

MAESTRO PIOTR GAJEWSKI AND VIOLINIST CHEE-YUN ARE AVAILABLE FOR ADVANCE INTERVIEWS.

Media Contact: Marc Apter, 301-904-3690, marca1030@gmail.com.



The National Philharmonic
Music Center at Strathmore
5301 Tuckerman Lane
North Bethesda, MD 20852
T 301.493.9283
F 301.493.9284

How the World Hears Vivaldi's and Piazzolla's *The Four Seasons* Via Italy, Argentina, and Korea

World-Renowned Violinist Chee-Yun to Play Instrument Buried for 200 Years

Bethesda, MD (August 12, 2016) — The National Philharmonic presents a weekend program that skips from hemisphere to hemisphere and explores how art inspires other works of art. Vivaldi's most popular work *The Four Seasons* is paired with Astor Piazzolla's Argentinian homage, *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires)* in a dazzling roundelay of string and orchestral music. Chee-Yun, a South Korean violinist whose "technique is brilliant and utterly secure, her tone like butter, smooth, rich and flawless" (*Strings*), will perform as the soloist — using an extremely rare, previously buried, three hundred year old violin — for all eight pieces of music under the baton of Music Director and Conductor Piotr Gajewski. The performances will take place on **Saturday, October 8th at 8pm and on Sunday, October 9th at 3pm at the Music Center at Strathmore**. An "Instrumental Petting Zoo" for young people and their families will take place from 2-2:30pm before the 3pm performance on Sunday. In addition, selected student artwork and poetry will be on display as part of the Color the Music project. Ticket prices start at \$28 and are free for young people age 7 to 17 (please call or visit the Strathmore Ticket Office to reserve "Kids Free" tickets). Strathmore is located at 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to www.nationalphilharmonic.org or call 301.581.5100.

For this performance, Chee-Yun will play a 1669 Francesco Ruggieri violin. This violin was discovered in such pristine condition that its authenticity was called into question. That is, until during an audience Q&A in Israel, when a man told Chee-Yun about the original owner: a Norwegian who had requested that the violin be buried with him. The instrument had remained buried for 200 years. "It's got the darkest, deepest, lush, big G-string sound," says Chee-Yun, "The bottom notes sound like a cello at times. And then it has the most sweet

singing quality at the soprano voice. Many violins can have a resonant lower register, or upper, or both, but then the middle register doesn't sound at all. The Ruggieri is just flawless." Chee-Yun purchased the violin in 1990 with the help of The Stradivari Society in Chicago. The Stradivari Society pairs great antique instruments with young world-class musicians (through a combination of loans or patronage) such as Grammy-award winner Joshua Bell, Midori, and more.

In a clever nod to the fact that Italy's summer is Argentina's winter (due to them being in different hemispheres), musical elements of Vivaldi's Summer concerto can be heard in Piazzolla's Winter. Violin virtuoso Gidon Kremer is credited with starting the practice of pairing Vivaldi and Piazzolla's work, and Russian composer Leonid Desyatnikov is responsible for the modern arrangement. This weekend's program encompasses some 400-odd years of classical music, and demands a considerably talented soloist.

"Chee-Yun is an incredibly dynamic and charismatic performer," says Maestro Gajewski, "So much so that Hollywood has taken notice. She's appeared on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, the HBO comedy series, and on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*. I know she's only performed this Vivaldi and Piazzolla program once before, with the Chicago Philharmonic, and it's a very physically demanding feat."

"Both Vivaldi and Piazzolla were innovative composers, drawing artistic inspiration from eclectic, international influences," says Gajewski. "*The Four Seasons* concertos were inspired by a series of paintings. Vivaldi wrote a sonnet to accompany each concerto, and the sonnets contain these poetic performance directions. Things like: murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes; teeth chattering in the bitter chill; and so on. The musicians recreate these feelings and places. It was so ahead of his time, much like Piazzolla. Piazzolla absorbed the sounds of New York City, Buenos Aires, and Paris, and gave us *nuevo tango* — an entirely new style of music."

Chee-Yun, who began her career at age eight after winning the Grand Prize of the Korean Times Competition in her native Seoul, now has close to four decades of experience performing with the world's foremost orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic and the National Symphony Orchestra. Known as "a talented instrumentalist, with the kind of high-gloss tone that pulls sensuously at the listener's ear" (*The New York Times*), her performances are also noteworthy because of the rare and antique violins in her possession, such as "golden period" Stradivarius violins. Chee-Yun also continues to record new music, including a new concerto by celebrated American composer Christopher Theofanidis in June of 2017.

At the Instrument Petting Zoo on Sunday at 2pm, young people and their families are welcome to explore orchestral instruments with members of the orchestra and their instruments, including violins, violas and trumpets. Continuing the theme of art inspiring art, the National Philharmonic has partnered with VisArts, Montgomery County's premiere center for the visual arts at Rockville Town Square, for the *Color of Music* project that invites students to submit artwork or poetry related to two upcoming concerts series: Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* on October 8-9 and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* on April 22-23. The project is open to all students from elementary to 12th grade, and selected art and poetry

will be displayed at Strathmore and at VisArts the week of the concert. To learn more and submit, visit: <http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org/education/color-the-music-project.aspx>.

Led by Maestro Gajewski, the National Philharmonic is known for performances that are “powerful,” “impeccable” and “thrilling” (*The Washington Post*). In July 2003, the National Chamber Orchestra and Masterworks Chorus merged to create the National Philharmonic, an ensemble with over 50 years of combined history, bringing high caliber musical performances to the DC area. The National Philharmonic took up residence at the state-of-the-art Music Center at Strathmore upon its opening in February 2005. As the Music Center at Strathmore’s orchestra-in-residence, the National Philharmonic showcases world-renowned guest artists in time-honored symphonic masterpieces conducted by Maestro Gajewski, with additional conducting by Associate Conductor Victoria Gau, and monumental choral masterworks under National Philharmonic Chorale Artistic Director Stan Engbretson.

The Philharmonic boasts a long-standing tradition of reasonably priced tickets and free admission to all young people age 7-17, assuring its place as an accessible and enriching component in Montgomery County and the greater Washington, DC area. To purchase tickets for the performance or for a complete schedule, please visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org or call the Strathmore box office at (301) 581-5100. Complimentary parking is available.