

NURHAN ARMAN, Conductor  
DMITRI LEVKOVICH, Pianist

In Festive Commemoration  
*World premiere*

Kevork Andonian  
(1978 - )

Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K 488

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Rondo: Allegro assai

*Dmitri Levkovich, Pianist*

- intermission -

Quest

Alice Ping Yee Ho  
(1960 - )

Idyll

Leoš Janáček  
(1854-1928)

- I. Andante
- II. Allegro
- III. Moderato
- IV. Allegro
- V. Adagio
- VI. Scherzo
- VII. Moderato

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## Sinfonia Toronto

Now in its 25th season, Sinfonia Toronto has toured in Europe, the US, South America and China, and performs in cities across Ontario. It has released six cd's, including the JUNO winner *Flanders Fields Reflections* and *Shadow & Light* in May 2023 featuring three Canadian double concertos.

Sinfonia Toronto's Digital Inclusion Project has shared concert livestreams and videos free for residents in 43 long-term care homes in Ontario and students attending non-profit community music schools. Their interactive 'Concerts under Construction' programs introduce students in high-needs schools to varied musical styles and model the positive effects of cooperation.

The orchestra's repertoire includes all the major string orchestra works of the 18th through 21st centuries, and it has premiered many new works, especially music by Canadian composers. Under the baton of Music Director Nurhan Arman, the orchestra's performances present outstanding international guest artists and prominent Canadian musicians.



### Nurhan Arman, Music Director

During the 2022-23 season in addition to his leadership of Sinfonia Toronto Nurhan Arman guest-conducted the Orchestre Classique de Montréal and orchestras in Germany, Georgia, Greece and Italy. Other recent engagements have included a four-concert tour in Italy with Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali, the Festival Udine Castello, National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia and return engagements with the Kammerorchester Arpeggione in Austria and San Remo Philharmonic in Italy. His 2023-2024 season has taken off with the opening concert of Sinfonia Toronto's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season and guest engagements in Austria and Italy.

Maestro Arman has conducted throughout Canada, Europe, Asia, South America and the United States, returning regularly to many orchestras in Europe. Among the orchestras he has conducted are the Moscow Philharmonic, the Deutsches Kammerorchester, l'Orchestre Regional d'Ile de France, Hermitage Orchestra St. Petersburg, the Hungarian Symphony, Orchestra Milano Classica and Belgrade Philharmonic.

Born to Armenian parents in Istanbul, he played his first violin recital at the age of 13. After arriving in the United States on a Disney Foundation scholarship, he concertized from coast to coast, performing across the United States and at the Tanglewood, Spoleto, New York and Florida music festivals. After several seasons of leading US orchestras as concertmaster, he began a conducting career that has taken him all over the world.

Maestro Arman has served as an adjudicator for international conducting competitions in Poland and Canada and has taught conducting to several generations of students at the Brockport Festival and the Florida Festival in the United States, the Northern Music Festival in Canada and the Royal Conservatory of Music.



Happy 25th Silver Anniversary season!

Our musicians and I send out warmest greetings and gratitude to our audiences, donors, granting agencies and business partners for their support!

It has been a great privilege to make music together, exploring magical creations of the past and present, and introducing terrific young performers in Toronto.

During international tours on four continents we have experienced the power of music to connect cultures. Our inspirations and dreams for a better world are endless. We are delighted to have you with us for this season of celebration, passion and wonderful music.

Nurhan Arman  
Music Director

## Program Notes

*By Dr. Lorne Tepperman*

### In Festive Commemoration

*World premiere*

**Kevoork Andonian**

(1978 - )

Kevoork Andonian's passion for music creation flourished at an early age; he began writing at the age of six. He completed his Bachelor of Music at Carleton University with Highest Honors in 2001 and was awarded the Carleton University Medal in Music. He holds a Master of Music in Theory and Composition from the University of Ottawa, where he taught as a part-time professor.

A versatile composer, he has written for the concert hall, theatre, film, video, multimedia and dance productions. Now living in Los Angeles, he is Resident Composer of the Los Angeles Dream Orchestra and is pursuing postgraduate studies in Music Composition and Film Scoring at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he is also a Teaching Fellow.

Andonian's works have been performed by Sinfonia Toronto, the Grammy-nominated Lincoln Trio, members of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Omaha Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Flutist Marc Grauwels and marimbist Sarah Mouradoglou recorded his "A Longing For Joy" for Naxos - a work originally composed for Sinfonia Toronto and performed on the orchestra's tour in Spain. He finds fulfillment and joy in

collaborating with choreographers, lyricists, filmmakers, producers and other musicians. He is also an accomplished pianist performing many musical genres. He has performed at international festivals in North America and Europe as well as for heads of state including Jean Chrétien, former Prime Minister of Canada.

## Piano Concerto No. 23, K. 488

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

(1756-1791)

By early 1786, Mozart was earning more from vocal compositions than from writing and performing piano works. He was working on his opera *The Marriage of Figaro* and a comic *singspiel*, *The Theatre Director*, but still hoped that fickle Viennese patrons and audiences would return to the appetite for his piano concertos they had shown just a few years before, when he was a popular new sensation recently arrived from Salzburg.

Mozart wrote three piano concertos in 1786, each different in atmosphere and displaying different instances of the innovations with which he was expanding the genre: the festive Concerto in E-flat, K. 482; this Concerto in A Major, K. 488; and the darker, dramatic Concerto in C minor, K. 491. Mozart probably performed them during Vienna's 1786 Lenten season concerts. Unpublished until after his death, all three have become standard repertoire, with K.488 especially beloved for its lyrical, intimate character.

The first movement is in traditional sonata form, with a double exposition in which the main themes are presented by the orchestra first and then by

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the soloist. The home key of A major is one Mozart favoured for gentle, gracious works including his Clarinet Quintet and Clarinet Concerto; the themes here follow this serene path.

The second movement is unique in Mozart's entire oeuvre. It is the only piece he ever composed in the key of F sharp minor, as well as the last time that he wrote a minor-key slow movement. Its simple A-B-A form contains some of the most touching and expressive music he composed in any form. The interaction between the solo and orchestra parts evokes the intimacy of chamber music more than the greater formality of orchestral concertos.

The last movement is a joyful and boisterous rondo full of Mozart's impish wit and humor. The soloist and orchestra play tag with the movement's themes through a musical garden of unexpected key changes before returning at last to A major for a playful conclusion.

## Quest

**Alice Ping Yee Ho**  
(1960 - )

Hong Kong-born, composer Alice Ping Yee Ho is one of Canada's most sought after composers of contemporary works. Critics have called her music dramatic and graceful, while praising its "organic flow of imagination," "distinctly individual" style", "colourful orchestration", and "emotive qualities." Influences evident in her proudly eclectic approach include Chinese folk and operatic idioms, Japanese Taiko , jazz, pop culture, and other contemporary art forms. Her ongoing goal is to explore new musical styles that are provocative to the ears. Colors and tonality are two attractive resources to me: they form certain mental images that connect to audiences in a very basic way."

Twice a JUNO award nominee (2015, 2018), her discography includes releases on the Centrediscs, Naxos, Marquis Classics, Blue Griffin, Electra, and Phoenix labels. She has four solo albums devoted to music written for different genres: *Ming* for percussion, *Glistening Pianos* for two pianos, *The Lesson of Da Di* - her full length award winning opera, and *The Mysterious Boot* features chamber music for flute, cello, and piano. Her fifth album was recently released through Centrediscs/Naxos of her children's opera *The Monkiest King* with the Canadian Children's Opera



Company. Her opera *Chinatown* was premiered by City Opera Vancouver in September 2021 at the Vancouver Playhouse.

Ms. Ho holds a Bachelor of Music in composition with high distinction from Indiana University and a Masters in composition from the University of Toronto. Her teachers have included John Eaton (USA), Brian Ferneyhough (Germany), and John Beckwith (Canada). She is a noted classical pianist and an active advocate of contemporary music. She has performed in many new music festivals, including a solo piano recital recorded by CBC Radio 2 in which she premiered Tan Dun's solo piano work "Traces II". She now makes her home in Toronto.

The title *Quest* signifies exploration and motivation. The work was written to stimulate string players to try different bowing techniques, to play expressively and to tackle various rhythmic skills, also exposing them to special string effects and sonorities. *Quest* has two parts: an expressive slow introduction and an energetic, dance-like movement. The idea of the work is a theme of positive energy and bravery against adversities, and at the same time expresses a young person's expeditions and dreams.

## Idyll

**Leoš Janáček**  
(1854-1928)

Czech composer Leoš Janáček drew inspiration from Slavic and Eastern European musical traditions. His mature works blend his earlier forays into national folk music into a modern, creative synthesis.

The son of a schoolteacher, Janáček received his early musical training in choral singing at the Brno Monastery of St. Thomas. After graduating from organ school in 1875 as the top student in his class and then a brief stint as a music teacher and choir director, he resumed formal studies of piano, organ and composition at the Leipzig and Vienna Conservatories.

He returned to Brno to teach and serve as the organ school's director from 1881 to 1919. Midway through the 1880's, he began to spend more time on composing and preserving native music. Starting in the early 1890's, he orchestrated and arranged folk songs and dances from Moravia and Silesia.

Janáček's *Idyll for String Orchestra* was an early work, written in 1878 and then reworked in 1921. It was only the composer's second large-scale instrumental work, written when he was only 24 years old. The world premiere was performed in Brno under Janáček's direction, with Antonín Dvořák present in the audience. Janáček wrote his *Idyll* to celebrate Olga's birth, and its seven movements capture the love and happiness he felt then. Dvořák's melodic style and use of folk elements are unquestionably the most common references and influences on *Idyll*.



Janáček and his wife made two brief trips to Russia in 1902. Their daughter Olga accompanied them to St. Petersburg and remained there to study Russian. But Olga fell ill; barely three months later, Janáček brought her back to Brno where she died shortly after. Janáček poured his grief into the opera *Jenufa*, opening a period of great successes and great distress.

In the first decade of the 20th century, Janáček faced both personal and professional challenges. His formerly peaceful marriage grew stressed after Olga's death. And he nearly gave up his ambition as a composer after years of working in obscurity. But in 1916 a new version of *Jenufa* won warm acclaim in Prague and earned Janáček critical praise on a national scale. The same year, he began a long-lasting friendship with Max Brod, a theatre critic, dramatist, translator and well-known friend of Franz Kafka.

Enjoying his new popularity, Janáček attracted the notice of soprano Gabriela Horvátová, who helped him navigate Prague's high society. On learning of his relationship with Gabriela, his wife attempted suicide. The couple eventually agreed to an "informal" divorce, to avoid public scandal, and continued living in the same house but leading separate lives.

In 1917 Janáček met Kamila Stösslová, a young married woman 38 years his junior; she would serve as an inspiration for many of his works for the rest of his life. Over 730 letters were exchanged in an intense and emotional correspondence, mostly from him. On an outing with Kamila and her son in 1928, Janáček caught a chill that turned into pneumonia. He died in August 1928 at the age of 74. A massive public funeral featured music from the final scene of his opera *Cunning Little Vixen*.



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**Pianist Dmitri Levkovich** honed his skills under the guidance of Sergei Babayan for 11 years and in composition at the Curtis Institute of Music. He has been praised for "artistic sophistication far above the ordinary" (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung) and "understanding of the music far beyond most young pianists" (American Record Guide).

Between 2005 and 2013 Dmitri earned top awards at over a dozen international competitions, including the Cleveland, Jose Iturbi, Gina Bachauer, China Piano Competitions and the Vendôme Prize in Lisbon. He has earned 'audience favorite' awards and special recognition for his performances of Chopin. After his 2013 International German Piano Award he appeared in both the Grand Hall and Chamber Music Hall of the Berlin Philharmonie, the Great Hall of Frankfurt's Alte Oper, Fazioli Concert Hall in Sacile, and in Shanghai, Qatar and Tbilisi.

He has performed over 30 different concertos with orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra, China National Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, Gulbenkian Orchestra, Mariinsky Orchestra and Slovak Philharmonic. He has played in the Alte Oper Frankfurt, Beijing's National Center for Performing Arts, Berlin Philharmonie, Moscow Conservatory, Warsaw Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall and the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. He has participated in festivals including Deer Valley, New Contemporary Piano Faces at Mariinsky, Gergiev Festival in Rotterdam, Salzburg Whitsun, Ravinia and Ravello. His recording of Rachmaninoff's 24 Preludes was nominated for the 2016 International Classical Music Award.

Recent highlights include the Grieg Concerto with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, Liszt's First Piano Concerto at the Great Hall of Berlin Philharmonie, a debut at the Ravinia Festival and a performance at the 2nd International Mariinsky Far East Festival. Dmitri was featured in ARTE TV's "Stars of tomorrow" and "Living the Classical Life" interview series.

In the fall of 2021 Dmitri toured Switzerland with Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, performing in the Basel and Bern Philharmonic Halls. The same season, his performances of Chopin's Concerto No.1 with Sinfonia Toronto and Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto with the Baden-Baden Symphony Orchestra (Frankfurt's Alte Oper) were streamed online.

Dmitri has also been receiving recognition as a composer. Next April the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra will perform his 'Fantasie' for piano and orchestra, and in July his Piano Trio will be performed at the Verbier Festival in Switzerland.



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