

THE ORGAN CONCERT

April 4,* 5,** & 6, 2024 • 7:30 PM

*Thursday Classics presented by Quikcard

**Friday Classics presented by Lexus of Edmonton

Featuring:

Kerem Hasan, conductor – see *bio on page 5*.

Jean-Willy Kunz, organ – see *bio on page 6*.

To read the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra roster, see page 7.

MOUSSA

A Globe Itself Infolding

(11')*

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

(35')*

I - Poco sostenuto - Vivace

II - Allegretto

III - Presto – Assai meno presto

IV - Allegro con brio

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

LIGETI

Concert Românesc / Romanian Concerto

(13')*

Andantino – Allegro vivace – Adagio ma non troppo – Molto vivace - Presto

GUILMANT

Symphonie No. 1 in D minor for Organ and Orchestra, Op. 42a

(22')*

I - Introduction: Allegro – Largo e maestoso – Allegro – Tempo primo

II - Pastorale: Andante quasi allegretto

III - Finale: Allegro assai – Andante maestoso – Tempo primo

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

A Globe Itself Infolding

Samy Moussa

(b. Montreal, 1984)

First performed: May 29, 2014, in Montréal

This is the ESO premiere of the piece

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. He made his ESO debut in May 2023, conducting a concert that featured two of his compositions.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) has commissioned a number of works from Moussa. These include *Léviathan* (2005), the two *Études Geggenshein* 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 40-minute paean 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.

Program note courtesy of l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. Reprinted with permission: *A Globe Itself Infolding* was given its world premiere by the OSM under Kent Nagano with Jean-Willy Kunz as organ soloist at a concert inaugurating the Pierre-Béique Grand Organ at Montréal's Maison symphonique. Its American premiere took place in 2017 in Dallas, and the OSM has since presented it again.

The title derives from words in William Blake's epic poem *Milton*, as well as from similar words in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, where we find "a fire itself infolding." In the 11-minute work, the organ is used not so much as a solo instrument as a prominently displayed member of the orchestral fabric. Together organ and orchestra arrive at a series of climactic moments, each reached by a procession of slowly evolving harmonic progressions, layered textures and a wide range of colours.

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op.92

Beethoven

(b. Bonn, 1770 / d. Vienna, 1827)

First performed: December 8, 1813, in Vienna

Last ESO performance: February 2015

Beethoven's sketchbooks tell us that he actually began formulating ideas for what would become his *Seventh Symphony* even before the fifth and sixth, but he did not gather them into their final form until 1813. After the titanic architecture of the fifth and the personal salute to nature in the sixth, the *A Major Symphony* might be thought as almost impersonal – but that does it very little justice.

The two paramount features of this symphony are rhythm, and the relationship between the keys of A Major, F Major, and C Major. The long, slow introduction establishes this tonal relationship, touching on all these keys. And when the A Major Vivace finally emerges, the underpinning rhythmic drive is irresistible. As with all the other movements, there is a steady, rhythmic ostinato prominently beating under this movement, interrupted only with the introduction of a beautiful, pastoral theme first presented by a solo flute. But as it is taken up by the orchestra, its pace quickens, and it also becomes part of the dance. These two melodic ideas dominate the rest of the movement.

The famous second movement, in the tonic minor, is so stately, ceremonial, and beautiful, it often accompanies such occasions as funerals. But it is marked Allegretto, so it is often slowed to a pace to which Beethoven might have viewed as overly slow. After a solemn chord, this movement's obligato is introduced, a long-short-short-long-long pulse that is presented several times, soon complemented by a beautiful and deceptively straightforward theme in the violas and cellos. The passion builds, though the rhythm remains constant, until the opening obligato pulse is loudly proclaimed by the entire orchestra. The mood softens again, and the movement concludes quietly.

The third movement is a Scherzo and Trio in the key of F Major – recalling the key relationship from the symphony's introduction. The Scherzo theme (again, listen for the rhythmic pattern over which the theme is played) is first heard in the oboe, for all the world sounding like it is laughing. The Trio, cast in D Major, is in a slower tempo, a syncopated three-note figure over held notes in the upper strings. The Trio repeats twice, and sounds as if it will return again, only to be interrupted rudely (and with rough good humour) by the Scherzo, which hastens the movement to its end.

The finale should, by all the "rules," be in A Major – and it will be. But it doesn't start there – we're actually in C Major (completing the reference back to the introduction) and it is in high spirits and a lot of musical busy-ness that, with great propulsive energy, we eventually arrive at a thunderous theme in A Major, played first on the horns with strings underneath, then immediately after by the strings with the horns providing the pulse. This theme becomes the main one, though other ideas are presented briefly. So important is rhythm to this work that Wagner famously dubbed this symphony "the apotheosis of the dance."

Concert Românesc / Romanian Concerto

György Ligeti

(b. Dicsöszentmárton, Transylvania, 1923 / d. Vienna, 2006)

First performed : 1971

Last ESO performance: October 2012

György Ligeti grew up in a Hungarian-speaking part of Romania and was fascinated by the cultural traditions to which he was exposed. Valveless horns, bagpipes, and rustic fiddling were part of village life, as were holiday traditions featuring musicians dressed as devils and sprites. Ligeti absorbed it all, bringing it with him to the Budapest Academy of Music as a student, and using its influence in his compositions. He returned to the Academy a year after graduating from it, now as a teacher, and it was while doing that, in 1951, that he fused some of those folk elements from his youth into his *Concert Românesc* ("Romanian Concerto").

Hungary, however, was by this time on the other side of the Iron Curtain, and music was severely restricted. The dissonances of Hungarian folk tradition (which Ligeti said was one in which musicians played “against the grain”), may sound to us now as merely colourful and piquant, were enough for the work to be banned after its first and only reading in 1951, and as a result, would not be publicly performed for another 20 years. The work is in four short movements with no pauses between them. The fast-slow-fast-slow nature is reminiscent of the traditional *lassú* and *friss* of Hungarian music (which Bartók also often employed), in which a dreamy, lyrical slow section would be answered by a rough, rustic dance. Folk elements to listen for include the slow third section, where Ligeti instructs the horn players to use natural tuning, without valves, and the final movement – a swirling dance with a prominent role for solo violin playing very much in a folk-like, fiddling style.

Symphonie No. 1 in D minor for Organ and Orchestra, Op.42a

Alexandre Guilmant

(b. Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1837 / d. Meudon, 1911)

Original sonata composed c. 1874

Last ESO performance: November 2019

As a member of a multi-generational family of organists and organ builders, Alexandre Guilmant had strong opinions regarding the way the organ was thought of. There was a tendency during his time, he noted, to think of organ playing in one of two ways. The first was to treat the organ as a sort of “substitute” for the orchestra. “The other holds that the organ has so noble a tone quality that it need not imitate the orchestra as a servant,” he said, agreeing with Berlioz’ maxim that “the organ is Pope, the orchestra Emperor.”

The melding of the two titanic forces is not easy, and great works uniting organ and orchestra are actually quite rare. This work is one of the finest such examples, yet it began life as a work for organ alone. This symphonie is Guilmant’s own arrangement of his *Op. 42 Sonata No. 1 for Solo Organ*.

Both forces establish themselves in the dramatic slow introduction, which leads to a classically designed movement established with a strongly melodic idea shared by orchestra and organ. A gentler theme is spun from this same silk, and while there is often a sense of dialog, there is also masterful orchestration in sections where both forces play without either losing ground.

The slow Pastorale begins on the organ alone, atmospheric and ethereal – a mood continued as the strings of the orchestra complement the organ’s shimmering timbre. The final movement bursts out from the organ in a dazzling fantasia. Again, the organ and orchestra play together as equals in a colourful showcase for both. In the central section, the music slows for an Andante of ruminative reflection, until fanfares in both organ and orchestral brass and percussion bring the work to a blazing and triumphant conclusion.

Program notes © by D.T. Baker, with thanks to the Montréal Symphony Orchestra for notes on the Moussa piece.

Biographies

Kerem Hasan

Conductor

Kerem Hasan is chief conductor of the Tiroler Symphonieorchester Innsbruck, now in his fourth season, assuming the title in September 2019. In Summer 2017, the young British conductor laid the foundations for a very promising international career by winning the Nestlé and Salzburg Young Conductors Award. Prior to this, he had already attracted attention as a finalist in the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in London and as Associate Conductor of the Welsh National Opera.

This season in Innsbruck, Kerem Hasan conducts Verdi's "La Traviata" at the Tiroler Landestheater in addition to his concerts with the Tiroler Symphonieorchester. Other highlights of the 2022/2023 season include production of "Carmen" at English National Opera and guest engagements with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Dresdner Philharmonie and Norwegian Radio Orchestra. He works with the Münchner Rundfunkorchester Radio Orchestra, Romanian National Radio Orchestra and Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música for the first time. Reinvitations take him to the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Noord Nederlands Orkest. In June 2023, he will make his debut with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Japan.

His recent successes include opera performances at Glyndebourne ("The Magic Flute"), with Glyndebourne on Tour ("The Rake's Progress"), at the Welsh National Opera ("La Forza del destino"), at English National Opera ("Cosi") and at Tiroler Landestheater ("Samson et Dalila", "Rigoletto", "The Rape of Lucretia"). He has conducted concerts with the Concertgebouworkest, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, SWR Symphonieorchester, MDR Sinfonieorchester, ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Filarmonica Teatro La Fenice and New Japan Philharmonic. In the summer of 2022, he made his US debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra.

In masterclasses, he received valuable advice from David Zinman, Edo de Waart, Gianandrea Noseda and Esa-Pekka Salonen, amongst others. At the invitation of his mentor Bernard Haitink, he assisted him with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Concertgebouworkest and Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks.

In the summer of 2016, Kerem Hasan first attended the Conducting Academy of the Aspen Music Festival, where he worked with Robert Spano. In 2017, he returned to the festival as Conducting Fellow and was subsequently awarded the Aspen Conductor Prize. As Assistant Conductor, he was in Aspen again in summer 2018. In August 2022, he was invited as a guest artist and conducted the Aspen Chamber Orchestra.

Born in London in 1992, Kerem Hasan studied piano and conducting at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He later honed his craft at the Zurich University of the Arts with Johannes Schlaefli.

Jean-Willy Kunz

Organ

Jean-Willy Kunz was appointed in 2013 as the first Organist in Residence of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. In addition to playing both with the Orchestra and in recital, he sees to the development and showcasing of the Grand Orgue Pierre-Béique, Casavant Frères' opus 3900 installed at the Maison symphonique in Montréal.

His performances with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra include concerts conducted by Rafael Payare, Kent Nagano, Masaaki Suzuki, François-Xavier Roth, Vasily Petrenko, Juraj Valčuha, Paul McCreech, Leonardo García Alarcón, John Storgårds, Carlo Rizzi, and David Zinman. He has also performed as a soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Quebec Symphony Orchestra, and Les Violons du Roy.

At the Maison symphonique, Kunz has premiered numerous pieces for organ and orchestra, and for solo organ, by Tod Machover, John Rea, Samy Moussa, Harry Stafylakis, Matthew Ricketts, Régis Campo, and Maxime Goulet. A highlight among his many solo performances on the Grand Orgue Pierre-Béique was a recital presented in 2017 in collaboration with the NASA, the Canadian Space Agency, and the European Space Agency, during which a live audio-video duplex with an astronaut aboard the International Space Station allowed for the first ever Earth-Space organ duet.

Jean-Willy Kunz' interest and versatility in different styles of music are reflected in the various projects he has been involved with for the last ten years, and which shed new light on the pipe organ, including jazz music in duo with Branford Marsalis and with the Ensemble InSpirations, pop music with Rufus and Martha Wainwright, stage music with the Cirque du Soleil, contemporary music with the Quebec Contemporary Music Society and the Quatuor Bozzini, and baroque music with the Ensemble Caprice and Les Boréades.

His discography includes many recordings which reflect the broad range of his musical influences. His most recent CDs include a solo organ album Jean-Willy Kunz au Grand Orgue Pierre-Béique ; Impressions with the Ensemble InSpirations (organ, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, double bass, and percussion) ; Symphonie et créations pour orgue et orchestre with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra (which was awarded a Juno in 2016) ; and The Pipes are Calling for organ and trombone.

Jean-Willy Kunz holds a doctorate in organ performance from McGill University where he studied with John Grew. In 2018, he completed an MBA at HEC Montréal. He is organ professor at the Conservatory of Music in Montréal, titular organist at the church of St-Jean-Baptiste, and artistic director of the Canadian International Organ Competition.

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

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Zoë Sellers (on leave)

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 Metzies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Chris Jones – Acting Assistant Principal

Janice Quinn

Rob Aldridge

Chantel Leung

Douglas Ohashi (on leave)

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

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Sarah Pollard – Assistant 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

Ryan Garbett – 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 – Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Percussion

Martin Bui – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal