

A WORLD PREMIERE: AN OCTOBASS WILL MAKE ITS ARRIVAL AT THE OSM NEXT SEASON

Montréal, June 16, 2016 - For almost a dozen years, Maestro Kent Nagano, music director of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, has dreamed of having an octobass, the biggest and lowest instrument in the string family, at the OSM. It was on his initiative that the Canimex company, headed by recognized patrons in the classical-music world Mr. Roger and Mrs. Huguette Dubois, acquired and imported directly from Europe a magnificent octobass. The OSM thereby becomes the only orchestra in the world to have the privilege of featuring an example of this rare instrument in its ranks.

“For many years, we at the OSM have strived to present performances of great 19th century repertoire inspired by the perspectives offered by recent scholarly research,” stated Kent Nagano. “Thanks to the vision and generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Dubois and the much-anticipated addition of the octobass, an historical member of the string family long missing from the modern stage and advocated by many composers, notably H Berlioz, to our orchestra, we will take one step closer to that ideal. The instrument, a faithful and beautifully constructed reproduction of the original built by Jean-Baptiste Villaume, will be heard in concerts played by OSM double bassist Eric Chappell, who will specialise in its performance. We eagerly await our chance to introduce this fascinating instrument to our public next season.”

The octobass arrived in Québec at Maison des arts Desjardins in Drummondville on Tuesday, May 24, and will be exhibited on the occasion of the Canadian Music Competition – Canimex. It will make its first appearance with the OSM at concerts presented next October 20, 22 and 23, and will be played by double bassist Eric Chappell.

This is a premiere because only three instruments of this kind exist on the planet, and the two others are not in active use. The octobass acquired by Canimex is noteworthy in that it is the only flawless reproduction of the original model perfected in 1851, on display at Cité de la musique in Paris. The third instrument of this kind is kept in detached parts.

The impressive instrument, 12 feet 8 inches (3.87 meters) tall, is composed of hundreds of parts, 237 of which make up the complex mechanism. It is thanks to that functional mechanism and to a system of levers making it possible to press on the strings that an experienced musician can play it with a bow.

The incredible support of Canimex

“The idea of having the only playable octobass here won us over right away,” explained the president of Canimex, Roger Dubois. “We were excited to turn this extraordinary project into a reality. Following its exhibition at Maison des arts, Canimex will make the magnificent octobass – which is a perfect addition to our instrument collection – available to the OSM. This extremely

delicate instrument represents an exciting test, for it needs to be handled very carefully if the technical challenges of its design are to be met.”

To admire the octobass and the string-instrument exhibition

As part of the Canadian Music Competition – Canimex, the finals of which will be held at Maison des arts in Drummondville, the public is invited to admire the octobass free of charge (now through mid-July), and also in the context of the string-instrument exhibition (taking place on June 20, 26 and 30 and July 5) during normal Maison des arts box-office hours.

- 30 -

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal wishes to thank 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.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal is presented by Hydro-Québec.

BMO Financial Group is partner of the 2015-2016 season.

Air Canada, official carrier of the OSM

For a photo of the octobass, [click here](#).

In the photo: Mr. Roger Dubois and Mrs. Huguette Dubois of Canimex, double bassist Eric Chappell and Maestro Kent Nagano.

Jasmine Goupil

Press agent / Orchestre symphonique de Montréal / 514 840-7414 / jgoupil@osm.ca