

Violin star Vadim Gluzman continues a New Orleans love affair with three LPO concerts in Jan.



By Chris Waddington, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
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Certain New Orleans settings bring out the best in musicians: Ellis Marsalis sails at Snug Harbor, Terence Blanchard soars at the Fair Grounds. For *Vadim Gluzman* the winning trick is to play with Carlos Miguel Prieto and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Russian-born, Israeli violinist will rejoin the LPO on Jan. 9 (New Orleans) and Jan. 10 (Covington), and also will perform a special chamber concert at the New Orleans Athletic Club on Jan. 11. It's his fourth residency with the orchestra.

Gluzman first grabbed my attention with his April 2010 account of Leonard Bernstein's "Serenade (After Plato's Symposium)." In a season roundup, I praised Gluzman's "big, room-filling tone and his probing emotionality."

In May 2011, Gluzman helped the LPO close out its season with a bow-shredding, intensely personal performance of Tchaikovsky's violin concerto — a show that led me to throw down this critical gauntlet: "He is better than Itzhak Perlman, better than Midori, better than Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and all the other big-name string titans who have soloed with the LPO in recent years."

Gluzman returned the following season for an all-Russian program with the LPO. In his performance of Prokofiev's "Violin Concerto No. 2," Gluzman "pushed the tempo with attacking phrases, pulled back for the nursery lyricism of the andante, filled the room at a whisper, and plucked heart strings with the weeping, dark, all-Russian sound he conjured from his 1690 Stradivarius."

This week Gluzman will perform Alfred Schnittke's "Violin Concerto No. 4," a work dedicated to violinist Gidon Kremer. It was first performed with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1984. The visionary Russian composer, who died in 1998, won international acclaim for collage-like compositions in which rich baroque melodies, neoclassical rhythms, and dissonant passages are deftly combined. Schnittke's fourth concerto is full of virtuosic violin flights — and requires rare colors from the LPO, which will feature a prepared piano, an alto saxophone and a large percussion section.

Gluzman will stick around after his orchestral engagement to perform Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," with narrator Bob Edes Jr., and a septet drawn from the LPO. This sparkling neoclassical work follows the story of a young soldier who sells his violin to the devil in exchange for wealth beyond his dreams. Carlos Miguel Prieto will conduct Saturday's concert.

Vadim Gluzman with the LPO

The acclaimed violinist will perform at three concerts around the region. For tickets and details go to Lpomusic.com or call the box office at 504.523.6530.

The series begins with two orchestral concerts led by Carlos Miguel Prieto: Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m., Mahalia Jackson Theater; and Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m., First Baptist Church, Covington. Gluzman will perform the Violin Concerto No. 4 by Alfred Schnittke in a program that also includes "The Enchanted Lake" by Anatoly Liadov and the Symphony No. 2 by Jean Sibelius. Tickets begin at \$20

Gluzman also will appear in a chamber concert with LPO players that features Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m., New Orleans Athletic Club ballroom. Tickets start at \$35.