

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Jersey Symphony announces Gregory D. McDaniel as Colton Conducting Fellow for the 2024–25 season

NEWARK, NJ—After a national search and conductor audition, the New Jersey Symphony announced Gregory D. McDaniel as the New Jersey Symphony’s Colton Conducting Fellow for the 2024–25 season.

The New Jersey Symphony Colton Conducting Fellowship is an excellence-based program that provides opportunities for early-career orchestral conductors from underrepresented backgrounds to gain valuable professional experience as a foundation to propel their careers and be successful in the music industry. This initiative continues the New Jersey Symphony’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. McDaniel will work closely with the Symphony’s internationally-renowned Music Director Xian Zhang, the orchestra’s Artistic Advisory Committee and artistic staff. The Colton Fellowship is funded as part of a generous gift from Stewart and Judith Colton.

Music Director Xian Zhang says, “I am very excited to mentor and work with Gregory this upcoming season. The Colton Conducting Fellowship has given us the ability to provide valuable opportunities and mentorship for early-career conductors, setting them up for successful futures. I am eager to work with Gregory this season, and to see where this Fellowship takes him.”

McDaniel’s responsibilities will include rehearsing and conducting select performances, as well as serving as cover conductor for Classical subscription programs. He will collaborate closely with other New Jersey Symphony artistic and education staff members.

As cover conductor, McDaniel 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. McDaniel will also be consulting with the conductor on balance and other artistic elements.

For a comprehensive experience, McDaniel will work closely with New Jersey Symphony's Vice President of Artistic Planning, Erin Lunsford Norton. During the fellowship, McDaniel will attend various concerts and community events representing the Symphony, participate in planning meetings, media events, fundraising activities, administrative meetings, educational and community engagement opportunities, as well as other activities.

Gregory D. McDaniel

Gregory D. McDaniel is a passionate conductor who is active in many different musical surroundings.

Praised for his "impeccable musicality and technique" (*La Presse* – Montreal), McDaniel was recently featured in concert with the Orchestre Métropolitain in Québec, conducting Lili Boulanger's *D'un Matin de printemps*. Last summer, as a member of the Orchestral Conducting Academy at the Académie du Domaine Forget de Charlevoix, he worked with the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec under the tutelage of conductors Thomas Rosner and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Last season, McDaniel led two projects for the Houston Ebony Opera Guild, including their annual African-American Music Gala, which featured a performance of Julia Perry's *Stabat Mater*. He also worked with Opera in the Heights as cover conductor and chorus master for their production of *La Bohème*, and cover conductor for their production of *Hansel and Gretel*.

This upcoming season, in addition to receiving the Colton Conducting Fellowship with the New Jersey Symphony, McDaniel will work with Opera in the Heights as cover conductor and chorus master for their production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He will also conduct the Houston premiere of Laura Kaminsky's pivotal opera *As One* for HOPERA.

Past seasons have included leading performances of William Grant Still's *Highway 1, USA* and Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up* for Opera Ithaca. He also had the opportunity to work with the Boise Baroque Orchestra in works by Mozart and Haydn, and he also worked with the Prizm Ensemble in a concert that featured Emmy and GRAMMY Award-winning baritone Reginald Smith, Jr. With the University of North Texas Chamber and Concert Orchestras, McDaniel conducted the works of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Puccini and more.

Some of McDaniel's past conducting opportunities include working with the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (TX), the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music Opera Conducting Initiative, and participating in a conducting fellowship with the Allentown Symphony. Past operatic opportunities include various works of Bizet (CCM) and a production of Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites* (EADO in Houston). A native of Houston, TX, Gregory received degrees from the University of North Texas in Orchestral Conducting and the University of Houston in Music Education.

About the New Jersey Symphony

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.

Internationally renowned Chinese American conductor Xian Zhang began her tenure as the New Jersey Symphony's current music director in 2016. Since her arrival, Zhang has revitalized programming with an industry-leading commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in mainstage concerts. Since 2021, 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. In 2024, Allison Loggins-Hull will succeed DBR as the orchestra's next Resident Artistic Partner.

In the 2024–25 season, the New Jersey Symphony will present *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene* with Renée Fleming, Billy Childs' *Diaspora*, Daniel Freiberg's *Latin American Chronicles*, Allison Loggins-Hull's *Can You See?*, Qasim Naqvi's *God Docks at Death Harbor* and Gabriela Ortiz's *Kauyumari*. Classical favorites on the season include Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, "Choral," Gustav Holst's *The Planets*—An HD Odyssey, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and Igor Stravinsky's Suite from *The Firebird*. Artistic partnerships include Paquito D'Rivera and his quintet, as part of the TD James Moody Jazz Festival; Nimbus Dance performing with *The Firebird* and *God Docks at Death Harbor*; Montclair State University Chorale performing on three programs; as well as Peking University Alumni Chorus and Starry Arts Children's Chorus appearing on the Lunar New Year Celebration concert with Xian Zhang.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit 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.

The New Jersey Symphony'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.

Press materials

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