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Elisa Citterio performs as Tafelmusik's new leader Sept
By TRISH CRAWDFORD

Italian violinist left La Scala for leadership of Toronto's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra



Elisa Citterio, Tafelmusik's new music director. (MONICA CORDIVIOLA PHOTO)

Elisa Citterio is entering a brand-new world.

She has crossed the Atlantic Ocean — leaving Italy's renowned La Scala orchestra in Milan — to become the music director of Toronto's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, headquartered in a Bloor St. W. church.

After 33 years under the steady, entrepreneurial hand of music director Jeanne Lamon, Tafelmusik has plucked the Italian violin virtuoso from her European-orchestra and chamber-music roots to refresh its vision.

On Thursday, Sept. 21, Citterio showcases her skills as violinist, entertainer, and artistic inspiration in Tafelmusik's season-opening concert at Koerner Hall.

Titled *A Joyous Welcome*, it includes composers Handel and Corelli as well as two Vivaldi compositions in which she will showcase her talents — "Summer," from the *Four Seasons*, and "Concerto in F minor."

Since quitting her old job in March, Citterio has been actively learning about both this city and her new orchestra, noting in particular the variety of fare in local restaurants, including a proliferation of Chinese restaurants, compared to the predominance of Italian fare back home.

“The first time we came, I was really excited to see all the cultures of Toronto,” she says — and she has started to observe the cultural differences at the workplace, too.

The orchestra members, some of whom were on the 11-member search committee, have lived up to Canada’s reputation for politeness — during a break in her first rehearsal, the musicians sat quietly waiting for her instructions. “At La Scala, I would have to say, ‘Please shut up.’ They all talk.”

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