



MEDIA CONTACTS:

For Refugee Orchestra: Rachel Adler-Golden, 857-636-8324, refugeeorchestraproject@gmail.com

For Gourmet Symphony: Camille Cintrón Devlin, 787-298-0717, ccintron@gourmetsymphony.org

Refugee Orchestra Project & Gourmet Symphony Showcase Refugees' Impact Through Music

April 10 D.C.-area performance aims to give voice to refugees, build understanding within United States

WASHINGTON, D.C.— As the world grapples with the most severe global refugee crisis since World War II, musicians convened by conductors John Devlin and Lidiya Yankovskaya, herself a refugee who found asylum in the United States, are coming together to provide a voice to refugees in the country.

At 7:30 p.m. on Monday, April 10, Yankovskaya and instrumentalists whose friends and families have fled to the U.S. to escape violence and persecution will perform a special concert for residents in the nation's capital and surrounding areas. The performance will take place in The Fillmore Silver Spring and will feature a full symphony orchestra and soloists - including award-winning soprano Zhanna Alkhazova - performing works by refugee composers such as Iranian composer Gity Razaz, Bela Bartok, and Irving Berlin, as well as music that involves refugee themes written by Verdi and Puccini, among others. The concert will showcase, through music, the positive impact those who have come to this country seeking safety and a better life have had on American culture and society. It is one of three fundraising events that the Refugee Orchestra Project is organizing this spring.

"I organized the Refugee Orchestra Project as a way to demonstrate, through music, the critical role that these individuals play in our cultural landscape," said Refugee Orchestra Project Conductor and Artistic Director Lidiya Yankovskaya. "In light of the negative rhetoric we regularly read and hear in the news today, I felt it important for all of us to once again be reminded of the essential role that refugees play in making American culture vibrant and strong."

Devlin and the D.C.-based Gourmet Symphony will support this endeavor by recruiting local musicians to participate in the concert, as well as food vendors who will provide product and services to encourage donations for the cause.

“Gourmet Symphony was thrilled when the Refugee Orchestra Project representatives reached out to us about a possible collaboration around this worthy cause. As artistic leaders in the nation’s capital, we feel that it is our responsibility to play an active role in our community and in matters of national importance. This concert will also allow us to engage culinary partners who are passionate about this cause. Our common goal is to offer a sense of connectedness and hope through the music and fellowship shared in this performance.”

Admission to the concert is free, donations are suggested. Guests who make a donation of at least \$50 will receive premium seating and a gourmet gift box including snack bites from Gourmet Symphony’s culinary partners at Beuchert’s Saloon and Mike Isabella Concepts, among others—this will be capped at 100. Proceeds from donations will go toward the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees in support of those seeking asylum in the U.S. and abroad.

WHO: Musicians whose friends and families have fled to the United States to escape violence and persecution

WHAT: Refugee Orchestra Project in collaboration with Gourmet Symphony

WHERE: The Fillmore Silver Spring, 8656 Colesville Road Silver Spring, MD 20910

WHEN: Monday, April 10, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

About the Refugee Orchestra Project

The Refugee Orchestra Project is in its second season. The project was conceived by conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya, herself a refugee who found asylum in the United States. In the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis Yankovskaya realized many of her own closest colleagues and friends were unaware of her own history as a refugee. In addition to raising funds for organizations supporting refugees worldwide, the Refugee Orchestra Project gives voice to refugees in the United States. The concert seeks to build support, human connections, and understanding within the larger community. More information at refugeeorchestraproject.org, and on Twitter at [@RefugeeOrchProj](https://twitter.com/RefugeeOrchProj) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/refugeeorchestraproject).

About Gourmet Symphony

Gourmet Symphony was founded in 2014 with the mission to reimagine the classical music experience by presenting culinary-inspired concerts that unite Washington, D.C.’s cultural and artisanal communities. By curating innovative programs that explore the connections between classical music and locally sourced cuisine, Gourmet Symphony breaks the conceived boundaries of traditional concert formats and inspires interest in both the classical and culinary arts. Gourmet Symphony debuted at the Atlas Performing Arts Center in February 2015 with the support of a successful Kickstarter campaign and has since presented events across the nation's capital, garnering critical acclaim for its pioneering approach to classical music programming. More information at gourmetsymphony.org. Follow GS on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/gourmetsymphony), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/gourmetsymphony), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/gourmetsymphony).

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