



Presented by



**Inaugural concert for the Azrieli Music Project: Premiere of a large-scale work for orchestra, choir and tenor, in addition to compositions by Mahler, Bernstein and Wlad Marhulets
Kent Nagano, 4 soloists and the OSM Chorus**

Montréal, September 16, 2016 – Maestro Kent Nagano is conducting the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal on **Wednesday, October 19 at 8 p.m. at Maison symphonique de Montréal** in a concert presenting a reflection on tradition, identity and on the universal character of music. Four wonderful soloists – tenor Frédéric Antoun, pianist Serhiy Salov, clarinetist André Moisan and soprano Sharon Azrieli Perez – and the OSM Chorus will join forces with the Orchestra on stage to perform masterworks by **Bernstein** and **Mahler** along with a spectacular concerto for clarinet by **Wlad Marhulets**, the inaugural winner of the Azrieli Prize in Jewish Music. The audience will also hear the world premiere of a groundbreaking and epic work by **Brian Current**, *The Seven Heavenly Halls*, winner of the Azrieli Commissioning Competition. The event is being presented in collaboration with the Azrieli Foundation.

The Azrieli Music Project

The Azrieli Music Project is a daring and ambitious new initiative, fostering the creation of new orchestral works on a grand scale that is rarely seen. This first edition presents composers of two major new works reflecting on the history, culture and traditions of Jewish experience. While the Jewish experience is a central theme of this program, music remains a universal language that transcends culture, ethnicity, time and place.

Commenting on the partnership with the Azrieli Foundation, Music Director **Kent Nagano** stated: “The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is delighted to take part in this ground-breaking new initiative, which sets an impressive example for both philanthropy and creation in Canada. On behalf of the OSM, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Azrieli Foundation for spearheading this collaborative project.”

Dr. Sharon Azrieli Perez (also performing excerpts from Mahler’s *Rückert-Lieder*) inaugurated the project in 2015, stating, “Music has always played an important role in the development of cultural identities; it reflects history and soul. In creating these extraordinary opportunities for composers of music inspired by Jewish experience, we hope to sustain music’s vital continuity through the long and rich history of Jewish people and culture. The Azrieli Music Project is a medium for innovation, creation and risk-taking by today’s most inspired orchestral composers.”

Program:

- The World premiere of **Brian Current's** magisterial ***The Seven Heavenly Halls*** for orchestra, chorus and tenor solo (with Frédéric Antoun, tenor)
- **Wlad Marhulets'** virtuoso ***Concerto for Klezmer Clarinet*** for orchestra and clarinet solo (with André Moisan, clarinet)
- **Bernstein's** rarely heard ***The Age of Anxiety*** for piano and orchestra (with Serhiy Salov, piano)
- **Mahler's** sublime ***Adagietto*** for orchestra and ***Rückert-Lieder*** (excerpts) for soprano and orchestra (with Sharon Azrieli Perez, soprano)

A **pre-concert discussion** will be held in French and English starting at 7:00 pm on the Parterre level lobby of Maison symphonique. Kelly Rice will moderate the discussion which will include composers Brian Current, Wlad Marhulets, and composer and AMP jury member Ana Sokolović.

Details of works to be performed:

Brian Current's *The Seven Heavenly Halls* is a work of grand proportions, calling for full orchestra and chorus, and a tenor soloist. This 25-minute piece was inspired by the ancient Kabbalistic book of the *Zohar*, with a scale harkening back to the golden age of great symphonic music. "While reading through the *Zohar*, I immediately heard turbulent and gestural music full of orchestral colours," says Current. "Even more inspiring was the reference to the *Sefer Hekalot* or the Seven Heavenly Halls, a series of ecstatic stages where each vision is marked by a different colour."

Wlad Marhulets' *Concerto for Klezmer Clarinet* brings the lively folk traditions of central Europe to the concert hall. Born in Minsk in 1986, Marhulets moved with his family to Gdansk, Poland as a child. It was there, at the age of 16, that he first heard a recording by acclaimed klezmer clarinetist David Krakauer. "Listening to this modern reinvention of klezmer music changed my life," says Marhulets, who soon after moved to New York City, where he met Krakauer and was taken under the wing of Oscar-winning composer John Corigliano. Marhulets's *Klezmer Clarinet Concerto* was premiered by Krakauer and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Andrew Litton, in 2009.

Gustav Mahler, Jewish by birth, fought persecution throughout his entire career. Fifty years later **Leonard Bernstein** was able to celebrate his Jewish cultural heritage openly and to critical acclaim. Works by Mahler and Bernstein on this program bear witness to the history of composers who struggled to express personal and cultural identity through the universal language of music.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal

Since its founding in 1934, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) has made a name for itself as a leading orchestra in Quebec and Canada. The OSM is a cultural ambassador of the highest order, having earned an enviable international reputation for its many quality recordings and tours. The OSM proudly upholds this tradition under the leadership of its current music director, Kent Nagano, by featuring innovative programming that aims to rejuvenate the orchestra's repertoire and strengthen its connection with the community. Over the years, the OSM has gone on tour approximately 40 times (with the most recent being a coast-to-coast tour of the United States from March 14 to 26, 2016) and roughly 30 excursions in Canada and abroad. The Orchestra has more than 100 recordings to its name on the Decca, EMI, Philips, CBC Records, Analekta, ECM and Sony labels, as well as on its own label. These recordings have earned some 50 national and international awards.

The Azrieli Music Project (AMP) is a newly-established initiative of the Azrieli Foundation. Inspired by the creative vision of Dr. Sharon Azrieli Perez, AMP aims to celebrate, foster and create opportunities for the performance of high quality new orchestral music on a Jewish theme or subject.

The Azrieli Foundation is a Canadian philanthropic organization that supports a wide range of initiatives and programs in the fields of education, architecture and design, Jewish community, Holocaust commemoration and education, scientific and medical research, and the arts. www.azrielifoundation.org/music

The OSM's Customer Service can be reached at 514 842-9951
from Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM and Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

You are also invited to consult the OSM's 83 season programming and purchase tickets
online at osm.ca.

Indispensable partnerships for the OSM

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal thanks the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts de Montréal and Ville de Montréal for their generous support.

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