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ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT CELEBRATES LUNAR NEW YEAR

New concert features folk music from China and Korea

ATLANTA – The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra announces a new concert celebrating Lunar New Year featuring Chinese and Korean folk music on January 29 at 8pm at Atlanta Symphony Hall.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra brings a 3,500-year tradition to the stage with beloved Chinese and Korean folk songs to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Guest conductor Junping Qian leads the full orchestra in a Chinese classic by Huanzhi Li and the beautiful Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto.

The concert features the debut of two rising-star soloists: violinist Timothy Chooi and Metropolitan Opera sensation Joo Wan Kang.

Atlanta composer Alice Hong offers a brand-new work to extend warmest wishes for good health and abundance.

Tickets for these concerts are on sale now. Learn more at aso.org.

CALENDAR LISTING

Lunar New Year Concert

Featuring Chinese & Korean Folk Music

Atlanta Symphony's Lunar New Year Concert

Friday, January 29, 2027, 8pm

Junping Qian, conductor

Timothy Chooi, violin

Joo Won Kang, baritone
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Y. BAO: Happy Sunrise
Z. HE & CHEN: The Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto
A. HONG: New Work
DONG-SOO SHIN: San-ah (Mountain)
ROSSINI: "Largo al factotum della città" from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (The Barber of Seville)
TRADITIONAL, ARR. Y. SUZUKI: Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon
H. LI: Spring Festival Overture

Ring in the year of the fire goat! The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra brings a 3,500-year tradition to the stage with beloved Chinese and Korean folk songs to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Guest conductor Junping Qian leads the full orchestra in a Chinese classic by Huanzhi Li and the beautiful Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto. Catch the debut of two rising-star soloists: violinist Timothy Chooi and Metropolitan Opera sensation Joo Wan Kang. Also, Atlanta composer Alice Hong offers a brand-new work to extend warmest wishes for good health and abundance.

About Junping Qian

Chinese conductor Junping Qian has established an international career encompassing leading orchestras across Europe, Asia and North America. He is Principal Guest Conductor of the Iași "Moldova" Philharmonic and the Satu Mare "Dinu Lipatti" Philharmonic and served as Artistic Director of Chamber Philharmonia ZJCM in Hangzhou during the 2025/26 season.

He has conducted orchestras including the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Royal Scottish National, Minnesota and Danish National Symphony orchestras, as well as the Orchestre de Paris, Konzerthausorchester Berlin and Mozarteumorchester Salzburg. In Asia, his collaborations include the Shanghai Symphony, China National Symphony and China NCPA orchestras. Highlights of the 2026/27 season include debuts with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra.

Qian's repertoire ranges from Classical symphonies to late Romantic masterworks, with a particular affinity for Wagner. His interpretations are informed by his extensive work with Sir Roger Norrington on historically informed performance practice. He has also conducted opera at Guangzhou Opera House, including Enjott Schneider's *Marco Polo*.

Previously Assistant Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris, Qian is a prizewinner of several international conducting competitions. He studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin. Before pursuing conducting full-time, he was a violist with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and principal viola of the Verbier Festival Orchestra.

About Timothy Chooi

Internationally acclaimed violinist Timothy Chooi (pronounced “Chewy”) is celebrated for his passionate interpretations, emotional depth, and dynamic stage presence. Praised for “dazzling the audience with a combination of flawless technique and heartfelt expression” (*El Informador*, Guadalajara), he has appeared with leading orchestras and at prestigious venues worldwide. Beyond the concert stage, Chooi is recognized as a cultural leader, committed to expanding access to classical music through education, outreach, and digital platforms that have reached millions of viewers worldwide. His artistry reflects the traditional roots of Asia, the elegance of European training, and the openness of his North American upbringing — embodying the voice of a 21st-century violinist.

A laureate of some of the world’s most distinguished competitions, Chooi won First Prize at the Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Hannover, Second Prize at the Queen Elisabeth International Violin Competition in Brussels, and the Yves Paternot Prize from Switzerland’s Verbier Festival. His career has been supported and mentored by luminaries including Pinchas Zukerman and Anne-Sophie Mutter, whose encouragement has helped shape his path as one of today’s leading violinists.

Chooi has collaborated with renowned conductors including Gianandrea Noseda, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Michele Mariotti, Xian Zhang, and Pinchas Zukerman. His orchestral partners include the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Belgian National Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Wiener Concert-Verein, and Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

He made his solo concerto debut at age 16 with l’Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal (OSM), launching a career that has since taken him to Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, London’s Royal Albert Hall, and Suntory Hall in Tokyo.

The 2025/26 season marked a significant milestone in Chooi’s career, highlighted by his debuts with the NHK Symphony Orchestra and Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, as well as a major European tour with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra across Munich,

Innsbruck, Paris, Antwerp, Eindhoven, Linz, and Prague. Other highlights included Hong Kong's Generation Next Arts Festival; concerto engagements with the Calgary Philharmonic and other North American orchestras; and his appointment as Artistic Partner of Wiener Concert-Verein for the 2025/26 season, including a concert at the Musikverein Wien and performances in France. Festival appearances included the Verbier Festival, Toronto Summer Music Festival, and recitals in Vancouver, Brussels, Antwerp, Tokyo, Seoul, Ottawa, and New York City.

Chooi's artistry is widely broadcast and recorded, including collaborations with Anne-Sophie Mutter and Mutter's Virtuosi for Deutsche Grammophon, Medici TV features, and appearances on NPO Radio Klassiek (Amsterdam), WQXR (New York), RTBF (Belgium), Swiss Public Radio, CBC Radio Canada, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and Danish Public Radio.

Born in Canada to Chinese-Indonesian parents, Chooi is now Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa (Canada), where he received the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Award in 2025. His work emphasizes research in violin performance and classical music as a cultural connector, community engagement, accessibility, and nurturing the future of the violin as a mentor and teacher.

Timothy Chooi performs on the legendary 1714 "Dolphin" Stradivarius, once played by the legendary Jascha Heifetz, generously loaned by the Sasakawa Music Foundation. He also plays the 1741 "Titan" Guarneri del Gesù (Canimex Group, Drummondville, Québec) and a 1761 Landolfi violin (University of Ottawa).

About Joo Won Kang

Joo Won Kang, South Korean baritone, has appeared this season at the Metropolitan Opera as Ping in *Turandot* and as Marcello in *La Boheme* (The role of his company debut in 2021). This season, he also made his Canadian Opera Company debut as Marcello and returned to Minnesota Opera in that same role.

In addition, he made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, both in Boston and at Carnegie Hall, singing in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk*, concerts which were recorded for release on DG Records. He also made his NY solo recital debut at Weill Hall.

Mr. Kang has appeared in leading roles, such as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, the title role in *EUGENE ONEGIN* and Ping in

TURANDOT with opera companies throughout the US, including San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Arizona Opera, Wolf Trap Opera and Utah Opera.

He sang the role of Chou En-lai in John Adam's *NIXON IN CHINA* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, conducted by the composer, and he made his New York City Opera debut as Manfredo in *L'AMORE DEI TRE RE*.

At the Wexford Festival in Ireland, he sang the leading roles in 2 rare operas, Donizetti's *MARIA DE RUDENZ* and Leoni's *L'ORACOLO*, as well as appearing there in recital.

Mr. Kang is a Top Prize winner in such important Vocal Competitions as Gerda Lissner Foundation, Opera Index, Giulio Gari International Competition and the McCammon Competition.

About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Under the leadership of Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) offers live performances, media initiatives, and learning programs that unite, educate and enrich our community through the engaging and transformative power of orchestral music experiences. The ASO engages the diverse international community of our city, bringing people together in harmony—including our youngest citizens, with extensive opportunities for youth and families to experience the power of live orchestra music.

The Orchestra's range and depth are featured in more than 150 concerts each year, including the flagship Delta Classical Series, Movies in Concert, Family Concerts, Coca-Cola Holiday series, and many community and education concerts. In addition, the ASO presents many vibrant, wide-ranging events and artists through its Delta Atlanta Symphony Hall Live presentations. The ASO also performs regularly with the ASO Chorus, originally founded by Robert Shaw, and currently under the direction of Norman Mackenzie. The Chorus is featured on nine of the ASO's 27 GRAMMY® Award-winning recordings.

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