

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Jersey Symphony Announces Jessica Rivero Altarriba as its first-ever Colton Conducting Fellow

Altarriba will work closely with Music Director Xian Zhang and will serve as the conductor for New Jersey Symphony’s educational concerts as well as cover conductor for mainstage concerts, among other opportunities.

Newark, NJ–The New Jersey Symphony announced today that Jessica Rivero Altarriba will become the New Jersey Symphony’s first-ever Colton Conducting Fellow for the 2023–24 season, after a national search and conductor audition.

The New Jersey Symphony Colton Conducting Fellowship is an excellence-based program designed to support early-career orchestral conductors representing populations that have been historically underrepresented on the podium. The fellowship is funded as part of a generous \$1.5 million gift from Stewart and Judith Colton. This initiative continues the New Jersey Symphony’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, as an expansion of the existing Colton Fellowship for orchestral musicians. Altarriba will work closely with the Symphony’s internationally renowned Music Director Xian Zhang, the orchestra’s Artistic Advisory Committee and artistic staff.

Music Director Xian Zhang says, “I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with and mentor Jessica, and that the Colton Fellowship has provided us with this opportunity to further a young conductor’s career. I look forward to our season together, and to watching Jessica develop her talent in this role.”

Altarriba’s responsibilities include rehearsing and conducting select performances, serving as cover conductor for Classical subscription programs, and collaborating

closely with other New Jersey Symphony artistic and education staff members.

As cover conductor, Altarriba will personally prepare all scores on each program and will be ready to step in to replace the scheduled conductor in case of illness or logistical issues. The role also includes conducting off-stage ensembles as required by repertory, serving as score reader for supertitles or other production needs, and listening to rehearsals and performances and consulting with the conductor on balance and other artistic elements.

To provide the most comprehensive experience possible, Altarriba will also work closely with the New Jersey Symphony's Vice President of Artistic Planning, Erin Lunsford Norton. During the fellowship Altarriba will attend various concerts and community events representing the New Jersey Symphony, participate in planning meetings, media events, fundraising activities, educational and community engagement opportunities, administrative meetings and other activities.

Jessica Rivero Altarriba

An emerging Latin American conductor, Jessica Rivero Altarriba stands out for her charisma and enthusiasm on the podium. Altarriba is particularly interested in composers of the Classical era as well as contemporary music. Hailing from Cuba, Altarriba appreciates the communal culture of music-making, and she believes that music has the ability to transform lives.



Altarriba is the first-ever Colton Conducting Fellow for the New Jersey Symphony in the 2023–24 season, and in this role will serve as cover conductor for subscription performances as well as conducting select performances. Other upcoming performances in the 2023–24 season include the National Orchestral Institute + Festival and the Chicago Sinfonietta.

In the United States, Altarriba has appeared on the podium with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra and has also worked with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Abroad, Altarriba has appeared as guest conductor with Lüneburg Symphoniker in Germany and has also worked with Málaga Camerata and Virtuós Mediterrani in Spain.

In her native Cuba, Altarriba served as Music Director of the Eastern Symphony Orchestra in Santiago de Cuba and has appeared as guest conductor with several orchestras and contemporary music ensembles across the country, including a collaboration with the composition department of the Arts University, in which she premiered several new works. In addition, Altarriba's dedication to training younger musicians led to her appointment as the Music Director of Amadeo Roldán Conservatory and Esteban Salas Symphony Orchestra.

Altarriba's presence in Cuban musical festivals in the last five years includes the

Festival a Tempo con Caturla, Havana Jazz Plaza, Contemporary Music Festival, Festival Mozart Habana and Arts Festival, where she was awarded the first prize for young conductors.

Altarriba holds a bachelor's degree in conducting from the Arts University in Havana, Cuba. She is currently completing her master's degree at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, under the mentorship of Marin Alsop. She is the recipient of the Excellence in Music Leadership Fellowship at Peabody Institute.

New Jersey Symphony

The New Jersey Symphony has a long history of championing diversity, equity and inclusion in the orchestra field. In 1968, Henry Lewis became the first Black music director of a major American orchestra when he was appointed as the director of the New Jersey Symphony. Amidst the escalating fights for freedom in the late 1960s, Lewis was determined to stand against racial oppression by launching the orchestra's summer concerts in Newark, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr—a tradition the Symphony still holds today.

Presently, the Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. The Symphony is renewing its deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be a new experience; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of our organization—all to better reflect and serve our vibrant communities.

Since 2021, Music Director Xian Zhang has worked together with composer, violinist, educator and social-justice advocate Daniel Bernard Roumain, the orchestra's Resident Artistic Catalyst, to offer programming that connects with diverse communities in Newark and throughout New Jersey.

Internationally renowned Chinese American conductor Xian Zhang began her tenure as the New Jersey Symphony's current Music Director in 2016. Since her arrival at the New Jersey Symphony, Zhang has revitalized programming with an industry-leading commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in mainstage concerts. In its second century of bringing concerts to the people of New Jersey, the Symphony will present audience favorites in 2023–24 including Dvorak's "New World" Symphony, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, violinist Joshua Bell leading the orchestra in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and pianist Daniil Trifonov playing Gershwin's Concerto in F. New Jersey Symphony co-commissions include works by internationally-renowned living composers: Anna Clyne's *ATLAS* and Jessie Montgomery's *Snapshots*. Composers Rob Kapilow and Daniel Bernard Roumain will present world premieres.

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

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