



ORCHESTRE
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Yannick Nézet-Séguin



Official Partner

NIELSEN & BARTÓK: TWO CONCERTOS



2022

2021



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NIELSEN & BARTÓK: TWO CONCERTOS



Nicolas Ellis, *conductor*
Yukari Cousineau, *violin*

**Saturday,
March 26, 2022
7:30 p.m.**

Maison symphonique
de Montréal

NIELSEN

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 33

- I. Præludium (Largo) - Allegro cavalleresco
- II. Poco adagio - Rondo (Allegretto scherzando)

Performance time: about 34 minutes

20-minute intermission

BARTÓK

Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116, BB 123

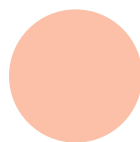
- I. Introduzione (Andante non troppo)
- II. Giuoco delle coppie (Allegretto scherzando)
- III. Elegia (Andante non troppo)
- IV. Intermezzo interrotto (Allegretto)
- V. Finale (Pesante - Presto)

Performance time: about 36 minutes



NICOLAS ELLIS

CONDUCTOR & ARTISTIC PARTNER



Nicolas Ellis is the Artistic Director, Conductor and Founder of the Orchestre de l'Agora and currently serves as Artistic Partner to the Orchestre Métropolitain and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Mr. Ellis appeared as guest conductor with Les Violons du Roy, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Orchestre de chambre I Musici de Montréal, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Orchestre symphonique de Québec, the Orchestre Métropolitain, Symphony Nova Scotia, the Orchestre classique de Montréal, the Ottawa Symphony, the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

He also regularly collaborates with the Opéra de Montréal's Atelier lyrique. During the 2021-2022 season, in addition to his guest conducting engagements, he will act as Assistant Conductor at the Opéra Comique in Paris alongside conductor Raphaël Pichon and the Ensemble Pygmalion, on a new production of *Fidelio* (fall 2021). In January 2022, he will also act as cover conductor to Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra for recordings that will be released under the label Deutsche Grammophon.

Nicolas Ellis has performed with renowned artists including Jean-Guihen Queyras, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Julie Boulianne, Hélène Guilmette, Karina Gauvin, Anthony Roth Constanzo and Charles Richard-Hamelin.

In 2013, he founded the Orchestre de l'Agora, an orchestra now recognized on the Montreal scene for its artistically audacious programs and its social engagement. The ensemble has joined force with Share the Warmth Foundation, Les Porteurs de musique and the Espace Transition of the Hôpital Sainte-Justine to give workshops, music lessons

and concerts to children from underprivileged neighbourhoods. Agora also presents concerts in places where people frequently lack access to live classical music, such as psychiatric centres, shelters and elderly homes.

During the 2021-2022 season, Agora will embark on a new concert series at the Prison Bordeaux in the north of Montreal. On April 22, 2020, the Orchestre de l'Agora donated \$138,000 to Earth Day Canada, the Sierra Club Canada and Nature Conservancy of Canada through the Gala de la Terre, a major fundraising event to protect the St. Lawrence Estuary.

The concerts of Agora have been recorded and broadcast by Radio-Canada and CBC Music, including a production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* in collaboration with the Atelier lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal. During the 2021-2022 season, Agora will perform Bach's complete Brandenburg concertos, as part of the Festival Bach Montréal. The orchestra will undertake a series of seven concerts across Québec and Ontario and will renew its status of "resident orchestra" at the Atelier lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal.

Nicolas Ellis has participated in a number of conducting workshops, most notably at the Verbier Festival, assisting Maestro Valery Gergiev, the Aspen Music Festival where he studied with Robert Spano, and at the Accademia Chigiana di Siena with Gianluigi Gelmetti.

He is the recipient of the 2017 Bourse de carrière Fernand-Lindsay and was named Revelation of the Year 2018-2019 by Radio-Canada. He is also the recipient of the Heinz Unger Award 2015 sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council. More recently, he won the Prix Goyer Mécénat Musica 2021.



YUKARI COUSINEAU

VIOLIN



Yukari Cousineau is the principal violin of the Orchestre Métropolitain. A member of the OM since 1998, Yukari first held the position of assistant concertmaster and then associate principal viola. The daughter of Jean Cousineau, founder of the École Les Petits Violons, Yukari is also a member of the Ensemble Magellan (with Olivier Thouin, Yegor Dyachkov and Jean Saulnier) and the Ensemble Jean Cousineau.

Yukari has been invited to play as a soloist with many Montréal-based ensembles such as the Orchestre de chambre Appassionata, with whom she performed Locatelli's Violin Concerto No. 12, broadcast live on Radio-Canada. She has also put on some memorable performances as a soloist with the Orchestre Métropolitain, including Berg's Violin Concerto, "To the Memory of an Angel."

As a chamber player, she is a member of the Trio Cousineau and the Quatuor Molinari, and has been collaborating with pianist Mateo Creux for many years. In 2008, she founded the Quatuor La Muse. She has been invited to perform at many festivals, including the Festival de Lanaudière, Concerts aux Îles du Bic and Un Été à Bourges, where she has given concerts of works for solo violin. She has also performed in recitals with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Alvaro Pierri, Jean Saulnier and Julien LeBlanc.

In addition to her work as a performer, she is a visiting professor at the Université de Montréal. She has also taught violin and viola at UQAM for several years, where she is regularly invited to give master classes.





CARL NIELSEN



(1865-1931)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 33

Premiered in Copenhagen on February 28, 1912, by Peder Møller, conducted by Nielsen

Carl Nielsen was born in Denmark to a poor peasant family. With the help of friends, he enrolled at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen at age 19. Three years later, he won a scholarship that let him travel to Germany, France and Italy.

He then made a career as a violinist and, eventually, conductor at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre and the Music Society, in addition to teaching at the Academy. Composing in all genres, he left, as François-René Tranchefort writes, "a perfectly original body of work in strong reaction to the German postmodernism whose influence was felt in Denmark."

Besides his six symphonies, "which carry all the violence and even aggressivity of a 'message'," Nielsen's orchestral music includes three concertos – for violin, flute and clarinet – "comparatively tamer works in which oppositions always find resolution in the unanimity of discourse." The Violin Concerto is dedicated to his son-in-law, the Hungarian violinist Emil Telmányi. Its unusual structure is comprised of two diptychs, each with a slow introduction followed by a fast movement. But, as Andrew Clements

has pointed out, though Nielsen gives his Concerto proportions of a certain scale, the sweeping, heroic designs of Brahms or Dvořák hold no interest for him. Nielsen leaves the stage to the soloist with the orchestra rather discreetly accompanying and no suggestion of struggle or tension. By his own admission, Nielsen wanted the work to be accessible and radiant but also free of superficiality.

The Præludium that opens the first diptych moves from G minor to D major, the work's main key. Calm, meditative and seemingly improvised, it features violinistic figurations somewhat in the manner of Bach. Announced by an orchestral tutti, the following Allegro cavalleresco adheres to sonata form. Later the violin develops a long cadenza before concluding on a *più presto* in G major. The second diptych begins with a Poco adagio in D minor introduced by the oboe and built around a BACH theme (B minor-A-C-B) that reappears on various levels throughout the movement. Given first to the cellos, the next theme ends up creating a mysterious atmosphere. The concluding Allegretto scherzando in a deceptively naïve popular style is a rondo full of life and tinged with humour in which the soloist plays virtuosically.



BÉLA BARTÓK

(1881-1945)



Concerto for Orchestra, Sz. 116, BB 123

Premiered in New York City on December 1, 1944, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky

After receiving piano lessons from his mother, Béla Bartók studied in Pozsony (present-day Bratislava) before enrolling in the Royal Academy in Budapest, where he was introduced to composition. Early influences were Richard Strauss, then Debussy and eventually Stravinsky and Schoenberg. However, as Roland de Candé notes, though Bartók was thoroughly familiar with their work, “his originality was too great for him to fit into contemporary musical movements.” Bartók also appreciated Liszt and Brahms for their Hungarian Gypsy style, part of his lifelong fascination with folk music, which saw him collecting thousands of Eastern European folk tunes and songs whose peculiarities would end up marking his style.

A professor at the Liszt Academy in Budapest from 1907 onward, he also went on frequent concert tours of Europe and the United States. In 1940, fleeing Nazism, he moved to New York, where his works met with less than the hoped-for success. Despite support from colleagues, his finances were precarious. Five years later, he succumbed to leukemia. His work embraces all genres. For de Candé, “everything is exceptional in this music carved from crystal: the transparency and tonal ambiguity of the harmony, the profound originality of the instrumentation, the daring and independent spirit of its creator.”

Bartók composed his Concerto for Orchestra in 1943 on a commission from conductor Serge Koussevitzky, who enthusiastically declared it “the best orchestra piece of the last 25 years.” As the title implies, the work is a nod to the past: much as in the concertos *con molti stromenti* popular in Bach’s day,

specific instruments, above all the winds, take brief turns playing a concertante role with the orchestra. The five movements are structured like an arch: the first corresponds to the fifth and the second to the fourth, with the central Elegia forming the keystone. Their progression represents, in the composer’s own words, “a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement [...] to the life-assertion of the last one.”

The Introduzione moves in jumping fourths that start in the basses, instilling an air of mystery and imminent danger. As if to ward off the foreboding, stark *fugato* motifs run through the strings, a process repeated in the last movement. In the very rhythmic banter of the Giuoco delle coppie (game of couples), paired winds dash into “dance tunes of a subtle charm,” as Tranchefort puts it, interrupted by a kind of slow chorale in the brass. The radically different Elegia, undoubtedly the work’s most Bartókian movement, is a lugubrious death song. The Intermezzo opens with folk-like melody that is interrupted by the clarinet, satirizing a theme from Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony to quotes from a song from Lehar’s *The Merry Widow* along with mocking glissandos from the trombones and snickering from the strings.

The Finale is a perpetuum mobile that, as Ernest Ansermet said, “runs to the coda, a dizzying coda: like a great gust of wind, waves of phosphorescent-coloured strings seem to carry away fragments of the fugue until the theme of it bursts forth in all its grandeur on brass instruments.”



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Marcelle Mallette
Concertmaster
Johanne Morin
Associate Concertmaster
Alain Giguère
Assistant Concertmaster
Carolyn Klause
Alexander Lozowski
Florence Mallette
Ryan Truby
Solange Bouchard
Ariane Bresse
Mary-Elizabeth Brown
Julien Oberson

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Principal
Lyne Allard
Associate Principal
Dominic Guilbault
Assistant Principal
Lucie Ménard
Second Assistant Principal
Lizann Gervais
Sylvie Harvey
Helga Dathe
Ana Drobac
Flavie Gagnon
Jacob Niederhoeffter

Violas

Elvira Misbakhova
Principal
Scott Chancey
Brian Bacon
Gérald Daigle
Julie Dupras
Élisa Boudreau
Jean René
François Vallières

Cellos

Christopher Best
Principal
Caroline Milot
Associate Principal
Thérèse Ryan
Assistant Principal
Louise Trudel
Vincent Bergeron
Sheila Hannigan
Christine Harvey

Double basses

René Gosselin
Principal
Marc Denis
Associate Principal
Gilbert Fleury
Réal Montminy
Catherine Lefebvre

Flutes

Caroline Séguin
Principal
& Principal Piccolo
Jocelyne Roy
Principal
& Principal Piccolo
Noémie Caron-Marcotte

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Marjorie Tremblay
Principal
Mélanie Harel
Principal English Horn
Kirsten Zander

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Simon Aldrich
Principal
David Perreault
Martin Carpentier
Principal Bass Clarinet

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Michel Bettez
Principal
Gabrièle Dostie-Poirier
Carmelle Préfontaine
Principal Contrabassoon

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Louis-Philippe Marsolais
Principal (Bartók)
Simon Bourget
Pierre Savoie
Jean Paquin

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Principal
Lise Bouchard
Taz Eddy

Trombones

Patrice Richer
Principal
Angelo Munoz
Trevor Dix
Principal Bass Trombone

Tuba

Alain Cazes
Principal

Timpani

Julien Bélanger
Principal

Percussions

Alexandre Lavoie
Principal
David Thérien-Brongo

Harp

Robin Best
Principal
Antoine Mallette-Chénier

Lizann Gervais plays on a Michele Deconet 1754 violin with a Claude Thomassin bow, generously made available to her by Canimex Inc., Drummondville.





One of Quebec's key cultural ambassadors, the Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal (OM) is celebrating its 40th anniversary this season. At its inception in 1981, the OM set the bar high: to build a unique relationship with the community through high-impact initiatives. Over the last 20 years, the Orchestre has grown alongside its artistic director and principal conductor, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, whose career continues to reach new heights. In September 2019, the OM announced that Nézet-Séguin had signed on for an exceptional lifetime contract.

This special relationship resonates throughout the community, with 50 concerts performed annually at the Maison symphonique and across the city, thanks to the Conseil des arts de Montréal Touring Program. The OM also puts on webcast and open-air concerts. Driven by excellence, the ensemble is known for its bold presence, authenticity and community engagement.

Proud to have expanded its educational initiatives, including The OM for Schools and The OM for Future Talent, the Orchestre strives to cultivate a passion for music among young people.

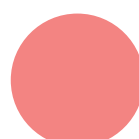
The OM also regularly collaborates with other high-calibre cultural organizations in Quebec, serving as the Opéra de Montréal's orchestra. Following the success of its 2017 European tour, the OM and Yannick Nézet-Séguin travelled to the US in November 2019 with soprano Joyce DiDonato, winning over audiences in Chicago, Ann Arbor, New York and Philadelphia.



The winner of multiple national awards, the OM has recorded some 20 performances with the Canadian ATMA Classique label, including Bruckner's symphonies, which were released in spring 2018. The Orchestre has also collaborated with Deutsche Grammophon to release two albums with renowned singers Rolando Villazón and Ildar Abdrazakov (*Duets* in 2017 and *Verdi* in 2019).

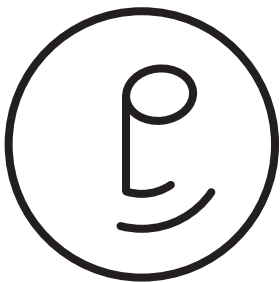
More recently, the Orchestre performed all nine Beethoven symphonies for its *Summer of Beethoven* webcast series available exclusively on DG Stage. This initiative made the OM one of the first orchestras to come together again after the COVID-19 crisis forced ensembles across the globe to go on hiatus.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Orchestre Métropolitain has rolled out numerous digital initiatives, which has helped it stay connected with audience members during this unprecedented time.





The Orchestre Métropolitain invites you to discover...



THE OM PRELUDES

HAVE A FRONT ROW SEAT ON OUR EMERGING
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For more than a decade, the Orchestre Métropolitain has given a venue to young musicians of the next generation through its pre-concert OM Preludes.

During the 2020-2021 season, the series made the shift to digital and can now be viewed online on the [OM's YouTube channel](#).

This initiative is included in our educational program:



THE OM FOR
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We warmly thank all who have chosen to support the Orchestre Métropolitain during these unprecedented times.

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^A Multi-year gift. Through their donation of \$2.5 million over ten years, Mmes. Desmarais are contributing to the artistic development of the OM and its conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin.
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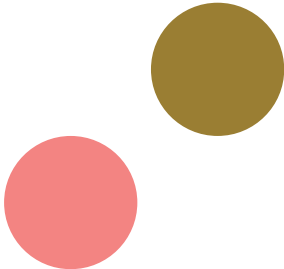
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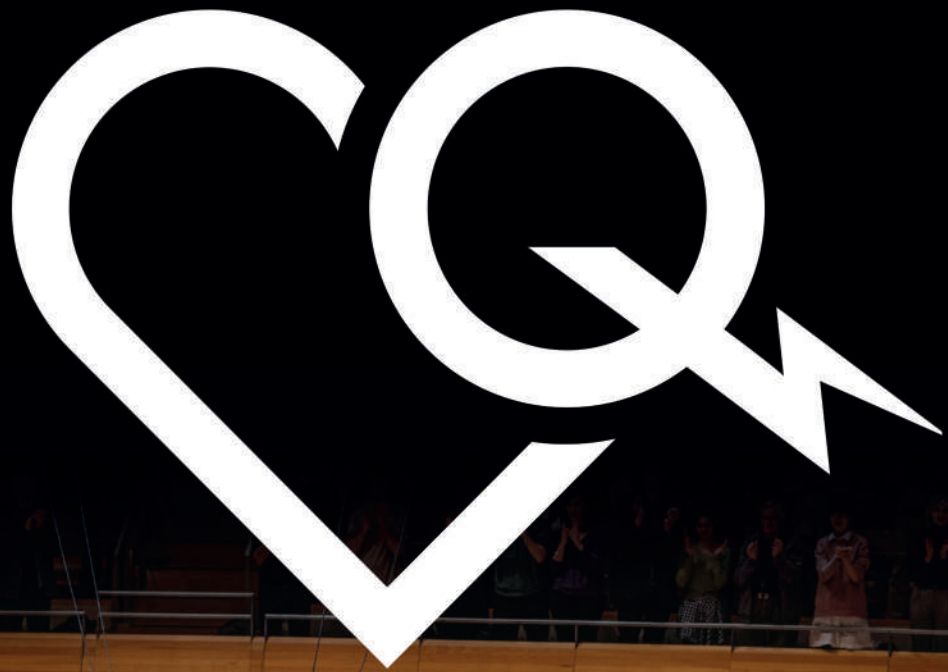
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