



ORCHESTRE
SYMPHONIQUE
DE MONTRÉAL

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PRESS RELEASE

KENT NAGANO CONDUCTS THE FIRST CONCERT IN 2012

On the program, Ravel, Debussy, and Mahler lieder performed by Christian Gerhaher.

FIRST CONCERT IN THE “CHAMBER MUSIC WITH OSM MUSICIANS” SERIES

At the Grande Bibliothèque, the OSM melds music and poetry. Émile Nelligan and Saint-Denys Garneau read by James Hyndman to music by Campo, Fauré and Pépin.

Montreal, January 9, 2012 – The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal will open 2012 under its music director, **Kent Nagano**, on January 11, 12 and 14. Two French works from the turn of the twentieth century, including the famous *La Valse* by **Ravel**, will serve as bookends to two sets of songs by **Mahler**, his *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children) and his *Rückert-Lieder*. These will both be performed by German baritone **Christian Gerhaher**, many of whose recordings have been honored with prestigious awards, and who can be heard on the OSM’s recording of Mahler’s *Das Lied von Erde* (The Song of the Earth) released in September 2009.

The first concert in the new chamber-music series with OSM musicians is also being presented in January. It will feature Gabriel Fauré’s Piano Quartet No. 1 in C minor and a premiere by composer **Régis Campo** that includes texts by **Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau** and **Gaston Miron** sung by baritone **Stephen Hegedus**. Also on the program, a trio by Québec composer **Clermont Pépin**, in which Émile Nelligan’s *Le Vaisseau d’or* plays an essential role. Poems will be read by actor **James Hyndman**.

KENT NAGANO AND RAVEL’S LA VALSE – SOLD OUT

**Wednesday Grand Concerts 1, Power Corporation of Canada Thursday Grand Concerts 2,
OSM Saturday Evenings
January 11, 12 and 14 at 8 p.m.
Maison symphonique de Montréal**

Kent Nagano, conductor
Christian Gerhaher, baritone

DEBUSSY, *Children’s Corner*
MAHLER, *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children)
MAHLER, *Rückert-Lieder*
RAVEL, *La Valse*

Two cycles of rare power by [Gustav Mahler](#) keep company in this concert with [Maurice Ravel's *La Valse*](#) and Claude Debussy's *Children's Corner*, originally written as a piano-solo work for the composer's daughter. The two song cycles will be performed by German baritone [Christian Gerhaher](#), an artist associated with Mahler and a soloist on among other recordings the OSM's disc devoted to *Das Lied von Erde* (The Song of the Earth), and hailed by the *New York Times* for a "rich tone and a seemingly infallible ear for dramatic phrasing." Since being awarded the New York/Paris-shared Prix international Pro Musicis in 1998, he has had the opportunity of collaborating with several of the most prestigious conductors and orchestras. The two sets of songs presented here he recorded in 2009 with pianist Gerold Huber.

The five *Kindertotenlieder* were composed between 1901 and 1904 to poems by Friedrich Rückert written after the deaths of his two children. Late romantic in style, the lieder, like the texts that inspired them, seek to convey a mixture of anxiety, of belief in a possible resurrection and of resignation. Four years after composing the cycle, Mahler would himself lose his daughter Maria, only four years old. "I placed myself in the situation of one of my children dying. When I lost my daughter for real, I could not have written these lieder."

The *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wandering Journeyman) date from the early 1880s, when his parents were ailing, his employment at the court theatre in Kassel was proving unappetizing and his love for the singer Johanna Richter came to an abrupt halt. "I've written a cycle of lieder, six for the moment, that are dedicated to her. She does not know them. And what can they tell her other than what she already knows?" Of the six lieder undertaken at first, Mahler would end up setting only four texts to music, which can only be understood against the background of the pain and sadness he was experiencing at the time.

Mahler's interest in Rückert led him to set five of his other poems to music, published under the title *Rückert-Lieder*. A number of Mahlerians consider "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" (I am lost to the world), a seven-minute gem, the most sublime of the composer's independent songs.

Written in 1920, a commission from renowned impresario Serge Diaghilev for his Ballets Russes, [Ravel's *La Valse*](#) has become a sublimation of the very activity of dance. "It is not subtle" – in the composer's own words – "what I am undertaking at this moment. It is a Grande Valse, a sort of homage to the memory of the great Strauss – not Richard, the other, Johann. You know my intense sympathy for this admirable rhythm."

Musicologist Jean-Jacques Van Vlasselaer (the author of program notes and university articles as well as writing for *Le Droit* and the *Globe and Mail*), and actor Jean Marchand, who will read some of Mahler's letters to his wife, Alma, will chat with host Kelly Rice in the concert hall starting at 6:45 p.m. in a [pre-concert discussion](#).

Please note that the *Rückert-Lieder* are replacing the excerpts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* announced in the season brochure but that the soloist and conductor remain unchanged.

The concert on January 11 is dedicated to the memory of musician Pierre Rolland, who passed away on November 29, 2011, at the age of 80. An accomplished oboist, he filled the position of English horn with the Orchestra from 1961 to 1984 and of president of the OSM's Musicians Association for many years.

Evening of January 11 presented by Fasken Martineau
Evening of January 14 presented by VIA Rail Canada

QUÉBEC AND FRANCE: MATCHING LANDSCAPES

QUÉBEC AND FRANCE: MATCHING LANDSCAPES CHAMBER MUSIC WITH OSM MUSICIANS

January 24 at 6:30 p.m.

Auditorium of the Grande Bibliothèque (next concerts in the series presented at Maison symphonique de Montréal).

James Hyndman, reader

Stephen Hegedus, baritone

Ramsey Husser, violin

Johannes Jansonius, violin

Natalie Racine, viola

Gary Russell, cello

Louise-André Baril, piano

CAMPO, a world premiere (OSM commission, inspired by poems by Saint-Denys Garneau and Nelligan)

PÉPIN, Suite No. 1 for violin, cello and piano, including *Le Vaisseau d'or* (inspired by the Nelligan poem)

FAURÉ, Piano Quartet No. 1 in C minor

At this first concert in the Chamber Music with OSM Musicians series, the worlds of France and Québec fuse **by way of music and poetry**, excerpts of which will be read by actor James Hyndman, acclaimed for his intensity and stage presence. Opening the concert, French composer **Régis Campo**, whose works have been recognized with a number of distinctions, including the Dutch prize from the Fondation Gaudeamus, three prizes at the Henri Dutilleux competition, and the Pierre Cardin Prize from the Académie des Beaux-Arts (Institut de France). In 2008 he did an orchestration of Satie's *Sports et divertissements* for the OSM, and has written a new work inspired by poems of **Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau** and **Gaston Miron**. **Nelligan** is also at the very heart of the Piano Trio by **Clermont Pépin** composed in 1958. The program is completed by **Gabriel Fauré's Piano Quartet No. 1**.

Series presented in collaboration with Gestion Scabrini Inc. and Fondation Sylvain Goulet

Information: (514) 842-9951 or www.osm.ca

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