Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 23, 2016

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach, Music Director

GUEST CONDUCTOR EDWARD GARDNER MAKES HIS NSO DEBUT IN 2016–2017 SEASON-OPENING SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS; JURAJ VALČUHA LEADS NSO IN SECOND WEEK OF CONCERT SEASON

Programs Honor 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Death with Music by Inspired by Bard’s Work

September 29–October 1, and October 6–8, 2016

(WASHINGTON)—Young British conductor Edward Gardner makes his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) this fall in the first week of classical subscription programming of the 2016–2017 season. Three performances—Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, September 29, 30, and October 1—at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall feature a program inspired by the writings of the great William Shakespeare: Elgar’s Falstaff, Walton’s Henry V, and Tchaikovsky’s tone poem, Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture. The week marks the first of three weeks of NSO programs that honor the 400th anniversary of the Bard’s death in 1616.

The season’s second week, led by guest conductor Juraj Valčuha, also features music inspired by the great author, including Korngold’s Suite from Much Ado About Nothing, Dvorak’s Othello Overture, and Richard Strauss’s Macbeth. Renowned pianist Emanuel Ax is the soloist in Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 1, which is also heard on this program. Concerts take place on Thursday and Saturday evenings, October 6 and 8, as well as Friday, October 7, at 11:30 a.m.—at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

Through a collaboration with Alan Paul, Associate Artistic Director of D.C.’s Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC), each of the NSO’s Shakespeare-themed programs will have concert enhancements added, which range from projected visuals to dialogue and recitations from the related plays. Actors Matthew Rauch, William Vaughan, and Audrey Bertaux, will participate in the first week’s concerts. Additional actors to be named will participate in the second week, representing the famous couples featured in Shakespeare’s writings highlighted that week: Beatrice and Benedick, Othello and Desdemona, and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

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PROGRAM DETAILS

Thursday, September 29, at 7 p.m.
Friday, September 30, at 8 p.m.
Saturday, October 1, at 8 p.m.
Kennedy Center Concert Hall
National Symphony Orchestra
Edward Gardner, conductor
Matthew Rauch, William Vaughan, and Audrey Bertaux, actors
Alan Paul, director

ELGAR  
Falstaff

WALTON
Suite from Henry V

TCHAIKOVSKY  
Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture

Thursday, October 6, at 7 p.m.
Friday, October 7, at 11:30 a.m.
Saturday, October 8, at 8 p.m.
Kennedy Center Concert Hall
National Symphony Orchestra
Juraj Valcuha, conductor
Emanuel Ax, piano
Alan Paul, director
Actors to be announced

BEETHOVEN  
Piano Concerto No. 1

KORNGOLD
Suite from Much Ado About Nothing

DVORÁK  
Othello Overture

R. STRAUSS
Macbeth

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 EDWARD GARDNER
Edward Gardner is Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, a position he assumed in October 2015. The coming season will see Gardner tour with the orchestra to cities including Berlin, Munich, London, and Amsterdam and continuing his hugely successful relationship with Chandos Records. Gardner was Music Director of English National Opera for eight years until July 2015, and under his direction, ENO presented a series of stellar productions. He returned in Spring 2016 to conduct a new production of Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde to critical acclaim.

Gardner continues to be in great demand on the international opera scene. He has an ongoing relationship with the Metropolitan Opera New York where he will return in Spring 2017 for Werther. Last season he made his debut with Lyric Opera Chicago (Rosenkavalier) and was re-invited to La Scala, Milan. This season will see him returning to Opéra National de Paris to conduct Eugene Onegin and future invitations include The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and further engagements at Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera Chicago.

In the 2016–17 season and beyond, Gardner expands his guest conducting in North America including debuts with New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, and the Minnesota Orchestra. In Europe, he will continue to work with major orchestras including Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin, Leipzig Gewandhaus, WDR Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Cologne, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony, Finnish Radio, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale RAI Torino and l’Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

Gardner also works regularly with young musicians including the CBSO and Barbican Youth Orchestras, the National Youth Orchestra, and Juilliard School of Music in New York. In 2002, he founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra, and in September 2014, was appointed to the new role of Mackerras Chair of Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music.

An exclusive recording artist for Chandos, Gardner has most recently released critically acclaimed discs of Janáček, Mendelssohn, Walton, Lutoslawski, Britten, Berio vocal and orchestral works, and Verdi’s Macbeth with ENO. Born in Gloucester in 1974, Gardner was educated at Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music where he studied under the instruction of Colin Metters. He graduated in 2000 and went on to assist Mark Elder at The Hallé Orchestra for three years. In June 2012, he was awarded an OBE for his Services to Music in the Queen’s Birthday Honors.

ABOUT JURAJ VALČUHA
Juraj Valčuha has been appointed Music Director of the Teatro di San Carlo in Napoli, beginning in October 2016.

From 2009 to 2016, Valčuha was Chief Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai, Torino. He studied composition and conducting in Bratislava, St. Petersburg with Ilya Musin, and in Paris.


He recently conducted Jenufa in Bologna, Turandot at the Rome Opera and San Carlo Napoli, Madama Butterfly and The Love for three Oranges in Florence, and Parsifal at the Budapest Opera.

In 2016–2017, Valčuha debut with the Chicago Symphony and Cleveland Orchestras and will return to the San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Washington, Montreal, and Minneapolis symphonies. In Europe, he will return to the HR Frankfurt, NDR Hamburg, Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Philharmonia, Santa Cecilia Orchestra in Rome. He will also conduct
Faust in Florence, Elektra and Carmen at Teatro di San Carlo Napoli and Peter Grimes at Teatro Comunale Bologna.

ABOUT EMANUEL AX
Born in modern day Lvov, Poland, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg, Canada, with his family when he was a young boy. His studies at The Juilliard School were supported by the sponsorship of the Epstein Scholarship Program of the Boys Clubs of America, and he subsequently won the Young Concert Artists Award. Additionally, he attended Columbia University where he majored in French. Ax made his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series, and captured public attention in 1974 when he won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. In 1975, he won the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists, followed four years later by the coveted Avery Fisher Prize.

Always a committed exponent of contemporary composers with works written for him by John Adams, Christopher Rouse, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bright Sheng, and Melinda Wagner already in his repertoire, the 2016-2017 season will feature two newly commissioned works. With the New York Philharmonic conducted by Alan Gilbert, January will bring the world premiere of HK Gruber's Piano Concerto followed in March by the European premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle. In recitals throughout the season his program will include works by Schubert and Chopin partnered with "Impromptus (2015-2016)" by Samuel Adams commissioned by Music Accord and inspired by Schubert. His ongoing relationship with the Boston Symphony will include visits with them to Carnegie Hall, Montreal, and Toronto; with the Cleveland Orchestra, Ax will appear as the featured artist for their Gala opening concert of the season. As a regular visitor he will return to the orchestras of Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Toronto, Seattle, Milwaukee, and Detroit.

A Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987, recent releases include Mendelssohn Trios with Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman, Strauss's Enoch Arden narrated by Patrick Stewart, and discs of two-piano music by Brahms and Rachmaninoff with Yefim Bronfman. In 2015, Deutche Grammophon released a duo recording with Perlman of Sonatas by Faure and Strauss which the two artists presented on tour during the 2015-2016 season. Ax has received GRAMMY® Awards for the second and third volumes of his cycle of Haydn’s piano sonatas. He has also made a series of Grammy-winning recordings with cellist Yo-Yo Ma of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano. His other recordings include the concerts of Liszt and Schoenberg, three solo Brahms albums, an album of tangos by Astor Piazzolla, and the premiere recording of John Adams’s Century Rolls with the Cleveland Orchestra for Nonesuch. In the 2004-2005 season, Ax also contributed to an International EMYY® Award-winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust that aired on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In 2013, Ax’s recording Variations received the Echo Klassik Award for Solo Recording of the Year (19th century music/Piano).

A frequent and committed partner for chamber music, he has worked regularly with such artists as Young Uck Kim, Cho-Liang Lin, Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Peter Serkin, Jaime Laredo, and the late Isaac Stern.

Emanuel Ax resides in New York City with his wife, pianist Yoko Nozaki. They have two children together, Joseph and Sarah. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Yale and Columbia Universities.

TICKET INFORMATION
Tickets for NSO performances begin at $15 and 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.

FUNDING CREDITS
David and Alice Rubenstein are the Presenting Underwriters of the NSO.
The NSO Music Director Chair is generously endowed by Victoria and Roger Sant.

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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MEDIA CONTACT:
Rachelle Roe
(202) 416-8443
rbroe@kennedy-center.org

TICKETS & INFORMATION:
(202) 467-4600; (800) 444-1324
www.kennedy-center.org