



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Igor Shakhman
(360) 735-7278

**BARTÓK *CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA* AND
PROKOFIEV PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 HIGHLIGHT
JANUARY 16 & 17 VANCOUVER SYMPHONY CONCERTS**

Maestro Salvador Brotons conducts guest artist pianist Dimitri Zhgenti

(Vancouver, WA) It's time for the first concert of 2016 as Maestro Brotons conducts Liszt, Prokofiev and Bartók, and welcomes pianist Dimitri Zhgenti to Skyview Concert Hall on January 16 & 17. The concerts feature the 70+ member orchestra led by music director and conductor Salvador Brotons, now in his 25th consecutive season as music director and conductor.

Opening the concert will be Franz Liszt's *Prometheus*, followed by Sergei Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 1, featuring Mr. Zhgenti. The entire second half will consist of Béla Bartók's 20th century masterpiece, *Concerto for Orchestra*.

The performances are Saturday, January 16 at 3 pm and Sunday, January 17 at 7 pm at Skyview Concert Hall, located at 1300 NW 139th Street in Vancouver, WA. Tickets are available for this concert and all 2015-2016 events at vancouversymphony.org or (360) 735-7278. Tickets are \$50 reserved, \$37 General admission, \$32 Senior (62+) and \$10 Student.

By the time he wrote his *Concerto for Orchestra* Bartók was in bad shape physically, emotionally and professionally. Distressed over his beloved country's capitulation to the Nazis, he had emigrated to New York in 1940, leaving behind the royalties and colleagues who had provided his financial and professional support. (He sent his original manuscripts to Switzerland for safe-keeping.) His activity as a scholar, performer and composer seemed over - a brief stint arranging archival folk recordings at Columbia University ended without hope for extension, his few recitals had met with critical hostility and public indifference and he had written no new music for four years. Always of tenuous health, he had been hospitalized, weighing a mere 87 pounds. Although destitute, he was intensely private and wary of even a hint of charity. He considered himself an exile in an alien land and ached to return home.

It was at this nadir of his life that two compatriots, violinist Josef Szigeti and conductor Fritz Reiner, arranged a commission for a major work for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. When its conductor Serge Koussevitzky arrived at the hospital with a substantial down payment, the effect was astounding. Bartók immediately rallied, and within seven weeks finished the piece. When given its world premiere by the Boston Symphony on December 1, 1944, the *Concerto for Orchestra* was an immediate critical and audience success. It drew attention to the neglected composer and his other work. More commissions arrived. New projects were started. But Bartók's health again failed and he died the next September, leaving the *Concerto for Orchestra* as his testament.

About Dimitri Zhgenti

Dimitri Zhgenti was born in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia. At the age of nine he began studying with Medea Javahia and later with one of the prominent professors of the Tbilisi State Conservatory, Rusudan Hodjava. In 2002, Dimitri moved to Vancouver, WA and in 2004 began studying with renowned American concert pianist and artist-teacher Joanna Hodges at the Joanna Hodges Piano Studio where he currently serves as an associate instructor. Mr. Zhgenti was accepted into the Alexander Toradze Piano Studio at Indiana University, where he studied under world renowned concert pianist Alexander Toradze and concert pianist and Senior Lecturer of Music Ketevan Badridze. There he completed both Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Starting in 2011, Dimitri began studying with American award-winning pianist and teacher Mark Westcott and has completed additional study at the SUNY New Paltz Piano Summer Festival under the artistic direction of Vladimir Feltsman. Dimitri was one of the top prize winners of the Gonzaga University Music Festival in Spokane and was the first prize winner in the WSMTA competition. Dimitri regularly performs in the studios of Toradze, Hodges and Westcott. He enjoys organizing recitals and benefit concerts and attracting musicians from around the world.

About The VSO

World-renowned Maestro Salvador Brotons is in his 25th season leading the professional orchestra of over 70 core members. For 37 seasons The VSO has been a cornerstone of Southwest Washington's arts community, providing world-renowned classical music, promoting young musicians, and opening doors to classical music for young audiences through events such as the annual In-School concerts, Young Artists Competition and various family-styled special events and performances. Many of our musicians are teachers in our school districts and beyond. The VSO provides our region with a multi-concert classical season every year and performs at Skyview Concert Hall, 1300 NW 139th Street, Vancouver. Season support for The VSO is provided by All Classical Portland and The Columbian. Additional support for the orchestra is provided by Oregon Public Broadcasting. Tickets for the VSO Chamber Series and all VSO symphony concerts are on sale now at (360) 735-7278 or www.vancouversymphony.org.

THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PO Box 525 Vancouver, WA 98666-0525 Phone (360) 735-7278
Fax: (360) 906-0355 www.vancouversymphony.org