

NJSO Accents: Russian poetry readings follow all-Tchaikovsky concerts, Oct 29–30



**Victoria Juharyan to read poems by Tchaikovsky's favorite poet,
Alexander Pushkin, and more**

Audiences will hear poetry in original Russian and in English

**Concert program features Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony,
First Piano Concerto and Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin***

Xian Zhang conducts in her debut performances as NJSO Music Director

Sat, Oct 29, at State Theatre in New Brunswick

Sun, Oct 30, at Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown

NEWARK, NJ (September 23, 2016)—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra presents Russian poetry readings following October 29–30 performances of the all-Tchaikovsky concert program that marks Xian Zhang's debut as NJSO Music Director. Victoria Juharyan—who earned audience raves for post-concert Russian poetry readings in 2015—returns to read poems by Tchaikovsky's favorite poet, Alexander Pushkin, and more, in the original Russian. Attendees will also hear the poems in English translation at these NJSO Accent events, which are free to concert ticketholders.

Poetry readings follow the 8 pm NJSO performance on Saturday, October 29, at the State Theatre in New Brunswick, and 3 pm Orchestra performance on Sunday, October 30, at 3 pm at the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown. The NJSO concerts that inspired the readings feature a trio of Tchaikovsky scores, led by Zhang in her inaugural concerts as the Orchestra's new artistic leader. The Russian composer is a favorite of the Music Director; she conducts his Symphony No. 5, Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin* and Piano Concerto No. 1. The latter features piano soloist Simon Trpčeski.

Juharyan has an extensive background in and deep love for Russian literature. The Armenia native is a PhD candidate in Slavic languages and literatures at Princeton University and a graduate of Saint Petersburg State University and Dartmouth College. She has written extensively on literature and theater and was co-editor of *The Journal of Comparative Literature* at Dartmouth College. In Russia, she worked as a radio correspondent for a major national radio station, Echo of Moscow, and as a news reporter for publications *Petersburg Student* and *Saint Petersburg State University Magazine*; she also served as a research specialist, translator and public-relations manager. She has organized and produced theatrical and film events, and she has served as a teaching assistant in courses on Russian literature, theater, language and culture, as well as classes about Shakespeare and German intellectual history.

The New York Times features the NJSO's Tchaikovsky program in its fall preview, anticipating the concerts "when this excellent orchestra introduces its charismatic new music director, Xian Zhang." The conductor has garnered acclaim for her rapport with the NJSO since her first guest appearance in 2010. Of the April 2016 performances that previewed her tenure with the Orchestra, *The Star-Ledger* wrote that Zhang "won over the crowd with both her remarks and her musicianship. And like any good trailer or overture, it left you wanting more. ... A good music director isn't just a conductor; she's also a communicator and a leader."

Inspired by the concerts and designed to inspire audiences, NJSO Accents are pre- or post-concert events that complement the concert experience and provide audience members with more opportunities to personally connect with the music and music makers. Additional information, as well as a schedule of 2016–17 season NJSO Accents, is available at www.njsymphony.org/accents.

More information on the October 29 and 30 Russian poetry readings is available at www.njsymphony.org/concerts-events/accent-events/russian-poetry-reading.

TICKETS

Concert tickets start at \$20 and are available for purchase online at www.njsymphony.org or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476). The NJSO Accent event is free to all ticketholders.

THE PROGRAM

Xian Zhang Debuts as Music Director

Saturday, October 29, at 8 pm | State Theatre in New Brunswick

Sunday, October 30, at 3 pm | Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown

Xian Zhang, conductor

Simon Trpčeski, piano

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

TCHAIKOVSKY Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin*

TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No. 1

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 5

The NJSO also presents this program on Saturday, October 27, at 1:30 pm at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, and Friday, October 28, at 8 pm at the Richardson Auditorium in Princeton. Full concert information is available at www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/xian-zhang-debuts-as-music-director.

Bank of America is Concert Sponsor of the October 29 performance.

NJSO ACCENTS: Russian Poetry Reading—Sat, Oct 29, and Sun, Oct 30, after the concert

Savor an evening of Tchaikovsky's music plus a rare opportunity to hear poems of his favorite poet, Alexander Pushkin, and more, both in the original Russian and English translation. Victoria Juharyan was a sensation at readings in 2015; she reprises her role here. Free for ticketholders. More information is available at www.njsymphony.org/concerts-events/accent-events/russian-poetry-reading.

MUSIC DIRECTOR XIAN ZHANG

Conductor Xian Zhang begins her critically anticipated tenure as NJSO Music Director in the 2016–17 season. Zhang is internationally renowned for “dynamic performances [that prove] hers is a name worth memorizing” (*The New York Times*) and “dynamism, agility and precision” (*The Telegraph*). WQXR placed her arrival in New Jersey in the top two of 2016’s classical stories to watch, and *The Star-Ledger* calls the conductor “a thrilling leader who has already established a strong rapport with the orchestra.”

Zhang has served as Music Director of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi since September 2009, with highlights including their televised debut at the BBC Proms in 2013 with Joseph Calleja. This season, Zhang takes on the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales (BBC NOW), thereby becoming the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra.

A regular conductor with the London Symphony and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras, Zhang’s recent highlights include debuts with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, as well as performances with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, BBC NOW at the BBC Proms and Orchestre National de Belgique, where she will appear again this season.

Recent operatic performances include a return to English National Opera conducting *La Bohème* and her debut with Den Norske Opera conducting *La Traviata*. Following Zhang’s hugely successful production of *Nabucco* with Welsh National Opera in 2014, which subsequently transferred to the Savonlinna Festival, she returned to the festival in summer 2016 to conduct *Otello*—marking her debut with the opera company itself.

Zhang frequently returns to her native China, where she is a regular conductor with the China Philharmonic and the Beijing and Guangzhou symphony orchestras. A champion for Chinese composers, she conducted Qigang Chen’s *Iris Devoilee* with the BBC NOW and National Centre for the Performing Arts, where she will return in 2017. She led the world premiere of Qigang Chen’s *Luan Tan* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic—a work commissioned by the orchestra—and the West Coast premiere of Tan Dun’s *The Triple Resurrection* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Working with young talented musicians continues to play a major part in Zhang’s life. She has been Artistic Director of the NJO Dutch Orchestra and Ensemble Academy since 2011, and last summer she made her hugely successful debut with the European Union Youth Orchestra, conducting them in Grafenegg, Amsterdam, Berlin, Rheingau and Bolzano.

Born in Dandong, China, Zhang made her professional debut conducting *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Central Opera House in Beijing at the age of 20. She trained at Beijing’s Central Conservatory, earning both Bachelor and Master of Music degrees, and she served one year on its conducting faculty before moving to the United States in 1998. She was appointed the New York Philharmonic’s Assistant Conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming their Associate Conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.

Learn more about Zhang at www.njsymphony.org/zhang.

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Named “a vital, artistically significant musical organization” by *The Wall Street Journal*, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra’s superb musicians.

The NJSO welcomes new Music Director Xian Zhang in the 2016–17 season. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at the State Theatre in New Brunswick, Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra’s statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People performances, NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). The NJSO's REACH (Resources for Education and Community Harmony) chamber music program annually brings original programs—designed and performed by NJSO musicians—to a variety of settings. In the 2015–16 season, Orchestra musicians performed at nearly 200 events, reaching more than 34,000 people in nearly all of New Jersey's 21 counties.

For more information about the NJSO, visit www.njsymphony.org or email information@njsymphony.org. Tickets are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's programs are made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, along with many other foundations, corporations and individual donors.

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