

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Xian Zhang announces appointment to music director of Seattle Symphony while remaining music director of New Jersey Symphony

NEWARK, NJ—Music Director Xian Zhang announced on Thursday, September 5, 2024, that she will become the music director of Seattle Symphony starting in the 2025–26 season and will continue as music director of New Jersey Symphony. For the 2025–26, 2026–27 and 2027–28 seasons Zhang will be music director of both New Jersey Symphony and one of the top orchestras in the nation, Seattle Symphony. In the 2024–25 season, Zhang will take the music director designate title with Seattle Symphony.

Zhang has served as New Jersey Symphony music director for eight seasons and is contracted through 2027–28 season, which will be her 12th season—making Zhang the longest-serving music director in New Jersey Symphony’s 102-year history.

Zhang says, “I am absolutely thrilled about this new opportunity to lead Seattle Symphony, one of the nation’s top orchestras. I look forward to making the most of my next four seasons as music director of New Jersey Symphony and connecting with patrons on the many spectacular performances ahead.”

Vice President of Artistic Planning Erin Lunsford Norton says, “We congratulate Xian on her appointment as the next music director of the Seattle Symphony. Xian has played an instrumental role in shaping the New Jersey Symphony’s artistic vision and cementing the Symphony’s reputation as a leading and relevant 21st century orchestra. Xian led the Symphony through the challenging pandemic landscape, conducting multiple Emmy-Award winning virtual concerts, and then helped launch the orchestra right into a successful centennial season featuring a milestone celebration gala & concert with Yo-Yo Ma and premieres of several new works commissioned by the Symphony. Xian also envisioned and launched the very successful annual Lunar New Year Celebration, just one of the many efforts the organization has made to connect with diverse audiences in New Jersey. The artistic quality of the orchestra has soared under Xian’s leadership; Xian has appointed 11 of the current orchestra musicians thus far and has been a leading figure in the creation and expansion of the Colton Orchestral and Conducting Fellowships. Xian has been an incredible force for artistic innovation and excellence in our orchestra over the past eight years, and we very much

look forward to the next four years under her leadership and our continuing relationship in the years that follow.”

The New Jersey Symphony will begin its search in the coming months for a music director that will continue expanding on Zhang’s record-breaking achievements. Zhang returns to the podium at NJPAC in Newark on October 6, with the New Jersey Symphony presenting Renée Fleming singing *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene*. For more information go to njsymphony.org/voiceofnature.

Xian Zhang

2024–25 will mark the GRAMMY and Emmy Award-winning conductor Xian Zhang’s ninth season as music director of the New Jersey Symphony. Starting in 2025–26, Zhang will also hold the role of music director at Seattle Symphony. Zhang holds the position of conductor emeritus of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, having previously held the position of music director between 2009–2016.

The 2024–25 season sees Zhang return to the Metropolitan Opera in New York to conduct David McVicar’s acclaimed production of Puccini’s *Tosca*.

Zhang is in high demand as a guest conductor, appearing regularly with Philadelphia Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic, returning to both in 2024–25. Her work with recording with Philadelphia Orchestra and Time for Three, *Letters for The Future* (released 2022 on Deutsche Grammophon), won multiple GRAMMY Awards in the Best Contemporary Classical Composition (Kevin Puts’ *Contact*) and Best Classical Instrumental Solo categories.

Following a successful collaboration at Tanglewood Festival 2023, Zhang returns to Boston Symphony Orchestra this season. She remains a favored guest of the Orchestra of St Luke’s and recently stepped in for their Brahms *Requiem* concert at Carnegie Hall. Other 2024–25 highlights include Montreal Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, NAC Orchestra, Belgian National Orchestra and Milan Symphony Orchestra.

Zhang continues to enjoy good relationships with many leading orchestras worldwide, including London Symphony Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Houston Symphony, St Louis Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra DC and Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse.

Zhang previously served as principal guest conductor of the BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales, the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2002, she won first prize in the Maazel-Vilar Conductor’s Competition. She was appointed New York Philharmonic’s assistant conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming their associate conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.

About the 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.

Internationally renowned Chinese American conductor Xian Zhang began her tenure as the New Jersey Symphony's current music director in 2016. Since her arrival, Zhang has revitalized programming with an industry-leading commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in mainstage concerts. Since 2021, 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. In 2024, Allison Loggins-Hull will succeed DBR as the orchestra's next Resident Artistic Partner.

In the 2024–25 season, the New Jersey Symphony will present *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene* with Renée Fleming, Billy Childs' *Diaspora*, Daniel Freiberg's *Latin American Chronicles*, Allison Loggins-Hull's *Can You See?*, Qasim Naqvi's *God Docks at Death Harbor* and Gabriela Ortiz's *Kauyumari*. Classical favorites on the season include Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, "Choral," Gustav Holst's *The Planets*—An HD Odyssey, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and Igor Stravinsky's Suite from *The Firebird*. Artistic partnerships include Paquito D'Rivera and his quintet, as part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival; Nimbus Dance performing with *The Firebird* and *God Docks at Death Harbor*; Montclair State University Chorale performing on three programs; as well as Peking University Alumni Chorus and Starry Arts Children's Chorus appearing on the Lunar New Year Celebration concert with Xian Zhang.

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

The New Jersey Symphony'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.

Press materials

Photos and information: njsymphony.org/newsroom

Press releases: njsymphony.org/pressreleases

Connect with us

njsymphony.org

@NJSymphony on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#) and [X](#)

@NewJerseySymphony on [YouTube](#)

Email: information@njsymphony.org

Press contacts

Ali Harrison

Communications Manager

New Jersey Symphony

973.735.0969

aharrison@njsymphony.org

Geoffrey Anderson

Vice President of Marketing & External Affairs

New Jersey Symphony

973.735.1713

ganderson@njsymphony.org

###