

TCHAIKOVSKY & BRUCH: ROMANTIC FAVOURITES

June 9,* 10, & 11,** 2023 • 2:00 PM / 7:30 PM

*Friday Classics presented by Lexus of Edmonton

**Sunday Classics presented by The Robbins Foundation

Featuring:

Earl Lee, conductor – *see bio on page 4.*

Timothy Chooi, violin – *see bio on page 5.*

To read the 22/23 Edmonton Symphony Orchestra roster, see page 6.

GARY KULESHA

Torque

(4')*

BRUCH

Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op.26

(26')*

I - Vorpsiel: Allegro moderato

II - Adagio

III - Finale: Allegro energico – Presto

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op.64

(47')*

I - Andante – Allegro con anima

II - Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza – Moderato con anima

III - Valse: Allegro moderato

IV - Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

Torque

Gary Kulesha

(b. Toronto, 1954)

First performed: September 15, 2009. It was revised in August 2010

Last ESO performance: March 2013

Born in Toronto, Gary Kulesha received his musical training at The Royal Conservatory of Music, where he earned an associate diploma in piano (1973), a licentiate diploma in music theory (1976), and associate and fellowship diplomas in music composition in 1978. At the conservatory, he was a pupil of William G. Andrews and Samuel Dolin. He also studied composition in England from 1978–1981 with John McCabe, and in New York City in 1982 with John Corigliano. He has been Composer-in-Residence with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, and the Canadian Opera Company. He also taught in the University of Toronto's music faculty. He was awarded the National Arts Centre Orchestra Composer Award in 2002.

Of his work *Torque*, Mr. Kulesha has supplied the following program note:

Torque was commissioned by Peter Oundjian and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra for a tour in September of 2009. Intended as a concert opener, it is a short, energetic work cast as a perpetuum mobile. The brisk tempo is established immediately, and never flags. Indeed, the music is always in motion, even in quieter passages. The title refers to a general concept in physics – simply put – “torque” is a rotational or twisting force. It is most commonly used in descriptions of an automobile's performance abilities. Although the work is not intended to be descriptive, I must admit that the image of rapidly rotating wheels (or tires) was in my mind throughout the writing of the work. This may or may not have had something to do with the fact that I was shopping for a new car during the creation of this composition. And it may or may not be related to the fact that I acquired a Porsche Carrera halfway through the writing process ...

Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op.26

Max Bruch

(b. Köln, 1838 / d. Berlin-Friedenau, 1920)

First performance of final version: January 5, 1868, in Bremen

Last ESO performance: Symphony Under the Sky 2017

A highly-respected composer and educator during his long life, Max Bruch was a friend of Brahms, and therefore a firm devotee of classical tradition and form. Based on the reception his works received in his lifetime, Bruch should be remembered today almost entirely for his choral works. But posterity has turned the tide, and today Bruch's legacy rests almost entirely on two works for violin and orchestra: the *Scottish Fantasy, Op. 46*, and the *Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 26*.

The latter was composed arduously for Bruch. He began sketching it out in 1857, but it did not receive its premiere until nine years later – and even then, the reception it got led Bruch to withdraw the work. He sought the input of several violinists – most notably Joseph Joachim, another close friend of Brahms – and presented the work in its final form, and dedicated to Joachim, in 1868. While appearing to be cast in a traditional three-movement format, the work begins unusually. Bruch called the movement a Vorspiel (“Prelude”), and the beginning is rather

dramatically staged. A brief roll of timpani, some hushed woodwinds, and the violin sings a recitative before the movement proper – an Allegro moderato – puts the violin squarely in the spotlight. The G minor home key lends a pall of sadness and pathos to the soloist's song, which is gently underpinned in the orchestra. The cadenza is brief, followed by a rapturous orchestral moment adding a lustrous beauty to the first movement's final moments.

Without pause, the second movement tiptoes in, on a plaintive and haunting melody from the violin. A little unusually for a slow movement in a concerto, there are no less than three contrasting melodic ideas, the second of which features the violin's upper register employed to great dramatic effect. Again, near the movement's conclusion, the orchestra gets an impassioned statement of its own, though this time the violin has the final say, swirling round to gentle wind accompaniment. The famous final movement is in a loose Rondo form; the syncopated three-note figure at the movement's outset forming the basis for the Rondo's main theme, played in double stops on the violin and having a decidedly folk-like character. Its energy and drive is everything the tender and serene slow movement is not, a roguish and colourful finish.

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op.64

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(b. Kamsko-Votinsk, 1840 / d. St. Petersburg, 1893)

First performed: November 17, 1888, in St. Petersburg

Last ESO performance: November 2017

By 1888, Tchaikovsky had moved into his house at Klin, which would be home until the end of his life. Things were more settled for him now than they had been during the composition of his *Fourth Symphony*. In that work, Tchaikovsky's prevailing theme was of "cruel fate." In his letters written while he was composing *Symphony No. 5*, he speaks more of "providence" – a subtle change, perhaps, but to the perpetually overcast Tchaikovsky, an improvement.

The "providence" theme with which the symphony opens is a sombre, deliberate theme, marked by descending scales, but ending on a rising phrase of optimism. This leads to the body of the movement, an Allegro con anima that defies piecemeal interpretation. Indeed, aside from his stated idea of providence, Tchaikovsky left precious few clues as to any subtext the work may contain. He did, however, suggest that the second movement is a love song. It does have the outline and mood of the *pas d'action* between Aurora and the Prince from his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*, which he composed at about the same time. The horn is the first instrument to present the beautiful main theme, which is interrupted by brief storms intermittently.

The third movement is a waltz, though a delicate and sad one, with falling phrases and a sense of wistfulness. Contrast is provided by a unique, off-kilter solo for the bassoon, as well as a brief reappearance of the "providence" theme. The final movement, in sonata form, has a strong, chordal theme as its first main subject; the second is a much more flowing melody for the woodwinds. Once again, the "providence" idea emerges strongly, and it is this theme that is garbed in grand orchestral clothes for the finale. At first, Tchaikovsky was one of the harshest critics of his *Fifth Symphony* after its first performances – audiences seemed to take to it right away – but he, too, did eventually come around to it.

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Biographies

Earl Lee

Conductor

Earl Lee is a renowned Korean Canadian performer who has captivated audiences worldwide. Currently Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra his appearances in the 21/22 season include leading the San Francisco Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, and Ann Arbor Symphony in subscription; the New York Philharmonic in its annual Lunar New Year Gala; debuts with the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra at New York's Lincoln Center, the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood, and with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam as a participant in the Ammodo masterclasses led by Fabio Luisi. Next season includes a return to the San Francisco Symphony and his Boston Symphony subscription debut.

Earl recently concluded his position as the Associate Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony where he led various concerts and its programming. He also served as the Resident Conductor of the Toronto Symphony from 2015 to 2018.

In all of his professional activities, Earl seeks ways to connect with fellow musicians and audiences on a personal level. His concerts to date in Canada, the U.S., China and South Korea have often been accompanied by outreach events beyond the concert hall in the community at large. He has taken great pleasure in mentoring young musicians as former Artistic Director and Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and as Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra and is a regular guest conductor with the orchestras of North America's top music schools such as Manhattan School of Music and the New England, San Francisco, and Royal Conservatories.

As a cellist, Earl has performed at festivals such as the Marlboro Music Festival, Music from Angel Fire, Caramoor Rising Stars, and Ravinia's Steans Institute and has toured as a member of the East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO), with Musicians from Marlboro, with and Gary Burton & Chick Corea as a guest member of the Harlem String Quartet.

Earl has degrees in cello from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School and in conducting from Manhattan School of Music and the New England Conservatory. He was the recipient of the 50th Anniversary Heinz Unger Award from the Ontario Arts Council in 2018, of a Solti Career assistance Award in 2021 and has been awarded a Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Scholarship by Kurt Masur and the Ansbacher Fellowship by the American Austrian Foundation and members of the Vienna Philharmonic. He lives in New York City with his wife and their daughter.

Timothy Chooi

Violin

Powerful and finely nuanced interpretations, sumptuous sonorities, and a compelling stage presence are just a few of the hallmarks of internationally acclaimed violinist Timothy Chooi. A popular soloist and recitalist, he is sought after as much for his passionate performances as for his wide-ranging repertoire. Recent honors include Second Prize, Belgium's world-renowned 2019 Queen Elisabeth Competition, First Prize, the 2018 Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Germany, and the First Prize, the 2018 Schadt Violin Competition in the USA. Recently he was the recipient of one of Europe's most coveted prize, "Prix Paternot" which recognizes a promising and accomplished international artist at the prestigious Verbier Festival in Switzerland.

Future engagements include returns to the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Belgian National Orchestra, Wiener Concert-Verein as well as his debuts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Sinfonieorchester Berlin with Jukka-Pekka Saraste and l'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec with Bramwell Tovey.

Chooi's most recent artistic collaboration was a tour with Anne-Sophie Mutter and the Mutter Virtuosi where they performed across Europe's most notable concert halls such as the Musikverein in Vienna, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and the Berlin Philharmonie. Recent performances include engagement with Luxembourg Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra with Peter Oundjian and a live on-air recital on New York City's WQXR classical radio station; and recital tours across Europe, North America and Asia. In addition, Chooi has also collaborated with Brussels Philharmonic under Stéphane Denève, with Santa Barbara Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to his awards, Timothy Chooi's numerous honors include the third prize at the 2015 Michael Hill Violin Competition in New Zealand and Grand Prize at the 2010 Montreal Symphony Manulife Competition in Canada. He was a laureate at the 2014 Menuhin International Competition, and the recipient of the Vadim Repin Scholarship Award in New York City.

In addition to his performing career is a founding member of The VISION Collective, a three-year-old ensemble of musicians and composers that utilizes music to highlight refugee and immigrant voices and stories, raising awareness for the global refugee crisis, and brings together individuals from all walks of life together to create diverse and meaningful art. This ensemble was the recipient of the 2020 Harold W. McGraw Family Foundation's The Robert Sherman Award for Music Education and Community Outreach. Chooi studied at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Catherine Cho. His mentors include Anne-Sophie Mutter, Pinchas Zukerman, Patinka Kopec, Ida Kavafian and Pamela Frank. He currently is enrolled in Juilliard's prestigious Artist Diploma program and a Professional Studies candidate at the Kronberg Academy with Christian Tetzlaff.

An avid educator with a passion of sharing his international experience to his home country of Canada, Timothy Chooi is the Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa. He performs on the 1717 Windsor-Weinstein Stradivarius on a generous loan from the Canada Council for the Arts and is a recipient of the Nippon Music Foundation Rare Instrument Project from the Government of Japan.

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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(American Federation of Musicians of the United States
and Canada) Local 390.*