

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director

Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 8:00pm

Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 8:00pm

Sunday, January 13, 2019 at 3:00pm, George Weston Recital Hall

David Robertson, originally scheduled to conduct this program, has had to withdraw from these concerts due to personal reasons. Mr. Robertson sends his warmest regards to the TSO musicians and audience.

We are grateful to conductor Ludovic Morlot for stepping in.

Ludovic Morlot, conductor

Leila Josefowicz, violin

Kurt Weill

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik (Suite from *The Threepenny Opera*)

- I. Overture
- II. The Murderous Deed of Mackie Messer
- III. Instead-of Song
- IV. The Ballad of Pleasant Life
- V. Polly's Song
- Va. Tango-Ballade
- VI. Cannon Song
- VII. Threepenny Finale

Igor Stravinsky

Concerto in D Major for Violin

- I. Toccata
- II. Aria I
- III. Aria II
- IV. Capriccio

Intermission

Jean Sibelius

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

- I. Allegretto
- II. Andante, ma rubato
- III. Vivacissimo
- IV. Finale: Allegro moderato

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

Kurt Weill

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik (Suite from *The Threepenny Opera*)

20
min

Born: Dessau, Germany, March 2, 1900

Died: New York, New York, USA, April 3, 1950

Composed: 1929

On February 5, 1929, Kurt Weill wrote a letter to UE (Universal Edition), his music publisher:

“I heard the *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* (I deliberately avoided using the word ‘suite’) yesterday at rehearsal; I am very content with it. There are eight numbers in all-new, concert versions, with some new intermediate strophes and an entirely new orchestration: two flutes, two clarinets, two saxophones, two bassoons, two trumpets, one trombone, one tuba, banjo, percussion, piano. I believe the piece can be played an awful lot, since it is precisely what every conductor wants: a snappy piece to end with.”

It is, equally, as we shall hear tonight, a snappy piece to begin with!

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik premièred in Berlin two days later, on February 7, 1929, with Otto Klemperer conducting the Preussische Staatskapelle (Royal Prussian Court Orchestra), barely five months after the work from which it was derived, *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*) had premièred on August 31, 1928, also in Berlin. *The Threepenny Opera* remains, to this day, the best-known of the works Weill created in partnership with the individual who, more than any other, helped shape Weill’s unique musical voice—the playwright Bertolt Brecht.

James M. Keller, program annotator for the New York Philharmonic, describes the basis of the chemistry between them: “In the late 1920s [they were] both prowling about Berlin’s jazz-age Bohemia. The two met in 1927 [and] recognized shared aesthetic sympathies.... Brecht provided bitter cynicism, wealth-scourning social commentary, and the ability to elevate the lowest of the downtrodden to the level of universal human myth. Weill responded with masterful scores of generally scaled down proportions: rhythmically nervous, jazz-tinged, and rich in cabaret-inflected melodies.”

Their source for *The Threepenny Opera* was a 1728 English stage piece, *The Beggar’s Opera*, by librettist John Gay and composer Johann Christian Pepuch, which had itself achieved enduring fame by taking a story of the seamier side of London life and rendering it in parodic operatic form, with tunes drawn from popular ballads of the day. In a 1956 essay titled “That was a Time!”, Lotte Lenya, who rocketed from obscurity in the role of Jenny in the 1928 production, recalls: “It was Elisabeth Hauptmann, Bert Brecht’s secretary and vigilant shadow in the mid-twenties, who first read of the great success in London of a revival of *The Beggar’s Opera*. She promptly ordered a copy and...began a rough translation whenever she had a few free moments, giving

the German text to Brecht one scene at a time...these bawds, bully boys and beggars of 18th-century London were creatures to delight his heart: why not make them speak his language in the fullest sense of the word?"

In Brecht and Weill's hands, the focus of the story remains English—Macheath (Mack the Knife), a murderer and seducer in Victorian London—but the focus of the opera's satire becomes the Weimar Germany of their own time.

Despite an initially poor reception, it became one of the most popular works of the period, playing 400 times in the next two years. It also travelled to North America as a film by G. W. Pabst (readily available on YouTube for the curious), which opened in New York in 1931; its Broadway première followed two years later, at the Empire Theatre, on April 13, 1933 (a run that, it should be noted, closed after 12 performances). Within five years, it had been translated into 18 languages and performed more than 10,000 times in Europe.

Very early on, *The Threepenny Opera* had, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, also attracted the attention of the serious-music establishment in Germany. As Lotte Lenya observes: "Kurt had written three operas which had been applauded by the most austere music critics, Weill, Krenek, Hindemith were rated as the three most gifted young opera composers in Germany. But Kurt felt strongly that serious composers had withdrawn into too rarefied an atmosphere. He insisted that the widening gap between them and the great public must be bridged at all costs."

Just four months after its première, conductor Otto Klemperer commissioned Weill to create the work on tonight's program—a "concert suite," as Klemperer called it (and as Weill

declined to do), in the tradition of opera suites for winds from Mozart's day.

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik reduces the opera's 55 minutes of music, spread out over 21 songs, into eight movements with a combined duration of just over 20 minutes. The first seven movements reflect key sung moments from the opera, alternately savage, cynical, satirical, and tender (although not necessarily in plot sequence), while the finale masterfully blends several elements from the opera's thoroughly Brechtian ending: Macheath, about to be hanged, sings bitterly about the injustice of it all, then, in rapid succession, begs all men for forgiveness, is pardoned by the queen, and is given a pension.

As a German Jew, Weill's fortunes turned sour in the early 1930s, as the new Nazi regime ramped up a propaganda campaign against his popular, politically subversive works. He fled first to Paris in 1933, then to the United States in 1935, where he continued an active career as a musical-theatre composer, collaborating with Ira Gershwin and Langston Hughes, among others, until his death of a heart attack at age 50.

Program note by David Perlman

ABOUT THE WORKS

Igor Stravinsky

Concerto in D Major for Violin

22
min

Born: Oranienbaum, Russia, June 17, 1882

Died: New York, New York, USA, April 6, 1971

Composed: 1930–1931

Stravinsky composed his Concerto in D for the Polish violinist Samuel Dushkin. After meeting Dushkin in October 1930, he began jotting down ideas for a violin concerto the next day, and insisted that Dushkin live nearby and offer advice on the solo part during composition. The concerto was completed in September 1931, and Dushkin gave the première on October 23, in Berlin, with Stravinsky conducting the Berlin Radio Orchestra. Later, the two performed the concerto around Europe and in the United States (sometimes in Stravinsky's own violin-piano arrangement).

The Concerto in D Major for Violin is in some respects a throwback, modelled more closely on the Baroque keyboard concerto than on its more immediate Romantic predecessors. Stravinsky's own program note for the work, reprinted in his 1963 autobiographical *Dialogues and a Diary*, co-written with Robert Craft, says:

"The Violin Concerto was not inspired by or modeled on any example. I did not find that the standard violin concertos—Mozart's, Beethoven's, Mendelssohn's, or even Brahms's—were among their composers' best work. (The Schoenberg Concerto is an exception, but that is hardly standard yet.) The subtitles of my Concerto—Toccatà, Aria, Capriccio—may suggest Bach, though, and so, in a superficial way, might the musical

substance. I am very fond of the Bach Concerto for Two Violins, as the duet of the soloist with a violin from the orchestra in the last movement of my own Concerto possibly may show. But my Concerto employs other duet combinations, too, and the texture is almost always more characteristic of chamber music than of orchestral music."

He goes on to say that he did not compose a cadenza, "not because I did not care about exploiting violin virtuosity, but because the violin in combination was my real interest.... Virtuosity for its own sake has only a small role in my Concerto, and the technical demands of the piece are relatively tame."

"Tame" is something of an overstatement. The soloist does not stand apart from the orchestra to the degree it does in many concertos, but the solo part is difficult, and the violin plays in almost every bar—"first among equals," sometimes subsumed into the overall texture, as in a Baroque concerto. The violin style could be described as defiantly *anti-Romantic*: more angular than lyrical; lean, incisive, precisely attacked; at times brittle or even scratchy; suspicious of Romantic clichés like vibrato and portamento (though making frequent and innovative use of harmonics and pizzicato).

The hard bite of this violin style is apparent from the opening salvo of the Concerto in D,

a strange, bitter chord that Stravinsky called his “passport” to the concerto (he placed it at the start of each movement), and that Dushkin at first declared to be “unplayable.”

The Concerto in D has an unusual four-movement structure. The two outer movements are fast, busy, and witty: a hard-driving, perpetual-motion *Toccata*, and a lighter, more playful *Capriccio* with an episodic structure. Both are delightfully heterogeneous, flitting from idea to idea; both show off the solo violin dazzlingly; both are rife with Stravinsky’s

trademark rhythmic complexities. These two extroverted (almost manic) movements frame two darker, more reflective *Arias*. Throughout, the stylistic and violinistic devices of Baroque and Classical music are treated with irony and wit, along the way to achieving real power and gravity in *Aria II*, in which the violin cries out several times with the “passport” chord. This movement, with its long, heavily embellished melody, calls to mind, not superficially, some of Bach’s most profound slow movements.

Program note by Kevin Bazzana

Jean Sibelius

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

44
min

Born: Hämeenlinna, Finland, December 8, 1865

Died: Järvenpää, Finland, September 20, 1957

Composed: 1901–1902

At the time he entered Sibelius’s life, Axel Carpelan was an unmarried, unemployed, eccentric, hypochondriacal (and almost penniless) Finnish aristocrat, with no career and an aimless life. His own youthful ambition to play the violin thwarted by his parents, he remained devoted to music and literature, a passionate hanger-on in the milieu of artists and their patrons. That being said, he had a strong personality, was well informed, and had good ideas. In 1900, he began writing to Sibelius, full of advice about his music and career; the composer replied respectfully, and a friendship blossomed that proved mutually inspiring.

Carpelan helped spur the creation of some of Sibelius’s most important works. He raised money to allow Sibelius to travel to Italy,

where, early in 1901, he began sketching his Second Symphony. Later, Carpelan arranged a quarterly allowance that sustained Sibelius while he worked on the symphony back home. After some “bitter struggle,” Sibelius completed the work early in 1902, and conducted it in a series of sold-out concerts in March, in Helsinki, to enormous acclaim. According to his biographer, Erik Tawaststjerna, “No previous new work had enjoyed such popular success in Finland.”

That success must be understood in the context of the political tension amid which the symphony was conceived. Finland was then a grand duchy of Russia, and, in the 1890s, the Tsar’s government undertook an aggressive “Russianization” campaign there that sparked waves of protest. Sibelius, incensed, supported

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the cause of Finnish separatism in several compositions and on a concert tour of the continent, with a group of Finnish musicians, in the summer of 1900. His music was thus already a symbol of Finnish resistance to Russia when the Second Symphony appeared, and many listeners inevitably read an overtly nationalistic program into the new work—the heroic finale, especially, but also the long, anguished slow movement, music of great passion, pain, and even fury that surges along in great waves toward a grim conclusion. The conductor and composer Robert Kajanus, in a review of the première, described the *Andante* as “the most broken-hearted protest against all the injustice that threatens at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and our flowers of their scent,” and the *Finale* as “a picture of lighter and confident prospects for the future.” (Sibelius himself disclaimed any such overtly political intent.)

As in the post-Romantic, Tchaikovsky-influenced First Symphony, in the Second

Symphony, Sibelius still adhered to the classical symphonic model, with a plan of four movements, all but the scherzo in some kind of sonata form. But the piece also bears the stamp of Sibelius’s mature style. His command of symphonic development is impressive: in each movement, he offers a wealth of distinctive and pregnant themes from which he builds up intricate, dramatic, but unpredictable forms. The musical materials and scoring evoke that cold, massive, unmistakably Nordic sound-world that we associate with Sibelius, and that Glenn Gould once aptly described as “passionate but anti-sensual.” We hear it in the granitic sonorities he draws from brass and woodwind choirs; in the textures of stark melodies in woodwinds and horns over murmuring strings, often with a pedal-point in the brass or timpani; and in the plentiful passages in which he builds great musical tension over a long span—as in the coda that brings the work triumphantly to a close.

Program note by Kevin Bazzana

THE ARTISTS



Ludovic Morlot **conductor**

Ludovic Morlot made his TSO debut in February 2008.

Ludovic Morlot has been Music Director of the Seattle Symphony since 2011. During the 2018/19 season, they will focus particularly on the music of Debussy and newly commissioned works include Caroline Shaw's Piano Concerto and the US premiere of Pascal Dusapin's *At Swim-Two-Birds*. The orchestra have many successful recordings, two among which have won GRAMMY® Awards.

This season, Ludovic's guest engagements include the Houston, Melbourne, and Bamberg Symphony Orchestras, and the Netherlands Radio, BBC, and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestras. In 2018, his summer festival appearances included the BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra), the Caramoor Festival (Orchestra of St. Luke's), the Hollywood Bowl (Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra), and the Aspen Music Festival, where he is a regular guest. He also has a particularly strong connection with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, having been the Seiji Ozawa Fellowship Conductor in 2001 at Tanglewood and subsequently appointed assistant conductor for the orchestra (2004–2007). Since then, he has conducted the orchestra in subscription concerts in Boston, at Tanglewood, and on a tour to the west coast of America.

Recent and future debuts include the Berliner Philharmoniker, Vienna Symphony (Wien Modern Festival), and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestras. Ludovic has conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra in London and on tour in Germany. In 2017, he conducted the inaugural concerts of the National Youth Orchestra of China in New York and China. Other recent notable performances have included the New York Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, Czech Philharmonic, Dresden Staatskapelle, Budapest Festival, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestras. Ludovic served as conductor in residence with the Orchestre National de Lyon under David Robertson (2002–2004). Ludovic was Chief Conductor of La Monnaie for three years (2012–2014).

Trained as a violinist, Ludovic studied conducting at the Pierre Monteux School (USA) and then continued his education in London at the Royal Academy of Music and then at the Royal College of Music. Ludovic was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in 2014 in recognition of his significant contribution to music. He is Chair of Orchestral Conducting Studies at the University of Washington School of Music in Seattle.

THE ARTISTS



Leila Josefowicz violin

Leila Josefowicz made her TSO début in February 1991.

Leila Josefowicz's passionate advocacy of contemporary music for the violin is reflected in her diverse programs and enthusiasm for performing new works. In 2008, she was awarded a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, joining prominent scientists, writers, and musicians who have made unique contributions to contemporary life.

Other highlights of Josefowicz's 2018/19 season include concerts with the New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Houston, St. Louis, and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras, working with conductors at the highest level including Jaap van Zweden, Christoph Eschenbach, and Matthias Pintscher.

Alongside pianist John Novacek, with whom Josefowicz has enjoyed a close collaboration since 1985, she has performed recitals at world-renowned venues such as New York's Zankel Hall and Washington's Kennedy Center, as well as Reykjavik, Leeds, Chicago, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Halifax (Nova Scotia). This season, she appears at Madrid's Centro Nacional de Difusión Musical, the Ithaca and Eastman schools of music, and the Perimeter Institute of Theoretical Physics, and returns to London's Wigmore Hall.

A favourite of many living composers, Josefowicz enjoyed a close working relationship with the late Oliver Knussen, performing together over 30 times, most of these with his Violin Concerto. Josefowicz has premiered many new concertos with composers including John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Colin Matthews, and Steven Mackey, all writing especially for her. Josefowicz gave the world première of Adams's *Scheherazade.2 (Dramatic Symphony for Violin and Orchestra)* in 2015 with the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert. Luca Francesconi's concerto *Duende—The Dark Notes* (also written for her) was given its world première by Josefowicz in 2014 with Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Susanna Mälkki, and subsequently performed again with BBC Symphony Orchestra and Mälkki at the BBC Proms in 2015.

Recent highlights include engagements with the Berliner Philharmoniker, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Washington's National Symphony Orchestra, and Boston and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestras. In summer 2017, Josefowicz appeared at Birmingham's Symphony Hall, and at London's Royal Albert Hall in the BBC Proms, with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla.

Josefowicz has released several recordings, notably for Deutsche Grammophon, Philips/Universal, and Warner Classics, and was featured on Touch Press's acclaimed iPad app, *The Orchestra*. Her latest recording, featuring *Scheherazade.2* with the St. Louis Symphony conducted by David Robertson, was released in 2016 and nominated for a GRAMMY® Award. Josefowicz's recording of Esa-Pekka Salonen's Violin Concerto with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer, was also nominated for a GRAMMY® Award in 2014.