

# Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director

**Saturday, May 11, 2019 at 8:00pm**

**Sunday, May 12, 2019 at 3:00pm**, George Weston Recital Hall

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**Nicholas Collon**, conductor

**Shai Wosner**, piano

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**Edward Elgar**

## **Serenade in E Minor for String Orchestra, Op. 20**

I. Allegro piacevole

II. Larghetto

III. Allegretto

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

## **Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467**

I. [Allegro maestoso]

II. Andante

III. Allegro vivace assai

Intermission

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

## **Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67**

I. Allegro con brio

II. Andante con moto

III. Allegro

IV. Allegro

*The Three at the Weston Series performances are generously supported by Margaret and Jim Fleck.*

*As a courtesy to musicians, guest artists, and fellow concertgoers, please put your phone away and on silent during the performance.*

# ABOUT THE WORKS

Edward Elgar

## Serenade in E Minor for String Orchestra, Op. 20

12  
min

**Born: Broadheath, United Kingdom, June 2, 1857**

**Died: Worcester, United Kingdom, February 23, 1934**

**Composed: 1892**

Numerous front-rank British composers, including Vaughan Williams, Britten, and Holst, have found writing for the rich, expressive, and flexible medium of the string orchestra a highly congenial practice. Elgar's contributions were small in number but substantial in every other sense. When fellow composer Herbert Howells asked him for the secret of his understanding of strings, Elgar replied, "Study old Handel. I went to him for help ages ago."

This lovely, warm-hearted Serenade was Elgar's first work for string orchestra, followed by the *Introduction and Allegro* (1905), *Elegy* (1909), and *Sospiri* (1914). The première of the work's three separate movements most likely took place in May 1888, with the Reverend Edward Vine Hall conducting the Worcestershire Musical Union. At that stage, the piece's three movements bore titles: *Spring Song*, *Elegy*, and *Finale*. "I like 'em, (the first thing I ever did)," Elgar told a friend, Dr. Charles Buck, later that year.

He revised and re-titled the three pieces in the spring of 1892, in time to offer what he then called Serenade as a third anniversary present to his wife, Alice. The first performance of that version—two compact, animated sections framing the heart of the work, a haunting Larghetto—was probably given by the Ladies' Orchestral Class in Worcester, an ensemble which Elgar trained and conducted. The first complete performance by a professional ensemble was given in Antwerp, Belgium in 1896. At first, British audiences greeted the Serenade with indifference. It remained unheard in London until 1906, when Elgar conducted it himself.

Author Michael Kennedy wrote that together with the stirring concert overture, *Froissart* (1890), the Serenade shows "that Elgar was already a master of the orchestra rare in English music, that he lived and breathed the orchestra as naturally as the air around him." Elgar himself, in later life, continued to refer to the Serenade as his favourite among his works.

**Program note by Don Anderson**

## CARMINA BURANA

**JUNE 19, 20, 22 & 23**

Lust, fate, wine, and roasted swans are celebrated in the choral extravaganza *Carmina Burana*, conducted by Donald Runnicles.

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## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

### Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467

29  
min

**Born: Salzburg, Austria, January 27, 1756**

**Died: Vienna, Austria, December 5, 1791**

**Composed: 1785**

In May 1781, Mozart was unceremoniously discharged from the service of Hieronymus von Colloredo, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Delighted to be free from an unappreciative and demeaning relationship, he relocated from the cultural backwater of Salzburg to the bustling musical metropolis of Vienna, a city ripe for artists with his talent and drive. Before long, he was deep into a busy schedule of composing, performing, and teaching.

Mozart soon found that Vienna valued his piano playing the most. Responding to this preference, he composed 12 superlative piano concertos between February 1784 and December 1786. They were deeper in feeling, broader in scope and richer in colour than any written before, and in years to come would serve as models to which Beethoven, Brahms, and many other composers would turn for inspiration. Mozart gave the premières of most of these “golden dozen” concertos himself, often within days of their completion, and usually at subscription concerts designed for his own benefit. Such

was the case with this piece. At its première in Vienna on March 10, 1785, he played the solo part and directed the orchestra.

The concerto whose creation preceded it by just four weeks—No. 20 in D Minor—is one of the darkest, most Romantic pieces Mozart composed in any form. In terms of personality, this “sequel” is its polar opposite. The opening movement is fully symphonic, with an orchestral backing that matches the solo part for interest and variety; Mozart here, with perfect ease, balances forcefulness, elegance, and wit. The dreamlike slow movement, based on the simplest of materials, is magical. (Its placid beauty served as a most effective backdrop for the 1967 Swedish film *Elvira Madigan*.) The concerto concludes with a merry rondo, echoing with the laughter of comic opera, and looking ahead to Mozart’s masterpiece in this genre, *The Marriage of Figaro*, whose creation followed just one year later.

**Program note by Don Anderson**

## GUSTAVO GIMENO CONDUCTS THE FIREBIRD

**JUNE 28, 29 & 30**

Incoming Music Director Gustavo Gimeno returns to lead the Orchestra in Stravinsky’s blazing, fairy-tale-inspired ballet.

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# ABOUT THE WORKS

Ludwig van Beethoven

## Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

36  
min

Baptized: Bonn, Germany, December 17, 1770

Died: Vienna, Austria, March 26, 1827

Composed: 1807–1808

The Fifth Symphony may be the most familiar opus in all of classical music, and today it is a struggle to recapture the astonishment with which it was received in Beethoven's day, to appreciate how replete with novelties—how *radical*—it was. In a review of the Fifth Symphony published in 1810, E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote that Beethoven “unlocks the marvellous realm of the infinite,” “awakens that endless longing that is the essence of Romanticism,” and “surrenders himself to the inexpressible.” It was a *pathetic* work, in the old sense of the word—impassioned, full of emotion and pathos. Unrestrained by conventional notions of beauty, order, and good taste, this was no mere pleasant half-hour for an early 19th century audience accustomed to regarding a symphony as public entertainment, but an elevated, edifying, sometimes disturbing, ultimately uplifting musical drama. As Hoffmann noted, a symphony could be philosophical and metaphysical—and reveal a composer's whole world-view.

In all four movements Beethoven plays fast and loose with Classical conventions, yet his forms are as logical and organic as they are unpredictable. Note, for instance, his near-obsessive developing of the famous *da-da-da-daaah* four-note motif with which the piece begins (“Thus Fate knocks at the door!” he supposedly remarked of that motif). The result is a dense, driven first movement in which tension accumulates steadily and finally explodes in furious convulsions.

The ingenuity of the Fifth extends beyond the individual movements to the structure of the

whole: the four movements form a unified cycle in which the confident finale, in radiant C major, is eventually heard as the goal to which the work's stormy opening bars aspire. The brassy, celebratory finale resolves and transcends the musical argument of the previous movements: militaristic episodes in the march-like slow movement look ahead to it; and Beethoven links the finale directly to the third movement (a scherzo in all but name) with a tense, dramatically charged transition. He also inserts a ghostly recollection of the scherzo in the middle of the finale, casting a momentary shadow over the prevailing mood of triumph.

The massive, often clangorous scoring of the Fifth was much indebted to the “public” music of the French Revolution and to the operas of Gluck. The woodwinds and brass often evoke band music, especially in the finale, where Beethoven employs several instruments associated with the military: piccolo, contrabassoon, and trombone. It is perhaps no coincidence that by the time the symphony was completed, in the spring of 1808, Austria was at war with Napoleon's France, and the music often strikes a militaristic note that surely reflected the patriotic sentiments then sweeping through German-speaking lands.

The Fifth had its première as part of a long, all-Beethoven program, conducted by the composer on December 22, 1808. Inadequately rehearsed and fraught with problems, the concert ran for four hours in a freezing-cold hall, and not surprisingly the music had a mixed reception. Posterity, to say the least, has been kinder to it.

**Program note by Kevin Bazzana**

# THE ARTISTS



## Nicholas Collon conductor

*These performances mark Nicholas Collon's TSO début.*

British conductor Nicholas Collon is “a born communicator as well as an innovative programmer, and high-calibre interpreter of a wide range of repertoire” (*London Evening Standard*). He is Founder and Principal Conductor of Aurora Orchestra, Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Residentie Orkest in The Hague, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gürzenich-Orchester in Cologne. His elegant conducting style and searching musical intellect have prompted guest invitations from orchestras such as the DSO Berlin, Bamberg Symphony, Danish National Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, and many of the leading British orchestras including the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Hallé Orchestra, and City of Birmingham Symphony; also the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Ensemble Intercontemporain, and Les Siècles.

In 2018/19 he makes his North American début with the Toronto Symphony and his Japan début with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony. He will also conduct the Oslo Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, and Orchestre National de Lyon for the first time, and returns to Opera Köln for *Peter Grimes*.

Under Collon's artistic direction, Aurora Orchestra have forged an enviable reputation in the UK and abroad. As Resident Orchestra at Kings Place they are midway through a five-year cycle of the complete Mozart Piano Concertos, and as Associate Orchestra at the Southbank Centre they are reinventing the concert format with their “Orchestral Theatre” Series. They have appeared at the BBC Proms every year since 2010, often performing entire symphonies from memory, and have become regular visitors to leading European venues such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Cologne Philharmonie.

Collon has recorded two critically acclaimed recordings with Aurora for Warner Classics: *Road Trip*, featuring music by Ives, Copland, Adams, and Nico Muhly, winning the 2015 Echo Klassik Award for “Klassik Ohne Grenzen” (“Classical Without Borders”); and *Insomnia* with music by Britten, Brett Dean, Ligeti, Gurney, and Lennon & McCartney. He has also recorded Haydn and Ligeti with the Danish Radio Symphony, Britten and Delius with the Philharmonia, and several discs of contemporary repertoire with the Hallé Orchestra.

He has conducted over 200 new works, including the UK or World Premières of works by Unsuk Chin, Philip Glass, Colin Matthews, Nico Muhly, Olivier Messiaen, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Judith Weir.

Opera productions have included *The Magic Flute* at English National Opera, Jonathan Harvey's *Wagner Dream* at Welsh National Opera, *The Rape of Lucretia* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and *The Turn of the Screw* at the Aldeburgh Festival with the Aurora Orchestra.

[nicholascollon.co.uk](http://nicholascollon.co.uk)

## THE ARTISTS



### **Shai Wosner** **piano**

*These performances mark Shai Wosner's TSO debut.*

Pianist Shai Wosner has attracted international recognition for his exceptional artistry, musical integrity, and creative insight. His performances of a broad range of repertoire—from Beethoven and Schubert to Ligeti and the music of today—reflect a degree of virtuosity and intellectual curiosity that has made him a favourite among audiences and critics, who note his “keen musical mind and deep musical soul” (NPR’s *All Things Considered*).

This season, Mr. Wosner’s highlights include a recital in St. Paul featuring repertoire from his latest recording, *Impromptu*, which explores an eclectic mix of improvisationally inspired works by composers from Schubert to Ives. He also continues his career-long, critically acclaimed engagement with Schubert’s music in a recital series of the composer’s final sonatas, with performances in Berkeley, Berlin, Buffalo, and Fresno, and a recording to be released in 2019. He also performs with the Alabama, Detroit, and Jerusalem Symphonies. His chamber music performances include a five-city U.S. tour with pianist Orion Weiss, during which they perform music by David Lang, Schubert, and Brahms; and collaborations with CMS of Lincoln Center, New York Philharmonic musicians, and violinist Jennifer Koh in continuation of their *Bridge to Beethoven* series.

In addition to *Impromptu*, Mr. Wosner’s recordings for Onyx include concertos and capriccios by Haydn and Ligeti with the Danish National Symphony, conducted by Nicholas Collon; solo recordings of works by Schubert, Brahms and Schoenberg, and new commissions by Missy Mazzoli; and Beethoven’s complete works for cello and piano with Ralph Kirshbaum. He also performs Bartók, Janáček, and Kurtág on a recording with Jennifer Koh for Cedille.

Mr. Wosner is a recipient of Lincoln Center’s Martin E. Segal Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award—a prize he used to commission a concerto by Michael Hersch, which he performed with the Seattle Symphony and Deutsche Radio Philharmonie. In the U.S., he has appeared with the orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Berkeley, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco, and St. Paul and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestras. He has also performed with the Barcelona, Bournemouth, Frankfurt Radio, and Gothenburg Symphonies, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Nieuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam, Orchestre National de Belgique, Staatskapelle Berlin, and the Vienna Philharmonic, among others. Mr. Wosner studied piano with Opher Brayer and Emanuel Krasovsky, as well as composition, theory, and improvisation with André Hajdu, and at The Juilliard School with Emanuel Ax.