



ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL



Press release
For immediate distribution

May at the OSM

Kent Nagano conducts six concerts, including Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* to conclude the season

André Laplante, Alain Lefèvre and Michelle Nam together for the first time, in Mozart's Concerto for Three Pianos

Gil Shaham performs the Brahms Violin Concerto

Visit from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

Montreal, April 23, 2009 — After a dazzling six-country European tour, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and its music director, Kent Nagano, will be happy to be reappearing before Montreal audiences for the final six concerts in its 75th season. The OSM will be welcoming violinist **Gil Shaham** in the magnificent violin concerto by **Brahms**, as well as **Canadian pianists André Laplante, Alain Lefèvre and Michelle Nam, together for the first time** on the same stage, in Mozart's rarely performed three-piano concerto, "Lodron." For the very last concert of the season, bass-baritone **José van Dam**, one of the most widely praised voices of our time, will perform excerpts from the enchanting Berlioz song cycle *Les Nuits d'été*, among other works. The Orchestra will also be heard in the complete ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* by **Ravel**, the first in a long series of critically hailed recordings the OSM has made and a **calling card of the Orchestra** for almost thirty years.

The first concert of the month will be performed by the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra** and its music director, **Bramwell Tovey**, who will offer Montreal music lovers a program of major twentieth-century works, including the suite Stravinsky extracted from his ballet *Petrushka*.

Information and reservations: 514 842-9951 or www.osm.ca

THE MAY CONCERTS:

May 3 at 2:30 p.m. (Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier) **Musical Sundays:** Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. **Bramwell Tovey**, conductor; **Avan Yu**, piano; Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

May 12 and 13 at 8 p.m. (Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier) **Grand Concerts:** **Gil Shaham** plays Brahms. **Kent Nagano**, conductor; **Gil Shaham**, violin.

May 13 at 10:30 a.m. (Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier) **Symphonic Matinees:** **Gil Shaham** plays Brahms. **Kent Nagano**, conductor; **Gil Shaham**, violin.

May 22 at 8 p.m. and May 24 at 2:30 p.m. (Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier) Panasonic Signature Performances: Lefèvre and Laplante: Together for the First Time! Kent Nagano, conductor; André Laplante, piano; Alain Lefèvre, piano; Michelle Nam; piano

May 26 and 28 at 8 p.m. (Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier) Grand Concerts: *Daphnis et Chloé* – an OSM Specialty. Kent Nagano, conductor; José van Dam, bass-baritone;

Information on the month's concerts:

Musical Sundays: The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

An ensemble founded in 1919, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra gives over 150 concerts a year. Bramwell Tovey, also principal conductor and music director of the Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg from 2000 to 2006, has been the Vancouver music director since 2000. A great communicator and himself a composer (he won a Juno for one of his works in 2003), he is recognized for the warmth of his personality and his charisma on the podium.

He will conduct the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, one of the works that brought musical romanticism into modernism. A fervent champion of the contemporary Canadian repertoire, he will next be presenting *The Linearity of Light* by Canadian composer Jeffrey Ryan, a VSO commission and a work inspired by the characteristics and properties of light. "When we talk about music (and sound in general)," explains the composer, "we often use words borrowed from the visual sense. We refer to the 'colour' of an instrument's tone, or we describe a chord as 'dark' or 'bright.' Light, like sound, is intangible, and yet it is all around us, and can have a profound effect on our mental and emotional states."

Guest soloist for the program will be the twenty-one-year-old Canadian pianist Avan Yu, first-prize winner at the Canadian Chopin Competition when he was seventeen and of the Junior Division of the Missouri Southern International Competition in April 2008. He made his debut at fourteen with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in Sergei Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, which he will be performing here.

Completing the program will be the suite Igor Stravinsky derived in 1947 from his ballet *Petrushka*, a Russian Pulcinella. The ballet, which constitutes the second component of the composer's Russian trilogy, with *The Firebird* and *The Rite of Spring*, remains a high point of the genre.

Musical Sundays

May 3, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Bramwell Tovey, conductor

Avan Yu, piano

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

Claude Debussy

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

Jeffrey Ryan

The Linearity of Light

Sergei Rachmaninov

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Igor Stravinsky

Petrushka (1947)

Tickets starting at \$24.75

Information and reservations: 514 842-9951 or www.osm.ca

Grand Concerts: Gil Shaham plays Brahms

Recognized as one of the most convincing virtuoso violinists on the international circuit, **Gil Shaham** made his debut in 1981 with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra and the Israel Philharmonic. In 1982, after winning the Claremont Competition in Israel, he earned a scholarship to Juilliard, where he worked with Dorothy DeLay and Hyo Kang. He was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1990 and ever since has dazzled audiences both in North America and around the world. For this eagerly awaited return to Montreal he will be performing the **Violin Concerto by Johannes Brahms**, which was premiered by Joseph Joachim, a great virtuoso of his era and a long-standing friend of the composer's as well as the work's dedicatee. After an initial favourable welcome the concerto took some time to establish itself in the repertoire for violin and orchestra, partly owing to its technical demands. Today it is one of the most popular of works, along with the violin concertos of Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky.

Kent Nagano, music director of the OSM, will also lead the Orchestra in *Central Park in the Dark* by that pillar of the American avant-garde, Charles Ives, a work that evokes the nocturnal summertime moods of New York's Central Park, and the Symphony No. 2 by Robert Schumann, a work of triumph over the self, **close to the spirit of Beethoven**. Schumann was experiencing the first signs of his illness, and the symphony has become synonymous with man's struggle against his fate: "I can safely say that it is the resistance of the spirit that is manifest here, and that I have striven to fight against my condition."

Grand Concerts

May 12 and 13, 2009, at 8 p.m.

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Kent Nagano, conductor

Gil Shaham, violin

Charles Ives

Central Park in the Dark

Johannes Brahms

Violin Concerto

Robert Schumann

Symphony No. 2

Evening of the 12th presented by BBA

Evening of the 13th presented by Elle Québec

Tickets starting at \$24.75

Information and reservations: 514 842-9951 or www.osm.ca

Symphonic Matinees: Gil Shaham plays Brahms

Reprise of the program in the Grand Concerts series, without the piece by Ives.

Pre-concert discussion at 7 p.m. on May 22 and at 1:30 p.m. on May 24: Kelly Rice, director-coordinator and host on CBC Radio Two, welcomes composer Jacques Hétu along with Edgar Fruitier

Tickets starting at \$24.75

Information and reservations: 514 842-9951 or www.osm.ca

Grand Concerts: *Daphnis et Chloé* – an OSM Specialty

The winner of competitions in Liège, Toulouse and Geneva, bass-baritone **José van Dam** has sung on the finest international stages for more than forty years. He appeared in the movie *Le maître de musique* (The Music Teacher) in 1988 and was the first to sing the role of St. Francis at the premiere of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*. His imposing discography includes most of the great baritone roles, as well as two of Schubert's song cycles, a complete Duparc and *Les Nuits d'Été* by Hector Berlioz, a cycle he is revisiting here. He will also be singing *Don Quichotte* by Jacques Ibert, a work written to be included in the soundtrack of Georg Wilhelm Pabst's film of the same name, and *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* by Maurice Ravel, which was also to have appeared in it. These three songs are the last work completed by the composer.

Canadian composer and conductor **Samy Moussa** studied composition with José Evangelista and Denis Gougeon in Montreal, with Magnus Lindberg in Finland, as well as with Jouni Kaipainen, Matthias Pintscher, Oliver Knussen and Kaija Saariaho. A number of ensembles have performed his works, among them the OSM, Montreal's Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the New Music Ensemble in Kazan, the New Music Ensemble at California State University, Long Beach, Vienna's Ensemble Reconsil and the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra in Helsinki. The OSM will be premiering two of his Studies for orchestra this time.

The OSM disc containing the ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* by Maurice Ravel has been one of the Orchestra's most important calling cards for a number of years and is still found on many must lists of twentieth-century recordings. A commission of Serge Diaghilev's for his Ballets Russes, the score still stands as a great moment in French music for its iridescent orchestrations, the refinement of its language, and its textural mastery. Conceived in a single movement for chorus and orchestra, the ballet relates the story, rich in developments, of the goatherd Daphnis and his love for the shepherdess Chloé. The episode known as "daybreak," in the second half of the ballet, is considered the peak of the composer's orchestral art.

Grand Concerts

May 26 and 28, 2009, at 8 p.m.

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Kent Nagano, conductor

José van Dam, bass-baritone

Samy Moussa

Studies Nos. 3 and 4 for orchestra
(world premiere, OSM commission)

Jacques Ibert

Don Quichotte

Maurice Ravel

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée

Hector Berlioz

Les Nuits d'été, excerpts

Maurice Ravel

Daphnis et Chloé, complete ballet

Evening of the 28th presented by Spinelli Lexus

Tickets starting at \$24.75

Information and reservations: 514 842-9951 or www.osm.ca

**The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is presented by Hydro-Québec
in association with National Bank**

– 30 –

Source: Orchestre symphonique de Montréal
Information: Lucie Paquin
Head of Media Relations
(514) 840-7414
lpaquin@osm.ca