April 10, 2018

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES POPS PROGRAMMING FOR 2018–2019 SEASON

Highlights Include:

*Star Wars* in Concert
(Four films with live orchestra)

Performances by
Brandy Norwood, Leslie Odom Jr., Ashley Brown,
Andrew Bird with guest Gabriel Kahane, and more

(WASHINGTON)—Known as a leader in creative Pops programming, the National Symphony Orchestra showcases its flexibility and versatility in the 2018–2019 season, with innovative and creative programming that offers a diverse mix of offerings in a range of genres. All concerts take place in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

“The NSO is an extraordinary orchestra; their ability to effortlessly leap between genres makes our programs both varied and exhilarating, and our newest season is no exception!” said Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke. “I’m thrilled to welcome even more unique collaborations with artists from the realms of rock ’n’ roll, R&B, musical theater, jazz, and beyond as we forge new creative paths between the Orchestra and the music of today.”

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The season begins with the legendary film music of John Williams—four full scores from four Star Wars films, performed by the NSO, while the films are shown on a big screen. A New Hope opens the season in September, with The Empire Strikes Back in October, Return of the Jedi in January, and The Force Awakens in February.

Renowned as a “one-man orchestra of the imagination,” Andrew Bird is a versatile singer/songwriter and classically trained violinist who joins the NSO performing with indie musician, composer, and orchestrator Gabriel Kahane. In his Kennedy Center debut, Bird masters delicately layered pop melodies with nuanced creative genius in innovative orchestrations of his songs conceived by Kahane.

The annual favorite, A Holiday Pops!, returns in 2018–2019 with Ashley Brown, who created the role of Mary Poppins on Broadway, in her NSO debut in three performances of traditional holiday fare. The Washington Chorus also participates.

Following her acclaimed Broadway appearance and Kennedy Center engagement as Roxie Hart in the Tony®-winning revival of Chicago, Grammy Award®-winning singer/actress Brandy Norwood offers her first-ever collaboration with a live orchestra with the NSO, in two performances of hits from her distinguished career in music and on Broadway, connecting R&B and symphonic music.

Multi-faceted performer Leslie Odom Jr. won the 2016 Tony Award® for Best Actor in a Musical for his role as Aaron Burr in Hamilton. Next season, he makes his NSO debut in a program of Broadway and jazz classics, including a tribute to Nat King Cole and songs from Rent and Spring Awakening, among others.

50 Years Over the Rainbow: A Judy Garland Celebration closes the NSO Pops season. Marking half a century to the week since the entertainment world lost one of its greatest treasures, the NSO remembers the immortal music and extraordinary cultural
impact of Judy Garland—star of *The Wizard of Oz, Easter Parade, Meet Me in St. Louis, A Star Is Born*, and countless more.

**Steven Reineke**’s boundless enthusiasm and exceptional artistry have made him one of the nation’s most sought-after pops conductors, composers, and arrangers. The 2018–2019 season marks his eighth as Principal Pops Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra. In that capacity he has broadened the scope of offerings with the NSO on the Pops series, having led performances of a range of genres and style such as Broadway favorites, jazz, Hip Hop, and film scores. In addition, he has created shows with the NSO for such notable performers as Kendrick Lamar, Common, Nas, and Seth MacFarlane. His work with the NSO has been featured in national broadcasts on PBS for Renée Fleming’s *American Voices* and most recently with *Nas Live from the Kennedy Center: Classical Hip-Hop*, as well as live-streamed performance on Tidal with Common, and the first live performance of an orchestra on NPR’s *All Things Considered* in February 2017.

**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 Folds.

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 *Capital 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.

ABOUT THE NSO POPS
Great performances featuring the highest levels of artistic talent have been a staple of the NSO’s 87 seasons. Popular offerings have ranged from performances on a barge on the Potomac River, to concerts on the Ellipse, and in National Parks around the greater Washington area. The 2011–2012 season was the first with Steven Reineke as Principal Pops Conductor. NSO popular programming—which ranges in genre from Broadway and American song to jazz and from film scores to Hip Hop to rock ‘n’ roll—take place at the NSO’s principal performance venues: the NSO’s primary home, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall, Wolf Trap, and the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, with a subscription season featuring a variety of musical genres.

Complete program, date, and artist listings follow.

TICKET INFORMATION
Subscriptions to all NSO 2018–2019 season series are available now via the Kennedy Center Subscription Office or website. Groups of 20 or more may contact Kennedy Center Group Sales at (202) 416-8400. Dates for sale of individual tickets will be announced later this year on www.kennedy-center.org.
2018–2019 SEASON SCHEDULE

All concerts take place in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, September 12, 2018, at 7 p.m.
Thursday, September 13, 2018, at 7 p.m.
Friday, September 14, 2018, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, September 15, 2018 at 8 p.m.
National Symphony Orchestra
Steven Reineke, conductor

Star Wars: A New Hope

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Tuesday, October 23, 2018, at 8 p.m.
Wednesday, October 24, 2018, at 8 p.m.
Thursday, October 25, 2018, at 8 p.m.
National Symphony Orchestra
Steven Reineke, conductor

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back

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Friday, October 26, 2018, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, October 27, 2018, at 8 p.m.
National Symphony Orchestra
Steven Reineke, conductor

Andrew Bird with guest Gabriel Kahane
Friday, December 14, 2018, at 8 p.m.  
Saturday, December 15, 2018, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.  
National Symphony Orchestra  
Steven Reineke, conductor  
The Washington Chorus, Christopher Bell, artistic director

A Holiday Pops!  
Under the Mistletoe with Ashley Brown

The NSO performs comforting classics and singalong carols in this annual tradition! This year features Ashley Brown—originator of the title role in Mary Poppins on Broadway—along with The Washington Chorus.

Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at 7 p.m.  
Wednesday, January 23, 2019, at 8 p.m.  
Thursday, January 24, 2019, at 8 p.m.  
National Symphony Orchestra  
Steven Reineke, conductor

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi

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Friday, January 25, 2019, at 8 p.m.  
Saturday, January 26, 2019, at 8 p.m.  
National Symphony Orchestra  
Steven Reineke, conductor

An Evening with Brandy Norwood

The multi-platinum, Grammy®-winning R&B/pop singer, songwriter, actress, and consummate entertainer performs favorites from her iconic career, following her acclaimed debut as Roxie Hart in the Tony®-winning revival of Chicago on Broadway and at the Kennedy Center.

Thursday, February 21, 2019, at 7 p.m.  
Friday, February 22, 2019, at 8 p.m.  
Saturday, February 23, 2019, at 2 p.m.  
National Symphony Orchestra  
Emil de Cou, conductor

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

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Wednesday, May 1, 2019, at 7 p.m.
Thursday, May 2, 2019, at 8 p.m.
Friday, May 3, 2019, at 8 p.m.
National Symphony Orchestra
Steven Reineke, conductor

An Evening with Leslie Odom Jr.

This multi-faceted performer won the 2016 Tony Award® for Best Actor in a Musical for his role as Aaron Burr in Hamilton. His remarkable talents have also taken the spotlight with two solo jazz albums, on NBC’s hit series, Smash, and at the 2018 Super Bowl™ where he sang “America the Beautiful.”

Friday June 28, 2019, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, June 29, 2019, at 8 p.m.
National Symphony Orchestra
Steven Reineke, conductor

50 Years Over the Rainbow: A Judy Garland Celebration

Marking half a century since the entertainment world lost one of its greatest treasures, the NSO remembers the immortal music of Judy Garland, star of The Wizard of Oz, Easter Parade, Meet Me in St. Louis, A Star Is Born, and countless more.

Programs and artists subject to change.

FUNDING CREDITS

David M. Rubenstein is the Presenting Underwriter of the NSO.

AARP is the Presenting Sponsor of the NSO Pops Season.

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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