

ARTS & CULTURE    OCTOBER 19, 2016 11:55 AM

# Tacoma Symphony Orchestra – now Symphony Tacoma – opens season with Eastern European showcase



BY ROSEMARY PONNEKANTI  
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Just like Constantinople and Prince, the Tacoma Symphony is changing its name. Beginning Friday (Oct. 21), the 70-year-old orchestra will be known as Symphony Tacoma in a rebranding effort to stand out from the crowd and better reflect its goals. The symphony will kick off the

new name and new season with a Friday-night gala at Tacoma Art Museum and a Saturday concert at the Pantages, featuring violinist Vadim Gluzman and an Eastern European program connecting past and present.

“It’s an exciting time for the symphony,” said director Sarah Ioannides. “Becoming Symphony Tacoma is separating the past from the future. This is a time where we can take our vision to the next step. It’s more than just the name. It’s about the fresh thinking the symphony is doing about what we can become.”

What they can become, according to the board-agreed statements that informed the new name, logo and even color choice, is an orchestra that is deeply rooted in community while “going beyond tradition to surprise and captivate.”

This plays out in a new logo of swooping maroon and lime curves that partly look like the letters “ST,” partly like the line a conductor’s baton makes through the air. It comes out in a new tagline “Touch the Sound,” with photos and design to match. It’s the first name change since the professional orchestra began as a community group in 1946.

That past-to-present vision also plays out in Saturday’s opening concert, says Ioannides. The program centers on Gluzman, a soloist Ioannides has been wanting to bring back since his sold-out show in 2015. The conductor first heard Gluzman years ago on a sample CD sent by an agent from the Juilliard School of Music, where the Soviet-born Israeli violinist was studying. The demo was “Fratres,” the sonorous instrumental work by Arvo Pärt that builds simple harmonies in his “tintinnabulation” style, with echos of medieval plainchant.

“I thought, wow, this is amazing,” says Ioannides. “His drive, precision and sound quality was one of the best I’d ever heard.”

As a bonus, Gluzman also happens to play the 1690 “Leopold Auer” Stradivarius violin.

On Friday and Saturday Gluzman will play the “Fratres,” in Pärt’s 1991 version for solo violin, strings and percussion. Saturday he’ll also play the Glazunov Violin Concerto, which combines a rich Russian sound with the forward-looking aesthetics Glazunov picked up from his travels to France and America.

Also forward-looking is the main work on the program: Dvorák’s Symphony no. 9 “From the New World.” Now a popular classic of orchestral repertoire, to Dvorák in 1892 it represented the clean, bright future of America, and included sounds his European audiences had never heard, like Native American melodies.

Finally, the symphony chorus — now called Symphony Tacoma Voices — will join the orchestra for Borodin’s “Polovtsian Dances,” a work based more in Russia’s musical past.

The orchestra also played a Russian-themed concert to open last year's season, but this is less a Russian program than one about "broad-minded composers thinking about diversity in music," says Ioannides.

And, like the orchestra's new name, it's a little old, a little new.

"It still shows ownership of where we're from, but allows us to reflect on where we're going," Ioannides says.

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## NEW WORLD SEASON OPENING

**Who:** Symphony Tacoma, directed by Sarah Ioannides.

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

**Where:** Pantages Theater, 901 Broadway, Tacoma.

**Tickets:** \$19-\$80.

**Also:** Gala 6 p.m. Friday (Oct. 21) at Tacoma Art Museum. Tickets are \$200.

**Information:** 253-591-5894, [broadwaycenter.org](http://broadwaycenter.org); 253-272-7264, [tacomasympphony.org](http://tacomasympphony.org).



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