



IT'S A SWISS INTERLUDE FOR SOI

The Symphony Orchestra of India will perform a special concerto with Ustad Zakir Hussain at a prestigious music festival in Switzerland

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India's first and only professional orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI), will embark on a three-city tour of Switzerland from January 19 to 22, 2016, on a special invitation by the Migros Kulturprozent Classics — an annual festival that brings renowned orchestras, famous conductors and star soloists from around the world to established Swiss concert halls.

"We were delighted to get an invitation to perform at three venues (Zurich, Geneva and St. Gallen) this year at the Migros Festival. The Festival Director suggested we Indianise our selection instead of merely performing an entire set of western classics like all the other orchestras," said Mr Khushroo N. Suntook, NCPA chairman and founder of the Symphony Orchestra of India.

India's poster boy of per-

cussion, Zakir Hussain was the obvious choice to lend a *desi* touch to the repertoire and he has created a new concerto for *tabla* and orchestra — *Peshkar* — which he will perform at The Migros Festival with the SOI, conducted by its associate music director Zane Dalal.

Both Hussain and Dalal happen to be residents of Los Angeles and spent quality time collaborating on a piece that could combine the flamboyance and artistic brilliance of Hussain's *tabla* performance with the grace and rhythm of a western orchestra.

"The first commission by an orchestra is an important milestone and I am delighted to be the premier composer commissioned by the Symphony Orchestra of India. I hope our audiences in India and abroad will enjoy and appreciate this unique musical experience," Hussain said.

"This is SOI's first foray to Western Europe and we will



Zane Dalal



Zakir Hussain

be performing in the stellar company of leading orchestras such as the Mariinsky Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra to name a few, so we are gratified by the faith the Migros team has in us," added Zane Dalal.

The SOI was founded in 2006 by NCPA chairman Khushroo N. Suntook and renowned violin virtuoso Marat Bisengaliev (who serves as the orchestra's music director). As India's first and only professional symphony orchestra, the SOI has performed around India and internationally, and worked with renowned conductors including Charles Dutoit, Augustin Dumay, Yuri Simonov and Lior Shambadal.

The orchestra's core group of musicians are resident at the NCPA all year round; additional players are

recruited from a talented pool of professionals from around the world. The SOI features a growing number of Indian players, representing the finest home-grown talent, which provides a solid foundation for the future of orchestral playing in the country.

"The creation of first-class cultural institutions working towards international recognition is a vital component of India's growing prestige on the world stage. Moreover, the SOI is fulfilling an important cultural and educational role within India, developing international standards of professionalism among its musicians, thereby addressing the aspirations of young musicians and music-loving audiences throughout India," Mr Suntook said.

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