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2022/23

Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director



Celebrate 100:
A Symphonic Century

February 8 & 9

**Gimeno Conducts
Romeo and Juliet**

February 11

NACO: Heggie & Atwood + Brahms

February 22, 24 & 25

Mozart & Rachmaninoff

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David S. Perlman, Program Editor
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Land Acknowledgement

Sewatokwa'tshera't (The Dish With One Spoon)

.....

Please join us in acknowledging that the land we are gathered on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit River, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We further acknowledge that this city, Toronto, is within the territory governed by the Dish With One Spoon treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee, which bound them to share the territory and protect the land, and that subsequent Indigenous Nations and Peoples, Europeans, and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect.

As we celebrate 100 years of community-building and sharing the healing power of art, we are grateful to live and make music on this land.

.....

Darker Days Bring Bright Prospects



AS I LOOK AT THE RANGE OF WORK at the beginning of this new year, I'm struck by the variety of ways that the word, *new*, presents itself this month. The feeling of renewal, of deepening

relationships, and of exploring the ways in which the old are made new again through extraordinary artistry and collaboration, reflects the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's breadth and depth of artistic excellence. Whether it's through the U.S. première of Samy Moussa's Symphony No. 2, which the TSO will perform at Carnegie Hall, or Gustavo Gimeno's new compilations of work from Prokofiev and de Falla, or a thought-provoking performance of a riveting new work by regular guest ensemble, NAC Orchestra, our offerings this month is an invitation to experience something we haven't heard before.

We are delighted to welcome extraordinary young violinist María Dueñas to perform with us here in her TSO debut program featuring Lalo's supremely challenging *Symphonie espagnole*, and even more so that she will join us on tour to Ottawa, New York City, and Chicago, where the tour ends on Valentines Day (a perfect setting for the tour program's *pièce de résistance*—Gustavo Gimeno's compilation of an orchestral suite from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*).

While the Orchestra is on tour, we have the pleasure of hosting the National Arts Centre Orchestra performing the orchestral première of Jake Heggie and Margaret Atwood's *Songs for Murdered Sisters*. Conductor Laureate Sir Andrew Davis and

pianist Louis Lortie join us at the end of the month with a phenomenal program of work by Berg, Mozart and Rachmaninoff. Topping things off, the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra's Winter concert on February 25 will feature Gustavo Gimeno's selection of movements from Manuel de Falla's ballet, *El amor brujo*, a work they will reprise in the Spring, side-by-side with the TSO.

February may be the shortest month of the year, but we have filled it with an extraordinary array of music for you. I'm filled with excitement at the new ways we keep finding to welcome and surprise you, and to continue bringing beautiful music to your ears. As we continue through 2023 together, I look forward to enjoying many more of these new experiences with you.

Mark Williams
Chief Executive Officer

Photo © Max Power

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Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Gustavo Gimeno's tenure as the tenth Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra began in 2020/21. Since his appointment, he has reinvigorated the artistic profile of the Orchestra, engaged with musicians and audiences alike, and brought performances of familiar works as well as some of today's freshest sounds. In leading the TSO through the pandemic and into this vibrant 100th-anniversary celebration, he has overseen renewed community engagement, and sown the seeds for an ambitious program of commissioning new works from emerging and established composers.

During the 2022/23 season, Gimeno and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra continue to celebrate the Orchestra's Centennial with major symphonic works including Bruckner's Symphony No. 4, Prokofiev's Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. Gimeno will share the stage with, among other soloists, Yo-Yo Ma, Yuja Wang, Yefim Bronfman, and Jean-Guihen Queyras. He and the Orchestra will also embark on the first tour of their partnership, including a concert at Ottawa's National Arts Centre, a return visit to Carnegie Hall, and the Orchestra's début at Chicago's Symphony Center.

This season, Gimeno and the TSO will make their first commercial recording, memorializing Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, with pianist Marc-André Hamelin and ondes Martenot player Nathalie Forget, for the Harmonia Mundi label. This builds on Gimeno's relationship with the label, for whom he has recorded Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Stravinsky's ballets *The Firebird* and *Apollon musagète* with Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg.

Gimeno has held the position of Music Director with Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg since 2015, and will become Music Director of Teatro Real in Madrid in 2025/26—he currently serves as their Music Director Designate. As an opera conductor, he has conducted at great houses such as the Liceu Opera Barcelona; Opernhaus Zürich; Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, Valencia; and Teatro Real, Madrid. He is also much sought-after as a symphonic guest conductor worldwide: débuts in 2022/23 include Staatskapelle Berlin and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Gimeno is also regularly reinvited to the Royal Concertgebouworkest, and touring projects have included concerts as far afield as Japan and Taiwan.

Gustavo Gimeno's TSO début was on February 21, 2018, in a program featuring Johannes Moser in Dvořák's Cello Concerto, Ligeti's *Concert Românesc*, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 4.

He was appointed Music Director Designate in November 2019, but his first appearance as Music Director wasn't until November 2021 when he conducted works by Joan Tower, Dvořák, Steve Reich (in which Gimeno also made his TSO soloist début playing percussion!), Stravinsky, and Morawetz.

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Anticipating a *Tour de force*



HOW WONDERFUL TO BE BACK WITH YOU ALL in Toronto for what promises to be a monumental month of returns and débuts, with three orchestras, four cities, and no fewer than six concert halls involved!

It all begins with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's tour—my first as Music Director—to Ottawa, New York, and Chicago, from February 11 to 14. Touring is incredibly important for an orchestra. Not only does it allow us to grow closer, socially and emotionally, as a collective, but it also yields innumerable artistic benefits: After first performing the tour program at Roy Thomson Hall on February 8 and 9, as a preview for our hometown audience, we will have three additional opportunities to present the same repertoire in vastly different halls, for entirely new audiences, each with its own way of listening. This is why I am so excited to be going on the road with this Orchestra, because of what we will discover, together, in the music along the way.

While we are in Ottawa, our friends from the National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO) will be performing in Toronto, as part of our annual "exchange." The new piece they are bringing, *Songs for Murdered Sisters*, is an exceedingly poignant work composed by Jake Heggie, with text by Margaret Atwood, and sung by baritone Joshua Hopkins, whose family tragedy inspired its creation. Co-commissioned by NACO, the piece's inclusion is representative of the programming philosophy our two orchestras share, which prioritizes vigorous commissioning, and repeat performances, of new Canadian music. In this spirit, we are

taking Samy Moussa's colourful Symphony No. 2, a TSO Commission, on tour with us.

New creative collaborations are also an integral part of our organizational ethos, which is why 20-year-old violinist María Dueñas will be making her TSO début with the tour program. I can't wait for the Orchestra to play with the extraordinary Spanish artist—and her with them—at Roy Thomson Hall, throughout the tour, and at Massey Hall shortly thereafter. The latter venue, which was where the TSO played its first concert 100 years ago, and the hall it called home for six decades, represents our hallowed past, and María signifies orchestral music's auspicious future, so the evening will be one of great significance for us all.

The final two concerts in February serve to extend this intergenerational interplay: Mozart & Rachmaninoff will see Conductor Laureate Sir Andrew Davis reunite with celebrated pianist Louis Lortie, and the two go back a long way—Lortie first appeared with the TSO under Davis (then Music Director) in 1978, both at Massey Hall and on our groundbreaking tour of China. And the TSYO Winter Concert will feature the remarkable talents of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, led by TSYO Conductor Simon Rivard and RBC Resident Conductor Trevor Wilson, performing diverse works by Beethoven, Falla, and Sibelius. A musical tour of Germany, Spain, and Finland, all from the comfort of George Weston Recital Hall.

Gustavo Gimeno
Music Director

TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Gimeno Conducts Romeo and Juliet

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor
María Dueñas, violin

Samy Moussa
Symphony No. 2
TSO Commission

Édouard Lalo
Symphonie espagnole for Violin and
Orchestra, Op. 21

- I. Allegro non troppo
 - II. Scherzando: Allegro molto
 - III. Intermezzo: Allegretto non troppo
 - IV. Andante
 - V. Rondo: Allegro
-

Intermission

Sergei Prokofiev/comp. Gustavo Gimeno
Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*

- I. Montagues and Capulets
- II. The Young Juliet
- III. Dance
- IV. Masques
- V. Romeo and Juliet Balcony Scene
- VI. Death of Tybalt
- VII. Romeo and Juliet before Parting
- VIII. Romeo at the Grave of Juliet
- IX. The Death of Juliet

Program 1

Wednesday,
February 8, 2023
8:00pm

Thursday,
February 9, 2023
8:00pm

*Gustavo Gimeno's appearances
are generously supported by
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Samy Moussa (b. 1984) Symphony No. 2

Toronto Symphony Orchestra Commission
Composed 2022

21 min

THE WORLD PREMIÈRE of Samy Moussa's Symphony No. 2, dedicated to Gustavo Gimeno, was one of the high points of his year-long 2021/22 residency as the TSO's first Spotlight Artist—an appointment that provided unprecedented access to the Orchestra's artistic resources. "One interesting thing about the piece is the instrumentation," the Montreal-born, Berlin-based Moussa said at the time. "The TSO allowed me anything I wanted for the commission, which was wonderful, both for things I wanted to do and wanted not to do. As well, composing for the TSO, whatever I had in mind I knew they could do. And this was liberating for me."

And the things he *didn't* want? "For one thing, no trombones," he said. "For two reasons: to break the habit of relying on particular instruments for a certain kind of power, and, because my next project is a trombone concerto, I wanted to allow myself to yearn for the trombone!"

Trumpets are also replaced, by flugelhorns; and a euphonium has been added to the usual roster of symphonic instruments. As he explained: "I wanted to create a new brass section sound. Unlike trumpets and trombones, flugelhorns have a conical bore; euphonium and tuba are conical bore instruments too. And for percussion I also wanted a grouped sound, so only pitched instruments—no bass drum, triangle, cymbals or gongs. Instead, marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, crotales, glockenspiel. That was very important for my aesthetic of the piece."

The 20-minute score is divided into three movements, but the music never stops

except for a very small moment near the end. "Watch for the chorale in the brass at the start. It comes back more than once, and of course at the end."

—Program note by David S. Perlman

Moussa's distinctiveness as a composer is marked by limpid approaches to harmony and form, resulting in a stream of ever-changing and uniquely vivid sound worlds, and a succession of performances by such wide-ranging ensembles as the Vienna Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Dallas and Houston Symphony Orchestras, London Symphony Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic, DSO, l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra.

His catalogue of published compositions (40 at last count) ranges from opera and oratorio to solo. Among these compositions are a dozen pieces for orchestra alone, and a further six for orchestra and soloist. Works underway in his composition diary include commissions for the Dutch National Opera & Ballet Amsterdam, and a flute concerto for Emmanuel Pahud. The aforementioned concerto for trombone and orchestra is scheduled for an April 14, 2023 première with the Orchestre national de Lyon, with Jörgen van Rijen, trombone).

Also an accomplished conductor, Moussa has performed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Opera, and Haydn Orchestra. Engagements this season include performances with Musikkollegium Winterthur and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.



Édouard Lalo (1823–1892)
Symphonie espagnole
for Violin and Orchestra,
Op. 21

Composed 1874

32 min

ÉDOUARD LALO belongs to a group of composers widely known for a single work—in his case, this spectacular showpiece for violin and orchestra. Coming of age as a composer during a period when French musical tastes of the day favoured lightness and grace over depth and seriousness, and preferred vocal music over the purely instrumental kind, he was greeted with indifference for so long that he gave up composing completely during the 1860s and early 1870s.

Inspiration to resume came largely from violinist Pablo de Sarasate, Spanish-born but a resident of Paris since the age of 11. Lalo, whose own Spanish ancestry harkened back to the 15th century, composed a largely forgotten Violin Concerto in F Major for Sarasate in 1874, after which they immediately began work together on the *Symphonie espagnole*, which Sarasate premièred in Paris. It was an instant success, at home and abroad, launching a trend—French music that pays tribute to Spain: Bizet’s opera *Carmen* (which débuted less than a month later), Ravel’s *Rapsodie espagnole*, *Alborada del gracioso*, and *Boléro*, and Debussy’s *Ibéria*.

The work has many of the characteristics of a typical 19th-century concerto, but Lalo chose to call it a symphony, rather than a concerto or a suite, because of the number of movements. “Artistically, a title means nothing, but commercially, a tainted, discredited title is never a good thing,” Lalo wryly observed. “I kept the title because it conveyed my thought—that is to say,

a violin solo soaring above the rigid form of an old symphony.”

The first movement is the most traditionally symphonic of the four original movements (the *Intermezzo* was added later). A brief orchestral introduction sets up the first entry of the soloist. The rhythm of a fiery Spanish dance then establishes itself. The second theme brings a taste of melancholy without slowing the music down at all. The second movement is a lively, playful, almost waltz-like scherzo, in which the spicy flavour of Spanish folk style becomes stronger. The delicate orchestral textures include pizzicato (plucked) strings, cleverly imitating the sound of a Spanish guitar.

The *Intermezzo* that follows was left out of most concert performances for 60 years. (There is a 1933 Victor recording of Yehudi Menuhin, then 17 years old, with the Paris Symphony under Georges Enesco.) In the right soloist’s hands, it provides a compelling narrative bridge between the playful scherzo and the movements that follow.

The fourth movement opens with a serious, almost hymn-like theme in the orchestra, which the soloist takes up and carries forward with ever-increasing passion, before a relaxing calmness is reasserted. In the finale that follows, the full virtuosic flair of the piece is unleashed—slowly at first, but ultimately outdoing the previous movements for catchy tunes, lavish colour, wit, spectacular solo fiddling, and sheer, joyful energy.

—Program note by Don Anderson

“
Artistically, a title means nothing, but commercially, a tainted, discredited title is never a good thing.

—ÉDOUARD LALO

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

comp. Gustavo Gimeno

Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*

Composed 1934–1940

43 min

OVER THE CENTURIES, at least 60 composers have written music directly inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, a handful of which still receive regular performances, including Vincenzo Bellini's opera *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (*The Capulets and the Montagues*, 1830); Charles Gounod's five-act *Roméo et Juliette* (1864); and Hector Berlioz's "symphonic drama" *Roméo et Juliette* (1839). Thirty years after Berlioz, a young Tchaikovsky side-stepped the thorny question of how to set Shakespeare's words to music by creating a strictly orchestral setting.

Tchaikovsky's three great ballet scores—*Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*—came later, inspiring many latter-day Soviet practitioners, none more so than Prokofiev (whose early efforts were motor-driven exercises in conscious modernity). With *The Prodigal Son* (1929), he began moving toward a warmer approach, and, in 1934, the Leningrad Opera and Ballet Company (later renamed the Kirov) commissioned him to compose a *Romeo and Juliet* ballet.

Prokofiev and the company's director, Sergei Radlov, spent months working on the scenario, including, at one point, attempting to give it a happy ending. "The reasons for this particular bit of barbarism were purely choreographic," Prokofiev recalled. "Live people can dance, but the dying can hardly be expected to dance in bed."

The project's path to fruition was fraught. Newly installed company management at the Kirov had doubts about Shakespeare as ballet, and withdrew. Prokofiev then struck a deal with Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre and

completed the score in five months, only to have the Bolshoi directors also dismiss it as "unsuitable for dancing."

Undaunted (and in hope of having a calling card for the full ballet), Prokofiev arranged from it a set of ten piano transcriptions and two orchestral suites (a third followed in 1946), which were warmly received. In 1939, the Kirov agreed to mount the production, but two weeks before the scheduled première, the company's dancers and musicians, accustomed to virtually plotless divertissements set to loud music, rebelled, voting to cancel the production, "to avoid a scandal."

Despite these, and other, complications, the production's début on January 11, 1940, was a triumph: the music was instantly hailed as a masterpiece. As the Kirov's star choreographer, Leonid Lavrovsky, described it: "Prokofiev developed the principles of symphonism in ballet music. He was one of the first Soviet composers to bring to the ballet stage genuine human emotions and full-blooded musical images. The boldness of his musical treatment...served to turn the performance into a dramatic entity."

For the three individual suites Prokofiev compiled while the full ballet was in limbo, he cherry-picked movements from the full ballet score, with concert logic taking precedence over dramatic sense. The suite you will hear in this performance draws from all three suites, thereby re-establishing the throughline and emotional power of the magnificent full score.

—Program note by Don Anderson



These performances mark María Dueñas's TSO début.

María Dueñas, violin

Spanish violinist María Dueñas beguiles audiences with the breathtaking array of colours she draws from her instrument. Her technical prowess, artistic maturity, and bold interpretations have inspired rave reviews, captivated competition juries, and secured invitations to appear with many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors.

María Dueñas studies with world-renowned violin teacher Boris Kuschnir at the Music and Arts University of Vienna. Born in Granada in 2002, she was accepted at the Conservatory in her hometown at the age of 7. In 2014, she won a scholarship to study abroad and went to Dresden, where she was soon spotted by conductor Marek Janowski, at whose invitation she would later make her début as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony. Two years later, she and her family moved to Austria, following the recommendation of her mentor Vladimir Spivakov. A multi-faceted musician, she is also fond of composing and wrote her own cadenzas for the violin concertos of Mozart and Beethoven.

Following an array of first prizes at various prestigious international competitions, María Dueñas created a stir at the 2021 Menuhin Violin Competition, where she won not only the first prize and audience prize, but also a global online following. Since then, she has been in high demand worldwide and has performed with many major orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, Dresdner Philharmonie, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and NHK Symphony Orchestra, under conductors such as Marek Janowski, Manfred Honeck, Vladimir Spivakov, Vassily Sinaisky, Gustavo Gimeno, and Michael Sanderling.

In August 2021, she made her début with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel at the Hollywood Bowl, and joined them again in May 2022 to give the world première of Gabriela Ortiz's violin concerto, *Altar de Cuerda*, which she has since also performed in Boston and at Carnegie Hall in New York. Her tour with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under Gustavo Gimeno is a highlight of the 2022/23 season.

María Dueñas has recently signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Her début album, featuring Beethoven's Violin Concerto together with Wiener Symphoniker and Manfred Honeck, will be released in May 2023. She plays on a Nicolò Gagliano violin kindly loaned from Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, and on the Stradivari "Camposelice" of 1710, on generous loan from Nippon Music Foundation.

For biographical information on conductor Gustavo Gimeno, please turn to page 8.

DEDICATION

One week after my sister Nathalie's murder in September 2015, my wife and I met with Daphne Burt and Stefani Truant at the NAC Orchestra to discuss the development of a new musical work that would both commemorate Nathalie and address the worldwide epidemic of gender-based violence. They, along with Alexander Shelley, have championed Songs for Murdered Sisters from the very beginning. I am indebted to them and the entire team at NACO for making this vision a reality.

For years, I found myself feeling numb about Nathalie's murder—it was something too shocking to comprehend. But since receiving Margaret's haunting words and then Jake's gorgeous music, I have shed countless tears. The words and music, in their own separate ways and woven together, have opened a portal to my heart, connecting me to complicated emotions that had lain dormant. This work has provided meaning for me, transforming my grief into something palpable.

I hope these songs awaken the hearts of those who may not yet recognize this epidemic. If this work can motivate someone to do their part, take action, and perhaps save someone from a similar plight, then I may truly hope to honour my sister's memory. Please visit songsformurderedsisters.com to see how you can help.

This song cycle is dedicated to Nathalie Warmerdam, Carol Culleton, and Anastasia Kuzyk—and the countless sisters who have been taken over the years.

—JOSHUA HOPKINS

**Saturday,
February 11, 2023**

8:00pm

NACO: Heggie & Atwood + Brahms

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Joshua Hopkins, baritone
National Arts Centre Orchestra, guest orchestra

Emilie Mayer
Faust-Overture, Op. 46

Jake Heggie/text by Margaret Atwood
Songs for Murdered Sisters

NACO Co-commission

- I. Empty Chair
 - II. Enchantment
 - III. Anger
 - IV. Dream
 - V. Bird Soul
 - VI. Lost
 - VII. Rage
 - VIII. Coda: Song
-

Intermission

Johannes Brahms
Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Andante moderato
- III. Allegro giocoso
- IV. Allegro energico e passionato

*A Work Jointly Commissioned
by Canada's National Arts
Centre Orchestra and Houston
Grand Opera.*

*Piano and Voice Premiere
[March 8, 2022] at the Rothko
Chapel in Houston, Texas.*

*Orchestra and Voice Premiere
[February 9-10, 2023] in Southam
Hall, at the National Arts Centre
in Ottawa, Canada.*

*Poems by Margaret Atwood ©
(Based on the original poems
by Margaret Atwood
© Margaret Atwood 2020).*

*Margaret Atwood's poem Songs
for Murdered Sisters is from the
collection Dearly, published
by HarperCollins US, Penguin
Random House UK and Penguin
Random House Canada. Dearly
is published in French by Editions
Robert Laffont.*

*The score for Songs for Murdered
Sisters is published by Bent Pen
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ON BEHALF OF THE NAC ORCHESTRA, a very warm welcome to tonight's concert, in which we juxtapose a daring and powerfully emotional symphony from 1885 with a profound and beautiful new commission from our own time.

Brahms's Fourth (and final) Symphony is, as is so often the case with this extraordinary composer, a stunning example of formal precision and efficiency leading to blistering emotional impact. It underscores how our sense of beauty is so inextricably linked with underlying structural rigour—at once intensely human, but constantly operating on a parallel, more veiled, metaphysical plane. It is a privilege to conduct a work like this.

It is a similar privilege to tonight be premièring a new work by Jake Heggie and Margaret Atwood. Commissioning and performing new music stands at the heart of what we do at Canada's National Arts Centre and this piece demonstrates the power and importance of this medium as a conduit for the stories and experiences of our time.

Joshua Hopkins's prefatory words effectively introduce *Songs for Murdered Sisters*. I would like to add only this: we are indebted to him for his trust, for asking us to walk alongside him on this journey, and for finding some means of translating a senseless, brutal act into a work of art that might move, awaken, and transform.

Thank you for being with us.

Alexander Shelley, Music Director
NAC Orchestra

Emilie Mayer (1812–1883) *Faust-Overture, Op. 46*

Published 1880

12 min

MANY CONCERTGOERS CAN CITE FANNY

MENDELSSOHN and Clara Schumann as representative women composers of the 19th century. Another name to add to this list is that of Emilie Mayer, whose lifespan almost exactly matched that of Wagner. Mayer was born in a small town in the extreme northeast of Germany, went to neighbouring Stettin (now Szczecin, Poland) to study with Carl Loewe, and in 1847 moved to Berlin to study with Adolf Bernhard Marx and Wilhelm Wieprecht.

Her music was played and published throughout her lifetime, though often at her own expense. What sets Mayer apart from most other women composers of the time is the sheer size and breadth of her catalogue: eight symphonies, 15 concert overtures, 12 cello sonatas, nine violin sonatas, seven piano trios, an opera, songs, piano music, and more.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians calls her "the most prolific German woman composer of the Romantic period." Following her death, Mayer's music fell into obscurity; only in recent years has some of it resurfaced and been recorded.

Mayer's *Faust-Overture* was published in Stettin. In mood and style it much resembles Schumann's *Manfred Overture*, whose subject is a restless, troubled soul. The slow introduction (*Adagio*) probably is meant to depict Faust alone in his study. The score's sole programmatic indication comes near the end, where the words "Sie ist gerettet" ("She [Margaret] is saved") appear at the point where the music moves from B minor to B major. Formally, the main *Allegro* section of the overture is laid out in modified sonata form, with a first subject in the minor mode and a secondary one in the major. The coda returns to the minor mode up to the point where Margaret is "saved," where B major once again prevails to the triumphant end.

—Program note by Robert Markow

Jake Heggie/text by Margaret Atwood *Songs for Murdered Sisters*

Composed 2021

25 min

ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2015, three women in Renfrew County, Ontario, were murdered in their respective homes by a man with whom each had had a relationship. One of the victims of this shocking crime spree, now recognized as one of the worst cases of domestic violence in Canadian history, was Nathalie Warmerdam, beloved sister of baritone Joshua Hopkins.

In grappling with his grief, Hopkins conceived of the song cycle that became *Songs for Murdered Sisters*, co-commissioned for Hopkins by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and Houston Grand Opera. It was released first as a film, with the Houston Grand Opera, and then as an album with the composer at the piano. The work's orchestral premiere was two nights ago in the National Arts Centre's Southam Hall in Ottawa.

Composer Jake Heggie describes the interweave of the words and music in the eight songs:

"In **Empty Chair**, fragile harmonies bring to mind a music box now silenced—a warmth and presence now flown—nothing left now, just emptiness and air. In **Enchantment** the music swirls and sparkles with imagination and wit as the singer tries to imagine her absence as something magical and mysterious, but is ultimately haunted and pulled back to reality. In **Anger**, stark, timeless, dark chords grow louder as his sister innocently opens the door to the 'red anger' of the man who murdered her. In **Dream**, a melancholy, distant tune is suspended in a cloud of delicate harmonies as the singer dreams about his sister, both of them young, until she tells him she has to go, and truth once again comes crashing in.

"In **Bird Soul** he looks to the sky for answers as to where his sister's soul might be.

The music evokes bird song as it sparkles, dips and soars, echoing the emotional quest. In **Lost** he contemplates the countless women murdered by angry, jealous, fearful men over thousands of years. 'So many sisters lost'—the chords echo this timeless sorrowful repetition. **Rage** follows, with a haunted wind seeming to sigh through the brass, percussion, and the lowest strings of the harp, nearly boiling over as the singer contemplates killing the man who killed her, then suddenly blossoming and flowing with new warmth and beauty when he wonders if the ghost of his sister might ask 'Would you instead forgive?' **Coda: Song** then offers a simple tune that brings comfort as the singer realizes that when he breathes and sings, his sister is with him. He hums. The air vibrates. The eternal ohm."

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

Composer Jake Heggie (b. 1961) is "arguably the world's most popular 21st-century opera and art song composer" (*The Wall Street Journal*). He is best known for his opera *Dead Man Walking*, described as "the most celebrated American opera of the 21st century" (*Chicago Tribune*), and widely acclaimed for *Moby-Dick*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Three Decembers*, *Two Remain*, and *If I Were You*. He is currently at work on his tenth full-length opera, *Intelligence*, with Jawole Zollar and Gene Scheer. The operas and his nearly 300 art songs have been performed extensively on five continents, championed by some of the world's most beloved artists.

→

Photo © James Niebuhr



Songs for Murdered Sisters

MARGARET ATWOOD

I. Empty Chair

Who was my sister
Is now an empty chair

Is no longer,
Is no longer there

She is now emptiness
She is now air

.....

II. Enchantment

If this were a story
I was telling my sister

A troll from the mountain
Would have stolen her

Or else a twisted magician
Turned her to stone

Or locked her in a tower
Or hidden her deep inside a golden flower

I would have to travel
West of the moon, east of the sun

To find the answer;
I'd speak the charm

And she'd be standing there
Alive and happy, come to no harm

But this is not a story.
Not that kind of story....

.....

III. Anger

Anger is red
The colour of spilled blood

He was all anger,
The man you tried to love

You opened the door
And death was standing there

Red death, red anger
Anger at you

For being so alive
And not destroyed by fear

What do you want? you said.
Red was the answer.

IV. Dream

When I sleep you appear
I am a child then
And you are young and still my sister

And it is summer;
I don't know the future,
Not in my dream

I'm going away, you tell me
On a long journey.
I have to go away.

No, stay, I call to you
As you grow smaller:
Stay here with me and play!

But suddenly I'm older
And it's cold and moonless
And it is winter...

.....

V. Bird Soul

If birds are human souls
What bird are you?
A spring bird with a joyful song?
A high flyer?

Are you an evening bird
Watching the moon
Singing Alone, Alone,
Singing Dead Too Soon?

Are you an owl,
Soft-feathered predator?
Are you hunting, restlessly hunting
The soul of your murderer?

I know you are not a bird,
Though I know you've flown
So far, so far away..
I need you to be somewhere...

VI. *Lost*

So many sisters lost
 So many lost sisters

Over the years, thousands of years
 So many sent away

Too soon into the night
 By men who thought they had the right

Rage and hatred
 Jealousy and fear

So many sisters killed
 Over the years, thousands of years

Killed by fearful men
 Who wanted to be taller

Over the years, thousands of years
 So many sisters lost

So many tears

VII. *Rage*

I was too late,
 Too late to save you.

I feel the rage and pain
 In my own fingers,

In my own hands
 I feel the red command

To kill the man who killed you:
 That would be only fair:

Him stopped, him nevermore,
 In fragments on the floor,

Him shattered.
 Why should he still be here

And not you?
 Is that what you wish me to do,

Ghost of my sister?
 Or would you let him live?

Would you instead forgive?

VIII. *Coda: Song*

If you were a song
 What song would you be?

Would you be the voice that sings,
 Would you be the music?

When I am singing this song for you
 You are not empty air

You are here,
 One breath and then another:

You are here with me...

Margaret Atwood is the author of more than 50 books of fiction, poetry, and critical essays. Her novels include *Cat’s Eye*, *The Robber Bride*, *Alias Grace*, *The Blind Assassin*, and the *Maddaddam* trilogy. Her 1985 classic, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, was followed in 2019 by a sequel, *The Testaments*, which was a global number-one bestseller and won the Booker Prize. In 2020 she published *Dearly*, her first collection of poetry in a decade, followed in 2022 with *Burning Questions*, a selection of essays from 2004 to 2021. Her next collection of short stories, *Old Babes in the Wood*, will be published in March 2023. Atwood has won numerous awards, including the Arthur C. Clarke Award for Imagination in Service to Society, the Franz Kafka Prize, the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, the PEN USA Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. In 2019 she was made a member of the Order of the Companions of Honour for services to literature. She has also worked as a cartoonist, illustrator, librettist, playwright, and puppeteer. She lives in Toronto, Canada.



→
 Photo © Luis Mora

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98

Composed 1884 & 1885

43 min

AUSTRIAN CRITIC AND BRAHMS CHAMPION Eduard Hanslick first heard the opening movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 4 as a piano arrangement performed by the composer and a friend and memorably commented, "I feel I've just been beaten up by two terribly intelligent people." To be sure, the Fourth Symphony is highly intellectual: creatively synthesizing Classical four-movement structure, Baroque music processes, and the Romantic era's harmonic language and principles of motivic development and unity. At the same time, it is passionate, encompassing anguish and tender warmth within its tightly wrought fusion of form and technique.

Brahms wrote the Fourth over two summers, in 1884 and 1885. On October 25, 1885, he conducted the Meiningen Court Orchestra in the première and on tour across Germany and the Netherlands. Since then, the work has been considered the crowning achievement of Brahms's symphonic output.

A defining feature of the Symphony is the near-constant use of thematic variation. In the E-minor first movement, the opening melody—a descending sequence of falling and rising motifs—undergoes varied treatment throughout. Similarly, a woodwind fanfare, which precedes a soaring second theme in the cellos and French horns, combines with a sinewy motif in the strings to dramatic effect at the beginning of the recapitulation.

The E-major *Andante moderato* features three themes in the first half of the movement that are reprised in the second half, having undergone both development and emotional intensification. Listen for

the stern second theme building to a forceful climax, after which the third theme, played "sweetly" before, now soars to passionate heights.

The third movement is a stirring dance in C major consisting of two melodies—the first vigorous and stamping, the second graceful and delicate. Variation technique is then directly in the spotlight for the E-minor finale, in the form of a Baroque passacaglia spinning out 30 variations, in seven sections, on an eight-note theme—Brahms's adaptation of the rising bass line from J.S. Bach's Cantata No. 150, *Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich* (*For Thee, O Lord, I long*). Woodwinds and brass present the theme. Variations 1 to 3 lead into a noble, impassioned melody (variation 4), which receives increasingly energetic treatment in variations 5 to 9. Variations 10 and 11 bring us to the movement's quiet centre. Solo flute, clarinet, oboe, and trombones maintain that quiet through variations 12 to 15. The original theme then bursts in again. From variations 17 to 21, the tension mounts, peaking with rushing strings at variation 21. Variations 22 to 26 explore triplet patterns; 27 to 30, "descending thirds" (referencing the first movement's opening melody). At the start of the coda, the original theme makes its final appearance, now urgent and intense. After reaching a final climax, the music relentlessly drives forward to the end.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD



←
Brahms on a Pedestal - "Dr Eduard Hanslick's holy Johannes" from *Viennese Figaro*, 1890.



Alexander Shelley, conductor

Alexander Shelley succeeded Pinchas Zukerman as Music Director of Canada's NAC Orchestra in September 2015. The ensemble has since been praised as being "transformed...hungry, bold, and unleashed" (*Ottawa Citizen*) and Shelley's programming credited for turning the orchestra into "one of the more audacious in North America" (*Maclean's*).

Shelley is a champion of Canadian creation; recent hallmarks include multimedia projects *Life Reflected* and *UNDISRUPTED*, and three major new ballets in partnership with NAC Dance for *ENCOUNT3RS*. He is passionate about arts education and nurturing the next generation of musicians. He is an Ambassador for Ottawa's OrKidstra, a charitable social-development program that teaches children life skills through making music together.

Alexander Shelley is also the Principal Associate Conductor of London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In the spring of 2019, he led the NAC Orchestra on its critically acclaimed 50th Anniversary European Tour, and, in 2017, he led the Orchestra in a tour across Canada, celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary. Most recently, he led the Orchestra in its first performance at New York's Carnegie Hall in 30 years.

He has made six recordings with the NAC Orchestra, including the JUNO-nominated *New Worlds*, *Life Reflected*, *ENCOUNT3RS*, *The Bounds of Our Dreams*, *Darlings of the Muses*, and *Lyrical Echoes*, all with Montreal label Analekta.



Joshua Hopkins, baritone

Known as one of the finest singer-actors of his generation, JUNO Award-winning and GRAMMY®-nominated Canadian baritone Joshua Hopkins has been hailed by *Opera Today* as having "a glistening, malleable baritone of exceptional beauty, and the technique to exploit its full range of expressive possibilities from comic bluster to melting beauty." Having established himself as a prominent leading artist throughout the US and Canada, Hopkins appears regularly at The Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Washington National Opera, amongst many others. On the concert platform, he has appeared with many orchestras in North America, including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony.

Profoundly committed to the art of song, Hopkins's first recital disc, *Let Beauty Awake*, features songs of Barber, Bowles, Glick, and Vaughan Williams on the ATMA Classique label. He has won numerous awards and distinctions including, most recently, a JUNO Award for his portrayal of Athanaël in the Chandos recording of Massenet's *Thaïs* in concert with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Sir Andrew Davis.

Joshua Hopkins's most personal work, *Songs for Murdered Sisters*, is a song cycle by composer Jake Heggie and author Margaret Atwood, conceived by Hopkins in remembrance of his sister, Nathalie Warmerdam. joshuahopkins.com

National Arts Centre Orchestra

Alexander Shelley, Music Director

John Storgårds, Principal Guest Conductor

Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, Principal Youth Conductor and Creative Partner

Pinchas Zukerman, Conductor Emeritus

FIRST VIOLINS

Yosuke Kawasaki
(concertmaster)
Jessica Linnebach
(associate
concertmaster)
Noëmi Racine Gaudreault
(assistant concertmaster)
Jeremy Mastrangelo
Marjolaine Lambert
Emily Westell
Manuela Milani
Emily Kruspe
Erica Miller*
Martine Dubé*
Renée London*
Oleg Chelpanov*

SECOND VIOLINS

Mintje van Lier (principal)
Winston Webber
(assistant principal)
Leah Roseman
Carissa Klopoushak
Frédéric Moisan
Zhengdong Liang
Karoly Sziladi
Mark Friedman
Edvard Skerjanc**
Andréa Armijo Fortin*
Heather Schnarr*

VIOLAS

Jethro Marks (principal)
David Marks
(associate principal)
David Goldblatt
(assistant principal)
David Thies-Thompson
Paul Casey
Tovin Allers*
Sonya Probst*

CELLOS

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Julia MacLaine
(assistant principal)**
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Stephanie Morin

OBOES

Charles Hamann
(principal)
Anna Petersen

ENGLISH HORN

Anna Petersen

CLARINETS

Kimball Sykes (principal)
Sean Rice

BASSOONS

Darren Hicks (principal)
Vincent Parizeau

HORNS

Lawrence Vine (principal)
Julie Fauteux (associate
principal)
Elizabeth Simpson
Lauren Anker
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TRUMPETS

Karen Donnelly (principal)
Steven van Gulik

TROMBONES

Peter Sullivan
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Colin Traquair

TUBA

Chris Lee (principal)

TIMPANI

Michael Kemp
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PERCUSSION

Jonathan Wade
Louis Pino*

HARP

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Corey Rempel

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Meiko Lydall

ASSISTANT PERSONNEL MANAGER

Laurie Shannon

*Additional musicians

**On Leave



National Arts Centre Orchestra

Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra is a world-class ensemble of outstanding classical musicians from across Canada and around the world, under the inspiring leadership of Music Director Alexander Shelley. Formed in 1969, the NAC Orchestra gives over 100 performances a year in Ottawa, and across Canada and the globe, working with diverse artists of international renown, and reaching a wide audience through livestreams, recordings, and extensive education outreach.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra and Alexander Shelley were active in online teaching and in concert livestreams, enthusiastically championing the work of young Canadian artists, and the music of diverse composers from Canada and abroad.

The Orchestra breaks boundaries with its regular commissions of new creations including the critically acclaimed *Life Reflected* (2016) and *UNDISRUPTED* (2021). Its commissions and recordings have won JUNO Awards, Canada’s highest honour in music, for best new classical compositions in 2018 and 2019. The Orchestra has a rich touring history, including its long-awaited return to Carnegie Hall in April 2022, and in recent years has travelled to the UK, to Paris, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and China, and across Canada.

White Ribbon Campaign

White Ribbon calls on all men and boys to be allies in ending gender-based violence and promoting gender equality. We invite you to take the White Ribbon pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about all forms of gender-based violence, and find out how you can make a difference.



NAC Acknowledgements

The National Arts Centre Foundation would like to thank Mark Motors Group, Official Car of the NAC Orchestra, and the Janice & Earle O’Born Fund for Artistic Excellence. The NAC Orchestra Music Director role is supported by Elinor Gill Ratcliffe, C.M., O.N.L., LL.D (hc).





Yuja Wang
piano

Experience a superstar performance of the Mount Everest of works, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3.

Yuja Wang's Rachmaninoff

June 16–18

Yuja Wang, piano

2022/23 TSO Spotlight Artist

Hurry—seats are selling fast!

TSO.CA

TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Mozart & Rachmaninoff

Sir Andrew Davis, conductor
Louis Lortie, piano

Alban Berg/orch. Sir Andrew Davis
Piano Sonata, Op. 1

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488

- I. Allegro
 - II. Adagio
 - III. Allegro assai
-

Intermission

Sergei Rachmaninoff/orch. Rachmaninoff
Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

Sergei Rachmaninoff
Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

- I. Non allegro
- II. Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)
- III. Lento assai – Allegro vivace

Program 3

Wednesday,
February 22, 2023

8:00pm

Friday,
February 24, 2023

7:30pm

Saturday,
February 25, 2023

8:00pm

The TSO Chamber Soloists

Louis Lortie, piano (special guest)
Clare Semes, violin
Yolanda Bruno, violin
Rémi Pelletier, viola
Emmanuelle Beaulieu Bergeron,
cello

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at
6:45pm in Roy Thomson Hall

Alban Berg (1885–1935)
Piano Sonata, Op. 1

Anton von Webern (1883–1945)
Langsamer Satz

*The February 24 performance
is generously supported by the
Estate of Thomas Charles Logan.*

*The February 25 performance
is generously supported by the
Holdbest Foundation.*

Alban Berg (1885–1935)
orch. Sir Andrew Davis
Piano Sonata, Op. 1

Composed 1909

12 min

ALBAN BERG'S PIANO SONATA, OP. 1, started life as one of a series of ten or so practice pieces that he composed while studying with Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna between 1904 and 1911. He had come to Schoenberg in the autumn of 1904, at first, to take lessons in counterpoint and harmony, then, from autumn 1907, to receive instruction in composition. According to Berg biographer Hans Ferdinand Redlich (quoted in the preface to the G. Henle Verlag publication of the urtext of the sonata), Berg originally intended it to be "a multi-movement work, followed by a slow movement and a finale. But for a long time he lacked any useful ideas." Berg later recalled Schoenberg's response: "Well then, you've said all there was to say." Appropriately enough, it was the only one of the practice pieces to which Berg gave an opus number—perhaps an indication that Berg himself saw it as a rite of passage, marking the end of his apprenticeship.

As a solo-piano sonata it has stood the test of time, recorded by Canadian piano greats Glenn Gould and Marc-André Hamelin among others. Orchestrated, it takes on a new life. "Berg's lush, hyper-Romantic early Piano Sonata is an emotional macrocosm in miniature," is how BBC Radio 3 describes it, in the programming announcement for a February 2022 concert broadcast live from London's Barbican Centre, celebrating "50 years of collaboration between the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Conductor Laureate Sir Andrew Davis." (That concert, incidentally, featured three of the four works on tonight's program—the Berg sonata in Davis's orchestration, and the same two works by Rachmaninoff.)

The Davis orchestration was not the first. In 2005, the TSO, led by Peter Oundjian, performed a 1984 version by Dutch composer Theo Verbey. But, as Davis observes in the liner notes to the 2022 Chandos-released recording of the February 2022 concert, "earlier versions had not really evoked the Viennese sound world of Mahler, Schoenberg, Zemlinsky, and Schreker that Berg inhabited at that time."

As mentioned previously, the work is not in classical sonata form. As the *Wikipedia* entry on the sonata succinctly describes it: "It consists of a single movement, centred in the key of B minor but making frequent use of chromaticism, whole-tone scales, and wandering key centres, giving the tonality a very unstable feel, which only resolves in the final few bars. [It] also relies heavily on Schoenberg's idea of 'developing variation', [where] all aspects of a composition [derive] from a single idea. In this case, much of the composition can be traced back to the two opening gestures."

—Program note by David S. Perlman

"Together with his primary teacher Arnold Schönberg and Anton Webern, Alban Berg belongs to the Second Viennese School, which defined musical advancement through atonality and the twelve-tone technique. Berg's pupil Theodore Adorno once said, 'Whoever is seriously trying to comprehend Berg's music should closely apply themselves to the eleven-page piano sonata'. It is tempting to enlarge upon this statement: Whoever is trying to get to grips with New Music will not be able to avoid Berg's opus 1."

—G. HENLE VERLAG, MUSIC PUBLISHER

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488

Composed 1784–1786

27 min

MOZART WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST—if not *the* greatest—of all composers of concertos, which is an ability that requires several skills.

One is a complete understanding of instruments' technical capabilities, not only on the part of the featured concerto soloist but also every member of the accompanying orchestra. Does the solo instrument sound more effective in some parts of its range than others? Does it blend better with strings or with woodwinds? Can it play loud enough to be heard together with an orchestra that includes trombones? How long can it hold a note? Can it articulate many short notes at a fast tempo—and so on.

On another, perhaps more elusive front, a composer must truly get inside the solo instrument's expressive personality. What sorts of themes suit its tone colour? Is it more effective at communicating low or high spirits? In what kinds of music will it sound out of place?

From early on (he composed the insightful Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, when he was 18), Mozart demonstrated that meeting all these challenges came naturally to him. It didn't matter what the solo instrument was (he composed outstanding concertos for piano, violin, viola, flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and harp) or whether he played it professionally—the result was always eloquent and supremely natural.

He also developed another ability that is vital to the effective creation of both concertos and operas: a profound grasp of how to create effective dialogue between music makers, be they singers in an opera, or a concerto soloist and the accompanying

orchestra. By the time he composed the concerto you will hear on this program, he had honed all these abilities to a diamond-bright lustre.

Even by his standards, the winter and spring of 1785/86 was a period of amazing creative activity. In addition to this Piano Concerto, he composed two others (the jovial, expansive No. 22 and the defiant, poignant No. 24); a one-act stage farce, *The Impresario*; the *Masonic Funeral Music*; a host of brief chamber, solo, and vocal works; and his masterpiece of comic opera, *The Marriage of Figaro*.

This concerto opens in leisurely fashion, with the orchestra presenting the movement's principal materials. The soloist then treats them with a winning mixture of elegance and delicious flights of fancy. With only the briefest of digressions, the mood of the opening movement is utterly contented. The atmosphere changes radically in the *Adagio* slow movement, one of Mozart's most poignant creations. The piano leads off, introducing a main theme in the rhythm of a siciliano (a dance in slow 6/8 or 12/8 time, not amenable to passionate outbursts). Just the same, Mozart sets forth the depths of his despair in most telling fashion. The finale that follows then brings back the sun, more welcome than ever in the wake of the dark *Adagio*.

—Program note by Don Anderson



← The Anton Walter fortepiano on which Mozart wrote all his late concertos, seen here in Mozart's Vienna home, on a two-week loan from the Salzburg Mozarteum in 2012. It has two octaves fewer than a modern piano.

Photo © REUTERS/
Herwig Prammer

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)
orch. Rachmaninoff
Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14

Composed 1915

7 min

UNLIKE ALBAN BERG'S PIANO SONATA, performed earlier in this concert, Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise* was orchestrated by the composer himself almost at the same time as the version for piano and voice/solo instrument. Conventional wisdom has it that Rachmaninoff decided to orchestrate it for soloist plus orchestra right after hearing it in recital for the first time. To the contrary, the official première of *Vocalise* took place, with orchestra, in Moscow in January 1916, performed by soprano Antonina Nezhdanova for whom Rachmaninoff had composed the work. There is also evidence that Serge Koussevitzky, who conducted the January 1916 concert, had previewed it in a December 1915 concert. As G. Henle Verlag describes it in their urtext edition of the work, "Koussevitzky, who was also a legendary double-bass virtuoso, played it in an instrumental arrangement for double bass and orchestra...most certainly with the approval of the composer who was close to Koussevitzky." Rachmaninoff himself may even have given Koussevitzky the idea: at the

end of a social evening at the Koussevitzky home early in September 1915, Rachmaninoff played the work, still underway, on the piano.

The title of the work is a clue to its infinite adaptability. As originally conceived, it contains no words. It is to be sung, Rachmaninoff stipulated, using only one vowel of the singer's choosing. It was not a large step from there to substitute solo instruments for the *vox humana* vocal line. From Koussevitzky's double bass to Nezhdanova's soprano, and on, there are arrangements for just about every instrument in the string, winds, and brass sections of the orchestra. There are also arrangements for choir and orchestra, jazz ensemble, organ, guitar, saxophone, theremin, electronic instruments, and cello with voice (Bobby McFerrin and Yo-Yo Ma). In the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's own archive, the first listed appearance of the work is perhaps the most intriguing: a 1947 Pops concert, with Ettore Mazzoleni conducting, and John Sebastian, harmonica, listed as soloist. (A close second would be a 1981 performance conducted by Danish-American comedian, pianist, and conductor Victor Borge.)

In the orchestral arrangement you will hear in this concert, there is no soloist. Instead, if past practice here is anything to go by (most recently in 2012), the vocal line will very likely dwell with the first violins.

—Program note by David S. Perlman

"Of the four most famous opera singers born in 1873—Nezhdanova, Enrico Caruso, Leo Slezak and Feodor Chaliapin—Antonina Nezhdanova was the longest-lived as well as having the longest career, giving her last performance in 1943 and surviving to the age of 77. She was also known in the West only through her recordings. But what recordings! Her voice was so full of overtones that even with the restrictive frequency range of acoustic recordings, one could hear it ring out and reverberate as if they were made with a microphone."

—NIMBUS RECORDS



↑

Photo © NIMBUS RECORDS

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

Composed 1940

33 min

RACHMANINOFF COMPOSED THE SYMPHONIC

DANCES in the summer and fall of 1940,

having recently fled to the US to escape the escalating war in Europe. His original title for the set was *Fantastic Dances*, and the three movements once bore descriptive labels: “Noon”, “Twilight”, and “Midnight”. In the end, he gave the work generic titles and refused to explain its meaning. The première was in January of 1941, with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormand. The music was coolly received; few critics showed much interest (one called it “a rehash of old tricks”), and indeed the *Symphonic Dances* were long misunderstood and neglected.

The work is rhythmically animated (he originally wanted it choreographed as a ballet) and truly symphonic in style, proportions, and sonority, with melodies that could only be Rachmaninoff’s. Yet it is less opulently Romantic than his earlier music: it has the leanness, discrimination, and occasional weirdness typical of his late orchestral style.

The driving first movement unfolds with grim determination. It begins with a grotesque, sarcastic march, which is subjected to intense development before dissolving into a more tranquil middle section, with a long, elegiac melody introduced by an alto saxophone—new to Rachmaninoff’s orchestra. (Some hear Russian folk music here.) The march returns, but the movement ends peacefully, with a quotation from Rachmaninoff’s own First Symphony (a theme derived from Russian church music). That symphony—disastrously premièred in 1897, and long withdrawn—was almost unknown in 1940, so the quotation

obviously had some purely personal meaning.

The second movement is a dark *valse triste*—a heavily stylized parody of the Viennese waltz, at once nostalgic and sarcastic, sensual and sinister. Traditional waltz lilt is compromised by complex, unsettling rhythms; the melodies are bittersweet; strange harmonies create an atmosphere of unease and anxiety; there are touches of the grotesque, like the sneering brass fanfare at the start. The movement builds to an almost hysterical climax only to vanish as if into shadows.

The finale is the shortest but most fantastical movement—dark, morbid, sardonic, full of demonic energy, with pounding strings, ominous brass, and squealing woodwinds. Rachmaninoff draws on two favourite sources of inspiration: chants of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the “Dies irae”, the Gregorian chant for the dead. The middle section is more soulful and lyrical, though melancholy, sometimes eerie. The opening “dance of death” returns and reaches a furious climax, but just before the end, Rachmaninoff introduces the Orthodox chant “Blessed be the Lord”. Again, his meaning seems to have been private (perhaps a recognition of God’s ultimate triumph over death?).

“I thank thee, Lord,” he wrote at the end of his score, and the words were sadly apt, for this would be his last original composition.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



Sir Andrew Davis, conductor

In a career spanning more than 40 years, Maestro Davis has been the artistic leader at several of the most distinguished operatic and symphonic institutions. He served as music director and principal conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago (2000 to 2021), and as chief conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2013 to 2019). Other appointments have included the BBC Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate and chief conductor from 1991 to 2004), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (music director from 1988 to 2000), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Conductor Laureate and Principal Conductor from 1975 to 1988), where he also served as Interim Artistic Director for two seasons, from 2018 to 2020. He also holds the honorary title of conductor emeritus from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sir Andrew has led performances at many leading opera houses, including The Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, Bayreuth Festival, and the major companies of Munich, Paris, San Francisco, and Santa Fe. In addition, he has appeared with virtually every internationally prominent orchestra, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and all the major British orchestras.

In the 2022/23 season, Sir Andrew conducts his own adaptation of Handel's *Messiah* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. The season also sees a return to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he leads a production of Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. Other engagements include the Minnesota Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Detroit Opera.

A vast and award-winning discography documents Sir Andrew's artistry. Last year saw the release of his recording of *Berg: Violin Concerto/Three Pieces for Orchestra* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, which includes Sir Andrew's orchestrations of Berg's Piano Sonata, Op. 1, and Passacaglia, as well as his recording of orchestral works of Carl Vine with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (nominated for an ARIA Award for Best Classical Album). Other recent titles including the works of Berlioz, Bliss, Elgar (winner of the 2018 Diapason d'Or de l'Année-Musique Symphonique), Finzi, Goossens, Grainger, Delius, Ives, Holst, Handel (nominated for a GRAMMY® in 2018 for Best Choral Performance), Massenet (winner of the 2021 JUNO Award for Best Classical Album: Vocal or Choral), and York Bowen (nominated for a GRAMMY® in 2012 for Best Orchestral Performance). Sir Andrew currently records for Chandos Records, where he has been an exclusive artist since 2009.

In 1992, Maestro Davis was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and in 1999, he was designated a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List.

Sir Andrew Davis made his TSO début in 1974, and was appointed as the Orchestra's sixth Music Director in 1975, a position he held until 1988, returning as Interim Artistic Director from 2017 to 2020, during the search for a Music Director to succeed Peter Oundjian.

Louis Lortie made his TSO début on January 10, 1978, at age 18, with Andrew Davis conducting, in the Liszt Piano Concerto No. 1, just before they embarked together on the TSO's groundbreaking 1978 trip to China, with Lortie performing the same work on tour.

Those early concerts mark the beginning of a chain of TSO performances by the two artists together (16 engagements between 1979 and 2019), including a reprise of Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 in May 2015—in a concert marking Sir Andrew's 40-year association with the Orchestra.

↑
Photo © Dario Acosta



Louis Lortie, piano

For over three decades, French-Canadian pianist Louis Lortie has continued to build a reputation as one of the world's most versatile pianists, across a broad spectrum of repertoire, with his performances and award-winning recordings attesting to his remarkable musical range.

Lortie has established long-term partnerships with European orchestras such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, and Dresden Philharmonic; and with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, San Diego Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, and New Jersey Symphony in the US. In Canada, he regularly performs with the major orchestras in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa, and Calgary. Destinations further afield include Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Adelaide, Sydney, and São Paulo. Regular partnerships with conductors include, among others, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Edward Gardner, Sir Andrew Davis, Jaap van Zweden, Simone Young, Antoni Wit, and Thierry Fischer.

In recital and chamber music, Louis Lortie appears in the world's most prestigious concert halls and festivals, including Wigmore Hall, the Philharmonie de Paris, Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Hall, the Beethovenfest Bonn, and Liszt Festival Raiding. Recent special projects have included performances of Liszt's complete *Années de pèlerinage* in one evening, and a complete Beethoven sonata cycle filmed at Salle Bourgie in Montreal and broadcast on medici.tv. The Lortie-Mercier Duo (with fellow pianist Hélène Mercier) continues to shed new light on the repertoire for four hands and two pianos, both in the concert hall and on several best-selling recordings.

Lortie's 30-year relationship with Chandos Records has produced a catalogue of over 45 recordings on the label, from Mozart to Stravinsky, including a complete Beethoven sonata cycle and the complete Liszt *Années de pèlerinage*, named as one of the top ten recordings of 2012 by *The New Yorker*. With Hélène Mercier, he has recorded *The Carnival of the Animals*, Vaughan Williams's Concerto for Two Pianos, Rachmaninoff's complete works for two pianos, and, just released, four-hands and two-piano works by Debussy.

Master in Residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel of Brussels from 2017 until 2022, Lortie continues to mentor exceptional pianists through series including a Beethoven/Liszt symphony cycle at Wigmore Hall, and a Scriabin Marathon at the LacMus Festival and Bolzano Festival Bozen in 2022. Another Beethoven/Liszt symphony series is scheduled for the Dresden International Festival in 2023.

During his formative years in Montreal, Lortie studied with Yvonne Hubert (a pupil of the legendary Alfred Cortot), then with Beethoven specialist Dieter Weber in Vienna, and subsequently with Schnabel disciple Leon Fleisher.

Louis Lortie is co-founder and Artistic Director of the LacMus International Festival on Lake Como, taking place annually every July since 2017.

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TORONTO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Simon Rivard, TSYO Conductor

Program 4

Saturday,
February 25, 2023

3:00pm

George Weston Recital Hall

TSYO Winter Concert

Simon Rivard, TSYO Conductor
Trevor Wilson, RBC Resident Conductor

Ludwig van Beethoven
Coriolan Overture, Op. 62
Trevor Wilson, conductor

Manuel de Falla/comp. Gustavo Gimeno
Selections from *El amor brujo*

- I. Introducción y escena (Introduction & Scene)
 - II. En la cueva (In the Cave)
 - III. El aparecido (The Apparition)
 - IV. Danza del terror (Dance of Terror)
 - V. El círculo mágico (The Magic Circle)
 - VI. Pantomima (Pantomime)
 - VII. Danza ritual del fuego (Ritual Fire Dance)
-

Intermission

Jean Sibelius
Symphony No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 39

- I. Andante, ma non troppo – Allegro energico
- II. Andante (ma non troppo lento)
- III. Scherzo: Allegro
- IV. Finale (quasi una fantasia): Andante – Allegro molto

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Ludwig van Beethoven (c. 1770–1827)

Coriolan Overture, Op. 62

Composed 1807

7 min

"THIS OVERTURE WAS INSPIRED BY HEINRICH VON COLLIN'S PLAY *CORIOLAN*, based on one of Shakespeare's less frequently performed tragedies, *Coriolanus*," wrote editor, lecturer, and music critic Herbert Glass. "Collin's play enjoyed some success on the Viennese stage for a time after its creation in 1802, subsequently fading from view. It resurfaced for a remarkable one-night stand in 1807 at the palace of Beethoven's patron Prince Lobkowitz—a vehicle solely for Beethoven's new overture, after which Collin's play then sank like a stone, while Beethoven's tremendous overture endures."

In part, Collin's play fell victim to the growing popularity, among German-speaking Romantics, of Shakespeare's plays. As Glass observed, when Beethoven composed his overture in 1807, he no doubt identified with Shakespeare's story, via Collin, of a lone man heroically bucking the system. But he would not have expected that it would be performed at productions of the play. He was, it is true, angling for a position with the Royal Imperial Theatre around this time; nevertheless, his *Coriolan* was intended as self-contained concert music—an overture *on*, rather than *for*, Collin's play.

Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus, according to legend, was a proud, haughty Roman aristocrat of the late sixth and early fifth centuries, B.C. Exiled unjustly by the Roman tribunes, he led the army of the nearby Volsci people against Rome, but at the city gates, his mother, Volumnia, pleaded for his mercy, and he withdrew, making himself now a traitor to the Volscians. Finding himself in an untenable situation, he committed suicide—according to Collin

and Beethoven, anyway; according to Plutarch and Shakespeare, he was slain by the Volscians.

Beethoven focused on the emotional core of the story—the decisive confrontation of mother and son. The famous opening chords, and the first theme in the strings, depict Coriolanus's vengeful fury, "plunging us into a snarling and titanic C minor, punctuated by furious musical stabs," as music writer Timothy Judd describes it. Then as the music unfolds, "the sounds of conquest, quiet anguish and terror melt into a new theme, in the violins, in E-flat major, filled with tenderness and lament," mirroring Volumnia's pleas, underpinned by arpeggios in the lower strings that move from tenderness to dread and back again.

It is a visceral struggle: twice more she pleads before her defiant son relents. In the coda, as Coriolanus's once mighty first theme disintegrates in the cellos, we can *hear* Coriolanus die. "This is revolutionary music filled with strange, shocking dissonances and unpredictable outbursts," Judd writes. "A final wrenching dissonance, and then the overture fades into silence."

Stormy, propulsive, impressively scored, the *Coriolan Overture* is a key specimen of Beethoven's so called "heroic" middle-period style, though here (unlike, say, the Fifth Symphony) there is no celebratory resolution; the tone of tragedy is maintained to the end. Brief as it is, the overture conveys the essence of a profound drama with unforgettable intensity. It would go on to influence the concert overtures and symphonic poems of Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Liszt, and many other Romantic composers.

—Program note by Don Anderson

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)
comp. Gustavo Gimeno
Selections from *El amor brujo*

Composed 1914 & 1915

15 min

EL AMOR BRUJO (*Love, the Magician*), is a ballet by Manuel de Falla to a libretto by María de la O Lejarraga García (1874–1974), a Spanish feminist writer, dramatist, translator, and politician, who collaborated closely and extensively with her husband, Gregorio Martínez Sierra; for years the libretto was in fact attributed to him. The two of them came into contact with Manuel de Falla in Paris in 1913 at the request of Falla's fellow Spanish composer Joaquín Turina who, like Falla, had gone to Paris to study and had become inspired by the music of Debussy and Ravel.

After Falla returned to Madrid, he, Lejarraga, and Sierra collaborated on various projects. For *El amor brujo*, Falla would play fragments of the score, and Lejarraga would then evoke the emotions of the fragments in words and action. Initially conceived as a *gitanería* (gypsy piece) for Pastora Imperio, a well-known dancer then at the peak of her popularity, the first version for voice and chamber orchestra was largely unsuccessful. Falla then transformed it into a ballet, retaining three songs for mezzo-soprano (not included in the selections for this performance).

El amor brujo is the story of an Andalusian gypsy woman called Candela. The plot is as convoluted as any opera, but thankfully without the mandatory *opera seria* unhappy ending. The object of Candela's current affection is a man named Carmelo, but the ghost of her previous husband continues to haunt her, and she dances every night with the spectre ("Danza del terror"), to the scorn of the whole village.

As the plot thickens, Candela discovers

that the ghost that haunts her had, in real life, been unfaithful to her. The "other woman," Lucía, was not only complicit in his infidelity, but also, as we discover, the cause of his death. Candela and Carmelo get advice that a ritual dance is necessary to cast the ghost off ("Danza ritual del fuego"), but, no such luck, the ghost will not let go of Candela's soul. Candela then tricks Lucía into showing up (hinting that she will hook Lucía up with Carmelo). Right on cue, Lucía turns up as the nightly dance begins. Candela slips away from the ghost, and instead Lucía is taken away by her dead lover ("Danza del juego de amor"). Dawn breaks with Candela and Carmelo free to enjoy their love.

All details of plot aside, the work is distinctly folkloric in colour, and contains moments of great originality, beauty, and emotional sweep. The Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra and audiences will be able to experience it on an even grander scale in four further performances between March 29 and April 2, in the TSYO's annual side-by-side performance with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

—Program note by David S. Perlman



↑
El amor brujo at the Teatro Argentino de La Plata, 1960.

Photo © Wikimedia,
Creative Commons

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Symphony No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 39

Composed 1898–1899

40 min

SIBELIUS'S SYMPHONY NO. 1 had a successful première in Helsinki on April 26, 1899, with the composer conducting, and helped consolidate his position as the most important composer in Finland. Today, the Sibelius literature tends to be condescending about it, emphasizing the conventional order and structure of its four movements, and its many stylistic debts. True, one does hear Sibelius's contemporaries and predecessors throughout this piece—principally Russians, above all Tchaikovsky (note, for instance, the sometimes feverish orchestration in the melancholy slow movement), but also Austro-Germans (certainly Brahms, perhaps Bruckner). But this was no apprentice work: Sibelius in 1899 had 38 opus numbers to his credit, including some significant works involving the orchestra. Behind all the borrowed ideas and sonorities in his first symphony one hears glimmers of the highly original, deeply personal symphonic style of the mature Sibelius.

For instance, he immediately establishes that characteristically Nordic quality of his music—the sense of still, wide-open spaces—in the opening bars; a slow, striking clarinet solo accompanied only by a quiet pedal-point on the timpani. (There are at least half a dozen important examples in the first movement alone of long pedal-points used to build up musical tension—a Sibelius trademark.) That clarinet solo proves to be a fund of motifs that Sibelius draws from again and again throughout the first movement to generate new themes, creating a tight network of interrelated ideas. More Sibelius trademarks come to the fore after the change of tempo to *Allegro energico*: the grandiose

principal theme of the first movement; the sustained chords and punctuating blasts in the brass; the second theme, with staccato flutes in thirds over shimmering high strings and harp chords; the long passages of static harmonies and repeated figures, sometimes building to mighty climaxes; the open orchestral textures; the unsentimental use of woodwinds; and the pounding rhythms. The sonic opulence of this music may seem a bit over the top by Sibelius's later standards, but his command of symphonic architecture and orchestration are already clearly apparent.

The last three movements, too, are full of characteristic touches. The third, a bony, propulsive, brilliantly scored *Scherzo*, the main motif of which may be a nod to the scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth, is superb, and has a sometimes disturbing power. Note also the slow, strange trio section, heavy with woodwinds and brass, in the middle of the movement. Sibelius marked the *Finale* "*quasi una fantasia*", perhaps to account for its relatively loose structure and variety of tempo markings. The movement is full of strife, though its emotional goal is apparently to be found in the two great statements of a massive, richly scored, somewhat overwrought melody (*Andante*)—the Big Tune of this symphony—that offers respite from the turmoil.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



Simon Rivard, TSYO Conductor

Simon Rivard is one of the most sought-after conductors on the Canadian music scene. Since 2018, he has been the conductor of the TSYO. In 2022/23, he will début with the Kitchener–Waterloo Symphony, the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestre classique de Montréal, and will return to the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de Sherbrooke, and the Edmonton Opera in *Tosca*.

Between 2018 and 2022, he held the title of RBC Resident Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In addition to leading concerts throughout the season, he assisted world-class conductors such as Sir Andrew Davis, Peter Oundjian, Donald Runnicles, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, John Storgårds, Barbara Hannigan, Xian Zhang, and Eun Sun Kim. Since 2019, he has been an Equilibrium Young Artist, as part of Barbara Hannigan’s internationally acclaimed mentorship program for early-career professional musicians. Earlier, in 2018, he was invited to participate in the first Conducting Mentorship Program at the Verbier Festival Academy (Switzerland), and in 2022 was invited to be a coach of the Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra.

Since 2020, he has been involved with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, as Associate Conductor (2020–2022) and as Artistic Collaborator (2022–present). As a guest conductor, he recently made his début with Orchestre symphonique de Québec, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and, in February 2022, with the Edmonton Opera in Puccini’s *La bohème*, and collaborated with Toronto-based opera company Against the Grain in Holst’s *Sāvitri*.



Trevor Wilson, RBC Resident Conductor

Appointed TSO RBC Resident Conductor in June 2022, Ottawa-born conductor and composer Trevor Wilson has been praised for his “close rapport with his players” and the “passion and clarity” he brings to performances. In his role at the TSO, he will be mentored by Music Director Gustavo Gimeno, assist incoming guest conductors, and conduct performances throughout the season.

During the 2021/22 season, Wilson participated in the Orchestre Métropolitain’s Orchestral Conducting Academy under the mentorship of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and will assist in performances with the Orchestre Métropolitain during the 2022/23 season.

Wilson has been active in the Ottawa musical community, having conducted performances with the University of Ottawa orchestra and many other local ensembles. In 2017, he co-founded the Ottawa Pops Orchestra, an organization that aims to redefine the concert experience and attract diverse audiences, serving as its Music Director until 2019. He also served as the Assistant Conductor of the National Academy Orchestra of Canada under the late Boris Brott in summer 2019.

Having attended numerous masterclasses and festivals, Wilson has had the opportunity to study under internationally renowned conductors such as David Zinman, Gerard Schwarz, Neil Varon, David Efron, and Markus Stenz, and, in 2018, he performed with the Dohnányi Orchestra Budafok in Budapest, Hungary. He completed his graduate studies in orchestral conducting under Marin Alsop at the Peabody Conservatory, where he also served as Assistant Conductor to the Peabody Choruses.

Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra

Simon Rivard, TSYO Conductor

FOR NEARLY 50 SEASONS, since its founding under the direction of Victor Feldbrill in 1974, the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (TSYO) has been dedicated to providing a high-level orchestral experience for talented young musicians aged 22 and under. The tuition-free TSYO program delivers a unique, powerful, and life-enriching opportunity that encourages significant achievement, regardless of participants' chosen career paths. The TSYO is closely affiliated with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO): TSO musicians serve as coaches through the season, TSO guest artists lead TSYO masterclasses, and the TSYO performs annually with the TSO in a side-by-side concert.

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