



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**WESTFIELD SYMPHONY TO BECOME NEW JERSEY FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA**

WESTFIELD, NJ (May 17, 2013) – As part of an innovative new strategy to sustain its core mission and secure future viability and growth, the Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO) Board of Directors today announced that the organization will be changing its name to *New Jersey Festival Orchestra*. The name change is aligned with other efforts to aggressively expand the orchestra's geographic footprint and reach new audiences.

“The WSO board and management believe that appealing to new patrons beyond Westfield – and to some new to us in Westfield – requires a name more suited to a statewide, even regional, performing arts organization,” says WSO Board President Norman Luka. The change will take effect in June 2013, at the conclusion of the orchestra’s 30<sup>th</sup> performance season.

WSO Music Director David Wroe, with 15 years tenure with the orchestra, comments, “With our expanded programs and the enduring help of our supporters and loyalty of our subscribers, the orchestra has cultivated a larger audience base, most recently in Morris County. Our efforts have proven successful, and we believe the time is right to formalize our expansion. And that means graduating the WSO to the next level: a statewide entity with a statewide brand – *New Jersey Festival Orchestra*. We enter this new phase proud of what we've accomplished and enthusiastic to carry forth an innovative formula for success.”

According to Luka, the impetus to pursue these changes is twofold: to bring exciting, world-class offerings to expanded audiences; and second, to respond pragmatically to the financial challenges familiar to arts organizations across the country.

Organizationally, the orchestra stays the same. David Wroe will continue to lead the musical direction, and staff operations will remain in Westfield. Performances will be held both at the traditional Westfield venues and at new locations throughout the State.

“The new name stands for an ongoing celebration of the diversity of music,” Wroe says. “It is a celebration not only of our musical excellence but also of our ability to create experiences that stretch the boundaries of traditional orchestral performances.”

Audiences can expect a full and dynamic 2013-2014 season led by Wroe. Programs will include classics from the orchestral repertory as well as a development of offerings that bring to life the fusion of fine arts and popular culture that have become the hallmark of WSO excellence. Plans include an in-concert performance of Verdi's *Aida* with guest stars from the Metropolitan Opera; the winning combination of symphonic soundtracks and silver screen; a season finale of Mahler's 2nd Symphony as well as perennial concert favorites such *Home for the Holidays* and the renowned New Year's Eve celebration.

Continues Wroe, “Our unique and dynamic approach to programming will, we believe, further bring classical music to life and create an ongoing 'festival' of compelling presentations worthy of our new name – *New Jersey Festival Orchestra*. Please join us at our season finale concert “New Beginnings” on Saturday, June 1, at the Presbyterian Church in Westfield to learn more about our new season and celebrate the orchestra's upward momentum and graduation to regional acclaim. ”

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