



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

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

National Philharmonic Season Continues With Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* Saturday, April 22 and Sunday, April 23

**Grammy Winning Cellist Zuill Bailey to perform Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* & Bloch's *Schelomo*
As part of "Exploring Jewish Identity Through Music" Initiative
On a 300-Year-Old Instrument**

Kids Instrument Petting Zoo Sunday, from 2-2:30 p.m.

North Bethesda, MD (March 1)—The National Philharmonic's 2016-2017 season at The Music Center at Strathmore continues with Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The concert, conducted by Philharmonic Music Director and Conductor Piotr Gajewski, will also feature celebrated Grammy award winner cellist Zuill Bailey performing Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*, variations on themes of Jewish origin, and Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo*, the final work of this composer's Jewish Cycle. The concert is part of Gajewski's initiative titled, "Exploring Jewish Identity through Music." Inspired by a visit to an art exhibition, Mussorgsky wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* in 10 pieces, with each movement representing one of the drawings or artworks on display. Also an artistic exhibition in itself, Bailey's cello, "Cello Bailey," was made more than 300 years ago by the great Venetian cello maker Matteo Goffriller. The performance is on Saturday, April 22, at 8 p.m., and on Sunday, April 23, at 3 p.m. A children's "instrument petting zoo" will start at 2 pm preceding the Sunday concert. Both concerts will be in Strathmore's Concert Hall. Ticket prices are \$23-\$78 and are free for young people age 7-17. Strathmore is located at 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org or call 301.581.5100.

Gajewski was born and raised in Warsaw. The son of a Holocaust survivor, Gajewski's family emigrated from Poland in 1969. "Exploring Jewish Identity through Music" also celebrates the

many National Philharmonic musicians who are Jewish. In 2018 the orchestra will recognize American composer Leonard Bernstein's 100th birthday.

An instrument "petting zoo" will take place in the lobby from 2-2:30 p.m. Sunday, allowing young concertgoers a chance to explore instruments from different music families (string, wood, brass, and percussion) with National Philharmonic musicians. This year, young attendees age 5-17 may submit artwork or poetry related to the *Pictures at an Exhibition* concert for display in the Strathmore lobby as part of the Color the Music Project. For more information on the project, visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org/education/color-the-music-project.

Mussorgsky (1839-1881) was one of the great Russian composers during the Romantic period, known for his famous operas, songs, and piano pieces. *Pictures at an Exhibition* was inspired by the death of a friend, painter Victor Hartmann, and the work was originally written as a piano suite. In 1922, French composer Maurice Ravel orchestrated the suite. The 10 pieces follow 10 paintings by Hartmann, with the idea that the composer (Mussorgsky) could be imagined strolling through the exhibition. Some of the pictures include "The Gnome," "The Old Castle," and "Tuileries."

Bailey is a distinguished soloist, recitalist, artistic director, and teacher who this year won three Grammy Awards. Bailey won the Grammy Awards for "*Best Classical Instrumental Solo*" and "*Best Contemporary Classical Composition*" for his performance on *Daugherty: Tales of Hemingway*, along with the Nashville Symphony. The piece, which was commissioned for Bailey, also won a Grammy for "*Best Classical Compendium*" for its inclusion on the album *Tales of Hemingway*.

Bailey has played with symphony orchestras worldwide, including Los Angeles, Nashville, Toronto, Israel, Cape Town, and the Bruchner Orchestra in Linz, Austria. He has collaborated with such conductors as Itzhak Perlman, Krzysztof Urbanski, Jacques Lacombe, and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, and has been featured with musical luminaries Leon Fleisher, Jaime Laredo, the Juilliard String Quartet, and Lynn Harrell, among others. Bailey has appeared at Disney Hall, the Kennedy Center, the United Nations, and Carnegie Hall, where he made his concerto debut performing the U.S. premiere of Miklos Theodorakis' *Rhapsody for Cello and Orchestra*. He made his New York recital debut performing the complete Beethoven Cello Sonatas at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. World premieres include works by composers such as Lowell Lieberman, Phillip Lasser, Roberto Sierra, and Michael Daugherty. Bailey was named the 2014 Johns Hopkins University Distinguished Alumni and was awarded the Classical Recording Foundation Award for 2006 and 2007 for Beethoven's complete works for cello and piano. Bailey received his bachelor's and masters from the Peabody Conservatory and the Juilliard School.

"Exploring Jewish Identity through Music" celebrates music based on Jewish themes such as Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*. Bruch (1838-1920) was a famous German Romantic composer and violinist. *Kol Nidre*, written in 1881, is a virtuoso piece written for the cello. Traditionally, the *Kol Nidre* is a prayer sung in Jewish synagogues at the start of Yom Kippur.

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) was an American composer of Jewish heritage. Bloch's music often contained Jewish and post-Romantic-era themes. *Schelomo* was written for cello and orchestra in 1916, and is part of a grouping of Jewish-themed works by Bloch.

Gajewski is one of a select group of American conductors equally at home in nearly all musical genres. He is the music director and conductor of the National Philharmonic at the Music Center at Strathmore, and a sought-after guest conductor. He was a student and disciple of the late Leonard Bernstein, and is described by *The Washington Post* as an "immensely talented and insightful conductor, whose standards, taste and sensitivity are impeccable."

Led by Maestro Gajewski, the National Philharmonic is known for performances that are "powerful and thrilling" (*The Washington Post*). In July 2003, the National Chamber Orchestra and Masterworks Chorus merged to create the National Philharmonic, an ensemble with more than 50 years of combined history, bringing high caliber musical performances to the Washington area. The National Philharmonic took up residence at the state-of-the-art Music Center at Strathmore upon its opening in February 2005. Now, more than 250 performances later, and with far-reaching educational programming, the National Philharmonic is the largest and most active professional orchestra based in Montgomery County.

The National 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, D.C., area.

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 Engebretson.

To purchase tickets for the performances and for a complete schedule, please visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org or call the Strathmore Ticket Office at 301.581.5100. Tickets are \$23-\$78; young people 7-17 are free through the ALL KIDS, ALL FREE, ALL THE TIME program. ALL KIDS tickets must be purchased in person or by phone. Complimentary parking is available.