

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director

Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 8:00pm

Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 8:00pm

Saturday, February 9, 2019 at 8:00pm

Sir Andrew Davis, conductor

Jonathan Crow, violin

Joseph Johnson, cello

Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra

Simon Rivard, conductor

Oskar Morawetz

Carnival Overture, Op. 2

Performed side by side with the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra

Johannes Brahms

Concerto in A Minor for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, Op. 102

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Vivace non troppo

Intermission

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60

I. Allegro non tanto

II. Adagio

III. Scherzo (Furiant): Presto

IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito

The February 7 performance is generously supported by Ana and Bernardo Sztabinski.

The February 9 performance is dedicated to the memory of Mary Beck.

The appearances of Sir Andrew Davis this season are made possible by Hans and Susan Brenninkmeyer.

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

ABOUT THE WORKS

Oskar Morawetz

Carnival Overture, Op. 2

6
min

Born: Světlá nad Sázavou, Czech Republic, January 17, 1917

Died: Toronto, Ontario, Canada, June 13, 2007

Composed: 1946

Carnival Overture is Oskar Morawetz's earliest surviving orchestral work. Sir Ernest MacMillan conducted the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in its 1947 première, the year after it was composed; MacMillan coined the title, reacting, in his words, to the music's "tremendous rhythmic vitality and colourful orchestration."

The work was performed most recently by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, under Peter Oundjian, in 2017—the 100th anniversary of the year of the composer's birth—during the TSO tour of Israel and Europe, including a performance in Smetana Hall in Prague.

Morawetz is one of Canada's most distinguished and most frequently performed composers. After early studies in Prague, Vienna, and Paris, in 1940, he escaped from the growing tide of Nazi terror by emigrating to Toronto. He was appointed a professor at the University of Toronto in 1952 and served there with distinction until his retirement 30 years later. His numerous honours include membership in the Order of Ontario (the first composer to be admitted), the Order of Canada, and a JUNO Award for his Harp Concerto.

He has created a substantial catalogue of music in virtually all major forms, from piano solos and songs to chamber music to choral works. Among his most highly regarded compositions are the Piano Concerto and Sinfonietta for

winds and percussion, both premiered by Zubin Mehta, while his deeply moving creations, *Memorial to Martin Luther King* (commissioned by cellist Mstislav Rostropovich) and *From the Diary of Anne Frank*, have been performed on four continents.

His orchestral works have proven especially successful. They have been programmed in North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia by nearly 120 orchestras and by such outstanding conductors as Seiji Ozawa, Rafael Kubelik, Kurt Masur, and Sir Adrian Boult. Other pieces have been commissioned by such renowned artists as Maureen Forrester, the Orford Quartet, and the TSO (Symphony No. 2, 1959).

His style absorbs, in his own distinctly personal way, several trends of the 20th century, but he was never attracted to serial music or to the latest avant-garde styles, such as the use of chance (aleatoric music) or electronic music. Musicologists and critics usually stress the melodic and rhythmic vitality of his music, his sincerity of expression, his sense for building up powerful, dramatic climaxes, and his colourful and imaginative orchestration. Stylistically, he was a self-avowed traditionalist: "Ever since I was a child, music has meant for me something terribly emotional, and I still believe there has to be some kind of melodic line," he once said.

Program note by Don Anderson

Johannes Brahms

Concerto in A Minor for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, Op. 102

31
min

Born: Hamburg, Germany, May 7, 1833

Died: Vienna, Austria, April 3, 1897

Composed: 1887

Concertos in the 19th century were, overwhelmingly, vehicles for *solo* virtuosity—the era was not receptive to more democratic concertos for multiple soloists, modelled on the Baroque *concerto grosso* or the Classical *symphonie concertante*. Beethoven's Triple Concerto was viewed as the last gasp of that 18th-century form, and was still Brahms's only real model when, in 1887, he decided to write a concerto for violin and cello—a combination largely unprecedented. He was excited about his Double Concerto, which proved to be his last orchestral work, but he knew what he was in for. He warned friends to “be prepared for a little shock” when he told them of his “latest folly,” his “strange notion of writing a concerto for fiddle and cello!” The apologetic tone was clearly a preemptive strike, and, sure enough, colleagues and critics were puzzled by the work, unable to place it in a convenient niche. Many years passed before it enjoyed the reputation of Brahms's other concertos.

Though shorter than the others (Brahms called it a “morsel”), the Double is a work of immense power and imagination, spacious in its proportions and profoundly Romantic. Brahms's orchestration is uncommonly sensitive here: he makes a positive virtue of the disparate registers of his solo instruments, and he forges an orchestral part that is rich and colourful but does not swamp the soloists. As in Beethoven's Triple,

it is the cello, surprisingly, that leads the solo pair: where something significant is initiated by one (rather than both) of the soloists, it is almost invariably by the cellist.

The first movement opens dramatically, with the orchestra throwing out nuggets of the two principal themes, to which the soloists reply with long, cadenza-like recitatives (shades of Beethoven's “Emperor” Concerto). The movement has both passion and poetry—great surges of power and a few passing storms, but also meditative, melancholy, and ardently lyrical passages, as Brahms exploits his pair of soloists by having them develop the principal themes in impassioned dialogues. The slow second movement, introduced by a stark, signal-like motif—a rising fourth in the horns and woodwinds—features two broad themes set out at length. The first is wide spaced and arching, its scoring thick and dark, mostly in lower registers; the second is a chorale-like melody introduced high in the woodwinds and interrupted by solo dialogue. The rondo finale, as in all of Brahms's concertos, has a bouncy, tongue-in-cheek quality, particularly the first theme, which introduces a welcome note of playfulness and wit into the piece. A splendid coda offers a brief yet grand conclusion: a slow, hushed variant of the first theme, laced with swirling solo figuration.

Program note by Kevin Bazzana

ABOUT THE WORKS

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60

41
min

Born: Nelahozeves (nr. Kralupy), Austrian Empire, September 8, 1841

Died: Prague, Austro-Hungarian Empire (now Czech Republic), May 1, 1904

Composed: 1880

Dvořák travelled to Vienna in November 1879, and it was a productive visit on two counts. He was at last able to meet Johannes Brahms, who had done much to encourage him and to promote his music. He also had a most congenial encounter with Hans Richter, the distinguished conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic. They got along so well that Dvořák agreed to compose a new symphony for Richter to perform the following year.

In typical fashion, he wrote Symphony No. 6 quickly—between August and October. He played it through at the piano for Richter, who embraced him joyfully after every movement, and felt honoured to accept the symphony's dedication. Various delays cropped up, however, and the première was postponed several times. Richter claimed an overworked orchestra and illness in his family as the reasons for these setbacks. The suspicious composer discovered that the real obstacle was a political one: the orchestra felt they were playing too much Bohemian music! Dvořák turned to Adolf Čech to conduct the première. Richter subsequently made amends by programming the work on several occasions. The Sixth Symphony proved an instant hit wherever it was played. It does so even now, often coming as a pleasant surprise to listeners familiar only with Dvořák's three later, more frequently performed symphonies.

It opens in leisurely fashion, establishing its pastoral character right from the outset. The first movement's themes are expansive, as is their treatment. The slow second movement is dominated by a wistful theme stated at the outset by the violins. Dramatic climaxes crop up, but, by movement's end, the initial sense of tranquility is restored. The scherzo third movement is Dvořák's first fully symphonic version of a Bohemian folk-dance called the *furiant*, a vigorous step in 3/4 time with strong 2/4 cross-rhythms, and with a tranquil central section that gives the piccolo one of its finest moments to shine in the entire symphonic literature. At the première, the audience demanded an immediate encore of this brilliant movement. The finale is as joyful as the rest of the work, crowned with a dynamic transformation of the movement's opening theme.

Program note by Don Anderson

THE ARTISTS



Sir Andrew Davis **conductor**

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director, made his TSO debut in May 1974, and served as TSO Music Director from 1975 to 1988, when he was named TSO Conductor Laureate.

Sir Andrew Davis is the Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Davis's career spans over 40 years during which he has been the musical and artistic leader at several of the world's most distinguished opera and symphonic institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate; chief conductor, 1991–2004), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (music director, 1988–2000), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Conductor Laureate; Music Director, 1975–1988), where he has also been named Interim Artistic Director from 2018 to 2020. He also holds the honorary title of Conductor Emeritus from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. One of today's most recognized and acclaimed conductors, Sir Andrew has conducted virtually all of the world's major orchestras, opera companies, and festivals.

Born in 1944 in Hertfordshire, England, Maestro Davis studied at King's College, Cambridge, where he was an organ scholar before taking up conducting. His wide-ranging repertoire encompasses the Baroque to contemporary, and spans the symphonic, operatic, and choral worlds. A vast and award-winning discography documents Sir Andrew's artistry, with recent CDs including the works of Berlioz, Elgar, Grainger, Delius, Ives, Holst, Handel, and York Bowen. The recording of Handel's *Messiah* (with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir) was nominated for a 2018 GRAMMY® for Best Choral Performance, and the York Bowen recording was nominated for a 2012 GRAMMY® for Best Orchestral Performance. Maestro Davis currently records exclusively for Chandos Records.

In 1992, Maestro Davis was made a Commander of the British Empire, and in 1999 he was designated a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List.

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THE ARTISTS



Jonathan Crow **violin**

TSO Concertmaster Jonathan Crow joined the TSO in 2011.

The 2018/19 season marks Canadian violinist Jonathan Crow's eighth season as Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A native of Prince George, British Columbia, he earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Honours Performance from McGill University in 1998, at which time he joined the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) as Associate Principal Second Violin. Between 2002 and 2006, he was the Concertmaster of the OSM; during this time, he was the youngest concertmaster of any major North American orchestra. Jonathan continues to perform as guest concertmaster with orchestras around the world. He has also performed as a soloist with most major Canadian orchestras, under the baton of such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Andrew Davis, Peter Oundjian, Kent Nagano, Mario Bernardi, and João Carlos Martins.

Jonathan Crow joined the Schulich School of Music at McGill University as an Assistant Professor of Violin and was appointed Associate Professor of Violin in 2010. Current and former students of Mr. Crow have received prizes at competitions around the world, and work regularly with major orchestras in North America and Europe. Jonathan is currently Associate Professor of Violin at the University of Toronto.

In 2016, Jonathan was named Artistic Director of Toronto Summer Music, which recently announced record attendance in his first full season. An avid chamber musician, he has performed at chamber music festivals throughout North America, South America, and Europe. He is a founding member of the JUNO Award-winning New Orford String Quartet, a project-based ensemble dedicated to the promotion of standard and Canadian string quartet repertoire throughout North America. As an advocate of contemporary music, he has premiered works by Canadian composers Vivian Fung, Michael Conway Baker, Eldon Rathburn, Barrie Cabena, Gary Kulesha, Tim Brady, François Dompierre, Ana Sokolović, Marjan Mozetich, Christos Hatzis, Ernest MacMillan, and Healey Willan. He also includes in his repertoire major concerti by such modern composers as Ligeti, Schnittke, Bernstein, Brian Cherney, Rodney Sharman, Vivian Fung, and Cameron Wilson.

Jonathan has recorded for the ATMA, Bridge, CBC, Oxingale, Skylark, and XXI-21 labels, and is heard frequently on Chaîne culturelle of Radio-Canada, CBC Radio Two, and National Public Radio, along with Radio France, Deutsche Welle, Hessischer Rundfunk, and the RAI in Europe.



Joseph Johnson cello

TSO Principal Cello Joseph Johnson joined the TSO in 2010.

Principal cellist of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Joseph Johnson previously held the same position with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as principal cellist of the Santa Fe Opera, and during the 2008/09 season was acting principal cellist of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. Prior to his Milwaukee appointment, Joseph Johnson was a member of the Minnesota Orchestra cello section for 11 years. He was a founding member of both the Prospect Park Players and the Minneapolis Quartet, the latter of which was honoured with The McKnight Foundation Award in 2005.

Mr. Johnson has been heard throughout the world as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator. His festival appearances include performances in all classical genres at the American festivals of Santa Fe, Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society, Bard, Cactus Pear, Grand Teton, and Music in the Vineyards, as well as the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan, and the Virtuosi Festival in Brazil. Recent highlights include concerto performances of Tchaikovsky's "Rococo Variations" with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Dvořák Concerto at the Lakes Area Festival, the Elgar Concerto with the Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra, and Bernstein's *Three Meditations* with the Lexington Philharmonic. He will be performing the Canadian Première of the Unsuk Chin Cello Concerto with the Esprit Orchestra on March 24 at Koerner Hall.

A gifted and inspiring teacher, Mr. Johnson is Assistant Professor of Cello at the University of Toronto, as well as the Cello Coach for the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra. He has conducted numerous masterclasses for a wide range of institutions and ensembles.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Joseph Johnson earned his master's degree from Northwestern University. Awards and honours include a performer's certificate from the Eastman School of Music and first prize from the American String Teachers Association National Solo Competition.

Mr. Johnson performs on a magnificent Paolo Castello cello crafted in Genoa in 1780. He uses Jargar Superior brand strings exclusively.

Simon Rivard and the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra: for more information about the tuition-free TSYO education program, and for artist biographies and the 2018/19 TSYO roster of musicians, please see pages 30–32.