FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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GUEST CONDUCTOR JUANJO MENA MAKES NSO DEBUT

SOLOIST GARRICK OHLSSON PERFORMS BARBER’S PIANO CONCERTO

October 12–15, 2017, in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall

(WASHINGTON)—Conductor Juanjo Mena makes his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) in three performances—Thursday, October 12, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, October 14, at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, October 15, at 3 p.m.—in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. Mena leads a varied program that includes the NSO’s first performances of Kennedy Center Composer in Residence Mason Bates’s Auditorium; Samuel Barber’s Piano Concerto with Garrick Ohlsson as soloist; and Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6, “Pathétique.”

Juanjo Mena has a growing presence in the U.S. as a guest conductor, having led many of the country’s major orchestra in recent years; he makes his NSO debut in these concerts. Mena is a regular on European podiums, having led all of Spain’s major orchestras, as well as the Berlin Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, and Orchestre National de France, among others. He currently holds the post of Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, England—Gianandrea Noseda’s former post—and is now Principal Conductor of the Cincinnati May Festival.

Bates’s Auditorium connects Baroque with the electronic hums of today’s technology, creating an ethereal sound that he describes as “a thriller that haunts the orchestra with ghostly processed recordings of a baroque ensemble, with the
electronic part comprised entirely of original neo-baroque music recorded on period instruments. Essentially it is a work for two orchestras – one live, one dead.”

Samuel Barber’s Piano Concerto follows. The Pulitzer Prize-winning concerto is performed by perennial audience favorite, Garrick Ohlsson. Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6 closes the program.

**PROGRAM DETAILS**

**Thursday, October 12, 2017, at 7 p.m.**  
**Saturday, October 14, 2017, at 8 p.m.**  
**Sunday, October 15, 2017, at 3 p.m.**
National Symphony Orchestra  
Juanjo Mena, conductor  
Garrick Ohlsson, piano

M. BATES  
BARBER  
TCHAIKOVSKY  
*Auditorium*  
Piano Concerto  
Symphony No. 6 in B minor, “Pathétique”

Tickets: $15–$89.

**ABOUT THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

The 2017–2018 season marks the National Symphony Orchestra’s 87th season, and Gianandrea Noseda’s first as its music director. The Italian conductor serves as the Orchestra’s seventh music director, joining the NSO’s legacy of such distinguished leaders as Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Slatkin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Antal Dorati, Howard Mitchell, and Hans Kindler. Its artistic leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke and Artistic Advisor Ben Foldes.

Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has always 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 96-member NSO regularly participates in events of national and international importance, including official holiday celebrations through its regularly televised appearances for Capitol Concerts, and local radio broadcasts on Classical WETA 90.9FM, making the NSO one of the most-heard orchestras in the country.

The Orchestra performs approximately 150 concerts each year, including classical and popular concerts at the Kennedy Center, at Wolf Trap in the summer, and on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol chamber music performances in the Terrace Theater, on the Millennium Stage, and at theaters around D.C. It has a distinguished history of touring, and an extensive education program, with a range of offerings for families and children ages three and up.
Additionally, the NSO’s community engagement projects are nationally recognized, including NSO In Your Neighborhood, which comprises a week of approximately 50 performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other neighborhood venues, and Sound Health, a collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and its affiliated organizations. Career development opportunities for young musicians include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its acclaimed Summer Music Institute.

For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org.

ABOUT JUANJO MENA
Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, United Kingdom, Juanjo Mena is one of Spain’s most distinguished international conductors.

He has conducted most of the leading orchestras in North America, including the Chicago, Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Montreal, and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. This season he assumes the role of Principal Conductor of the Cincinnati May Festival.

Throughout Europe, Mena has been Artistic Director of the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra, Chief Guest Conductor of the Orchestra del Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. He has worked with the Berlin Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, Milan, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as with all the major orchestras in Spain.

A guest of international festivals, Maestro Mena has appeared at the Stars of White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Hollywood Bowl, Grant Park (Chicago), Tanglewood, and La Folle Journée (Nantes). He has led the BBC Philharmonic on tours of Europe and Asia, including performances in Cologne, Munich, Vienna, Madrid, Beijing and Seoul, and performs with them every year at the BBC Proms in London.

His operatic work includes The Flying Dutchman, Salome, Elektra, Ariadne auf Naxos, Duke Bluebeard’s Castle, Fidelio and Erwartung and productions including Eugene Onegin in Genoa, The Marriage of Figaro in Lausanne and Billy Budd in Bilbao.

Highlights of Maestro Mena’s 2017–2018 season include his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., as well as return visits to the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

ABOUT GARRICK OHLSSON
Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, pianist Garrick Ohlsson has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although long regarded as one of the world’s leading exponents of the music of Frédéric Chopin, Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire, which ranges over the entire piano literature. A student of the late Claudio Arrau, Ohlsson has come to be
noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. To date he has at his command more than 80 concertos.

An avid chamber musician, Ohlsson has collaborated with the Takacs, Cleveland, Emerson, and Tokyo string quartets, among other ensembles. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio. Passionate about singing and singers, Ohlsson has appeared in recital with such legendary artists as Magda Olivero, Jessye Norman, and Ewa Podles.

In recognition of the Chopin bicentennial in 2010, Garrick Ohlsson was featured in a documentary The Art of Chopin co-produced by Polish, French, British, and Chinese television stations. Most recently, both Brahms concerti and Tchaikovsky's second piano concerto were released on live performance recordings with the Melbourne and Sydney Symphonies on their own recording labels, and Ohlsson was featured on Dvorak's piano concerto in the Czech Philharmonic's live recordings of the composer's complete symphonies & concertos, released July of 2014 on the Decca label.

A native of White Plains, N.Y., Garrick Ohlsson began his piano studies at the age of 8, at the Westchester Conservatory of Music; at 13 he entered The Juilliard School, in New York City. Although he won First Prizes at the 1966 Busoni Competition in Italy and the 1968 Montréal Piano Competition, it was his 1970 triumph at the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, where he won the Gold Medal (and remains the single American to have done so), that brought him worldwide recognition as one of the finest pianists of his generation. Since then he has made nearly a dozen tours of Poland, where he retains immense personal popularity. Ohlsson was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize in 1994 and received the 1998 University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, MI. He is also the 2014 recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance from the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music. He makes his home in San Francisco.

**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 inquires, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

**FUNDING CREDITS**

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