

DARK PATTERNS

May 19, 2023 • 7:30 PM

Featuring:

Samy Moussa, conductor – *see bio on page 7.*

Kerson Leong, Violin

Laura Veeze, ESO Violin

Keith Hamm, ESO Viola

Julie Hereish, ESO Cello

To read the 22/23 Edmonton Symphony Orchestra roster, see page 8.

This program does not include an intermission.

MOUSSA

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra “Adrano” (2019) (ESO Premiere)

(15’)*

I - circa 48 – Più mosso circa 58

II - Cadenza - senza misura

III - circa 96

IV - Epilogue - circa 48

HUW WATKINS

String Trio (2015)

(9’)*

TIMO ANDRES

Dark Patterns (2022) (ESO Premiere)

(10’)*

MOUSSA

Symphony No. 2 (2022) (ESO Premiere)

(21’)*

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra “Adrano”

Samy Moussa

(b. Montréal, 1984)

First performed: November 28, 2019 in Montréal

This concert marks the first time the ESO has performed music by Samy Moussa

Montréal-born composer and conductor Samy Moussa has a flourishing career in Canada, France, and Germany, where he now lives. Both of Moussa’s operas, *L’Autre frère* and *Vastation*, were premiered at Munich Biennales, in 2010 and 2014. Pierre Boulez commissioned him to write an orchestral work for the Lucerne Festival, which was premiered in 2015. Also that year, Moussa was named Québec’s Composer of the Year by the Conseil québécois de la musique (Opus Prize). As a conductor, Moussa has led the Bavarian State Opera Orchestra, Québec Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Vienna Radio Orchestra, and Leipzig Radio Orchestra, among others.

The OSM has commissioned a number of works from Moussa. These include *Léviathan* (2005), the two *Études Gogenshein* and *Zodiakallicht* (2009), *A Globe Itself Infolding* (2014), *Nocturne* (2015, dedicated to Moussa’s principal composition teacher at the Université de Montréal, José Evangelista), and *Symphony No. 1, Concordia* (2017), a forty-minute paeon to the city of Montréal, premiered by the OSM and the multimedia studio Moment Factory as part of the celebrations marking the city’s 375th anniversary.

The *Violin Concerto*, subtitled *Adrano*, was composed in Italy, where Moussa lived (mostly in Rome) from September of 2018 to September of 2019. Several visits to Adrano, a small town on the eastern coast of Sicily, led him to subtitle the work by that name for its geographic and metaphysical associations.

The twelve-minute concerto consists of two main movements, the first and third separated by a cadenza, and the whole concluded with an epilogue. Overall the concerto falls into two large sections, slow and fast, with all four movements closely connected. It opens with a slow introduction in the low flutes and a pair of double basses. From this sound mass the solo violin emerges with an ascending scale until it reaches a more melodic passage, where a new section (still in slow tempo) begins. This material is heard twice, each time resulting in a climax; the second of these is more decisive and intense. The second movement is an accompanied cadenza featuring extremely high notes (harmonics – produced by lightly touching the string with the finger resulting in thin, glassy-sounding notes in the extreme upper register) and arpeggios. The third movement, centered around the note B, is quick and relentless. For an epilogue we hear a variant of the concerto’s slow introduction leading to a quiet, serene ending.

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String Trio

Huw Watkins

(b. Wales, 1976)

First performed: March 14, 2015 in London

This concert marks the first time the ESO has performed music by Huw Watkins

Huw Watkins studied piano at Chetham's School of Music, and composition with Robin Holloway, Alexander Goehr, and Julian Anderson at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. In 2001, he was awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, where he later taught composition. He is currently Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

Watkins's growing body of orchestral works includes the widely acclaimed *Violin Concerto* (2010), and two commissions from the London Symphony Orchestra: *London Concerto* (2005) and the *Flute Concerto* (2013). His longstanding relationship with BBC National Orchestra has resulted in a number of works, including a *Piano Concerto* (2001-5) premiered in 2002 with the composer at the piano, and a *Double Concerto*, premiered by Philip Dukes (viola) and Josephine Knight (cello). As Composer in Association (2015-2019), Watkins has written several orchestral works including the *Cello Concerto*, premiered at the BBC Proms, and *Spring* (2017) for orchestra, commissioned by BBC Radio 3. In 2017, the Hallé Orchestra commissioned Watkins' *Symphony*, premiered under Music Director Sir Mark Elder.

A wealth of chamber music is central to Watkins' output, complementing his parallel career as a pianist. His solo violin *Partita* (2006) was written for Alina Ibragimova and the viola *Fantasy* (2006) was written for Lawrence Power. Long-time supporters the Nash Ensemble commissioned a *Horn Trio*, and his *String Quartet* for the Carducci Quartet was a commission from the Manchester Chamber Concerts Society. Among works for his brother, cellist Paul Watkins, is *Blue Shadows Fall* (2012-13).

Watkins' vocal works include *In my craft or sullen art* (2007) for tenor and string quartet, and *Five Larkin Songs* (2009-10) for soprano and piano, which won a British Composer Award. Further vocal works include *Remember* (2014) for soprano and string orchestra, written for Ruby Hughes, and *Four Sonnets* (2014) for tenor and piano. In 2017, Watkins was commissioned by King's College, Cambridge, to write a carol for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

The following program note for Watkins' String Trio was kindly supplied by Schott Music publishers, © Anthony Burton, 2019:

Huw Watkins' String Trio was commissioned by the Nash Ensemble, with funds provided by the Britten-Pears Foundation, and first performed at Wigmore Hall in London in March 2015, during the Ensemble's 50th anniversary season.

The medium of the string trio presents a challenge to any composer, because the predominance of the string quartet in the listening experience of his or her audience creates expectations of harmonic and textural richness and variety that are hard to fulfil with three performers. Huw Watkins meets this challenge in his *Trio* by judicious use of double-stopping to fill out the

harmonies, the introduction of harmonics to enlarge the range of instrumental colours, and constant variation of the density of texture and harmony. Remarkably, he achieves great variety within the framework of a single movement at an unchanging tempo. Reflecting the marking of *Allegro inquieto* (“restless” or “uneasy”), it begins with obsessively insistent little rhythmic figures, over a slow-moving accompaniment, which gradually coagulate into more continuous lines. This process of expansion recurs in varied forms at intervals, in alternation with contrasting episodes of sharp attacks, growing stillness, free-flowing lyricism and, at the climax, forceful chords for the whole group. A last return of the opening gesture dissolves into measured trills, leading to a calmer passage and an ending in which the obsessive figures are heard in longer note-values, their initial restlessness now transmuted into a much more subdued unease.

Dark Patterns

Timo Andres

(b. Palo Alto, California, 1985)

First performed: July 14, 2022 in Boulder, Colorado

This concert marks the first time the ESO has performed music by Timo Andres

Timo Andres is a composer and pianist who grew up in rural Connecticut and lives in Brooklyn, NY. Notable works include *Everything Happens So Much* for the Boston Symphony with Andris Nelsons; *Strong Language*, a string quartet for the Takács Quartet, commissioned by Carnegie Hall and the Shriver Hall Concert Series; *Steady Hand*, a two-piano concerto commissioned by the Britten Sinfonia and premiered at the Barbican with Andres and pianist David Kaplan; and *The Blind Banister*, a piano concerto for Jonathan Biss, which was a 2016 Pulitzer Prize Finalist.

As a pianist, Andres has appeared with the LA Phil, North Carolina Symphony, the Britten Sinfonia, the Albany Symphony, New World Symphony, and in many collaborations with Andrew Cyr and Metropolis Ensemble. He has performed solo recitals for Lincoln Center, Wigmore Hall, San Francisco Performances, the Phillips Collection, and (le) Poisson Rouge. Philip Glass selected Andres as the recipient of the City of Toronto Glenn Gould Protégé Prize. During the “quiet” season of 2020–21, Andres built an impressive library of music films on YouTube, featuring a deep range of repertoire which he performed, recorded, engineered, directed, and edited from home.

Andres was a 2021 Ojai Music Festival Artist, where he performed both a solo recital and Ingram Marshall’s *Flow* with John Adams and the OMF Orchestra (on a program with his own *Running Theme*).

A Nonesuch Records artist, Andres is featured as composer and pianist on the May 2020 release *I Still Play*, an album celebrating Robert Hurwitz. A Yale School of Music graduate, he is a Yamaha/Bösendorfer Artist and is on the composition faculty at the Mannes School of Music at the New School.

Of his work *Dark Patterns*, Timo Andres writes:

Dark Patterns is a repetitive, methodical, obsessive piece. This focus was a reaction to my initial idea for the piece’s most brazen outburst, a passage in which chromatic scales peel off in layers

from a broad, arch-shaped melody. The task of writing the piece became, essentially, digging a foundation and building a structure to support this brief dramatic moment.

The piece contains two kinds of material—a scale and a melody, both “circular” patterns that lead into restatements of themselves, and both of which pivot harmonically around a repeated central E. This regular pulse, heard first in the flute, harp, and muted piano, is interrupted, with increasing frequency and urgency, by low pedal tones that form the first rising scale. The end of this scale leads directly into first notes of the melodic material of the piece, introduced by a solo bassoon and always accompanied by chattering E’s. That scalar upbeat to the melody becomes increasingly elaborate, intense, and harmonically adventurous with each new iteration, yet always ends up drawn back to that central E.

A return to the opening material follows, but compacted and concentrated, the low, rising scale underscoring tempestuous excursions around the E. As the scale gradually rises from the bass to the treble, it turns distant and ambiguous, a hazy recollection of the bassoon melody accompanied by gently motoric percussion, keyboards, and harp. Wind solos moving at different speeds accumulate momentum once more, building to a section that is essentially a huge, scalar upbeat to that original dramatic crux—the climactic restatement of the bassoon melody. After this, the music plunges down once more, for a dark and chaotic restatement of the opening scale pattern, this time tangled in baleful natural-horn calls, the ostinato E now heard in shrill string harmonics.

Symphony No. 2 **Samy Moussa** (see above)

First performed: May 25, 2022 in Toronto

The feelings produced by the listener upon hearing a piece of music are what drew Samy Moussa, as a young man, to music. “I think that I was attracted to strong emotions – that’s what interested me,” he said. It set him on a path in which he knew from its early stages would include both conducting and composing.

Yet while Moussa is fully aware of music’s singular ability to create an emotional connection, the passion which ignited the creation of his *Symphony No. 2* may seem, superficially, devoid of any emotion. Written during a one-year residency as the first-ever Spotlight Artist for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Moussa was excited by the prospect of being able to begin the work from a completely blank sheet of paper. There was no extra-musical spark, or theme, or program to what he would be allowed to create, and the resources of the TSO were at his disposal.

“It was exactly what I wanted, and it’s why I accepted the commission – because I could do what I wanted,” he noted. And what he wanted was to create a piece of “absolute” music – music that exists in and for itself. “I wanted to write a piece for orchestra, I wanted the piece to be non-programmatic.”

Symphony No. 2 is cast in a single, long movement. “There are three parts in the score, but it’s a one-movement symphony, with recurring material,” Moussa said. It begins with a brass chorale, which recurs at key moments in the score. Moussa explained that he knew on which chord he would conclude the work – a rich, warm ending that may strike the listener as standing out from what has led to it – so for him the challenge was creating a single-movement, 20-minute piece that would lead to it. “I knew in what way the piece would end,” he stated, “and because of that, it was a goal, and that’s why (the end) is very conclusive. And that’s very important, because the piece before that never stops. Only once it’s concluded, that’s when it’s clear that we achieved the shape.”

Moussa has said that, because of the symphony’s completely non-programmatic nature, he sees the shape and contours of the work – the musical working-out of the long-form single movement – as the work’s *raison d’être*. Which is not to say that the listener won’t have an emotional or esthetic response to its undulating tonal landscapes, and its affirming coda. “Your impression of it may be more accurate than mine, because I know where it’s going,” he says pragmatically. “But I think it’s about the idea of the long form, and how to make it so that it doesn’t stop. Maybe that’s why it creates an effect.”

Another way of achieving its effect is in the symphony’s unique scoring. Trumpets are replaced by flugelhorns, tubas with euphoniums. Only pitched percussion instruments are used, and there are no trombones.

Moussa’s *Symphony No. 2* has been performed by orchestras around the world since its premiere a little over a year ago – a premiere Moussa did not conduct. “I do not conduct premieres of my own works,” he stated. “It’s something I really don’t want to do. I think a distance is necessary, because conducting is also an act of composition; an interpretation has to be composed. Of course, you follow the score, but all those decisions are taken firstly by the composer – he signals all those things in the score – but then right after having written a piece, if you have to add another layer of composition to it, that becomes really difficult, for me at least, to come up with interpretive content on top of the composition. So that’s why I’m not the right person to interpret the first performances of my work.”

In any creative process, the blank canvas can be an intimidating place to start. Many commissions, of course, arise from very specific requests, so the fact that Samy Moussa had absolutely none when he began composing his *Symphony No. 2* could be seen as creating something from nothing – a daunting prospect. “I think it’s a common thing to believe that limitations foster creativity or something like that,” he feels, “and it might be true, but I don’t think that the opposite is quite accurate, either. So I think that both have their advantages, having a lot of constraints or none at all.”

Moussa has dedicated his *Symphony No. 2* to Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Program notes © 2023 by the respective authors noted above. Note for Samy Moussa *Symphony No. 2* by D.T. Baker, with thanks to Samy Moussa and David Perlman of the TSO; notes edited by D.T. Baker

Biographies

Samy Moussa

Conductor / Composer

Samy Moussa, Canadian composer and conductor, was born in Montréal in 1984. Based in Germany for over a decade, he maintains close connections with his North American roots, particularly with l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and l'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec. In Europe, orchestras he has conducted include the Bayerisches Staatsorchester (Haydn's "Nelson Mass" at the Opernfestspiele), RSO Wien, MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Staatskapelle Halle and Zürcher Kammerorchester in repertoire ranging from the classical period to the 21st Century. His works have been commissioned and performed by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; conductors who particularly champion his work include Stéphane Denève, Christoph Eschenbach, Hannu Lintu and Kent Nagano. In 2010 he was named as Music Director of Ensemble INDEX in Munich.

Current and upcoming conducting engagements include the Toronto and Vancouver Symphony orchestras, Calgary Opera, Haydn Orchestra (Bolzano) and Les Violons du Roy; whilst his composition diary holds works for the Wiener Philharmoniker and for the Dutch National Opera and Ballet. He was awarded the Villa Massimo Fellowship at the German Academy in Rome (2018 – 19), the Hindemith Prize from the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festspiele (2017), the Composer's Prize from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation (2013) and is a laureate of the Fondation Banque Populaire Awards (2020).

Meet the Musicians

Michael Stern, Artistic Advisor

Cosette Justo Valdés, Resident Conductor and Community Ambassador

William Eddins, Music Director Emeritus, Conductor

Violin I

Robert Uchida, Concertmaster

The John & Barbara Poole Family Concertmaster Chair

Eric Buchmann, Associate Concertmaster

Broderick Olson

Ewald Cheung

Joanna Ciapka-Sangster

Susan Flook

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Zoë Sellers

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Viola

Keith Hamm – Principal

Ethan Filner – Assistant Principal

Clayton Leung

Rhonda Henshaw

Stefan Jungkind

Cello

Rafael Hoekman – Principal

The Stuart & Winona Davis Principal Cello Chair

Julie Hereish – Assistant Principal

Ronda Metszies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Derek Gomez

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Janice Quinn – Acting Assistant Principal

Douglas Ohashi

Rob Aldridge

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Oboe

June Kim – Principal

Paul Schieman – Assistant Principal

The Steven & Day LePoole Assistant Principal Oboe Chair

Clarinet

Julianne Scott – Principal

David Quinn – Assistant Principal

Bassoon

Bianca Chambul – Principal

Edith Stacey – Assistant Principal

Horn

Allene Hackleman – Principal

Megan Evans – Assistant Principal

Donald Plumb – Assistant Principal

Trumpet

Robin Doyon – Principal

Frédéric Payant – Assistant Principal

Trombone

John McPherson – Principal

Kathryn Macintosh – Assistant Principal

Bass Trombone

Tyler Cairns – Acting Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal

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