



## THE OSM AND MICHEL PHANEUF LAUNCH THE OSMose PROJECT

Montreal, November 11, 2020 – The **OSM** and wine expert, author and philanthropist **Michel Phaneuf** are pleased to announce the implementation of **OSMose**, an initiative of the Orchestra's educational mission begun 85 years ago. OSMose engages **children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** and regular classes in music and art, through **music** and **adapted dance** workshops. **Three musicians from the Orchestra, the OSM's Assistant Conductor, and one dance therapy intern from Les Grands Ballets** will give a **series of workshops and concerts at École Saint-Etienne**.

*"Education lies at the heart of the OSM's identity ever since it was founded. We are pleased to be opening our doors to groups with special needs, pursuing our objective of inclusion through this innovative and promising new project."* — **Madeleine Careau**, Chief Executive Officer of the OSM



### PROJECT ORIGIN

In 2008, **Michel Phaneuf**, well known to the public mainly as a sommelier and author of the famous *Guide du vin*, received a life-changing diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. After selling his wine cellar to fund a research project on the disease, Mr. Phaneuf soon developed his philanthropic capacities and experienced the immeasurable value of socially beneficial work. This committed donor who has been involved with the OSM since 2017 expressed his wish to fully fund a project with the potential to change lives. Thus, the OSMose project was born with the support of a donation of **\$100,000** over three years.



*"I have always considered two things to be essential in life: health and beauty. In my case, the first has been my engine, my strength; the second has been my fuel, my inspiration. It has also been demonstrated, however, that beauty can be of service to health. Mobilizing the therapeutic virtues of music to stimulate and inspire children with by Autism Spectrum Disorder, the OSMose project is a source of great hope."* —

**Michel Phaneuf**

## THE PROJECT

Building on its commitment to the community, in 2018, the OSM designed a project for children who, because of their special needs, have limited access to the Orchestra's programming for young audiences. For professional guidance and counsel, the OSM put together an advisory committee of distinguished education specialists: **Isabelle Peretz**, Professor of Psychology at the Université de Montréal, who holds a Canada Research Chair in neurocognition of music, and founder of the International Laboratory for Brain, Music and Sound Research (BRAMS); **Erin Parkes**, founding Executive Director of the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education; **Hélène Lévesque**, Music Education Consultant with the Centre de service scolaire de Montréal; **Guylaine Vaillancourt**, Chair of the Department of Art Therapies and Associate Professor of music therapy at Concordia University; **Nathalie Leroux**, certified music therapist and voice and piano teacher; and **Émilie Barrette**, classical ballet instructor, specialist in adapted dance, and dance therapy intern at the National Centre for Dance Therapy of Les Grands Ballets.

The Orchestra is proud to present the OSMose project to the public. Its objective is to give children with special needs the chance to enjoy a concert experience alongside their friends and family, and enable young people to work through issues of inclusion and empathy towards their peers.

The project began in the fall of 2019 at Saint-Etienne school of the Centre de services scolaire de Montréal, with three classes of students living with ASD and one regular-curriculum class. Since December 2019, in addition to attending weekly music therapy sessions with Nathalie Leroux, these young music lovers received visits by OSM musicians and the Orchestra's Assistant Conductor **Thomas Le Duc-Moreau**. It continued in January 2020 with the involvement of **Hugues Tremblay**, percussionist and timpanist with the OSM and **Charles Pilon** (photo) of the OSM viola section. Workshops planned with OSM horn player **Nadia Côté** and Grands Ballets dance therapy intern **Émilie Barrette** had to be postponed because of the pandemic.



While music therapy can help with cognitive and motor development in children with special needs and also furnish appropriate means for working on aspects of their social life, visits from OSM musicians reinforce students' efforts and enable them to engage with instruments and musicians. During each visit, children may touch the instruments, play with and explore them through touch, and try them out on their own.

The OSM hopes to resume the project as soon as possible and is working on a partially online version of the program that complies with measures in effect in pandemic "red zones." By these means, OSMose will soon be guiding students in experiencing new sensations and making discoveries in relation to musical concepts. A whole range of pedagogical resources will be developed over the winter and spring of 2021, materializing the project through educational tools for special needs communities.

A visit to the Maison symphonique will also be planned for the children of the OSMose project; they will become familiar with the venue under the guidance of musicians from the Orchestra. Community-based orientation and inclusion are at the heart of the OSM's mission, and therefore, students will be invited throughout 2021 to take part in creating a collaborative work facilitated by their teacher.

This project will culminate in a full-scale adapted concert at the Maison symphonique to which all students from École Saint-Etienne will be invited. Details of this concert are to be announced at a later date. It is the OSM's and Michel Phaneuf's wish not only that the OSMose project proves to be a great success, but that it will also serve as a model for implementing inclusive practices in the Orchestra's future programming.

### **About Michel Phaneuf, C. M., C.Q**

Michel Phaneuf published his first Guide du vin in the fall of 1981. In the ensuing decades, this landmark work became one of the greatest successes in the history of publishing in Quebec, also winning the prize for best wine guidebook in the world, in Paris (2010). Over the years, he has worked variously as a columnist, host, and speaker. His leading influence in the field of wines has earned him many accolades, including a diploma honoris causa from the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ) for "educating and guiding generations of Quebecers." In recognition of his professional and philanthropic achievements, Michel Phaneuf was made a Member of the Order of Canada (2015) and a Knight of the Ordre national du Québec (2019).

- 30 -

### **THE OSM WISHES TO THANK ITS PARTNERS, SUBSCRIBERS AND AUDIENCES**

Contributions from the Orchestra's public partners are essential to its operations. The OSM wishes to acknowledge its main public partner, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, as well as the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Quebec and the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

The OSM is proud to have the support of its loyal sponsors and gratefully acknowledges its Presenting Sponsor, Hydro-Québec, its Season Partner, BMO Financial Group, as well as its Major Series Sponsor, Power Corporation of Canada. We also wish to express our gratitude to the OSM Foundation, Sélection Retraite, Yimby, Air Canada, Fondation J. A. DeSève, J. Armand Bombardier Foundation, Le Groupe Maurice, Spinelli, Canada Life, National Bank, BBA, Cogeco, Estiatorio Milos, Volvo Car Canada, Charton-Hobbs, Doubletree by Hilton Montreal, ESKA, IRIS, Ritz-Carlton Montreal and Solotech.

The OSM is likewise grateful to its other donors and partners, as well its subscribers and audiences, who in different ways provide essential support for its activities.

The Artists-in-Residence program is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Rossy Foundation. The Grand Orgue Pierre-Béique has been generously gifted to the OSM by Ms. Jacqueline Desmarais.

**PRESS RELATIONS: Pascale Ouimet, Head of Public Relations • T. 514 840-7436 • [pouimet@osm.ca](mailto:pouimet@osm.ca)**