

CONCERTkey

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2022/23

Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director



Celebrate 100:
A Symphonic Century

September 21, 22 & 24

**Gimeno Conducts
Chopin & Scheherazade**

September 29, October 1 & 2

Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony

October 12, 14 & 15

Bronfman Plays Beethoven



Celebrate 100: Return to Massey Hall

Fri, Feb 17, 2023

A century after the Orchestra's first concert, the TSO returns for a one-night-only celebration at its former home.



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David S. Perlman, Program Editor

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.
.....

A Seminal Season



SINCE I ARRIVED IN APRIL I have had the opportunity to experience the beauty of the Orchestra, where I have been transported by the music and witnessed the deepening

relationship between the musicians and Music Director Gustavo Gimeno. Outside the concert hall, my husband and I have been moved by how welcoming Toronto has been to us, making us feel at home in this incredible and diverse community.

I am filled with hope and excitement for the future of this storied Orchestra. The awareness and perspective we have gained in recent years will inform and enrich the work of the next century. As Toronto's population continues to grow and become even more diverse, we must ask ourselves: How can we become an Orchestra that serves every part of this community? How can we ensure that every Torontonians has access to this extraordinary music making?

Questions like these inspire my collaboration with Music Director Gustavo Gimeno. His vision of orchestral programming—where the old informs the new, and the new sheds light on the old—dovetails with our collective desire to broaden the reach, impact, and appeal of orchestral music.

On April 23, 2023 we will reach a remarkable milestone—100 years to the day since the orchestra's first concert at Massey Hall. The countdown is already under way, with two very special celebrations planned. The first of these will be a Gala on November 16, here at Roy Thomson Hall, while the second, on February 17, will be a

return to Massey Hall, tracing, in reverse, the TSO's 1982 move to Roy Thomson Hall.

With the Orchestra continuing to reach new artistic heights, I am very pleased to say that, along with the special galas, we will be carrying the TSO centennial flag to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, New York's Carnegie Hall and, for the first time, to Chicago's Symphony Center.

On September 24, there will be an all-access TSO Open House at Roy Thomson Hall, including popup performances throughout the building, with music reflecting the diversity of the Toronto community, culminating in a free concert conducted by Gustavo Gimeno. I hope we will be able to look back on this seminal season and see it as the moment we took defining action to open our doors, literally and metaphorically, to the broader community that we serve.

And it won't stop there! We are *your* Toronto Symphony Orchestra and we will take every opportunity to welcome you, to engage you, and to share great musical experiences with you.

Mark Williams
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Gustavo Gimeno
Music Director

Catherine Beck
Board Chair

Mark Williams
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These extraordinary individuals have been recognized by the Orchestra for their remarkable commitment and service to the TSO.

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Catherine Beck &
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Renette Berman
Robert W. Corcoran
Sheryl L. Kerr
Wil Matthews
The Honourable Bob Rae
Judith (Billie) Wilder
(1928–2021)

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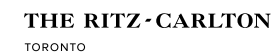
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Creation by Contrast



FROM MYSELF, AND ON BEHALF of the musicians of the Orchestra, a warm welcome to this very special concert season. Over the next 10 months, we will continue to celebrate together a century

of incredible music-making. But our Centennial Celebrations are as much about looking forward as they are about looking back.

The creation of contrast is at the heart of what I believe about concert programming—the coming together of past and future; masterworks side by side with new commissions; old friends and new faces on the concert stage; all manner of refreshing or startling juxtapositions.

Over the course of the season, audiences will experience powerful core Romantic works from Beethoven, Brahms, and Bruckner, to 20th century masterpieces like *Turangalila-Symphonie*, to new works from composers like Wynton Marsalis, Gary Kulesha, Helen Grime, Missy Mazzoli, and Daniel Bjarnason, and be able to hear great music and musicianship in a range of program offerings, including our Pops series, our Education offerings, Relaxed concerts, Films, and more.

Just as contrast within an individual concert creates a compelling dialogue among the various works, so too a rich variety of programs opens up many more doorways through which audiences, old and new, can come to appreciate the unique power and range of symphonic music in the hands of a great orchestra.

These first three concerts all reflect this artistic vision. You will hear great works that have long been part of the Orchestra's core repertoire, reinterpreted and

recontextualized: Chopin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Haydn, Saint-Saëns, and Beethoven. In every case you will have the opportunity to listen to these with ears refreshed by music that is new to you. Chopin is informed by a haunting contemporary tone poem by Lera Auerbach. Mendelssohn's musical sketch of the Hebrides stands alongside Samy Moussa's Mount Etna-inspired violin concerto. Beethoven's inexhaustible Piano Concerto No. 3 is wonderfully introduced by Unsuk Chin's *subito con forza*.

In welcoming *subito con forza* to the orchestra's repertoire (a Canadian première performance), we are at the same time introducing the music of Unsuk Chin, one of our great living composers, to the TSO audience for the very first time. For me as Music Director, it will be a balance of welcoming for the first time and welcoming back that will give me the greatest pleasure as the season unfolds. It applies to the repertoire you will hear; to the guest conductors and soloists who will grace our season; in the faces you will see among the musicians in the Orchestra; and above all else, to you our beloved audience. Never has being able to say welcome (or welcome back) felt so much like a reason to celebrate.

Gustavo Gimeno
Music Director

TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor
Bruce Liu, piano

Gimeno Conducts Chopin & Scheherazade

Kevin Lau
The Story of the Dragon Gate:
Celebration Prelude

TSO100 Commission/World Première

Lera Auerbach
Icarus

Frédéric Chopin
Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21

- I. Maestoso
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegro vivace

Intermission

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
***Scheherazade*, Op. 35**

Jonathan Crow, violin

- I. The Sea and Sindbad's Ship: Largo e maestoso – Allegro non troppo
- II. The Tale of Prince Kalendar: Lento – Allegro molto
- III. The Young Prince and the Princess: Andantino quasi allegretto
- IV. The Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – The Ship Goes to Pieces on a Rock: Allegro molto

Program 1

Wednesday,
September 21, 2022
8:00pm

Thursday,
September 22, 2022
8:00pm

Saturday,
September 24, 2022
8:00pm

Gustavo Gimeno's appearances are generously supported by Susan Brenninkmeyer in memory of Hans Brenninkmeyer.

Bruce Liu's appearances are generously supported by Blake and Belinda Goldring.

The September 21 performance is generously supported by the TSO Board of Directors.

The September 22 performance is generously supported by the Trustees of the Toronto Symphony Foundation.

The TSO's Celebration Preludes are generously supported by Margie and Peter Kelk.

Kevin Lau (b. 1982)

The Story of the Dragon Gate: Celebration Prelude

TSO100 Commission/World Première
Composed 2022

3 min

THE COMPOSER WRITES: In Chinese mythology, there is a waterfall so immense it seems to pour forth from a hole in the heavens. Perched above the waterfall is an ancient entrance to the sky, held up by stone columns and by arches the colour of mist. Fish swim upward against the water's fierce current toward this Dragon Gate; the few that succeed and pass through the gate are transformed into flying dragons.

I discovered this fable only recently while reading the work of American author Grace Lin, whose children's novel *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* cleverly weaves traditional fairy tales into its main narrative. The striking imagery of this particular tale, along with its brevity, made it an ideal source of inspiration for this three-minute celebratory overture, whose surging, splashy textures and overflowing lyricism are an

“*The artist must not only reflect on difficult times, but seek to transcend them; to delight, inspire, and, yes, entertain. I am immeasurably grateful for this opportunity to attempt all these things in celebration of an orchestra that I consider family.*”

attempt to reflect the story's themes and visual splendour.

To open the TSO's 100th anniversary season is both a great honour and a daunting task. It is not always easy to find the celebratory impulse, especially in recent years. But then, the artist must not only reflect on difficult times, but seek to transcend them; to delight, inspire, and, yes, entertain. I am immeasurably grateful for this opportunity to attempt all these things in celebration of an orchestra that I consider family.

Born in Hong Kong, Kevin Lau moved to Toronto at age 7. At the time, he was the youngest person to be appointed Affiliate Composer of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (from 2012 to 2015). Shortly after, he was commissioned to write two ballets with choreographer Guillaume Côté: a full-length ballet (*Le Petit Prince*) for the National Ballet of Canada and a half-hour ballet (*Dark Angels*) for the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

One of Canada's most prolific and sought-after composers, Lau is known for his large-scale orchestral creations, chamber music, ballets, and film scores. His music, frequently performed in Canada, the US, and Europe, has been recorded on multiple JUNO Award-winning albums, and is unified by the search for deep connections amidst surface diversity. His most recent large-scale work was an opera-film hybrid (*Bound*) commissioned by Against the Grain Theatre and recorded by the TSO. He currently serves as composer in residence of the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra.



Lera Auerbach (b. 1973)

Icarus

Composed 2006

12 min

BORN IN CHELYABINSK, USSR, Russian-American composer Lera Auerbach is widely known for the strong communicative and emotional power of her music. Grounded in traditional Western tonality though inflected with sharp dissonances, her distinctive style employs extreme contrasts in dynamics, instrumental colour and texture, as well as forceful gestures, to gripping effect. She composes with vivid metaphors and stories in mind, and her work is often tinged with a striking sense of irony.

These aspects are evident in her symphonic poem *Icarus*, a title that Auerbach says was attached between the time the piece was completed in 2006 and its world première by the Verbier Festival Orchestra in July 2011. “*Icarus* is what came to my mind, listening to this work at that time.” As she has described it, she finds the myth—about the winged boy who dared to fly too close to the sun—deeply moving for its beauty and tragedy:

“What makes this myth so touching is *Icarus*'s impatience of heart, his wish to reach the unreachable, the intensity of the ecstatic brevity of his flight and the inevitability of his fall.... His tragic death is beautiful. It also poses a question—from *Daedalus*'s point of view—how can one distinguish success from failure? His greatest invention, the wings which allowed a man to fly, was also his greatest failure as they caused the death of his son.”

According to Auerbach, the piece's title is meant to invite listeners “to feel free to imagine, to access their own memories and associations.” *Icarus* begins with alternating episodes between two distinct “sound worlds”: The first, to this listener, perhaps suggests *Icarus*' fixation on flying as his concerned father warns him of the dangers

of getting too close to the sun or the ocean; the second represents *Icarus*' fantasies of flight and freedom.

The work opens with a burst; cellos play with “obsessive energy,” punctuated by thwacks of aggressively plucked strings. An arrival point is reached, after which the music becomes otherworldly—*Icarus* in fantasyland. A solo violin rhapsodizes against a shimmering backdrop of celesta, harps, tam-tam, vibraphone, and piano. The obsessive music returns, the strings now more vigorous, and the brass making a thunderous warning statement, which is, however, ignored for another dreamy reverie. Once again, the rigorous warning music comes back, this time building to a big climax.

After a brief pause, there's swirling music—quarter-tone trills in the lower strings with ominous sustained tones in the trombones. It dissolves to solo violin and flute, to which is added the uncanny timbre of the theremin. Upper strings (with theremin) then ascend to even greater heights. The orchestra reaches a huge climax, triggering a long glissando descent—*Icarus*' fall—after which the music wallows in the depths of the catastrophe. This then transitions into an ethereal epilogue, closing the piece with a musical encapsulation of the myth's tragic beauty.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

“*What makes this myth so touching is Icarus's impatience of heart.... It also poses a question—from Daedalus's point of view—how can one distinguish success from failure?*”

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21

Composed 1829–1830

33 min

BY THE TIME HE WAS 19, Chopin had already found a unique voice as a pianist and composer. Pursuing his interest in Polish folk music, he was doing promising work in forms like the polonaise and mazurka, and his musical horizons were also expanding: in August 1829, he made his Viennese début, impressing audiences with his pianistic brilliance and his novelty as a nationalist composer. Upon his return to Warsaw, he gave some successful concerts, found love, and enjoyed the creative stimulation of political and artistic ferment. He was starting to codify his radical ideas about piano technique, and beginning his great set of Op. 10 Études at this time. He also wrote two piano concertos and, with the première of his Op. 21 in Warsaw on March 21, 1830, he scored another, less likely, triumph.

Chopin's concertos—indeed, all of the larger classical forms he had studied at the Warsaw Conservatory—were widely regarded as incompatible with his imagination. As Liszt remarked in 1852, “Chopin did violence to his genius every time he sought to fetter it by rules.” But in this case, he was not even trying to reinterpret the classical concerto. He was working in a different tradition called *stile brillante* [showy and sparkly], made fashionable by such virtuoso pianist-composers as Carl Maria von Weber and Johann Nepomuk Hummel, from whom Chopin borrowed a conception of the concerto as a loosely organized soloist showcase.

What makes Chopin's Op. 21 work is the dominance of the piano part. After introducing the first movement, the orchestra cedes all responsibility for musical development to the piano. There is none of the classical

concerto's true interplay of forces. But to call Chopin a poor orchestrator—“nothing but a cold and useless accompaniment” is how Berlioz described it—is moot. If Chopin treated the orchestra merely as a platter on which to serve the piano, that was the whole point.

In the same way the first movement bears the stamp of the *stile brillante*, the second shows the influence of Italian opera, owing much to the *bel canto* operas of composers like Rossini and Bellini. The delicate melodic embroidery in the outer section is unmistakably operatic; so, too, is the *arioso*-like piano writing, over trembling strings, in the middle section. (Chopin confessed in a letter dated October 3, 1929, that the second movement had been directly inspired by his secret passion for a younger singer at the Warsaw Conservatory.) Then, in the third movement, yet another unmistakable influence can be heard—the rhythm of the Polish mazurka, in a brilliantly stylized setting. Once again, the piano dominates, with the orchestra largely relegated to the roles of cushion and punctuation mark.

As one observer wrote, these piano concertos “linger in the memory for the poetry of their detail rather than the strength of their structures.” So imaginative and personal, they have become the only large-scale early works of Chopin to retain a place in the repertoire.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana

“*Chopin did violence to his genius every time he sought to fetter it by rules.* —FRANZ LISZT

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) Scheherazade, Op. 35

Composed 1888

47 min

EARLY ON, Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov seemed destined for a naval career, like others in his family. He was 27 when he decided on music as his life's work. Having somehow been offered the post of professor of composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he only kept ahead of his students by quickly digesting the books he was teaching. Major talent won through: he became a master of the art of colourful orchestration, nowhere more so than in this piece.

It was virtually inevitable that he would turn his attention to one of the world's best-known collections of folklore, the *Arabian Nights* (or *1001 Nights*). In his autobiography, he describes his intentions in composing *Scheherazade*: “I had in view the creation of an orchestral suite in four movements, closely knit by the unity of its themes and motives, yet presenting, as it were, a kaleidoscope of fairy tale images.... I meant the hinted titles of the movements to direct but slightly the hearer's fancy on the path which my own fancy had travelled.”

He also attached the following introduction to the score: “The Sultan Shakriar, convinced of the falsehood and inconstancy of all women, had sworn an oath to put to death each of his wives after the first night. However, the Sultana Scheherazade saved her life by arousing his interest in the tales which she told during the 1001 nights. Driven by curiosity, the Sultan postponed her execution from day to day, and at last abandoned his bloodthirsty design.”

The first movement of the suite opens with a stern brass theme that likely represents the bloodthirsty sultan. Answering it is the

most important recurring motif, a bewitching melody sung by the solo violin—the voice of Scheherazade. From early on, Rimsky-Korsakov also begins to dot the score with featured passages for solo instruments—flute, clarinet, cello, and horn—that make the entire suite a marvellous orchestral showpiece.

The second movement is indeed kaleidoscopic, as he described it in his autobiography. It has the character of a scherzo, with the solo bassoon launching the tale in a sinuous manner. Throughout, solo winds rhapsodize in flexible rhythm over a throbbing string accompaniment, and a war-like fanfare introduced by trombones and tuba plays an important role in the fantastic proceedings.

The third movement offers a luscious romantic reverie; a dance, tinged with light percussion, appears at the core. The sumptuous finale is a boisterous carnival, where themes heard earlier in the suite jostle for attention. It is ultimately crowned by a colossal climax, after which the “Scheherazade” theme returns one last time. Keening softly in the heights, it gently rocks the theme of the Sultan, its bullying tone now soothed, cradled in a tender lullaby.

—Program note by Don Anderson

SCHEHERAZADE AT THE TSO premiered on March 10, 1931, under Luigi von Kunits at Massey Hall. Not including these three performances led by Gustavo Gimeno, it has appeared 82 times on the programs of Masterworks, Pops, international tours, and school performances under the batons of Music Directors Karel Ančerl, Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Ernest MacMillan, Peter Oundjian, and Walter Susskind. It was also recorded by the TSO on the Chandos label in 2014, with Peter Oundjian and current Concertmaster Jonathan Crow.



Gustavo Gimeno, conductor

Gustavo Gimeno's tenure as Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra began in 2020/21. He has also held the position of Music Director with Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg (OPL) since 2015, and will assume it in 2025/26 with Teatro Real Madrid, where he is currently Music Director Designate.

Continuing their 100-year anniversary, Gimeno and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra celebrate with major symphonic works including Bruckner's *Symphony No. 4*, Prokofiev's *Suite from Romeo and Juliet*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. He will share the stage with, among other soloists, Yo-Yo Ma, Yuja Wang, Yefim Bronfman, and Jean-Guihen Queyras. The Orchestra will also embark on its first tour with him in winter 2023, including a return visit to Carnegie Hall, the TSO's annual orchestra exchange with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, and the Orchestra's debut at Chicago's Symphony Center.

With Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Gimeno explores repertoire including Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 6* "Tragic", Lutosławski's *Concerto for Orchestra*, and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5*. In 2022/23, he tours with the OPL to Switzerland, Austria, and Hungary, and together they make their first-ever tour to Korea.

This season, Gimeno and the TSO will record, for Harmonia Mundi, Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, with pianist Marc-André Hamelin and ondes Martenot player Nathalie Forget. This builds on Gimeno's new relationship, since April 2022, with the HM label, which commenced with a recording of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, featuring OPL with Maria Agresta (soprano), Daniela Barcellona (mezzo-soprano), René Barbera (tenor), Carlo Lepore (bass), and the Wiener Singverein. In August 2022, the OPL's second album for HM was devoted to two ballets by Stravinsky (*The Firebird* and *Apollon musagète*).

Gimeno and OPL also have an extensive discography with Pentatone. Releases include a Francisco Coll monography featuring the *Violin Concerto* with Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 1*, Bruckner's *Symphony No. 1*, Ravel's complete ballet music to *Daphnis et Chloé*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Rossini's *Petite Messe solennelle*, and César Franck's *Symphony in D Minor*.

As an opera conductor, he is invited for major titles 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: debuts 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 debut 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*.



Bruce Liu, piano

Canadian pianist Bruce Liu was brought to the world's attention in 2021, when he won the First Prize at the 18th International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. Since then, he has toured the world, appearing at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Wiener Konzerthaus, Bozar Brussels, Tokyo Opera City, Sala São Paulo, and the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra. Orchestral appearances also include the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. Additional past highlights include performances with ensembles such as The Cleveland Orchestra and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as a North American tour with the China NCPA Orchestra.

In addition to this debut appearance with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Liu's 2022/23 season includes a recital on the main stage of Carnegie Hall. His orchestral appearances include performances with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Wiener Symphoniker at the Musikverein. His festival appearances include la Roque d'Anthéron, Klavier-Festival Ruhr, Rheingau, Edinburgh, Chopin and his Europe, Duszyni, and Gstaad Menuhin.

An exclusive recording artist with Deutsche Grammophon, Mr. Liu's first album, featuring his winning performances from the Chopin Competition, won a Fryderyk Award and received international acclaim including both the Critics' Choice and Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine. "Forget the Chopin Competition element of this release," *Gramophone* says. "Listen to it simply as one of the most distinguished Chopin recitals of recent years, full of maturity, character and purpose." They also included it in their list of Best Classical Albums of 2021, describing Mr. Liu's playing as "evoking Shura Cherkassky and Georges Cziffra in a single breath."

"What we all have in common is our difference," the young pianist likes to say. Born in Paris to Chinese parents, he grew up in Montreal—a life that has been steeped in a cultural diversity that has shaped his own difference: in attitude, personality, and character. He draws on various sources of inspiration for his art: European refinement, Chinese long tradition, and North American dynamism and openness. Mr. Liu follows his artist path with optimism and a smile, and his teachers include Montreal-based Richard Raymond and Dang Thai Son.



In performance, International Chopin Competition, 2021.
→



Peter Oundjian
conductor

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Oundjian Conducts The Planets

Wed, Nov 9, 2022
Thu, Nov 10, 2022
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Felix Mendelssohn
The Hebrides, Op. 26
("Fingal's Cave")

Samy Moussa
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra "Adrano"

- I. ♩ circa 48 – Più mosso ♩ circa 58
- II. Cadenza: senza misura
- III. ♩ circa 96
- IV. Epilogue: ♩ circa 48

Intermission

Ernest Chausson
Poème for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 25

Camille Saint-Saëns
Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 78
"Organ Symphony"

- I. Adagio – Allegro moderato – Poco adagio
- II. Allegro moderato – Presto – Maestoso – Allegro

Program 2

Thursday,
September 29, 2022
8:00pm

Saturday,
October 1, 2022
8:00pm

Sunday,
October 2, 2022
3:00pm

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) *The Hebrides, Op. 26* ("Fingal's Cave")

Composed 1830

10 min

MENDELSSOHN CONCEIVED and first sketched *The Hebrides* in August 1829, during a walking tour of Scotland that included the Inner Hebrides islands off Scotland's west coast, and Fingal's Cave, on the Isle of Staffa. He completed the overture late in 1830, in Rome, but continued to revise it: after its well-received first performance, in London (May 1832); after its first publication as a piano duet (1833); and following its publication in orchestral parts (1834).

There was, by the way, no unanimity of title among the various manuscript and early published sources, which bore headings including *The Hebrides*, *Fingal's Cave*, *Ossian in Fingal's Cave*, *Overture to the Isles of Fingal*, and *Overture to the Lonely Isle*. Unlike such works as the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it does not set a particular poem, play, or other literary source, although Mendelssohn was probably influenced by Scottish literature of the day (namely, Ossian and Scott).

It seems to have been based largely on visual impressions (a fine draftsman, Mendelssohn made many drawings in Scotland). One can also perhaps detect in it certain naturalistic musical influences, like Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony, and traces of traditional Scottish music (though Mendelssohn, admittedly, was never much interested in folk music). It is also tempting to suggest tone-painting here and there—winds and waves, caves and crags. But even though the music is undeniably vivid, full of drama and mystery and rough-hewn grandeur, it has no explicit program. The music is really more impressionistic than programmatic.

Mendelssohn seems to have been primarily interested in conveying the textures

of the desolation of these Scottish islands; a few storms notwithstanding, they are mostly quiet. Set in a recognizable sonata form (the recapitulation is much truncated), the music unfolds organically, through transformations of a few interrelated ideas—particularly the famous motif with which it opens.

"Mendelssohn was not the first to create independent concert overtures," the musicologist R. Larry Todd writes, "but he was arguably the first major composer to probe extensively the ability of the autonomous overture to treat in purely musical terms programmatic ideas, whether of a dramatic, poetic, or pictorial nature." Mendelssohn's achievement was to separate the overture "from its traditional role on the stage, and to free orchestral music from the conventions of the symphony." The influence of his free-standing overtures on later dramatic and program music was incalculable.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



↑
["Fingal's Cave"] seems to have been based largely on visual impressions (a fine draftsman, Mendelssohn made many drawings in Scotland). [He] seems to have been primarily interested in conveying the textures of the desolation of these Scottish islands.

Samy Moussa (b. 1984) *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra "Adrano"*

Composed 2019

15 min

THE ORCHESTRAL WORKS of Montreal-born composer Samy Moussa, who was most recently the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's 2021/22 Spotlight Artist, are highly regarded for their vibrant sound worlds, with descriptions of his pieces often vividly citing his bold approaches to harmony and orchestral timbre. His Violin Concerto ("Adrano") from 2019 is an authoritative example of his compositional craft. Since the work's première, it has been recorded by Andrew Wan and the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal under Kent Nagano (Analekta) and won the 2021 JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year.

The work's name refers to the Sicilian city where Moussa had spent substantial time and was inspired by the views, including Mount Etna, the highest active volcano in Europe. In ancient times, the population there had worshipped Adrano or Adranos, a fire god who was said to have lived under the volcano. The concerto's four movements, which proceed without break, evoke the sublime beauty of the region's landscapes as well as the volatility of the volcano and the precariousness of life at the foot of it.

The concerto opens with an introduction of sustained notes intoned by flutes, after which the solo violin sings a gradually climbing melody. It reaches a high D, underneath which lower instruments (including contrabassoon) finally sound, as if from the depths. The registral gap widens further as the violin soars higher over slow-shifting harmonies below. Other instruments fill in the texture while the violin responds with arcing lyrical phrases. The opening melody returns, this time with the orchestra moving

more assertively. It ultimately builds to a grand climax with somewhat menacing low notes resounding from the deep. The threat dissipates, returning to calm as the orchestra steadily advances a progression of chords, the outlines of which the violin plucks.

The chords continue into the second movement, accompanying the solo violin's rhapsodic cadenza featuring quicksilver arpeggios of harmonics. At moments, dissonances resolve into consonances, like something coming into focus through the "mist." A decisive chord marks the beginning of the fiery third movement, and the orchestra emerges playing vigorously churning figures, with loud accents punctuating the roiling texture. Later, solo violin erupts into virtuosic ascending flourishes, with the orchestra interjecting with stabbing chords. Then, unleashed in a relentless *perpetuum mobile*, the violin drives forward with rapid arpeggios as the orchestra surges underneath; they finally culminate with triumphant chords. The fourth movement follows—an "Épilogue" that is a varied reprisal of the music from the first movement. After reaching its peak, the solo violin remains in the heights as a trumpet intones a mellow fanfare to draw the concerto to a serene close.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

THE FIRST PERFORMANCE of Samy Moussa's music in a TSO season was Nocturne for Orchestra, in March 2015. Since then, his works have featured on several recent programs: *A Globe Itself Infolding* (February 2017), *Crimson* for Large Orchestra (March 2022), *Fanfare pour Aix* (April 2022), *Frammenti dolorosi et amorosi: Eight Songs for Voice and Piano* (May 2022), and *Symphony No. 2* (May 2022), a TSO-commissioned World Première.

Ernest Chausson (1855–1899)

Poème for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 25

Composed 1896

16 min

BORN IN PARIS, France, Ernest Chausson produced a regrettably small catalogue. He came late to music, after first following his family's wishes and studying law; he composed slowly and carefully; and he died in a bicycling accident at 44.

After deciding that composition was his true calling, he entered the Paris Conservatoire at 25, evolving a highly personal style blending the mystical approach of Richard Wagner and Chausson's teacher, César Franck, with the impressionist style of his friend Claude Debussy. The resulting combination was greeted with great hostility by a Parisian press that despised both Wagner and Debussy. But Chausson pressed on.

Along the way, the celebrated Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe offered him a commission for a work with orchestral accompaniment. Chausson demurred at taking on a concerto, "but...a single movement for violin and orchestra," he noted, "would be much more likely. It would be very free in form, with many passages where the violin would play alone."

In the fall of 1896, while in Spain to take part in a series of concerts featuring French music, Chausson and Ysaÿe were invited to the home of painter Santiago Rusiñol, where they and other musicians performed chamber music for ten solid hours, including the first performance of the *Poème*, which Ysaÿe played without a rehearsal. The Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz, to whom Chausson had shown great generosity when Albéniz arrived friendless in Paris, likely heard *Poème* during that visit. Albéniz then persuaded renowned Hungarian conductor Arthur Nikisch to include music by Chausson at upcoming Paris concerts. The Paris première

followed in April 1897, only secured by the fact that the much-admired Ysaÿe would appear as soloist. The composer stood backstage during a performance greeted with tremendous applause.

Poème gave Chausson the least difficulty of any major work, and it shows in its confident, free-flowing form and contents. Debussy spoke of how *Poème* contained all its composer's best qualities. "The freedom of its form never hinders harmonious proportion. Nothing touches more with dreamy sweetness than its conclusion, where the music becomes the very feeling which inspired its emotion."

The solo violin emerges out of the dark, misty orchestral opening, playing in an intimate, free-flowing manner; the emotional tempo and temperature rise soon afterward, in an extended principal section during which the violin offers wave after wave of amorous expression, supported by lush orchestration. Once the work's climax has at last been attained, the music gradually dissipates.

A week after Chausson's untimely death, Ysaÿe played the *Poème* in London, a performance the composer had planned to attend. Ysaÿe then wrote to Chausson's children: "I was today...moved at the thought that I was the first after his death to place humbly all my artistic strength at the service of one of his works, whose pure beauty will reflect itself on all of you."

—Program note by Don Anderson

“*Nothing touches more with dreamy sweetness than its conclusion, where the music becomes the very feeling which inspired its emotion.*

—CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 78 "Organ Symphony"

Composed 1886

36 min

THE ORGAN WAS AN INSTRUMENT Saint-Saëns knew intimately: for two decades he was organist at the Madeleine in Paris (Liszt called him the greatest organist in the world). The organ gives unmatched depth and grandeur to this symphonic work, as it accompanies a series of broad, expressive themes.

Structurally, the work adheres to the four-movement plan of the Classical symphony, condensed by Saint-Saëns into two movements with three distinct sections each. Seeking "to avoid the endless resumptions and repetitions" of the Classical style, Saint-Saëns sought inspiration in the innovative forms of Liszt's later instrumental music, and in Liszt's technique of thematic transformation.

In the opening Adagio, for example, after a short, mournful introduction, he introduces a nervous, trembling motif (violins) that not only becomes the main theme of the Allegro moderato that follows, but also serves as a motto throughout the symphony, its profile changing to suit the musical context. The beginning of the Poco adagio, which concludes the first movement, marks the entrance of the organ, and has three distinct sections within it. The middle one of these, featuring woodwind and brass choirs, is darker, but the outer two, which favour the strings, sound like continuous outpourings of melody. The third, in particular is a tense, driving, fantastical scherzo, with a faster, brighter episode in the middle that is glitteringly orchestrated, like ballet music.

The second movement, which opens with a mighty blast from the organ, has its own new themes, the most important of which alludes to the famous four-note

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THE ROY THOMSON HALL GABRIEL KNEY PIPE ORGAN, Opus 95, 1981, was planned for during the initial design phases of the hall in the late 1970s—a large and eclectic concert organ capable of performing the entire corpus of the instrument's literature. The organ planning committee selected renowned organ builder Gabriel Kney of London, Ontario, to design and build this instrument, which remains to this day one of the largest mechanical-action instruments in Canada. At a cost of over \$650,000 and over 20,000 hours of labour, the instrument was inaugurated on September 18, 1982. On the occasion of the successful renovations to Roy Thomson Hall in 2002, it was completely revoiced by Kney, so as to best take advantage of the improved acoustic properties of the venue.

motif that begins the finale of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony. The motto from the first movement's Allegro moderato returns here as well, in fresh guises—with hymn-like majesty in the slow introduction, and as the subject of a brief, pompous fugue. The "hymn" and fugue versions of the motto, and the new themes of the finale, are developed at considerable length in a noisy, theatrical orchestral setting, before the work finally achieves its triumphant resolution, with the organ prominently on display to the very end.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



Gemma New, conductor

Sought after for her insightful interpretations and dynamic presence, New Zealand-born Gemma New is the newly appointed Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. She also holds the titles of Music Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. New is the recipient of the prestigious 2021 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award.

In New's inaugural season with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, she led the 2022 Winter Festival with Hilary Hahn and Paul Lewis, Mozart's Requiem with Voices New Zealand, and contemporary works by New Zealand composers John Psathas, John Rimmer, Tabea Squire, and Anthony Ritchie in the orchestra's 75th-anniversary season. The 2022/23 season also marks New's eighth season as Music Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra.

In the 2022/23 season, New leads the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Royal Northern Sinfonia. Increasingly in demand in Europe, she leads the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, Berner Symphonieorchester, Gävle Symphony, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, Orchestra della Toscana, and the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg in the final concert of Mozartwoche 2023. New makes her débuts with the Houston Symphony and Melbourne Symphony in Australia, and returns to lead the New Jersey Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and New World Symphony. In June 2023, she returns to St. Louis to lead Opera Theatre of Saint Louis's production of *Susannah*.

New's work as Music Director of the Hamilton Philharmonic has been committed to deepening the artistic level of the orchestra and expanding its reach into the community. New launched the HPO's first "Intimate and Immersive" concert series, a Family Series, and regular side-by-sides with the HPO Youth Orchestra. Her programs present works by core masters such as Beethoven and Mahler, as well as works by today's most active composers from Canada and New Zealand such as Zosha di Castri, José Evangelista, Salina Fisher, and Kevin Lau.

New previously served as Resident Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and as Associate Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony. A former Dudamel Conducting Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gemma New was a 2018 Conducting Fellow at Tanglewood Music Center and Conducting Fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. She studied conducting at the Peabody Institute with Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar. More information on Gemma New can be found at www.gemmanew.com.

Gemma New's TSO début was March 9, 2019, leading the orchestra in Shostakovich's kinetic *Symphony No.5* and Mozart's *Concerto for Flute and Harp K299/297c* (Kelly Zimba, flute, and Heidi Van Hoesen Gorton, harp).

→
Kerson Leong's TSO début was on June 22, 2013, playing Franz Waxman's *Carmen Fantasie* under Andrew Grams.

→
Jean-Willy Kunz's TSO début was on February 1, 2017, playing Samy Moussa's *A Globe Itself Infolding* under conductor Stéphane Denève.



Kerson Leong, violin

Canadian violinist Kerson Leong is quickly emerging as one of the finest musicians and instrumentalists of his generation. He continues to win over both colleagues and audiences alike not only with his "supreme mastery" (*Le Devoir*) of his instrument or his unmistakable tone, but also his ability to combine an honest, intellectual approach with raw intensity and spontaneity. He first gained international attention by winning Junior First Prize at the Menuhin Competition 2010 in Oslo. He has since emerged as a powerful, individual musical voice, in such venues as Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, Wigmore Hall, the Auditorium du Louvre, and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing.

Hand-picked by Yannick Nézet-Séguin as artist-in-residence with the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal during the 2018/19 season, Leong has performed with such ensembles as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, and Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra. Another recent highlight was recording John Rutter's *Visions*, a piece written especially for Leong, with the composer himself and the Aurora Chamber Orchestra.

Music outreach and pedagogy are growing passions for Leong. Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music and the Sibelius Academy have both invited him to teach and lecture, enabling him to cement his significant role in reaching young people and potential music lovers with his art.



Jean-Willy Kunz, organ

Jean-Willy Kunz, Organist in Residence of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, plays with the Orchestra and in recital, and sees to the development and showcasing of Casavant's Opus I3900 installed in 2014 at the Maison symphonique in Montreal.

Kunz has premiered numerous pieces for organ and orchestra, and for solo organ, by Tod Machover, John Rea, Maxime Goulet, and others. Among many highlights was a 2017 recital in collaboration with NASA, during which a live audio-video duplex with an astronaut aboard the International Space Station allowed for the first-ever

Earth-space organ duet.

His stylistic versatility is reflected in various projects over the years, including jazz music in duo with Branford Marsalis, pop music with Rufus Wainwright, and stage music with Cirque du Soleil. His discography includes 15 recordings reflecting the broad range of his musical influences: a solo organ album, *Impressions* with the jazz ensemble InSpirations, a 2016 JUNO Award-winning album with the MSO, and many more.

Jean-Willy Kunz studied with Louis Robilliard and with Mireille Lagacé, before completing a doctorate in organ performance at McGill University with John Grew. He is organ professor at the Conservatory of Music in Montreal, titular organist at the church of St-Jean-Baptiste, and artistic director of the Canadian International Organ Competition.

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TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor
Yefim Bronfman, piano

Bronfman Plays Beethoven

Christina Volpini
deep field: Celebration Prelude

TSO100 Commission/World Première

György Ligeti
Atmosphères

Richard Wagner
Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin*

Franz Joseph Haydn
Symphony No. 39 in G Minor, Hob. I.39
"Tempesta di mare"

- I. Allegro assai
- II. Andante
- III. Menuet and Trio
- IV. Finale: Allegro di molto

Intermission

Unsuk Chin
subito con forza

(Canadian Première)

Ludwig van Beethoven
Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Largo
- III. Rondo: Allegro

Program 3

Wednesday,
October 12, 2022

8:00pm

Friday,
October 14, 2022

7:30pm

Saturday,
October 15, 2022

8:00pm*

*There will be a TSO Chamber Soloists pre-concert performance at 6:30pm, October 15 only, for holders of tickets to that evening's performance.

Yefim Bronfman, piano
(special guest)

Jonathan Crow, violin

Eri Kosaka, violin

Michael Casimir, viola

Joseph Johnson, cello

Brahms: Piano Quintet in F Minor,
Op. 34 (40')

Gustavo Gimeno's appearances are generously supported by Susan Brenninkmeyer in memory of Hans Brenninkmeyer.

The October 12 performance is generously supported by Blake and Belinda Goldring.

The October 14 performance is generously supported by the Estate of Robin Pitcher.

The TSO's Celebration Preludes are generously supported by Margie and Peter Kelk.

The TSO Chamber Soloists' performance on October 15 is generously supported by Jack Whiteside.

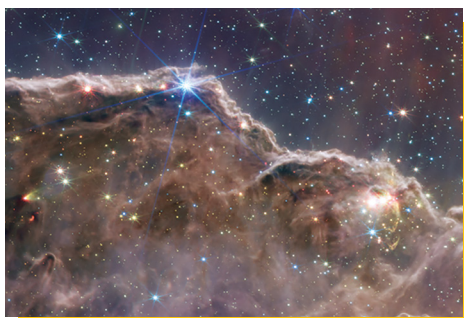
Christina Volpini (b. 1992)

deep field: Celebration Prelude

TSO100 Commission/World Première
Composed 2022

3 min

THE COMPOSER WRITES: As I was composing this work, NASA released the first images captured by the James Webb Space Telescope. The first JWST deep field photograph, captured over 12.5 hours of exposure time, covers an area of sky approximately the size of a grain of sand held at arm's length. Within this sliver of sky, thousands of galaxies are visible. While the JWST images are stunning upon first viewing, I find them astounding as I try (and fail) to comprehend the scale of what is pictured—for example, the Cosmic Cliffs of the Carina Nebula, which are seven light-years tall, or light of galaxies 13 billion years away. In addition to marking the 100th season of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, this work marks the release of the first JWST images. For me, these photographs disrupt from the day-to-day and imbue a sense of wonder that I may take in structures that exist on such a vast and unknowable scale.



↑
NASA released the first images captured by the James Webb Space Telescope.

Christina Volpini is a Hamilton/Toronto-based composer whose work focuses on gradually unfolding harmonies and timbral spaces. Described as “very nuanced, rustling and whispering” (*Neomemoire*) and “focused intently on the subtle sounds that fall between the cracks” (*Ludwig Van Toronto*), her music explores subtle variation in intonation, found objects, instrumental textures, and ephemerality. She frequently develops pieces through a process of creative discovery with other artists, crafting works for specific spaces and performers. Commissioned projects include works for Continuum Contemporary Music, Jumblies Theatre, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, Arraymusic, percussionist Ryan Scott, Duo AIRS, and Ensemble Bakalari, among others. Her work has been presented by the Music Gallery, Le Vivier, and Soundstreams, and she has participated in artistic residencies with the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and nyMusikk Norway via Quatuor Bozzini’s Composers’ Kitchen.

An avid capacity-builder in arts spaces, Christina was a core organizer of both the Montreal Contemporary Music Lab and the Toronto Creative Music Lab, important community-driven workshops for early-career artists with an emphasis on peer mentorship and collaboration. She is originally from Niagara Falls, Ontario.



György Ligeti (1923–2006)

Atmosphères

Composed 1961

10 min

IN THE CONTEXT of the 20th century, *Atmosphères* is a groundbreaking composition, and one of Transylvania-born György Ligeti’s best-known works. Commissioned by Southwest German Radio (SWF), it cemented the composer’s reputation internationally as being at the forefront of Western art music’s avant-garde at the time. The piece gained even more popularity when director Stanley Kubrick used it as the opening to the soundtrack of his 1968 epic science fiction film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where it functions as an overture to the film, playing for a full three minutes in blackness, before the studio credits appear.

Atmosphères is Ligeti’s pioneering achievement in creating a static music through novel orchestration techniques—by having each instrument play different rhythmic and pitch patterns at varying speeds and dynamic levels, all of which, through meticulous balance and coordination, are blended together to create a sound mass of what he called “fluctuating colour” (*Bewegungsfarbe*). He described the effect as follows: “The formal characteristic of this music is that it seems static. The music appears to stand still, but that is merely an illusion: within this standing still, this static quality, there are gradual changes: I would think here of a surface of water in which an image is reflected; then this surface of water is gradually disturbed, and the image disappears, but very, very gradually. Subsequently the water calms down again, and we see a different image.”

For the first couple of minutes in the piece, a static surface is disturbed by variations in dynamics. A massive chromatic cluster sounds at the opening, then dies away. Voices re-enter, swelling and abating, after which clusters shift from chromatic

to diatonic (think white keys on a piano) in the strings, to pentatonic (black keys) in the woodwinds, and back to chromatic (all keys) in the strings. Then, for another minute, the static surface is disrupted by changes in internal motion—each instrument enters in sequence, playing an oscillating figure that gets quicker through increasing divisions of the beat. As the texture becomes denser, it sounds like a cloud of noise. After it clears, the registral expanse gradually opens up, as families of instruments introduce clusters that push out to ever higher and lower pitches. Violins and piccolos reach their topmost notes, which are then transferred way down into the double basses’ lower strings.

About halfway through the piece, the strings present what Ligeti referred to as a micropolyphonic canon, during which each instrument enters closely offset from the others, on a different note of the melody. To the ear, melodic fragments seem to emerge and recede into the sonic fabric. Later, the composer introduces “mosaic” texture, created through overlapping entries and exits of instruments; the effect is of a sound mass animated by fluctuating densities. New timbres—such as blowing through brass instruments, playing harmonics on strings, or with the wood of the bow, or on the bridge—become part of the mass. The “noise” gradually dissipates and, finally, with brushed piano strings, disappears into the ether.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

THE FIRST LIGETI WORK PERFORMED BY THE TSO was *Atmosphères* (March 1966) under Seiji Ozawa. Other works performed: *Lontano* for Orchestra (January 1972) under James Levine, *Apparitions* (November 1997) under Jukka-Pekka Saraste, *Mysteries of the Macabre* (December 2000) under Gary Kulesha, *Melodien* (October 2005) under Ilan Volkov, and *Concert Românesc* (October 2015) under Barbara Hannigan.

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin*

Composed 1846–1848

8 min

THE CHARACTER OF LOHENGRIN, the pure-hearted knight, first shows up in Germanic legend in the early 1300s, as Loherangrin, child of Parzival and Condwiramurs, in Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic poem *Parzival*. Wolfram's story is a variation of the Knight of the Swan tale, previously attached to the Crusade cycle of medieval literature, mixed in with Arthurian legend. In Wolfram's account, Loherangrin and his twin brother, Kardeiz, join their parents in Munsalväsche (the castle of the Grail King) after Parzival becomes King. Kardeiz later inherits their father's secular lands; and Loherangrin remains in Munsalväsche as a Grail Knight, standing by to be sent out in secret to provide assistance to kingdoms that have lost their protectors.

He is eventually called to this duty in Brabant, where the duke has died without

THE PRELUDES FROM WAGNER'S

LOHENGRIN have been a TSO staple since a May 27, 1924 concert under Luigi von Kunits (back when the Orchestra was still known as the New Symphony Orchestra), showing up in the repertoire for regular and Pops concerts, as well as provincial and international tours. Including these performances, the Prelude to Act I has been performed 34 times. The Prelude to Act III has been even more popular, particularly at student and Pops concerts, with 191 performances since 1924 under a variety of conductors such as Victor Borge, James Conlon, Victor Feldbrill, Arthur Fiedler, Günther Herbig, Luigi von Kunits, Erich Kunzel, Sir Ernest MacMillan, Peter Oundjian, Ethel Stark (the first woman to conduct the TSO), and Walter Susskind.

—Note by John Sharpe, TSO Archivist

a male heir. His daughter Elsa fears the kingdom will be lost, but Loherangrin arrives in a boat pulled by a swan and offers to defend her, though he warns her she must never ask his name. She does (of course), tricked by an enemy, and Loherangrin steps back onto his swan boat, never to return.

Wagner immersed himself in Wolfram's epic during the winter of 1841–1842, leading to a lifelong fascination with stories of the Holy Grail—the cup from which Jesus is said to have drunk at the Last Supper—and with the knights who sought and then guarded it. Wolfram himself shows up as a character in Wagner's very next opera, *Tannhauser* (1845); and *Lohengrin* follows hard on its heels. Wagner completed the libretto in 1845, and the first draft of the music in July 1846. The full score was finished in April 1848. Later on, following completion of his Ring Cycle, Wagner returned to the Grail legend, tangentially in *Tristan und Isolde* (1865) and, coming full circle, in *Parsifal* (1882).

As in Wolfram's account, the action takes place near Antwerp, Belgium, during the first half of the 10th century. Lohengrin appears in answer to a prayer from Elsa, daughter of the King of Brabant, for a champion to defend her against a rival claim to the throne. He agrees to do so on condition that she not ask his name. Once again, Elsa is tricked into posing the forbidden question, and he reveals his identity. Under the rules of his sacred knightly order, this means that he must return immediately to his domain, and, as he departs, she falls lifeless to the ground.

The Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin* is, however, four-and-a-half hours removed from the opera's grim denouement, offering a gentle and luminous beginning that grows in ardour and volume to present at its centrepoint a radiant depiction of the Holy Grail.

—Program note by Don Anderson

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Symphony No. 39 in G Minor, Hob. I.39 "Tempesta di mare"

Composed 1766

20 min

THE YEAR IS 1766 and a 34-year-old Joseph Haydn has just been named Kapellmeister by Prince Anton Esterházy, thereby proving that Prince Anton had even more of an ear for music than his predecessor who had only appointed Haydn assistant conductor of the Esterházy Court. In the unparalleled freedom to experiment within this Hungarian courtly cocoon, the bulk of Haydn's 107 symphonies were composed: "Cut off from the world," as Haydn wrote, "there was no one to confuse or torment me, and I was forced to become original."

Shielded from the torments of the external world, he had free rein to fabricate internal tempests of his own, particularly as the *Sturm und Drang* ("storm and stress") Romantic movement was taking aim at the Enlightenment cult of Rationalism that had gripped Europe in the latter half of the 18th century. His Symphony No. 45 and this Symphony No. 39—aptly nicknamed "Tempesta di mare" ("storm at sea")—are often referenced as early gems of this aesthetic of fancy turbulence. Composed in Haydn's first year as Kapellmeister, this symphony contains all the boisterous energy and tireless optimism of one's first weeks at a new gig—a tireless drive that, for Haydn, would

“*Cut off from the world, there was no one to confuse or torment me, and I was forced to become original.*”

last for almost the next four decades at the helm of one of the era's premier orchestras.

Brief as it is, the symphony is nevertheless composed of sharply contrasting seascapes, beginning in the first movement with the stern wallop of the *sturm*, then colourful respite in the next two movements, and ending with the full-mast *drang* of the Finale. The first movement begins gently with a swiftly gliding figure on strings. After a brief bout of self-conscious hesitation, the horns join in to deliver the ballistic force for the confident theme that dominates the movement's entirety. The whole symphony wraps around a foursome of horns—the first and second of which are in B flat and the third and fourth in G minor. This symmetry is also reflected in the overall structure, with the movements scored in a palindromic sequence of minor-major-minor-major-minor.

The horns are mum for the whole second movement, as the strings weigh in. As if repenting for the excesses of the first movement, this one is a courtly Mozartian dance of light and grace. As the movement travels seamlessly into the Menuet of the third movement, the G minor horns return with leisurely phrases echoed on oboes and bassoon, paced by a light trot on continuo. The Menuet then gives way to a Trio, where it is the two B-flat horns that provide the delicate embroidery.

And then this orderly procession sails, slap-bang, into the tempest of the Finale. The electricity of tremolo on high strings mixes violently with scales and counterpoint between wind and low strings. It's an almost textbook snapshot of the panache that animated Haydn's proto-*Sturm und Drang* style, cloaked throughout, as befitted the Esterházy Kapellmeister, by the symmetrical Enlightenment orderliness that storm and stress sought to dislodge.

—Program note by Michael Zarthus-Cook

Unsub Chin (b. 1961)

subito con forza

(Canadian Première)

Composed 2020

5 min

KOREAN COMPOSER Unsub Chin is one of contemporary music's significant figures. A former student of György Ligeti, she feels her compositional style isn't easily pigeonholed into any specific aesthetic type or tradition. "Personally, I have the feeling that I don't belong to any school or movement," she has noted, "but I do try to write music that is 'modern'. In the sense of starting from our time, making reflective and critical use of the compositional possibilities available today."

Written for the Beethoven 250th birthday celebrations in 2020, *subito con forza* ("suddenly with force") takes inspiration from a line in the composer's conversation books: "Dur und Moll. Ich bin ein Gewinner." ("Major and minor. I am a winner.") Chin was also inspired by Beethoven's drive to seek inventive solutions with each piece he wrote, an aspect that makes him one of her favourite composers. The compact work contains several references to his music, and features, as she describes, "enormous contrasts: from volcanic eruptions to extreme serenity." It captures the composer's

“*The compact work contains several references to [Beethoven's] music and features enormous contrasts: from volcanic eruptions to extreme serenity.*”

volatile personality as well as defining characteristics of his music.

subito con forza moves swiftly through a series of highly contrasting episodes. It begins with the octave Cs from the start of Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture*, after which the music loudly shatters, then is suddenly very soft. First violins sustain a very high note with tremolo and a wandering passage begins low in the double basses; the rest of the strings fill in the texture. There's a brief pause, then strings restart and get louder, faster, raspier (they play *sul ponticello*—on the bridge). They relentlessly drive toward an extremely loud climax; after another pause, there are jarring full-orchestra stabs of dissonant chords. Suddenly, the piano enters with the opening flourish of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, but it's derailed by the orchestra. A transitional passage follows, mysterious at first, then becoming more decisive; it leads into an extended section, with woodwinds, piano, vibraphone, marimba, and plucked strings, and culminates in a very loud cluster chord.

Playing softly and *sul ponticello*, violins and violas take up a wandering line, the eerie timbre of which is punctuated by aggressive accents. In the next episode, instrumental sections—woodwinds, piano, and strings—simultaneously play material in different subdivisions of the beat—two, three, and four, respectively—and eventually climax with a loud flurry of string scales. After a moment of silence, the French horns and trumpets in alternation proclaim the famous short-short-short-long motif from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony like a fanfare. It disintegrates into a mysterious dialogue of tones and clusters, which, initiated by the tubular bell, picks up pace and develops into increasingly louder swells. It lands on a dense cluster of sound, which then stunningly resolves into a C-minor chord to close the piece.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37

Composed 1800

38 min

AS A YOUNG COMPOSER in his twenties, Beethoven was staking his claim, almost systematically, to one classical genre after another: piano sonata, variations, chamber music, aria, concerto, symphony. At the same time, he was also confronting the intimidating legacies of his great predecessors Haydn and Mozart.

If Haydn's influence can be heard most clearly in the early sonatas, string quartets, and symphonies, the spirit of Mozart hovers over the early concertos. Beethoven particularly admired two Mozart piano concertos in minor keys: K. 466 in D Minor and K. 491 in C Minor, both forerunners of the 19th-century Romantic style. Upon hearing K. 491 performed in 1799, he exclaimed to a friend: "Cramer! Cramer! We shall never be able to do anything like that!" But in fact he was already trying—labouring for several years on his own Piano Concerto in C Minor, which would reach its final form sometime in the early 1800s, and he gave the first performance in 1803.

The influence of K. 491 is audible in the details as well as the conception—in the opening theme, for instance, and at the end of the first movement, where (as in K. 491 but contrary to convention) the pianist continues to play along with the orchestra a series of mysterious arpeggios after the cadenza.

With its symphonic proportions, grand orchestration, and stormy, Romantic rhetoric (there are cadenzas in all three movements), Beethoven's C-Minor concerto was an important precursor of his "heroic" middle-period style; its solo part demanded unprecedented power and virtuosity, and

TSO STATS: the five Beethoven piano concertos have been performed 432 times, with No. 3 leading the way; No. 1 (44), No. 2 (58), No. 3 (116), Nos. 4 & 5 (107 each).

432

PERFORMANCES

an unprecedented range of colour and expression from the pianist. As Beethoven biographer Maynard Solomon wrote, this was the first concerto to "record something far beyond merely exterior wit or refinement, and to move toward dramatic oratory."

The slow movement is luminous, and Beethoven writes "*sempre con gran espressione*" ("always with great expression") at the little cadenza near the end (he never included such instructions lightly). One hears an incipient Romanticism in his beautiful piano writing: textures that span the whole range of the keyboard; sonorous, wide-spaced chords and lush arpeggios; evocative tremolos in the left hand; rich ornamentation and intricate melodic filigree. Beethoven is generous with pedal markings, too, some of which serve to blur harmonies into an impressionistic haze.

The closing *rondo* at first renews the blustery rhetoric of the first movement but, increasingly, the drama lightens. Pleasant, lyrical, even flippant melodic ideas appear, along with tender and tranquil episodes (one of which recalls the slow movement), bringing a new note of comedy with them, and it is the spirit of comedy that ultimately prevails. Just when the finale seems at an end, a short cadenza leads into a coda that is pure opera buffa, featuring a trivial little motif from earlier in the movement, reinterpreted in jaunty 6/8 time. With light-footed orchestral writing and brilliant cascades from the piano, Beethoven finishes the most passionate of his early concertos in a hail of raucous laughter.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor

For Gustavo Gimeno's performing biography, please see page 14.



Yefim Bronfman, piano

Internationally recognized as one of today's most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors, and recital series. His commanding technique, power, and exceptional lyrical gifts are consistently acknowledged by the press and audiences alike.

Following summer festival appearances in Verbier and Salzburg, and on tour with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, Mr. Bronfman's 2022/23 season begins with the opening week of the Chicago Symphony, followed by return visits to New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh, Houston, Philadelphia, New World, Pacific, Madison, New Jersey, Toronto, and Montreal symphonies. In Europe, he will tour with Rotterdam Philharmonic and can also be heard with Berlin Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk (Munich), Bamberg, Staatskapelle Dresden, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and Zurich Opera orchestras.

Always keen to explore chamber music repertoire, he has partnered with Pinchas Zukerman, Martha Argerich, Magdalena Kožená, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Emmanuel Pahud, and many others. In 1991, he gave a series of joint recitals with Isaac Stern in Russia, marking Mr. Bronfman's first public performances there since his immigration to Israel at age 15.

Widely praised for his solo, chamber, and orchestral recordings, Mr. Bronfman has been nominated for six GRAMMY® Awards, winning in 1997 with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for their recording of the three Bartók Piano Concerti. His prolific catalogue of recordings includes works for two pianos by Rachmaninoff and Brahms with Emanuel Ax, the complete Prokofiev concerti with the Israel Philharmonic and Zubin Mehta, a Schubert/Mozart disc with the Zukerman Chamber Players, the soundtrack to Disney's *Fantasia 2000*, and the 2014 GRAMMY®-nominated Magnus Lindberg Piano Concerto No. 2, commissioned for him and performed by the New York Philharmonic conducted by Alan Gilbert on the Dacapo label.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union, Yefim Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubín Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the US, he studied at The Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music, under Rudolf Firkušný, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. A recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, one of the highest honours given to American instrumentalists, in 2010, he was further honoured as the recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance from Northwestern University, and, in 2015, with an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.

Yefim Bronfman's TSO début was on November 17, 1981, playing Liszt's *Second Piano Concerto* under Varujan Kojian, in the TSO's final season at Massey Hall before moving to Roy Thomson Hall.

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- Out of respect for all patrons and performers, and to maintain musical continuity, an usher will admit latecomers into the auditorium when and if there is an appropriate break in the performance. This "late call" is determined by the conductor and guest artists.

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