



Angel Blue and Yannick Nézet-Séguin: Two famous artists with five Grammys between them

Montreal, Wednesday, May 31, 2023 – Between the two of them, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Angel Blue have won a total of five Grammy awards. Together they have dazzled audiences at New York’s Metropolitan Opera, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Philharmonie de Paris. And on June 11, thanks to the Orchestre Métropolitain, Montreal will be joining that select list!

Since their successful collaboration on the premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* at the Metropolitan Opera, which earned them a Grammy for best opera recording, the two artists have had the opportunity to work together on many occasions. In every instance, their partnership has stunned audiences and critics and made a lasting impression. They will shine again together on Europe’s greatest stages when the Met Orchestra goes on tour in late June.

Symphonic Explorations, the concert closing the Orchestre Métropolitain’s 2022-2023 season, is a unique opportunity for local audiences to experience the raw emotion that the pairing of two musicians of this calibre can generate. It is an invitation to resonate alongside them.

American voices, women’s voices

North America is in the spotlight in this concert, with two works by Samuel Barber, a premiere by Montrealer Keiko Devaux and a symphony from the first female African-American composer, Florence Price.

It was his recording of this symphony made with the Philadelphia Orchestra that earned Yannick his first Grammy award, in 2022. Into the work Price skillfully weaves elements of American folk music, notably spirituals, and a juba, a dance handed down from enslaved Africans. The resulting work is rhythmic, upbeat and glittering.

Samuel Barber, a 20th century American composer, wrote the most sublime American vocal works. Initiated into music by his aunt, a contralto at the Metropolitan Opera, he devoted nearly two-thirds of his work output to song. Taken from his opera *Antony and Cleopatra*, “Death of Cleopatra” is a great dramatic moment that simultaneously expresses the Egyptian queen’s despair and feeling of release in the moments before her suicide.

In the lyric rhapsody *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Barber spins a daydream of memories, recreating the warm atmosphere of a summer evening with clear if fleeting images. Commissioned in the middle of the last century by singer Eleanor Sterber, the work was popularized by Leontyne Price, the first African-American soprano to enjoy an international career.

Montreal composer Keiko Devaux is also strongly inspired by the impressions that certain sounds can leave in the memory. To create her reminiscences, she uses electroacoustics. Tracks of white noise, beeps from radar scans and clicks bordering on metronomic are placed in loops and deformed while set in juxtaposition to the orchestra's melodic lines.

Symphonic Explorations

June 11 2023, 3 p.m.

PROGRAM

[Tickets and information](#)

Keiko DEVAUX
Samuel BARBER
Samuel BARBER
Florence PRICE

[INAUDIBLE] (création)
Knoxville: Summer of 1915
Antony and Cleopatra, Death of Cleopatra
Symphony No. 3 in C minor

Conducted by **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** (closing concert)

Solist: **Angel Blue (soprano)**

Concert performed at the Maison symphonique de Montréal.

The Symphonic Explorations concert is presented by **Intact Assurance Prestige**.

To hear Angel Blue in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsmXYt9C4UA>

— 30 —

Media contact: Andréanne Moreau
Senior Advisor, Communications and Public Relations
C. 514-953-7845
amoreau@orchestremetropolitain.com



THE ORCHESTRE MÉTROPOLITAIN

A key cultural ambassador of Quebec, the Orchestre Métropolitain (the OM for those in the know) has created a unique relationship with the public through initiatives driven by excellence and emotion. Whether the OM is performing at the Maison symphonique de Montréal or in the city's boroughs as part of the Conseil des Arts de Montréal Touring Program, each concert is an opportunity for our music to resonate with the audience.

For over 20 years, the OM has grown alongside its artistic director and principal conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin to develop a bold, modern and timely offer. This shared vision has led the conductor and his orchestra to sign a lifetime contract, a rare commitment in the history of classical music, giving them the chance to develop a unique and distinct personality full of intention.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin's flourishing international career has had a positive impact on the OM, bringing the ensemble to some of the world's greatest stages (Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Philharmonie de Paris, Verizon Hall in Philadelphia) with a European tour in 2017, followed by a US tour in 2019. Once again, the Orchestre Métropolitain has been invited to perform at the famed Carnegie Hall, and as a result, the OM will be embarking on a tour of three US cities in spring 2024: New York, Philadelphia and Worcester. The ensemble is also planning a second European tour for 2025. The orchestra has capitalized on each of these opportunities to promote the talent of local composers and musicians across the globe.

From its founding in 1981, the OM's mission has been to introduce children to music, foster a passion for music among young people and support emerging musicians. Thanks to its many cultural and educational initiatives like its in-school activities, the OMNI Music Competition and the Orchestral Conducting Academy, which gives Yannick Nézet-Séguin the chance to pass down his craft to the next generation of conductors, the orchestra has built a strong relationship with community members of all ages.

The OM in numbers:

- 42 years of music
- 20 albums
- 15 Prix Opus and 7 Félix awards
- 11 international concerts
- 1,268 ovations, each as memorable as the last

Discover the OM's 2023-2024 season: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9hjZ5xjoNk>
https://orchestremetropolitain.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/OM2324_brochure_EN.pdf

The Orchestre Métropolitain thanks its valued partners:

PARTENAIRE PRINCIPAL



GRAND AMBASSADEUR



PARTENAIRE HÔTELIER



PRÉSENTATEURS DE CONCERTS



PARTENAIRES MÉDIAS



PARTENAIRES PUBLICS

