



CONCERT PROGRAM

HOLST THE PLANETS

Thursday, January 25, 2018

8:00pm

Friday, January 26, 2018

7:30pm

Saturday, January 27, 2018

7:30pm

John Storgårds

conductor

Andrew McCandless

trumpet

**Women of the
Elmer Iseler Singers**

Lydia Adams

Conductor & Artistic Director

The January 25 performance is dedicated to the **Toronto Symphony Volunteer Committee.**

Igor Stravinsky

Funeral Song for Orchestra, Op. 5

(CANADIAN PREMIÈRE)

John Estacio

Trumpet Concerto (TSO CO-COMMISSION)

- I. Triton's Trumpet: Tranquillo
- II. Ballad: Adagio
- III. Rondo: Fast and lively

Intermission

Gustav Holst

The Planets

- I. Mars, The Bringer of War
- II. Venus, The Bringer of Peace
- III. Mercury, The Winged Messenger
- IV. Jupiter, The Bringer of Jollity
- V. Saturn, The Bringer of Old Age
- VI. Uranus, The Magician
- VII. Neptune, The Mystic

THE DETAILS

Igor Stravinsky

Funeral Song for Orchestra, Op. 5 (CANADIAN PREMIÈRE)



Born: Oranienbaum, Russia, Jun 17, 1882

Died: New York City, New York, USA, Apr 6, 1971

Composed: 1908

Igor Stravinsky began studying with the eminent Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in 1905. Rimsky-Korsakov was a leading light in the school of composition that took inspiration from Russian folk music and Russian folk literature. He was also a supreme master of a colourful style of orchestration that befitted his compositions.

Stravinsky studied with him for three years. They became very close, to the point of establishing a surrogate father-and-son relationship. Naturally, Stravinsky's early works reflected Rimsky-Korsakov's style. They included the orchestral concert pieces *Fireworks* and *Scherzo fantastique* (both from 1908) and the ballet score *The Firebird* (1910).

RECEPTION

The recent rediscovery of Stravinsky's *Funeral Song* has generated much interest among musicologists, musicians, and critics. Music writer Alex Ross described the work in *The New Yorker* as "a modestly shattering discovery, one that alters our view of the 20th century's musical colossus" in the "veiled power" of its music. In response to the US première in April, the *Chicago Tribune* described that the significance of the piece "lies in what it reveals of the artistic development of one of the last century's great musical geniuses, and its portents of greater Stravinsky works to come (his revolutionary 'Rite of Spring' lay only five years in the future)."

Rimsky-Korsakov's death in 1908 moved Stravinsky deeply, and he composed the *Funeral Song* in tribute to him. It received what was for more than a century its only performance on January 17, 1909, at a memorial concert in St. Petersburg. Subsequently thought to be lost, it was reconstructed in 2015 from a set of parts that musicologist Natalia Braginskaya and librarian Irina Sidorenko unearthed in the archives of the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory in St. Petersburg. The second performance took place in that city on December 2, 2016, with Valery Gergiev conducting the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra.

Funeral Song begins quietly and darkly, in a mood of profound despair, with scurrying strings underpinning the dark voices of the low brass. Solo horn provides a bridge to a march-like theme that spreads to the entire orchestra. Solo winds are featured in a section that provides a measure of consolation. Despair lurks about the edges of the work, welling up briefly and occasionally, as the music winds down to a bleak conclusion.

Stravinsky considered it "the best of my works before *The Firebird*," and he recalled it in his *Memoires* of 1935: "I no longer remember the music, but I recall very well my idea for the work. It was like a procession of all the solo instruments of the orchestra, coming in turns to each leave a melody in the form of a wreath on the master's tomb, all the while with a low background of murmuring tremolos, like the vibrations of bass voices singing in a choir."

Program note by Don Anderson

THE DETAILS

John Estacio

Trumpet Concerto (TSO CO-COMMISSION)

20
min

Born: Newmarket, Ontario, Canada, Apr 8, 1966

Composed: 2017

The first of three movements, titled "Triton's Trumpet", takes its inspiration from the Greek myth about Poseidon's son, Triton, who used his conch shell as a trumpet to calm or raise the ocean waters. The movement begins in a tranquil state and features a lyrical and florid cadenza for the solo trumpet over sustained tremulous strings. An undercurrent of disturbance by the lower brass warns that this tranquility could be disrupted, but is calmed by the mellifluous tones of the trumpet. Gradually, though, the discordance in the depths of the orchestra eventually takes over and builds to a giant wave of sound and energy, almost overpowering the soloist. However, as with Triton, the soloist eventually calms the waters and the tranquil music from the beginning reappears. The opening themes are further developed with solos for the clarinets before the trumpet takes over with a revision of the

opening cadenza. Yet, once again, ominous tones overtake the tranquil mood and suddenly thrust the soloist into a more fervent tempo that eventually builds to a swirl of chaos and incivility that threatens to overtake the solo trumpet.

The "Ballad" movement features extended lyrical phrases for the solo trumpet. The strings introduce a primary melody that feels somewhat unsettled and ungrounded. A solemn chorale played by the woodwinds follows; this chorale will eventually transform and become the driving force behind a regal-sounding climax.

The "Rondo" is a spirited foil to the first movement. Written in a quick 6/8 metre, it begins with a quixotic melody that will be reprised throughout this mercurial kaleidoscope of energy, colour, and fanfare.

Program note by the composer

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



JUNO-nominated composer John Estacio is a recipient of the 2017 Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award. His works are frequently recorded, performed, and broadcast on international radio and television. His Trumpet Concerto was commissioned by 19 Canadian orchestras and will be performed throughout the country in the 2017/18 season. He has written four operas and has also composed a full-length orchestral score for Cincinnati Ballet's *King Arthur's Camelot*.

His music has been performed at Carnegie Hall by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. He is the recipient of the National Arts Centre Award for Composers and his music was performed by Pinchas Zukerman and the NAC Orchestra during their tours of China and the UK. In 2017, the NAC Orchestra and conductor Alexander Shelley toured across Canada with his orchestral work *I Lost My Talk*, inspired by Rita Joe's poem.

Gustav Holst

The Planets



Born: Cheltenham, United Kingdom, Sep 21, 1874
Died: London, United Kingdom, May 25, 1934
Composed: 1914–1916

During a tour of Spain in 1913, a fellow traveller, author Clifford Bax, introduced Gustav Holst to astrology. His curiosity thus aroused sowed the seeds of this spectacular orchestral suite, his most popular (if not most representative) creation. It portrays the astrological characters of seven planets in our solar system (as opposed to their mythological personalities, although his portrait of Venus manages to conjure both her mythological beauty and her astrological peacefulness).

“Mars, The Bringer of War” presents a harrowing portrait of cold, inhuman power. The brass section takes centre stage, hammering forth harsh blocks of sound over an implacable, motor-like rhythmic tread. Early audiences were convinced that Holst had intended this music as a portrait of the world war that had recently ended. In fact, he had completed the sketches before it broke out in 1914.

A NOBLE PATRON

Holst took his time to compose *The Planets*, in part because he feared that no orchestra big enough to handle his lavish demands would be available during wartime. However, his wealthy friend, H. Balfour Gardiner, who had already aided him on several fronts, stepped in. Gardiner hired a hall, an orchestra, and a conductor to rehearse and perform *The Planets* for an invited audience of 300. It is said that the infectious rhythms of “Jupiter” set the hall’s charwomen to dancing!

“Venus, The Bringer of Peace” offers total contrast: a calm, tranquil reverie, set far from the scene of any conflict and shot through with gorgeous instrumental solos. Holst associated “Mercury, The Winged Messenger” with the process of human thought. It flits by with appropriate speed and delicacy. “Jupiter, The Bringer of Jollity” has both its jovial feet planted firmly on the ground. Hearty tunes steeped in Holst’s study of English folk dances drive the opening and closing sections. In between rests a hymn-like theme evoking a more ceremonial type of rejoicing.

In the miniature tone poem “Saturn, The Bringer of Old Age”, the composer sets forth his views on the stages of human life: the uncertain beginning, the struggles and heartbreaks of maturation, and finally the emergence in late years of wisdom, with its serene acceptance of imperfection and mortality.

Next comes the dynamic conjuring act of “Uranus, The Magician”. Holst puts the orchestra through many spectacular paces, dramatic and grotesquely humorous alike. The suite concludes with the cool, disembodied meditations of “Neptune, The Mystic”. They arrive as if having travelled across vast distances of outer and inner space. Midway through, the ethereal sound of a wordless female chorus floats in from offstage. In the final bars, the orchestra falls silent and the voices echo, over and over, until they fade into silent infinity.

Program note by Don Anderson

THE ARTISTS



John Storgårds conductor

John Storgårds made his TSO debut in February 2012.

Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra as well as Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, John Storgårds has a dual career as a conductor and violin virtuoso and is widely recognized for his creative flair for programming. He additionally holds the titles of Artistic

Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland and Artistic Partner of the Munich Chamber Orchestra, and served as the Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic from 2008 to 2015. Highlights of Mr. Storgårds's 2017/18 season in North America include his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, re-engagements with the St. Louis and Toronto symphony orchestras, and a three-concert series celebrating the 150th anniversary of Canada and the 100th anniversary of Finland with the National Arts Centre Orchestra. He is also the Artistic Director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal's Nordic Spring Festival.

Mr. Storgårds's award-winning discography includes recordings of works by Schumann, Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn, but also rarities by Holmboe and Vask, which feature him as violin soloist. Recent successes include critically acclaimed Chandos recordings of two cycles of symphonies by Sibelius (2014) and Nielsen (2015) with the BBC Philharmonic, and works by Nørgård, Korngold, and Rautavaara, the latter receiving a GRAMMY® nomination and a Gramophone Award in 2012.



Andrew McCandless trumpet

TSO Principal Trumpet Andrew McCandless joined the TSO in 1999.

Andrew McCandless was appointed Principal Trumpet of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1999 and has established himself as a prominent brass player in the orchestral world. Since his first professional position at the age of 20 with the Savannah Symphony, Andrew has also held the position of principal trumpet with many notable orchestras including the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Dallas Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, in which he still performs today. As Principal Trumpet with the TSO, Andrew is regularly featured as a soloist. In 2010, he performed the world première of *Songs of the Paradise Saloon*, a trumpet concerto written specifically for him by Bramwell Tovey, and commissioned by the TSO. He appears as a guest artist and chamber musician throughout North America.

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Andrew began playing the trumpet at the age of nine, and later studied at Boston University and the Eastman School of Music. He is currently on faculty at The Royal Conservatory of Music, teaches privately, and has given masterclasses throughout North America. Andrew is a Yamaha performing artist.



Elmer Iseler Singers

Lydia Adams
Conductor & Artistic Director

Jessie Iseler
General Manager

The Elmer Iseler Singers made their TSO début in May 1982.

The Elmer Iseler Singers (EIS), conducted by Artistic Director Lydia Adams for the past 20 years, are now in their 39th season. This 20-voice fully professional choral ensemble, founded by the late Dr. Elmer Iseler in 1979, has built an enviable reputation throughout Canada, the United States, and internationally through concerts, broadcasts, and recordings—performing repertoire that spans 500 years, with a focus on Canadian composers.

The Singers present a five-concert series in Toronto each season, and are featured at concerts, workshops, and festivals throughout Canada. Touring is also a major component of EIS activities, with two multi-city tours taken in the 2016/17 season—one to western Canada and one to Atlantic Canada. Annually, EIS sponsors choral workshops through their GET MUSIC! Educational Outreach Initiative for secondary school conductors and choirs, concluding with a joint public performance.

The Elmer Iseler Singers are a 2014 National Choral Award recipient. Lydia Adams was the Artist Recipient of the 2013 Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts. In 2017, the Singers were a JUNO Award Nominee in the "Classical Album of the Year: Vocal or Choral Performance" category.

Women of the Elmer Iseler Singers

Soprano

Jodie Alcorn
Anne Bornath
Erin Cooper Gay
Amy Dodington
Gisele Kulak
Carrie Loring
Carole Nelles
Cathy Robinson
Alison Roy
Kate Tapp Mock
Emily Taub
Julie Winn

Alto

Margaret Bardos
Karen Freedman
Claudia Lemcke
Shirley Maddem
Victoria Marshall
Lynn McMurray