Nico Muhly.

Sergei Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2

Melodies too numerous and beautiful to track—so don't try. Just let this sweeping Romantic symphony, the inspiration for the song "Never Gonna Fall in Love Again," work its magic.

Gregory D. McDaniel is the 2024–25 Colton Conducting Fellow, made possible by the generous support of Judy and Stewart Colton.

Vadim Gluzman Plays Brahms

New Jersey Symphony Classical

New Brunswick → Thursday, Mar 20, 7:30 pm

Red Bank → Saturday, Mar 22, 8 pm

Newark → Sunday, Mar 23, 3 pm

Lina González-Granados conductor

Vadim Gluzman violín

New Jersey Symphony

Robert Schumann Overture, Scherzo and Finale

Bursting with a love of life in the months after his marriage to Clara, Robert Schumann created three fantastic movements—one shy of a full symphony but which stand magnificently on their own.

Gabriela Ortiz *Clara*

A fascinating depiction of the 19th-century composer-pianist Clara Schumann's inner life as imagined by one of Mexico's leading contemporary composers.

Johannes Brahms Violin Concerto

A favorite of New Jersey Symphony audiences, Vadim Gluzman returns with his signature singing tone to play what Brahms began as simply “a few violin passages,” but turned into one of the greatest of all concertos—its tunefulness inspired by his hero Schumann.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Xian Zhang

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Newark → Thursday, Apr 3, 1:30 pm

Newark → Friday, Apr 4, 8 pm

Newark → Saturday, Apr 5, 8 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, Apr 6, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Steven Banks saxophone

Felicia Moore soprano

Kelley O'Connor mezzo-soprano

Issachah Savage tenor

Reginald Smith Jr. baritone

Montclair State University Chorale | Heather J. Buchanan, Director

New Jersey Symphony

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin*

A lavish ball scene, the dashing hero and heroine twirling in splendor—a fun, festive dance lifted from Tchaikovsky's opera.

Billy Childs *Diaspora*

Inspired by Maya Angelou and other poets, Childs' new concerto was written for the amazing Steven Banks, who says the music “follows the trajectory of the Black experience from Africa before slave trade to now, going forward in hope.”

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 9, “Choral”

The sheer volcanic power of Beethoven’s music makes the Ninth’s message soar. “Brotherhood! Joy!”—our world needs these clarion calls now more than ever.

The appearance of vocalists Felicia Moore, Kelley O’Connor, Issachah Savage and Reginald Smith Jr. is generously supported by Lisa and Matthew Winkler.

The appearance of Montclair State University Chorale is supported in part by Mr. and Mrs. James Houghton.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens in Concert

New Jersey Symphony at the Movies

Red Bank → Wednesday, Apr 9, 7:30 pm

Morristown → Thursday, Apr 10, 7:30 pm

Newark → Saturday, Apr 12, 8 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, Apr 13, 3 pm

Constantine Kitsopoulos conductor

New Jersey Symphony

Thirty years after the defeat of the Empire, Luke Skywalker has vanished, and a new threat has risen: The First Order, led by the mysterious Supreme Leader Snoke and his enforcer, Kylo Ren. General Leia Organa’s military force, the Resistance—and unlikely heroes brought together by fate—are the galaxy’s only hope. Experience the complete film with the New Jersey Symphony performing John Williams’ thrilling score live.

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April 13 performance presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.

The Music of Led Zeppelin

Featuring hits like “Kashmir,” “Black Dog,” “Stairway to Heaven” and more!

Englewood → Saturday, May 3, 8 pm

New Brunswick → Sunday, May 4, 3 pm

Brent Havens conductor & arranger

Windborne Music Group

Justin Sargent vocalist

New Jersey Symphony

The New Jersey Symphony and Windborne Music Group bridge the gulf between classical music and rock n' roll to present The Music of Led Zeppelin, celebrating the best of the legendary classic rock group. Amplified with full-on guitars and screaming vocals, sing and dance along as Led Zeppelin's "sheer blast and power" is put on full display riff for riff with new musical colors. Timeless hits like "Kashmir," "Black Dog," "Stairway to Heaven" and more will get you on your feet in this special concert you don't want to miss!

May 4 performance presented in collaboration with State Theatre New Jersey.

Xian Conducts Mozart

New Jersey Symphony musicians take the spotlight!

Princeton → Friday, May 16, 8 pm

Newark → Saturday, May 17, 8 pm

Newark → Sunday, May 18, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Eric Wyrick violin

Francine Storck violin

New Jersey Symphony

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*

Mozart may have tossed this off for a Viennese party one evening, but there is no piece more charming and beguiling than his "little night music."

Johann Sebastian Bach Double Concerto for Two Violins

The spotlight's on our two superstar principal violins, Eric Wyrick and Francine Storck, in perhaps the most beautiful duet ever created.

Michael Abels *Delights and Dances*

Delight in this imaginative, bluesy work for solo string quartet and string orchestra, with New Jersey Symphony's own musicians taking the spotlight in a series of captivating solos.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Symphony No. 35, “Haffner”

Mozart had intended to jot down a little occasional piece, but brilliant music kept pouring out of his pen until he’d made a dazzling full-fledged symphony, one of his best.

Discover Mozart & Bach

New Jersey Symphony Family Concert: A Music Discovery Zone

Newark → Saturday, May 17, 2 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Gregory D. McDaniel conductor

Eric Wyrick violin

Francine Storck violin

Annamaria Witek cello

New Jersey Symphony

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Selection from *Eine kleine nachtmusik*

Camille Saint-Saëns Selection from Cello Concerto No. 1

Johann Sebastian Bach Double Concerto for Two Violins

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Symphony No. 35 “Haffner”

Discover what makes a live orchestra concert so special. We’ll take a deep dive into works by Mozart, as well as J.S. Bach’s incredibly famous Double Concerto for Two Violins. Also featured on the program is 2024 Henry Lewis Concerto Competition winner, cellist Annamaria Witek. Inspired by Leonard Bernstein’s masterful way of putting young audiences at the center of music-making, this interactive concert will feature inside tips, listening cues and fun facts that make for the perfect Saturday afternoon family outing!

New Jersey Symphony Family Concert: A Music Discovery Zone is presented in NJPAC's Prudential Hall.

Gregory D. McDaniel is the 2024–25 Colton Conducting Fellow, made possible by the generous support of Judy and Stewart Colton.

Season Finale: Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich

New Jersey Symphony Classical

Morristown → Thursday, June 5, 7:30 pm

Princeton → Friday, June 6, 8 pm

Red Bank → Saturday, June 7, 8 pm

Newark → Sunday, June 8, 3 pm

Xian Zhang conductor

Conrad Tao piano

New Jersey Symphony

Sergei Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2

No piece has introduced and won more people to classical music than Rachmaninoff's magnificent work for piano and orchestra.

Dmitri Shostakovich Symphony No. 5

When Shostakovich's Fifth received a half-hour standing ovation at its premiere, the world knew that a classic was born—and it remains a landmark work for the virtuoso orchestra.