



ORCHESTRE
SYMPHONIQUE
DE MONTRÉAL

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PRESS RELEASE
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AFTER 47 YEARS, THE OSM PRESENTS ITS LAST SEASON CONCERTS AT SALLE WILFRID-PELLETIER

TRIBUTE to FATHER EMMETT JOHNS, known as POPS, May 2 and 3

ALAIN LEFÈVRE plays Scriabin and Rachmaninov to a
FULL HOUSE, May 8

“THE EVOLUTION OF THE SYMPHONY” under Kent Nagano,
May 10 and 11 reprised at New York’s Carnegie Hall, May 14

RUSH HOUR CONCERT with Louis-José Houde, May 18

and for this last end of season at Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier

Wagner’s Rheingold, opera in a concert version, May 29 and 31

Montreal, April 18, 2011 – The month of May promises to be rich in activities for the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, both emotionally and artistically, as the Orchestra offers its **very last concert in Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier on May 31** with **Wagner’s Rheingold** under the direction of **Kent Nagano**. In another concert-event, on the theme of the evolution of the symphony, Kent Nagano will lead the OSM in **Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony** and Canadian pianist **Angela Hewitt** will perform works by Bach, a composer with whom she has often been associated. This program will also be given at **prestigious Carnegie Hall** to conclude the brand new orchestral-music festival Spring for Music. The OSM will also be welcoming pianists **Alain Lefèvre** and **Yefim Bronfman** again. Alain Lefèvre will play two works for piano and orchestra, Scriabin’s rarely performed *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* and the original 1926 version of **Rachmaninov’s Concerto No. 4**. This concert, which also includes two masterworks by the French composer Henri Dutilleux, has already sold out. Yefim Bronfman meanwhile will play the Concerto No. 2 by **Liszt**. On the same program, the OSM under the baton of Kent Nagano will perform Liszt’s *Les Préludes* as well as **Shostakovich’s Ninth Symphony**, and premiere a work by Jean Lesage written as a **tribute to Father Emmett “Pops” Johns**, the respected and committed humanist who devotes his life to tending to the needs of young street people. As part of this tribute to Pops, actor **Yves Desgagnés** will read testimonials from young people who have benefited from the support of the organization “Dans la rue.” An **exhibit of visual art** and musical and literary creations by young people produced as part of the workshops offered by “Dans la rue,” will be presented to audiences in the Piano nobile at both performances. Finally, the Rush Hour Concerts series will be playing host to the popular humorist and host **Louis-José Houde**, who will share a few of his special musical favorites with host **André Robitaille** and the audience at Théâtre Maisonneuve.

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PRESS RELEASE

YEFIM BRONFMAN PLAYS LISZT

Tribute to Pops

Signature Performances, May 2 and 3 at 8 p.m.

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des arts

Kent Nagano, conductor

Yefim Bronfman, piano

Yves Desgagnés, actor

LISZT, *Les Préludes*

LESAGE, *Beatitudes* (world premiere; OSM commission in tribute to Father Emmett Johns)

LISZT, Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major

SHOSTAKOVICH, Symphony No. 9

This program features **two works by Liszt, the 200th anniversary of whose birth is being celebrated this year**. The first is *Les Préludes*, his best-known symphonic poem, inspired by Lamartine's *Méditations poétiques*, and then his Piano Concerto No. 2, closer to a symphonic poem than to a concerto, in which the pianist is often accompanist to the strings and woodwinds, and referred to by the composer as a "concerto symphonique." It will be performed by **Yefim Bronfman**, winner of a Grammy for his interpretation of three concertos by Bartók, and a longtime collaborator of the OSM's. "It's safe to say," wrote the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "there is no other pianist around like Yefim Bronfman."

Kent Nagano will also conduct the Ninth Symphony by **Shostakovich**, premiered on November 3, 1945, a neoclassical work and one of the composer's great achievements. This artistic and political manifesto would bring about the composer's disgrace for the decade to come, up to the death of Stalin. "When my Ninth was played," recounted Shostakovich, "Stalin got terribly angry. He was offended to the very depth of his being. Because there was no choir and no soloists, and neither was there the 'awakening of the masses.'"

The OSM also wished to pay **tribute to Father Emmett Johns**, founder of "Le Bon Dieu dans la rue" and known as "Pops" to his protégés and who, with his trailer, has been crisscrossing Montreal streets for almost 25 years. A commission was offered to composer **Jean Lesage**, who explains *Beatitudes* in these terms: "It struck me that a musical metaphor inspired by one of the most beautiful texts in the Gospels – the Beatitudes, contained in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew – would be an appropriate way to pay tribute to a man of faith whose social involvement seems to be directly inspired by a moral teaching that was highly subversive to the extent that it ran counter to accepted wisdom." At the start of the concert, actor-director **Yves Desgagnés** will read testimonials from young people who have sought help from "Dans la rue."

At the pre-concert **discussions**, Kelly Rice will chat with Father Emmett Johns, composer Jean Lesage and music therapist Julien Peyrin.

A unique **exhibit** will also be offered audiences in the Piano nobile, with canvases, photos, **musical and literary creations** assisted by headphones before the concert and during intermission on both evenings.

Series presented by Panasonic and Fillion Électronique.

Evening of May 2 presented by *The Gazette*.

The OSM thanks the Foundation of Greater Montreal for its support in this project.

KENT NAGANO AND ALAIN LEFÈVRE IN RACHMANINOV AND SCRIABIN – SOLD OUT

Musical Sundays, May 8 at 2:30 p.m.

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Kent Nagano, conductor

Alain Lefèvre, piano

SCRIABIN, *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*

DUTILLEUX, *Métaboles*

DUTILLEUX, *Muss es sein?* (Must It Be?)

RACHMANINOV, Piano Concerto No. 4 (original version of 1926)

Recently described as a “charismatic” pianist by London critics, who hailed his virtuosity and his irresistible performance on his visit to Cadogan Hall, Alain Lefèvre in 2010 received a JUNO Award and a Félix at the ADISQ Gala, and a Prix Opus this past January. Here he performs two works for soloist and orchestra that are rarely given. *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* is based on what has come to be called the “mystic chord,” a succession of varying fourths that cause the key to shift. From the initial chaos to the coda – described as “ecstatic” – the listener is privy to an almost superhuman outflow, which is difficult to resist. Alain Lefèvre is also offering the original 1926 version of Rachmaninov’s Fourth Concerto, a nostalgic piece, as though the composer were seeking to revive a memory of the Russia he had left nearly a decade before. The pianist will play a brand new **Yamaha CFX**, a unique instrument with enhanced tonal possibilities, favored this past year by a number of pianists on the international scene.

Two works by French composer **Henri Dutilleux**, who just celebrated his 95th birthday, are also on the program: *Métaboles*, one of the composer’s best-known works, a concerto for orchestra in five movements; and *Muss es sein?* (Must It Be?), written in September 2000 for the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra, and whose title refers to words Beethoven inscribed on his last quartet.

This concert, already sold out, will present a perfume-and-light ambiance thanks to the collaboration of La Maison Guerlain.

Concert sponsored by Yamaha and Guerlain.

KENT NAGANO AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE SYMPHONY

Grand Concerts, May 10 and 11 at 8 p.m.

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Kent Nagano, conductor

Angela Hewitt, piano

GABRIELI, Excerpts from *Symphoniae sacrae* for brass

BACH, *Sinfonias* for solo keyboard Nos. 1 to 5

WEBERN, Symphony, Op. 21

BACH, *Sinfonias* for solo keyboard Nos. 8 and 9

STRAVINSKY, *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*

BACH, *Sinfonias* for solo keyboard Nos. 11, 12 and 15

BEETHOVEN, Symphony No. 5

Conceived by **Kent Nagano**, this unique and innovative program showcases the different faces that the symphony has assumed over the past four centuries. The OSM will perform refined pages by Gabrieli, and Canadian pianist **Angela Hewitt**, MIDEM “instrumentalist of the year” in 2010 and *Gramophone* “artist of the year” in 2006, will play Bach. Also on the program is the Webern Symphony, a distillation of the genre, and Stravinsky’s *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, written in homage to Debussy. The concert further includes the essential **Beethoven Fifth Symphony**, which can also be heard on the OSM recording *Ideals of the French Revolution* on the Analekta label.

Evening of May 10 presented by Giorgio Armani.

Evening of May 11 presented by Pratt & Whitney Canada.

KENT NAGANO AND THE OSM AT THE SPRING FOR MUSIC FESTIVAL

May 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Carnegie Hall, New York

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal will present this same program at New York’s **Carnegie Hall** to wind up the brand new Spring for Music festival. This concert is the **25th by the OSM in the prestigious hall since 1982.**

The **concert will be broadcast live** by Classical 105.9 FM WQXR and will be accessible nationally thanks to America Public Media as part of their new series “Classical Live.”

The OSM thanks Tourisme Montréal and Rio Tinto Alcan, partners in the concert; Blue Cross of Québec, suppliers of travel insurance for the musicians during tours; and the OSM Foundation.

Participation of the OSM in the festival is made possible thanks to the financial support of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

RUSH HOUR CONCERT WITH LOUIS-JOSÉ HOUDE

Rush Hour Concerts, May 18 at 6:30 p.m.

Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

Stéphane Laforest, conductor

Louis-José Houde, special guest

André Robitaille, host

STRAUSS, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

SCHUBERT, Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major, D. 485 (fourth movement)

CONTI and LOWDEN, *Rocky Highlights*

BERNSTEIN, *West Side Story Suite*

TCHAIKOVSKY, *1812 Overture*

WAGNER, *Ride of the Valkyries*

A 1998 graduate of the École nationale de l'humour, **Louis-José Houde** is a darling of Québec audiences, as indicated by the many prizes won at the Olivier galas. Not only a versatile actor and an admired host (his program *Ici Louis-José Houde* took two Géméaux awards in 2006 and an Artis trophy in 2010), he is also a drummer and above all a man with a passion for a vast repertoire. Here he serves up some of his special favorites, choices he will explain with host **André Robitaille** and which include the powerful *1812 Overture* and *Ride of the Valkyries* as well as inspired pages used in movies, including some by Richard Strauss and Leonard Bernstein. On the podium, **Stéphane Laforest**, assistant conductor of the OSM.

Series presented by National Bank Financial Group.

May 18th concert is presented with the collaboration of Transcontinental – voir en 360

WAGNER'S RHEINGOLD – LAST CONCERTS IN SALLE

WILFRID-PELLETIER

Signature Performances, May 29 (2:30 p.m.) and May 31 (7:30 p.m.)

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Kent Nagano, conductor

Thomas J. Mayer, *Wotan*

Nikolai Shukoff, *Loge*

Anke Vondung, *Fricka*

Wendy Bryn Harmer, *Freia*

Laurent Alvaro, *Donner*

Antonio Figueroa, *Froh*

Anna Larsson, *Erda*

Eike Wilm Schulte, *Alberich*

Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacker, *Mime*

Franz Hawlata, *Fasolt*

Philip Ens, *Fafner*

Marianne Lambert, *Woglinde*

Allyson Michardy, *Flosshilde*

WAGNER, *Das Rheingold*

Presentation of the opera in a concert version, with bilingual supertitles

Following concert versions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Tannhäuser*, the OSM this time is performing a concert version of *Das Rheingold*, the prologue to the celebrated *Ring* cycle. The opera introduces us to three maidens who guard the Rhine gold, a ring made from which

bestows on him who renounces love the power to rule the world. The dwarf Alberich speaks the curse against love and seizes the gold. The gods also need it to offer to giants in exchange for the goddess Freia, who has been taken hostage. Alberich, having fallen prey to a ruse of the gods, turns the ring over to them, but he lays a curse on any future possessor of it. The giants quarrel over the ring, to the extent that one of them is clubbed to death. At the opera's end, the gods will enter a new home, the famous Valhalla.

To a libretto by Wagner himself, *Das Rheingold* consists of four scenes linked together by orchestral interludes. The prelude exposes many leitmotifs that Wagner will use throughout the tetralogy, several of them built on the famous initial E-flat chord.

Series presented by Panasonic and Fillion Électronique.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is presented by Hydro-Québec

**The 2010-2011 season is presented in association with
National Bank Financial Group**

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