

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 21, 2016

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach, Music Director

**SIR MARK ELDER LEADS NSO IN FIRST PROGRAM
OF THIS SEASON'S FAIRY-TALE, FABLE, AND
FOLKLORE-INSPIRED CONCERTS
WITH PIANIST JEREMY DENK**

January 12–14, 2017, in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall

(WASHINGTON)—Celebrated conductor Sir Mark Elder returns to the National Symphony Orchestra to lead a program that includes folklore-inspired works, with pianist Jeremy Denk as featured soloist in Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand. Three performances—[Thursday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m.](#), [Saturday, January 14 at 8:00 p.m.](#), and a matinee [Friday, January 13 at 11:30 a.m.](#)—at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall include Rimsky-Korsakov's Suite from *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* and Stravinsky's complete ballet score to *The Firebird*.

Opening and closing the program are two pieces drawn from the tradition of folklore and fairy-tales, which has served as inspiration for countless works. The Suite from Rimsky-Korsakov's four-act opera, *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, combines two Russian fairy stories. One is of a Brigadoon-like city, Kitezh, that disappears from sight to save its inhabitants when attacked by the Mongols and becomes a place only those pure of heart might go; the other is the tale of a prince, and his love for a peasant girl.

Stravinsky's complete ballet, *The Firebird*, closes the program. Also based on several Russian folk tales, the firebird—the cause of good fortune and mayhem both for its owners—assists Prince Ivan in freeing a captive princess, with whom he's fallen in love, from a wicked sorcerer. This concert begins the season's theme of the lure of folklore and the works that it inspires, an exploration which continues with concerts in February, with Hilary Hahn, led by Cornelius Meister, and in May with organist Paul Jacobs, led by conductor Gustavo Gimeno.

Pianist Jeremy Denk is the featured soloist in Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand, a work which has an origin as compelling as any folktale. After he lost his right arm in WWI, concert pianist Paul Wittgenstein returned to his performing career by commissioning such

pieces as this one by Ravel—for the left hand only. The piece is poignant and colorful, and matches the drama of the other narrative-driven works.

ForeWords, a new feature this season, takes place before the Saturday, January 14, performance. Beginning at 6:45 p.m., Deborah Lamberton from Classical WETA takes the audience on a tour behind the music. The pre-concert lecture lasts 30 minutes. The matinee performance on Friday is a Coffee Concert, with a convenient morning start time, accompanied by the opportunity to purchase breakfast items in the KC Café from 9:30 to 11:15 a.m.

PROGRAM DETAILS

[Thursday, January 12, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.](#)

[Friday, January 13, 2017, at 11:30 a.m.](#)

[Saturday January 14, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.](#)

National Symphony Orchestra

Sir Mark Elder, conductor

Jeremy Denk, piano

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh, Suite*

RAVEL Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

STRAVINSKY *The Firebird, complete ballet*

Tickets: \$15–\$89.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The 2016–2017 season marks the NSO’s 86th, and its seventh and final led by Music Director Christoph Eschenbach, also the Music Director of the Kennedy Center. Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has, throughout its history, been committed to artistic excellence and music education. In 1986, the National Symphony became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where it has performed a full season of subscription concerts since the Center opened in 1971. The National Symphony Orchestra regularly participates in events of national and international importance, including performances for state occasions, presidential inaugurations and official holiday celebrations. Its regularly televised holiday appearances for Capitol Concerts and local radio broadcasts on WETA make the NSO one of the most-heard orchestras in the country.

The Orchestra itself numbers 96 musicians who perform approximately 150 concerts each year. These include classical subscription series, pops concerts, summer performances at Wolf Trap and on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, chamber music performances in the Terrace Theater and on the Millennium Stage, and an extensive educational program, with performances designed for ages three years and up, and audience engagement activities, as well. Additionally, the NSO’s community engagement projects are nationally recognized, including NSO In Your Neighborhood which comprises of a week of approximately 50 performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other neighborhood venues) and NSO Sound Health, which has taken the NSO to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Children’s Inn at NIH, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Children’s National Medical Center, and Inova Health System. Career development opportunities include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its Summer Music Institute.

For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org.

ABOUT SIR MARK ELDER

Sir Mark Elder has been Music Director of the Hallé since September 2000. He was Music Director of English National Opera (1979–1993), Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (1992–1995) and Music Director of Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, U.S. (1989–1994). He has held positions as Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the London Mozart Players.

Recent and forthcoming concert engagements, as well as his commitment to the Hallé, include Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Tonhalle-Orchester Zurich, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Vienna Symphony, the OAE, Australian Youth Orchestra, and National Youth Orchestra. Operatic engagements include a complete performance of *Parsifal* at the BBC Proms with the Hallé; *Tannhäuser* and *La bohème* at the Opéra National de Paris; *Benvenuto Cellini* for Netherlands Opera; *Meistersinger* for San Francisco Opera; *Billy Budd*, *Falstaff* and *La Traviata* for Glyndebourne; several productions for Covent Garden including *Wozzeck*, *Fidelio*, *La bohème*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *L'Etoile*; and concert performances of *Lohengrin* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Sir Mark Elder was knighted in 2008 and was awarded the CBE in 1989. He won an Olivier Award in 1991 for his outstanding work at ENO and in May 2006 he was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society. He was awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2011.

ABOUT JEREMY DENK

Jeremy Denk is one of America's foremost pianists. Winner of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, the Avery Fisher Prize, and Musical America's Instrumentalist of the Year award, he returns frequently to Carnegie Hall and has appeared at the BBC Proms with Michael Tilson Thomas. In the U.S., he has recently performed with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and Cleveland Orchestra, as well as on tour with Academy St. Martin in the Fields.

In 2016–2017, Denk embarks on a recital tour of the U.K., including a return to Wigmore Hall, and he will make his debut at the Philharmonie in Cologne. He appears on tour in recital throughout the U.S., including Chicago Symphony Hall and at Lincoln Center's White Light Festival in a special program that includes a journey through seven centuries of Western music. He also tours with The St. Paul Orchestra to New York, and returns to the National Symphony Orchestra and St. Louis Symphony. He will release a solo recording, *The Classical Style*, of music by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and joins his long-time musical partners, Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis in a recording of Brahms's Trio in B-major. Future projects include a U.S. tour of the Ives Violin Sonatas with Stefan Jackiw, and a new Piano Concerto commissioned by The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets (\$15–\$89) are available at the Kennedy Center Box Office, online at kennedy-center.org, and via phone through Instant Charge, (202) 467-4700; toll-free at (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

FUNDING CREDITS

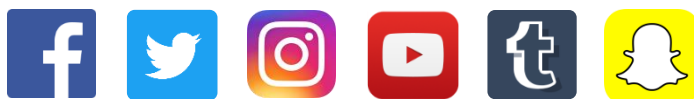
David and Alice Rubenstein are the Presenting Underwriters of the NSO.

The Blue Series is sponsored by United Technologies Corporation.

For more information about the NSO, visit nationalsymphony.org.

For more information about the Kennedy Center, visit kennedy-center.org.

Patrons 30 and under and active-duty members of the military are invited to join the Kennedy Center’s *MyTix* program for special discount offers and chances to win free tickets. For more information, visit kennedy-center.org/mytix



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TICKETS & INFORMATION:

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