

# Rossen Milanov



## 10th year leading the Princeton Symphony Orchestra



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by Gary Wien

The [Princeton Symphony Orchestra](#) is in a very unique place. It is located close enough to New York City and Philadelphia to lure both established and emerging artists, and situated in an Ivy League town that has wonderful facilities, history, and an appreciation for classical music. The orchestra is led by the renowned Music Director

Rossen Milanov who also leads the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, and RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra. Together, the symphony has been recognized for its innovation and vital role in the Princeton community. The 2019-20 season will be Milanov's 10th in Princeton.

"Rossen's brought an incredible professionalism," explained Marc Uys, Executive Director of Princeton Symphony Orchestra. "When he comes to Princeton, we have the benefit of someone who conducts major orchestras all over the world. He doesn't treat Princeton as a small town or a small orchestra and that is something which is hugely attractive to very high quality musicians doing work in Philadelphia and New York City in addition to a number of local musicians. This means there is

always a very strong competition whenever we have an audition, enabling us to be very selective. It also means we can perform challenging programs."

Milanov has also brought a dedication to working with emerging artists and the development of new works. As the music director of several orchestras, he not only has had the benefit of meeting talented musicians around the world but has performed with them as well. Programs this year include established and emerging artists



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such as Christina and Michelle Naughton, Natasha Paremski, Pablo Ferrández, Kiman Azmeh, Stefan Jackiw, and Daniel Rowland – many who are in their thirties. The season also features the World Premiere of Saad Haddad’s commissioned Clarinet Concerto.

“He believes very much in developing new and young talent,” said Uys. “It’s certainly not some-

thing we aim to do exclusively, but we feel that is a role we can play with the platform

we have. I think what he’s really brought is excellence and excitement among musicians and that is then translated to the experience that our audience has. They feel that in the audience and we have some very special concerts.”

This season marks the debut of Princeton Pops - a new series between the symphony and Mc-

Carter Theatre. Uys says the symphony has presented one pops concert a year for the past 15 years, but the additional performances will give the orchestra an opportunity to reach McCarter’s audience with the goal of bringing them back for future shows. The Orchestra has typically had about a 20% crossover for the audience. This not only allows the

orchestra a chance to expand its base, but it provides an opportunity to explore different genres and the

relationship between an orchestra with musical theatre or other performances one might not expect.

Between performances by emerging artists and series like Princeton Pops, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra helps keep classical music vibrant and moving forward with new ideas. Since its founding in 1980, the orches-

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tra has grown to include lecture events, children’s programs, and innovative collaborative programming. The orchestra views itself as Princeton’s hub for classical music knowledge and a gateway to the exploration of new music and performance practices.

“I think everyone who comes to

a Princeton Symphony concert is always surprised because nobody expects an orchestra of such exceptional quality in a small place,” added Uys. “I hope people give us a try because they won’t be disappointed. I don’t need to do any more work beyond getting you to come once.” ♦