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PRESS RELEASE

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DECEMBER AT THE OSM

KENT NAGANO CONDUCTS TWO PROGRAMS

BERLIOZ'S L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST

TRADITIONAL TALES OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON (THIRD SHOW ADDED)

ANDREW WAN PLAYS THE BRUCH CONCERTO

FIRST MONTREAL VISIT BY COLLEGIUM VOCALE GENT

Montreal, November 30, 2012 – The month of December, a prelude to the holiday season, will be anything but ordinary at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. After the success scored last year by Fred Pellerin's tale *La Tuque en mousse de nombril* (The Bellybutton-Lint Tuque), based on an original idea of Kent Nagano's, the OSM is serving up a new Christmas story, this time one created by prolific author Bryan Perro, best known for the popular Amos Daragon series, which has been translated into 22 languages. Backed by **Denis Bouchard** (responsible for the staging, as well as the role of the devil), and other guests, he offers us a journey to a bygone era, with two rival villages squaring off on the banks of the Saint-Maurice River. An extra show has been added to the program on the evening of December 15.

To celebrate the Nativity, the OSM, the OSM Chorus and some of Canada's most beautiful voices will be performing the sublime **Berlioz** oratorio *L'Enfance du Christ* under the direction of Kent Nagano. This grand holiday-season concert will be presented in the majestic setting of Notre-Dame Basilica.

Collegium Vocale Gent, under the direction of **Philippe Herreweghe**, will be making its Montreal debut as part of the **Montreal Bach Festival**, performing Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, a series of six cantatas that comprise what British musicologist Percy Young termed "the most comfortably human of Bach's large-scale choral works."

A German program completes the programming for the month, on December 4. **Andrew Wan**, OSM concertmaster and Grand Prize winner at the 2007 OSM Standard Life Competition, and who has given concerts in Carnegie Hall, at the Kennedy Center, at Benaroya Hall, at Jordan Hall and at Salle Gaveau, will be the soloist in Max Bruch's popular Violin Concerto No. 1. The program, under the direction of French conductor **Marc Piollet**, also includes symphonic excerpts from *The Twilight of the Gods*, the fourth opera in Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* cycle.

ROMANTIC GERMANY

Homeocan Tuesday Grand Concerts

December 4 at 8 p.m.

Maison symphonique de Montréal

Marc Piollet, conductor and soloist
Andrew Wan, violin

WEBER, Overture to *Oberon*
BRUCH, Violin Concerto No. 1
WAGNER, Symphonic excerpts from *Götterdämmerung*

Works by two of the greatest opera composers of their century, Weber and Wagner, frame one of the best-loved violin concertos, the First of **Bruch's**, dedicated to renowned violinist Joseph Joachim (also the dedicatee of the Brahms Violin Concerto), a highly melodic work containing virtuoso writing. It will be performed here by OSM concertmaster **Andrew Wan**.

The plot of *Oberon*, the last opera by Weber, a commission from Charles Kemble, actor and co-owner of London's Covent Garden theater, has a multitude of characters and settings and incorporates elements of the supernatural. The overture presents Oberon, king of the Elves, and the opera's major themes.

His tetralogy occupied **Wagner** (the bicentenary of whose birth is being celebrated in 2013) for more than a quarter-century, from the initial version of the text in 1848 to the completion of the orchestral score of *Götterdämmerung* (The Twilight of the Gods) in 1874. *Götterdämmerung* occupies a unique place through its aura of epic grandeur. Conductor Marc Piollet has laced together about 50 minutes of instrumental music from the opera, from the first bars depicting the murky world of the Norns (weavers of the rope of Destiny) to the final glorious moments of the tetralogy.

The Orchestra will be under **Marc Piolet**, the only prize-winner in 1995 in the *Dirigenten-Forum* organized by the German Music Council. From 2004 to 2012 he has been the acclaimed music director of the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden.

COLLEGIUM VOCALE GENT

OSM hosts
December 12 and 13 at 8 p.m.
Maison symphonique de Montréal

Collegium Vocale Gent
Philippe Herreweghe, conductor and chorus director
Dorothee Miels, soprano
Damien Guillon, counter-tenor
Thomas Hobbs, tenor
Peter Kooij, bass

BACH, *Christmas Oratorio*

With Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* is one of the best-known examples of sacred choral music associated with the Christmas season. In fact, this magnificent masterwork, rich in subtle musical shadings, remains the longest, most remarkable and most important in the genre.

Lasting close to two and a half hours in all, the *Christmas Oratorio* consists of independent but connected parts that collectively celebrate the entire Nativity story. Bach composed the work in Leipzig in late 1734 and conducted the first complete performance over the six most important days of the Christmas period: Christmas Day and the two days following, New Year's Day (the celebration of the circumcision), the following Sunday, and January 6 (feast of the Epiphany). The texts are for the most part taken from the Gospels according to Saint Luke (Cantatas I to IV) and Saint Matthew (Cantatas V and VI).

When it was founded in 1970, **Collegium Vocale Gent** was one of the first groups to extend the new principles of baroque-music performance to vocal music, an authentic approach that placed the accent on text and rhetoric. It since has earned international recognition and been invited to perform at the most important concert halls and festivals in Europe, Israel, the U.S., Russia, South America, Japan, Hong Kong and Australia. To this day it is led by

Philippe Herreweghe.

Presented as a co-production with the Montreal Bach Festival.

TRADITIONAL TALES OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON BY BRYAN PERRO AND THE OSM

Special concerts

December 14 at 7:30 p.m., December 15 at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Maison symphonique de Montréal

Kent Nagano, conductor

Bryan Perro, author and storyteller

Denis Bouchard, director and actor

Excerpts from repertoire classics, including the prelude to Wagner's *Rheingold* and an excerpt from Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, as well as traditional holiday-period music

At the invitation of Kent Nagano and the OSM, popular young-readers author **Bryan Perro** will be the storyteller at this unique Christmas program. He'll be sharing memories of his grandfather and evoking the birth of the Saint-Maurice River, but also the jealousy of two villages, one inhabited by lumberjacks (St-Jean-des-Piles), the other by raftsmen (Grandes-Piles). "I talk about my region, La Mauricie. I've incorporated a number of elements of the traditional Québec tale, transforming everything into a hybrid somewhere between narration and fantastic legend," explains the man who has just released in quick succession a second volume of the adventures of the hilarious *Walter* and the conclusion to his astonishing trilogy *Sanctuaire des Braves*, starring his hero, Amos Daragon. This time, music, both classical and traditional, will play an essential role in the program and lend it a very different sense. A number of guests will be appearing in these shows, staged by **Denis Bouchard**, who will also be playing the role of the devil. These will include Alain Lamontagne (foot percussion and accordion), Michel Bordeleau (foot percussion and violin), Simon Gauthier (musical saw player) and step dancer Benoît Bourque. Children will also appear in the show, in collaboration with the Fondation du Dr Julien and L'École supérieure de ballet du Québec.

A third performance has been added to the two scheduled earlier. It will take place on Saturday, December 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Holiday Concerts presented by Sun Life Financial.

BERLIOZ: L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST

Special concerts

December 19 and 20 at 8 p.m.

Notre-Dame Basilica

Kent Nagano, conductor

Pascal Charbonneau, narrator

Michèle Losier, mezzo-soprano (the Virgin Mary)

Tyler Duncan, baritone (Joseph)

Gino Quilico, baritone (Herod)

Alexandre Silvestre, bass (father of the family)

Philip Kalmanovitch, baritone (Polydorus)

Isaiah Bell, tenor (centurion)

OSM Chorus

Andrew Megill, OSM Chorus director

Berlioz, *L'Enfance du Christ*

Berlioz is known best of all today for his dramatic legend *The Damnation of Faust* and the celebrated *Symphonie fantastique*. But he's also the composer of one of the most powerful oratorios of the romantic period: *L'Enfance du Christ*, a brilliant score that enjoyed immediate success with audiences and critics alike.

"I hear it from all sides that you have just gathered a bouquet of the most exquisite melodic flowers," wrote German poet Heinrich Heine to the composer, "and that overall your oratorio is a masterpiece of simplicity." Although Berlioz was not religious, he was attracted to the story of the massacre of the innocents by Herod and the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. The composer himself compared his "sacred trilogy" to the illuminations on medieval prayer books, and hoped that the public would consider it an aid to contemplative and religious meditation.

Kent Nagano here conducts the OSM and its chorus, along with some of the most inspiring Canadian voices.

Christmas concerts presented by Power Corporation of Canada.



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

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