

## Music Director Xian Zhang

Acclaimed for her connection with musicians and audiences, Xian Zhang serves as Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra through the 2023–24 season.

*The Star-Ledger/NJ.com* wrote of last season’s opening program: “Under her baton, Zhang made both lasting music, from the ‘Ode to Joy’ to the national anthem, as well as [Kate] Whitley’s new piece, sound vibrant and relevant right now.”

Zhang will become the principal guest conductor of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 2020. She is conductor emeritus of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, following a hugely successful period as music director from 2009–16. She has previously served as principal guest conductor of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, becoming the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra.

Acclaim for her work in New Jersey has resulted in a strong North American career, with upcoming engagements with the symphonies of Chicago, Dallas, Baltimore, Montreal, Ottawa (NAC), Cincinnati, Houston and Minnesota. In 2019, she returned to Los Angeles Philharmonic to conduct Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and the world premiere of a work by Caroline Shaw.

Zhang’s 2019–20 European engagements include the Philharmonia and English Chamber Orchestra in London, Orchestre National de Lyon in Paris, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France at La Folle Journée festival in Nantes and the Orchestre National de Belgique in Belgium. She will also make her debut with MDR Leipzig.

Previous opera engagements have included *Nabucco* with Welsh National Opera, *Otello* with Savonlinna Festival, *La Traviata* for Den Norske Opera (Oslo), *La Bohème* for English National Opera and *La forza del destino* with the National Opera in Washington, DC. She will lead a production of *Rigoletto* for the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing in July 2020. She will make her debut with Santa Fe Opera in August 2020.

In 2002, Zhang won first prize in the Maazel-Vilar Conductor’s Competition. She was appointed New York Philharmonic’s assistant conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming their associate conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.