



Ulysses James, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic**
David Weigert, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra**
Randy Ward, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra**
Caroline Mousset, Executive and Artistic Planning Director

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Rebecca Bryant Novak conducts Marquez, Montgomery, and Dvořák Emad Zolfaghari plays Bartók's Viola Concerto

Posted Feb 20, 2023 | WMPA News & Press

Alexandria, VA—Guest conductor Rebecca Bryant Novak conducts the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic in its fourth concert of the 2022/2023 Season on **March 26, 2023 at 3 pm at the George Washington Masonic Memorial Theater**. Rebecca is one of four Music Director Finalists in Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic's **current Music Director search**.

"I'm excited to bring together orchestral works inspired by folk music from cultures from around the world, written by composers from the nineteenth century through today. Marquez' Conga del Fuego Nuevo is an exciting work that fuses the dance rhythms of his native Mexico with a lush orchestral sound. Bartók, renowned for his pioneering work collecting folk song from his native Hungary, wrote his viola concerto in the final years of his life and in it, he shows the peak of his compositional style. Jessie Montgomery's Strum is a tribute to the American fiddling tradition and highlights the amazing variety of sound in the string orchestra. And finally, Dvořák's Symphony No. 9, "From the New World" is his cross-cultural tribute to African American and Native American melodies, which he carefully studied and believed would be the future of music in America. I can't wait to share this program with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association and its audiences."

"Sharp, distinct, and vibrant . . . The joy of the music shaped her conducting." - Südkurier

Rebecca Bryant Novak is the Associate Conductor of National Philharmonic, where she conducts Summer String Institute, Montgomery County Public Schools 2nd Graders Concerts, and the Johansen International Competition Showcase Concert, and serves as the assistant conductor for the National Philharmonic Chorale. Last season, she guest conducted Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra, where she conducted the U.S. premiere of Oana Vardianu's Genesis, and studied at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music and the Romanian Chamber Orchestra Conductor Master Class with Cristian Măcelaru. She has conducted in master classes with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Southwest German Philharmonic, Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, among others, with teachers including Gerard Schwarz, Atso Almila, Johannes Schlaefli. She studied conducting at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the Peabody Institute.

She is the creator and conductor of SoundWebs – a concert series and commissioning project that explores wordless music in surprising sonic spaces – and The Listening Lab – an educational concert program that teaches students intentional listening skills. A first-generation college graduate, she is committed to access in education and has served as a teaching artist with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids, MyCincinnati, and the Peaslee Neighborhood Center.

Featured soloist is Emad Zolfaghari who will perform Bartók's Viola Concerto. 18-year-old Toronto-based violist EMAD ZOLFAGHARI was accepted into the Curtis Institute of Music at age 16, where he currently studies with Hsin-Yun Huang and Misha Amory. He holds the title of co-principal viola of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. Zolfaghari has been the recipient of many prestigious awards, including second prize at the Johansen International String Competition, Grand Prize at the OMNI Music Competition, and the second prize at the Ronald Sachs International Music Competition. Zolfaghari has appeared as a soloist with several major symphony orchestras, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic and the Oakville Chamber Orchestra. He will additionally be a guest soloist with l'Orchestre Metropolitain in Maison Symphonique twice and the Guelph Symphony Orchestra in the 2022/23 season.

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“The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic’s 2022/2023 Season honors the **legacy of Artistic Director Emeritus Ulysses James in presenting great works with a particular focus on championing underrepresented and American composers.** After experiencing the artistry of all four Music Director finalists in concert throughout the season, both audiences and orchestra members will be able to share their thoughts through surveys, which will be impactful in determining the Philharmonic’s next Music Director,” says WMPA Executive and Artistic Planning Director Caroline Mousset. The determination will be made in Spring 2023, and the new Music Director will begin leading the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic in the 2023/2024 Season.

WMPA is committed to a responsible concert experience. All performers and staff are fully vaccinated. To ensure health and maximize safety for all concert attendees, **masks are required at all times in indoor spaces** for all patrons regardless of vaccination status. WMPA no longer requires vaccine verification.

IMAGE GALLERY High-resolution press images are available in [WMPA’s Media Image Gallery](#).

Tickets available at wmpamusic.org. Single tickets: \$25; 18 and under: Free Admission
View Full Season/Tickets:



About Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic:

Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic is a modern, diverse orchestra with a strong focus on presenting a wide diversity of composers, championing works by living composers, and featuring American works. As a firm proponent of diversity and inclusion, the Philharmonic is dedicated to creating innovative and exhilarating experiences through memorable performances for the community of both well-known and rarely played classical repertoire.

About Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association:

A performing arts organization whose mission is to enrich, inspire, and educate through live performances of high-quality music, WMPA is comprised of several major programs, including Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (grades 9-12), Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra (grades 6-9), the Lyceum Chamber Music Series presenting weekly concerts throughout the summer at Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, and offering more than 50 on-demand, full-length online concerts. WMPA continues to grow and has earned a reputation for bringing adventurous and engaging programs to the community.

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