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thachuk
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director

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, the Niagara Symphony Orchestra acknowledges that we are on the shared traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Attiawonderonk (Neutral) Peoples, and many other Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island. We offer our gratitude and respect to the original and continued stewards of this land.

The territory we work and perform within is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties Act and is within the land protected by the "Dish With One Spoon" Wampum Agreement. This land has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years and is the traditional shared hunting and gathering grounds of many nations and continues to serve as a meeting place and crossroads for Peoples of many Nations to this day.

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NIAGARA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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Patricia Dydnansky

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Julia Morley

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Mari Shantz
Karen Ages

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Zoltan Kalman **P**
Zach (Zihao) Yang

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Xiaoling Li
Associate Concertmaster
Gail Poulsen
Michael van Dongen
Natalie Wong

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David Braun
Mary Beth Doherty
Erika Janzen
Vera Sherwood
Orsolya Szalados

VIOLA

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Caitlin Boyle
Sarah de Niverville
Pierre Gagnon
Andrée Simard

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supported by
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Sonya Nanos-Hodgson
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Neal Evans
Section Bass Chair
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Fil Stasiak
Section Bass Chair
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P denotes Principal



MUSIC DIRECTOR
BRADLEY
THACHUK

Canadian conductor, **Bradley Thachuk** enters his 13th season as artistic leader and conductor of the NSO in its 2023/2024, 75th Diamond Anniversary Season.

Previously, Thachuk held the positions of Interim Music Director of the Prince George Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the Brampton Symphony Orchestra (Canada); Music Director of the Erie Chamber Orchestra, Associate Conductor of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Conducting Assistant of the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras (US); and Staff Conductor of the Opera Theatre of Lucca (Italy).

As an in-demand guest conductor in North America and Europe, Thachuk's recent guest engagements include: English Symphony Orchestra (UK); *Genesis Revisited* with legendary guitarist Steve Hackett (UK tour); Thirteen Strings Orchestra, Windsor Symphony Orchestra (Canada); Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Ocean City Pops, Reading Symphony Orchestra, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Tuscon Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops, Richmond Symphony, Hartford Symphony Orchestra (US); Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal (Germany); and the Hradec Kralove Philharmonic (Czech Republic).

A versatile and diverse musician, Thachuk has also established himself globally as one of the handful of conductors who moves easily between the classical and rock worlds. He is a highly sought-after symphonic arranger, with numerous collaborations. Recent projects include work with Steve Hackett of Genesis, the music of Leonard Cohen, a tribute to the Tragically Hip, Dave Mason of Fleetwood Mac and Traffic, ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* franchise, Tony award-winning Heather Headley, Sarah Slean, Chantal Kreviazuk, The Beach Boys, and Air Supply.

A supporter of the next generation of orchestral musicians, Thachuk is also a lecturer in Orchestral Literature at the world-renowned Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, sharing his knowledge and passion for orchestral music with post-graduate students from around the world.

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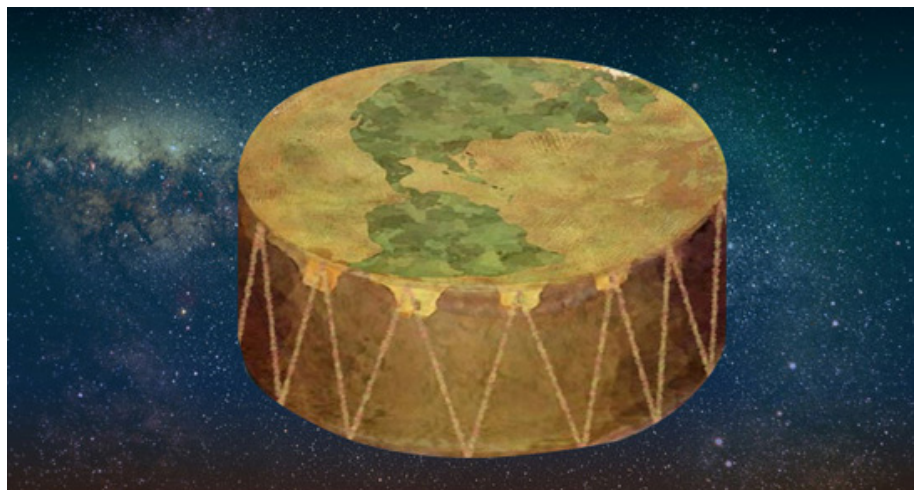
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SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024 | 2:30pm

PRE-CONCERT CHAT AT 1:45pm

NSO
CLASSIC
3

EARTHBEAT & BRAHMS

Bradley Thachuk, *conductor*

Snow Bai, *erhu*

Niagara Youth Symphonic Orchestra
(strings), *guest artist*

Vincent Ho

Earthbeat

Niagara Youth Symphonic Orchestra (strings), *guest artist*

Alison Yun-Fei Jiang

River Memory

Kevin Lau

Between the Earth and Forever

Snow Bai, *Erhu*

Intermission

Brahms

Symphony No. 4

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Andante moderato

III. Allegro giocoso

IV. Allegro energico e passionato

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Recording and photography
during the performance are
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VINCENT HO EARTHBEAT

Earthbeat was written as the last movement of the *True North: Symphonic Ballet*, commissioned by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra to celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary. The work premiered by the CPO (Gary Kulesha, conductor) at Jack Singer Concert Hall, Calgary, Alberta on 28 October 2017. The work was inspired by the pow-wow traditions of Canada's First Nation communities.

Thanks to pow-wow musician and expert Hal Eagletail of the Tsuu T'ina Nation, I was introduced to the music of his community, its history, and the cultural importance it serves. It is through such collective dances and music-making that brings one closer to the Earth's "heartbeat" while bringing unity within the community. From my discussions with Hal, I learned that this "heartbeat" is a universal theme found in all civilizations, and for me as a composer I should find a way to express it within my own musical language.

To reflect Canada's history and the people of the Indigenous, Hal and I decided that the inclusion of the Métis traditional piece *Red River Jig* during the climax of this work was an important way of acknowledging the nation's history in musical form. It is a piece that has its origins from the traditional dances of the First Nations, French, English, Scots, and Orcadian people.

I humbly thank Hal Eagletail and all of the pow-wow musicians I met and learned from during the creation of this work, and to choreographer Yukichi Hattori whose original narrative of the *True North Project* provided the initial inspiration.

Program note by Vincent Ho

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SESSION 1
JULY 8 - 19, 2024
Concert Evening: Thursday, July 18
Early Years: 5:30pm
Combination/Orchestral: 7:30pm

SESSION 2
JULY 22 - AUGUST 2, 2024
Concert Evening: Thursday, August 1
Early Years: 5:30pm
Combination/Orchestral: 7:30pm

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VINCENT HO

Vincent Ho is a multi-award-winning composer of orchestral, chamber, vocal, and theatre music. His works have been described as “brilliant and compelling” by The New York Times and hailed for their profound expressiveness and textural beauty, leaving audiences talking about them with great enthusiasm. His many awards and recognitions have included three Juno Award nominations, Harvard University’s Fromm Music Commission, The Canada Council for the Arts’ *Robert Fleming Prize*, ASCAP’s *Morton Gould Young Composer Award*, four SOCAN Young Composers Awards, and CBC Radio’s Audience Choice Award (2009 Young Composers’ Competition).

During the period of 2007-2014, Dr. Ho served as the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra’s composer-in-residence and presented a number of large-scale works that have generated much excitement and critical praise. His *Arctic Symphony* has been described “as a beautiful work that evokes the Far North in a very special way” (John Corigliano), and “a mature and atmospheric work that firmly establishes Ho among North American composers of note” (Winnipeg Free Press). His percussion concerto, titled *The Shaman*, composed for Dame Evelyn Glennie, was hailed as a triumph, receiving unanimous acclaim and declared by critics as “Spectacular” (The New York Classical Review), “A powerhouse work” (The Winnipeg Free Press), and “Rocking/mesmerizing...downright gorgeous” (The Pittsburgh Gazette). His second concerto for Glennie titled *From Darkness To Light*, was lauded as “a lasting masterpiece of sensitivity and perception” (Winnipeg Free Press). His cello concerto, *City Suite*, composed for Canadian cellist Shauna Rolston, has received similar praise with critics calling it “Thrilling” (Windsor Star) and “Overflowing with striking ideas...The most successful piece heard at this year’s Festival” (Classical Voice America).

Born in Ottawa, Ontario in 1975, Dr. Ho began his musical training through Canada’s Royal Conservatory of Music where he earned his Associate Diploma in Piano Performance. He gained his Bachelor of Music from the University of Calgary, his Master of Music from the University of Toronto, and his Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Southern California. His mentors have included Allan Bell, David Eagle, Christos Hatzis, Walter Buczynski, and Stephen Hartke. In 1997, he was awarded a scholarship to attend the Schola Cantorum Summer Composition Program in Paris, where he received further training in analysis, composition, counterpoint, and harmony, supervised by David Diamond, Philip Lasser, and Narcis Bonet.

In his free time, he enjoys running, reading, traveling, dancing, hiking, playing chess, and learning the keyboard works of Bach, Beethoven, Ravel, and Ligeti (among many others). He is also an enthusiast of old-time radio shows, photography, crime noir, Zen art, jazz, Jimi Hendrix, graphic novels, and Stanley Kubrick films.

Dr. Ho has taught at the University of Calgary and currently serves as Artistic Director to Land’s End Ensemble and New Music Advisor to the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. His works are published and managed by Promethean Editions Ltd and Peters Edition.



ALISON YUN-FEI JIANG RIVER MEMORY

The first inspiration for this work came from the Niagara Falls. I have always been fascinated by the moment on the Maid of the Mist boat tour, right beneath and in front of the Horseshoe Falls: a thundering and raging flow of water fills up the sight, transforming into an immense wall of whiteness.

At that moment, everything as perceived by the human senses becomes solemn, peaceful, and pure. It reminds me of a kind of transformation people experience through time - flowing down a river of memories from the past, present, and future. It also reminds me of the teachings of Buddhism, which compares life to a river. Drifting along the endless currents of life, the state of existence changes from moment to moment, from cause to effect. It is an ongoing, impermanent, and progressive process.

In a way, music composition resembles this process. For me, the process of creating music is a self-discovery and transformative journey that involves jumping into a "river" of inspirations, ideas, and thoughts, and going with the flow.

As an immigrant to Canada, I often contemplate how my mixed cultural identity has been transformed through time, through art making, and through living in and outside of Canada and thinking about Canada. The sight of the Niagara Falls reminds me of such transformations in cultural identity, of how immigrants bring experiences and memories into this country, and of what being Canadian means to me: being culturally inclusive, open-minded, strong, resilient, free, and full of joy.

Program note by Alison Yun-Fei Jiang

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ALISON YUN-FEI JIANG



Music composer, music-maker, and storyteller **Alison Yun-Fei Jiang**

explores the intersections of cultures, genres, and identities in music.

By drawing inspirations and influences from personal life experiences as well as an array of sources such as Asian aesthetics and philosophies, Chinese opera, natural landscapes, art, film music, popular music, and literature, she creates musical narratives and experiences in a lyrical, dynamic, and storytelling nature.

Alison currently serves as the RBC Affiliate Composer with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and was a Carrefour Composer-in-Residence with Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra from 2020-22. She has collaborated with ensembles and performers such as the NAC Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, JACK Quartet, the Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Imani Winds, and Molinari Quartet.

Her music has been performed in Canada and across the United States, featured on CBC Radio, the Royal Conservatory of Music 21C Festival, and the University of Toronto New Music Festival. Awards and recognitions come from the SOCAN Foundation, the Graham Sommer Competition for Young Composers, ASCAP, the American Prize, and International Alliance for Women in Music. Alison holds degrees in music from the University of Chicago (Ph.D.), New York University (M.M.), and Manhattan School of Music (B.M.). Her work has been generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SOCAN Foundation, the RBC Foundation, the Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation, New Music USA, and the Johan Franco Composition Fund.



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KEVIN LAU

BETWEEN THE
EARTH AND FOREVER

When I was approached by the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra (ROCO) to come up with a theme for a potential new commission, my first thought was: space. I was in Houston and I had just come back from visiting the Johnson Space Center. The experience had ignited in me a spark of nostalgia (for a time in my youth when I was passionate about all things space-related) as well as a renewed admiration for the intrepid explorers who continue to venture beyond the boundaries of our planet, wading into the mystery of the cosmos on behalf of all humankind.

Exploring this youthful passion through the lens of the erhu, a traditional Chinese, two-stringed instrument, was not an intuitive choice at first. I was familiar with the sound of the erhu, mostly through arrangements (of Western classical pieces or traditional folk tunes) and the occasional film score, but I knew little about it beyond that and had certainly no experience in writing for it. Nevertheless, the erhu has a history in my family: my grandfather, who I never met, was an amateur musician who played the erhu. This tenuous but personal connection provided an invisible thread which kept me tethered during the most challenging parts of composing this work. The voice of the erhu seemed to convey an immense solitude that was appropriate for this work, as was its ability to project both intensely human and otherworldly qualities.

The concerto begins with a theme on solo French horn, which recalls the primordial opening of Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* (so familiar to us through 2001: A Space Odyssey). What follows is a through-composed tone poem of sorts, where a web of recurring motives - fragments from the opening fanfare, a yearning, long-arched theme introduced to us on the erhu, and later, a melody that morphs from a playful, folk-tinged idiom into something more Copland-esque - develops across a landscape of shifting emotions and stylistic contrasts: wonder, exhilaration, danger, a touch of melancholy. The relationship between the soloist and the orchestra embraces several conventions of the concerto tradition - including a virtuosic dance between the erhu and orchestra that culminates in a vertiginous climax - until the final few minutes, when the sound of the erhu glides farther and farther above the ensemble, as if in an ever-widening orbit.

Finally, I drew most of my musical inspiration from the title itself, *Between the Earth and Forever*, which comes from the caption of a photo showing the Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield performing his first spacewalk. The caption, penned by Hadfield himself, is a poetic evocation of the space (literally!) between our home and the universe. But it also spoke to me of other, less tangible spaces: the space between the familiar and the unknown, between the earthly and the transcendent, between the preciousness of nature and the abyss of environmental disaster. It is these ideas that inform the spirit of this work above all.

I am immensely grateful to ROCO for commissioning me to write this work, and for erhu player Andy Lin for performing the solo part for the world premiere; his guidance made this undertaking a little less daunting.

Program note by Kevin Lau

KEVIN LAU

Kevin Lau is one of Canada's most versatile and sought-after composers. Awarded the 2017 Canada Council's Victor Martyn Lynn-Staunton Award, Kevin's creative output is often inspired by the surreal and the fantastical, and is unified by the search for deep connections amidst surface diversity - connections that serve as a metaphor for the reconciliation of seemingly fundamental differences.

Kevin's music has been commissioned and performed by ensembles across North America, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, Hannaford Street Silver Band, National Brass Project, Equinox Chamber Music, and the Houston-based River Oaks Chamber Orchestra. His work has been performed abroad in countries such as Denmark, Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic, and has been championed by acclaimed artists such as Jonathan Crow, Rachel Mercer, Scott St. John, Lizzy Hoyt, Caitlin Broms-Jacobs, Charles Hamann, Andy Lin, Conrad Chow, Angela Park, Michelle Colton, and Marc Djokic. He has held composer residencies with orchestras such as the Niagara Symphony Orchestra (2018-2019) and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra (2021-2023).

In 2016 Kevin composed the score for the National Ballet of Canada's original full-length ballet *Le Petit Prince*. His second ballet score, *Dark Angels*, was commissioned by the National Arts Centre Orchestra for its Encount3rs project in 2017. His most recent large-scale work, an opera-film hybrid (*Bound*) commissioned by Against the Grain Theatre and recorded by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, was hailed by the Globe and Mail as "a brilliant creation." His new interdisciplinary ballet *Kimiko's Pearl*, commissioned by Bravo Niagara!, will premiere in 2024. His music to *The Spirit Horse Returns*, an orchestral family concert featuring Indigenous artists and storytellers, has been performed across Canada six times since its premiere in 2022.

Kevin's discography includes two JUNO award-winning albums: *Detach* and *Mosaïque*. Other albums include: *Solo Seven*, which won Best Album at the 2020 East Coast Music Awards; the JUNO-nominated *Spin Cycle*; and *Encount3rs*. His 2021 composition *Little Feng Huang* is featured on the album *Lumena* which was voted among CBC's best 22 classical albums of 2022. His most recent album, *Under a Veil of Stars* features exclusively his chamber music, as performed by the St. John-Mercer-Park Trio. His music-and-text adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's fable *The Nightingale* was published as an illustrated children's book by ROCO and Lil' Smith and over two thousand copies were distributed to the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Born in Hong Kong, Kevin received his doctorate in 2012 from the University of Toronto under the supervision of Christos Hatzis; shortly after, he was appointed Affiliate Composer of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra until 2015. He is also an active film composer, and has written the scores to over a dozen films, including Charles Officer's acclaimed feature documentary *Invisible Essence: The Little Prince*. He is a professor at Humber College's Media and Creative Arts Faculty, where he teaches composition, orchestration, score study, and music for contemporary media, and has delivered guest lectures at institutions such as the University of Toronto, University of Ottawa, University of Manitoba, Brock University, York University, the University of Houston, and Laurier University. He currently lives in Ottawa with his wife Alexa, and his dog Varley.



JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

SYMPHONY No. 4 IN E MINOR, OP. 98

In his letters, Brahms often seemed to vacillate between proud enthusiasm and almost paranoiac uncertainty when describing the last of his four symphonies. He began the sketches for this work in the summer of 1884 at Mürzzuschlag in Styria (modern Austria), and his own misgivings quickly became apparent. Generally secretive about his unfinished compositions, in this case, he sent much of his manuscript to his friend Elizabet Herzogenberg in the hope of receiving a favourable evaluation. When she failed to reply immediately, he assumed his efforts were a complete failure, and he swore never to inflict the piece on anyone else. When the Ducal Orchestra at Meiningen agreed to premiere the work in October, 1885, he remarked that any orchestra willing to play it did so at its own risk!

After the performance and its positive reception, Brahms's confidence in the work was restored. Unlike the first three symphonies, it is difficult to link the *Fourth* with anything pictorial. This powerful, austere music does not lend itself easily to colourful metaphoric description. The music of the first movement, *Allegro non troppo*, develops without a pause for breath anywhere, almost one long uninterrupted phrase. Rich both melodically and harmonically, the *Andante moderato* is possibly the most sublime of the composer's symphonic slow movements. The principal theme is elegant, yet intense with frequent clashes of key and unexpected tonalities. The scherzo, *Allegro giocoso*, had an "irresistible rough humour" said Herzogenberg, who eventually did reply. For the spectacular finale, Brahms wrote a passacaglia, consisting of a theme, thirty variations, and a coda. He borrowed a bass line from J. S. Bach's *Cantata No. 150* for the ending, betraying his famous lifelong interest and respect for the forms of the great Baroque master.

Program note by Brian E. Power

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ERHU SNOW BAI

The first place winner of the China National Music Competition and the Concert Master of the Canada Oriental Culture Orchestra, **Snow Bai** began her erhu study since her childhood, and later graduated from the High School attached to the China Conservatory of Music under two well-known erhu educators and masters: Prof. Qing Jiang and Prof. Ming-Yuan Liu. She was the first prize winner of the Erhu Group of the National Instrumental Music Competition, and was the top student in erhu admitted to the Department of Traditional Instruments of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1997. Studying under Prof. Changfu Liu - a famous erhu performer and educator there - Snow won numerous scholarships from the Conservatory and performed actively in the China Youth Orchestra at home and abroad.

After graduating with an honors Bachelor's degree, Snow worked for the Central National Orchestra of China and participated in many performances around the world including the United States, France, and Japan. At the same time, she performed in various music events and festivals for popular music, movies, and television recording for many years. She was also an actress in several Chinese TV series and movies.

Since immigration to Canada in 2008, Snow continues her erhu teaching, her students passing the standard grade examinations in Toronto. She has been a soloist and Concertmaster of the Canadian Chinese Orchestra and the Canadian Oriental National Orchestra, performing in the orchestra's concerts every year to promote Chinese traditional music. She represented Canada in 2009, performing with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra in "Global Huqin Relay" in Hong Kong.

Since 2014 she has performed at Yikang Charity Donation Concert, Yee Hong Center Fundraising Concert, St. James Anglican Church Chinese New Year Charity Concert, World Musical Arts Festival, A Grand Ceremony of Traditional Chinese Music Concert, When Classical and Pop Impact-Asian Tradition Meet Pop, National Chamber Music Canada Tour, Delun Foundation New Year Concert, Toronto Traditional Classic Music Concert to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Macau's Return to China, and performed erhu concerto, *Between the Earth and Forever* by Kevin Lau with the Peterborough Symphony Orchestra.



NIAGARA YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Founded by Paul van Dongen, the **Niagara Youth Orchestra** is the premiere training ground for young orchestral musicians under 25 years old in the Niagara region. Led by professional coaches and conductors who are affiliated with orchestras across the province, members of the Niagara Youth Orchestra receive extensive music education and performance experiences through regular concert seasons and special events. Membership in the orchestra is determined by a placement interview and can be scheduled by emailing music@niagarayouthorchestra.org.

The Concert Orchestra provides young musicians with the opportunity to develop their skills, exposing them to challenging music in both their individual ensemble groups and as an orchestra, as well as providing them with performance experience.

The Symphonic Orchestra provides an excellent training ground for young musicians. There is a mix of elementary, high school and university level musicians in this group.

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Bradley Thachuk



In honour of the NSO's 75th Diamond Anniversary, Niagara's community of music lovers is invited to celebrate the past by sustaining the future. By becoming a member of the Group of 75, you will be part of a community movement to sustain your Symphony.

Introducing the Group of 75

At this pivotal time, your symphony needs your sustaining support. The NSO is introducing the Group of 75 by inviting you to become annual donors – champions of the NSO's future. Through your love of music and belief in your symphony's vital service to the community, you can set the stage for continuing relevance and sustainability by pledging an annual gift of \$750, \$1,500 or \$2,500 or more to the NSO for the next 3 years.

In addition to the Giving Circle Benefits, Group of 75 members will receive the following privileges:

\$750 each year	\$1,500 each year	\$2,500 each year
Invitation to a 'Salon Musical Gathering' with an NSO Musician in bespoke venues.	The invitation from the lesser level plus Advance ticketing privileges to all concerts.	The perks from the lesser levels plus Invitation to join Bradley Thachuk in a dedicated Travel Group to Orchestras near and far.

*Please note that while these benefits/invitations are not paid for by the NSO, members may have access to group rates when travelling or hosting.

Lock in your spot today!

To secure your spot in the Group of 75, please contact Lisa Donati (she/her), Director of Development and Fundraising, lisa.donati@niagarasymphony.com or 905-687-4993 x224; or Ginny Medland-Green, Chair of Fundraising, ginnylee2014@gmail.com or 905-978-2014.



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2024 | 7:30PM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024 | 2:30pm

JEANS' n
Classics



SOULFUL

A Celebration in Honour of Black History Month

Bradley Thachuk, *conductor*

Gavin Hope, *lead vocals*

Earth, Wind & Fire
Gnarls Barkley
The O'Jays
Marvin Gaye
Earth, Wind & Fire
The Three Degrees
The Spinners
The Temptations
Outkast

September
Crazy
Back Stabbers
What's Goin' On
Fantasy
TSOP
Could It Be I'm Falling In Love
My Girl
Hey Ya

Intermission

Isaac Hayes
The Commodores
Lou Rawls
Smokey Robinson
Stevie Wonder
Pharrel Williams
Luther Vandross
The Trammps

Shaft
Easy
You're Gonna Miss My Lovin'
Ooh Baby Baby
I Wish
Happy
A House Is Not A Home
Disco Inferno

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Notes*

A pre-concert
cocktail hour
with Doug Bundy



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LEAD VOCALS

GAVIN HOPE

Gavin Hope has a diverse career through song, stage, film, and television. He started his musical journey in school and university choirs and eventually ended up being the youngest member in Calgary Opera Chorus history. He was also a member of Alberta pop group The EarthTones, recording an album with them and touring Western Canada. In his late teens, he sang back-up for Michael Bolton for his *Time Love and Tenderness* tour, and was fortunate to become the newest and youngest (ever) member of Canadian pop a cappella institution, The Nylons.

Gavin is heard on four Nylons albums and has toured Brazil, China, Europe, and North America. Gavin's voice as lead on the single *Love TKO* on the album *Because*, earned the band a Juno nomination for best R&B Recording. He continues to be a part-time member of The Nylons and is happy to tour with old friends from time to time.

After four years with The Nylons he ventured back to professional theatre, where highlights include playing Tom Collins in the Canadian company of *RENT* (Mirvish), Simba in the original Canadian company of *The Lion King* (Mirvish), *Tempest* and *As You Like It* (Canadian Stage), and *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (Stage West Calgary).

Gavin recorded his debut album *Anything Like Mine* in 1998, gaining favourable chart positions on Canadian airwaves with nine singles, including *Can I Get Close* which garnered him yet another Juno award nomination for best R&B solo recording. He has shared the stage with Deborah Cox, Jill Scott, Shania Twain, Michelle Wright, Natalie Cole, James Brown, and Aretha Franklin, just to name a few.

As a featured vocalist for Jeans N' Classics, Gavin has headlined concerts with symphonies across the United States and Canada. He can be seen and heard on myriad jingles and voice-overs for both radio and television, and he has performed on Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, and Norwegian cruise lines.

Gavin's solo Jazz album, *For All We Know*, is a smooth and sultry album that has a new take on some classic tunes by such greats as Tony Bennet, Blood Sweat and Tears, and Donny Hathaway, to name a few. It is a sweet blend of styles in a minimalistic, yet inspiring, soulful, and heart-felt formula of just voice and piano.

The Soulful Band:

Gavin Hope, *lead vocals*

Stephanie Martin, *vocals*

Katalin Kiss, *vocals*

Andrea Koziol, *vocals*

Peter Brennan, *owner/guitar*

Kevin Adamson, *keyboards*

Jeff Christmas, *drums*

Mitch Tyler, *bass*

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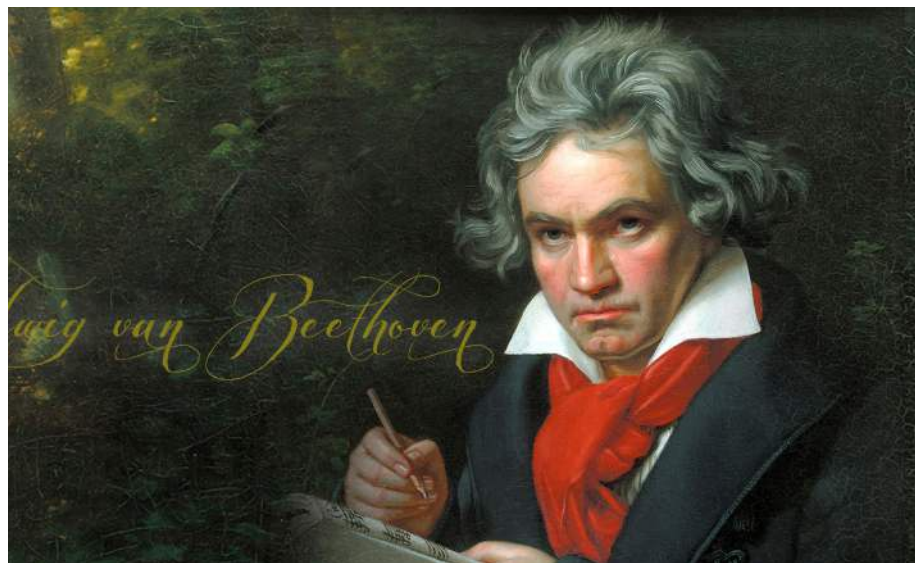
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SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024 | 2:30pm

PRE-CONCERT CHAT AT 1:45pm

NEXT GEN. BEETHOVEN



Bradley Thachuk, *conductor*

Chelsea Ahn, *piano*

Younggun Kim, *piano*

Beethoven *Coriolan Overture*

Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4*

Chelsea Ahn, *piano*

Intermission

Beethoven *Egmont: Overture*

Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 5*

Younggun Kim, *piano*

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Chelsea Ahn is the

DR. AND MRS. W.N. TYTANECK

Guest Artist



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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

CORIOLAN OVERTURE, OP. 62

You will hear two works by Ludwig van Beethoven that were originally premiered at the same concert in March 1807, 217 years ago, at the palace of the Bohemian Prince Joseph Franz von Lobkowitz: the *Coriolan Overture*, and the *Fourth Piano Concerto*.

Beethoven composed the *Overture* as an introduction to the tragedy *Coriolan*, written by Austrian playwright Heinrich Joseph Collin in 1804. The play revolves around the figure of the fifth-century Roman General Coriolanus, and unlike Collin's earlier Classical dramatic efforts, makes some allusion to the work of Shakespeare, whose play *Coriolanus* was based on the same legendary figure. Beethoven's treatment of the work dates from his "middle period," a time when he was experimenting with probably his most lasting musical legacy, dubbed by scholars as the "symphonic ideal." His *Symphonies* 3-7 all date from this period, roughly from 1803-12, a time when he expanded the symphonic form beyond anything that had come before and created a model for generations of composers that followed. Orchestral works from the same period, like the *Overtures to Coriolan* and *Egmont*, though shorter, were conceived in the same grand symphonic style, and cannot be confused with anything by an earlier Classical composer. In *Coriolan*, we hear the warrior general's theme in C minor, while his pleading mother Veturia is depicted by a secondary theme in the relative major, E-flat.

CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA NO. 4 IN G MAJOR

The *Fourth Piano Concerto*, despite its undeniable difficulty, is much more than a virtuoso warhorse. Written during the same period of Beethoven's life as the *Third* and *Fifth Symphonies*, it presents a marked contrast to the extroverted, so-called "heroic" style evident in those works. As in Mozart's concert, the solo pianist frequently serves as accompanist, a first among equals in dialogues with the string and woodwind sections of the orchestra.

The initial measures of the work already embrace the unexpected. The piano enters, unaccompanied, with a quiet, intense phrase; the orchestra echoes the soloist at the same dynamic level but moves suddenly to a B-major chord. Throughout, the pianist will play a variety of roles: virtuoso, singer, accompanist, chamber musician - all in an almost unassuming fashion. This first movement is also a showcase of instrumental colour; Beethoven explores the extremes of the piano's current range as well as the potential richness of woodwind sonorities.

The central movement is certainly the heart and soul of the work, and one of Beethoven's most unusual compositions up to this point in his career. Structured much like an operatic recitative, the Andante pits the piano against an unrelenting chorus of unison strings; A.B. Marx was the first of several commentators to draw a parallel with Orpheus begging the Furies to grant him entrance into Hell. But the finale, a charming rondo, dissolves these tensions; its tonal adventurousness and rhythmic trickery lead ultimately to a joyous conclusion.

OVERTURE TO EGMONT, OP. 84

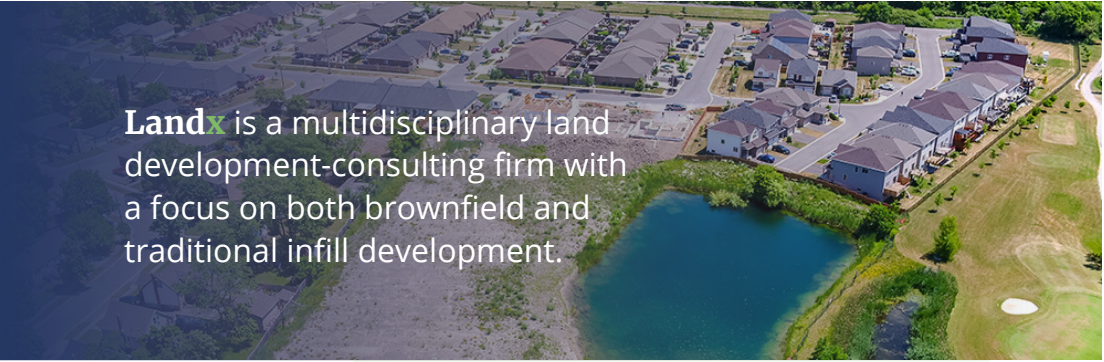
Beethoven's magnificent *Overture to Egmont* is a testament to his ardent admiration for Goethe's famous tragedy. The overture is one of ten pieces that Beethoven, out of love for Goethe (and a commission from the Court Theatre) composed as incidental music for the play, and it is the only one that has found a place in the modern concert repertoire. Work on this composition coincided with the restless war year of 1809, and was likely concluded in Baden in the spring of 1810. Unfortunately, Goethe's first hearing of his admirer's score was in the form of a piano rendition by an amateur, and only gradually did the poet learn to appreciate Beethoven's music! The integrity and heroism of the character of Egmont had inspired some of the composer's finest skill, particularly in the treatment of the sudden changes of mood in the final pages of the play. This work ranks with *Leonore No. 3* as one of Beethoven's most powerful overtures.

CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA NO. 5, "EMPEROR"

Although the Leipzig premiere in 1811 of the last piano concerto met with relative success, its debut in Vienna in February, 1812, was a complete failure. The problem was not the music, nor the soloist, Karl Czerny; rather, it was the audience, the Society of Noble Ladies for Charity. Obviously in the mood for no more than a light diversion, this group was not at all prepared for the thundering chords to which they were subjected. Although the music is dedicated to Beethoven's patron, Archduke Rudolf, the subtitle *Emperor*, added after its composition, has obvious Napoleonic allusions. Given Beethoven's documented disavowing of his short-lived admiration for the French dictator, it is reasonably certain that he would have disapproved strongly of this appellation.

A mood of sweeping grandeur is set by the emphatic chords and extravagant solo passages of the introduction. The subdued orchestral exposition presents the violins in a march-like theme, echoed by the woodwinds. Following an extended chromatic scale and trill, the solo piano begins a second exposition with a dolce rendition of the theme. The slow movement, in the surprising key of B major, serves as a short dialogue between soloist and orchestra, and takes the form of a theme and variations. Listen at the end of this movement for the piano's slow, soft anticipation of the brilliantly developed rondo theme which follows in the finale. Hailed as "the most spacious and triumphant of concert rondos," it presents the soloist in passages of exceptional brilliance, repeating the main theme in ever increasing ornamentation. Near the end, we hear a surprising textural contrast, when the piano and timpani are suddenly left alone and seem to fade to a close, before an equally surprising energetic burst from the soloist leads to the triumphant ending.

Program notes by Brian E. Power



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PIANO

CHELSEA AHN

Chelsea Ahn is the
Dr. and Mrs. W.N. Tytaneck
Guest Artist

Recipient of the Debut Atlantic Award for Musical Excellence, **Chelsea Ahn** was recently named a winner of the inaugural Robert W. and G. Ann Corcoran Concerto Competition. She studied at the Aspen Music Festival and School in 2022, as a scholarship student under Arie Vardi and Anton Nel, and one of nine pianists for John Perry Summer Academy.

Chelsea has performed at Koerner Hall, Carnegie Hall, Harris Concert Hall, among others. She debuted with the Fredericton Symphony Orchestra and won first prizes at the VIVO International Competition, NB Provincial Senior Piano Competition, and has an ARCT Performance Diploma with First Class Honours with Distinction. Chelsea records for CBC, SBS, COC and *Music of My Life* series. She received tutelage from Robert McDonald, Ronan O'Hara, Jean Saulnier, and John O'Connor.

Chelsea studies at The Glenn Gould School under a full tuition scholarship in the studio of James Anagnoson and Li Wang.



PIANO

YOUNGGUN KIM

Younggun Kim is a pianist known for his blazing technical capacity and a lush sound, who has performed across North America and Europe. He is active as a soloist and chamber musician, and he teaches at Queen's University and the University of Toronto. Younggun has also been involved with the Health Arts Society since 2011, playing in their concert series for those who may find it difficult to visit conventional venues.

His recent performances include a solo appearance with Toronto Korean-Canadian Choir and Orchestra, a solo recital as part of the Faculty Artist Series at Queen's University, concert appearances in South Korea, and an appearance with the esteemed Isabel Quartet.

Younggun is the winner of various prizes including San Antonio International Competition, Concours International de Piano Francis Poulenc, and Doctor of Musical Arts Recital Competition at the University of Toronto. Upon completion of the doctoral degree, Younggun was chosen as the recipient of the Tecumseh Sherman Rogers Graduating Award, which is the largest award offered by the Faculty of Music.



BRING THE *Sparkle* HOME



SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024 | 7:30pm

CLASSIC ROCK RADIO



Bradley Thachuk, *conductor*

Joe Retta, *lead vocals*

Steve Thachuk, *guitar and arranger*

Paul III, *bass guitar*

Dan Potruch, *drums*

Zachary Provost, *keyboards*

Selections announced from the stage.

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LEAD VOCALS JOE RETTA

A native of Rochester, New York, **Joe Retta** developed a deep appreciation for music at an early age and in the 80s, went to Los Angeles to explore his options in the entertainment business. He spent the late 80s knocking around Southern California, singing a vast spectrum of music that helped him become a versatile four-octave vocalist who could sing virtually anything, from jazz to heavy metal.

His future as a front man was put on hold as he ended up as a single father of two girls. With his children older, he hit the road, touring with Gregg Rolie (Santana and Journey) and a number of top tribute acts. In 2008, he joined Sweet as their new lead singer, as well as "Dio Disciples" for various shows after Ronnie James Dio's death. After this, Joe spent several years playing and recording with Heaven and Earth. In 2015 Joe joined the cast of the Trans Siberian Orchestra for its Christmas stadium tour.

For the past few years, Retta has been doing mostly studio work, and co-writing with several artists around the planet, including the Gregg Golden Band. Retta has toured all over the world including the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, and India and is considered by many, to be one of the top vocalists working today.



H.A. PATRICK LITTLE B.A., LL.B.

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Niagara Symphony - Always Noteworthy



GUITAR AND ARRANGER STEVEN THACHUK

Steve Thachuk is known throughout the world as a classical guitar virtuoso, and has performed as a soloist in concert, with orchestras, and on radio across North America and Europe. He was always a maverick in the classical world, often playing electric guitar, experimental music, and rock tunes in a classical style. In 2009, Steve partnered with Jeff Young (Megadeth) for acoustic shows in England, and since then has turned his attention more and more to his rock 'n roll roots.

After a stint with an acoustic fusion trio (with Julian Coryell, guitarist for Alannis Morissette and Leonard Cohen), Steve began working as an orchestrator for Steve Hackett (Genesis) and his *Genesis Revisited* for band and orchestra project. This collaboration produced a British tour and a Live album and DVD from Royal Festival Hall in London. Steve went on later to orchestrate a show for Dave Mason from Traffic and has been producing band and orchestra tributes ever since.

Steve played with the band ALLIANCE in the Toronto hard rock scene of the late 80s, but then left to pursue his classical performing career. He currently plays in several bands in Los Angeles, works as a session player, and performs in experimental and ambient concerts.



BASS GUITAR PAUL ILL

Paul Ill is a life-long bassist and songwriter whose career peak experiences include playing with the Willie Dixon Family Band at Mr. Dixon's wake, tracking live in a London studio with Tina Turner, playing and songwriting with Christina Aguilera, Pink, Alicia Keys, and performing with Bob Weir.

His recording and touring credits include the aforementioned Tina Turner, Bob Weir, Annie Lennox, Linda Perry (whom he counts as a crucial influence and mentor), Courtney Love, Christina Aguilera, Alicia Keys, Pink, Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top, James Blunt, Michael Des Barres, Mick Taylor (Rolling Stones), Bill Ward of Black Sabbath, and Wayne Kramer of MC5, just to name a few. As a studio bassist Paul has played on recordings that have sold over 20 million records. As a songwriter, he has sold more than 4.5 million records.

Paul is a graduate of the prestigious Berklee College of Music. Along with Bobby Owsinski, Paul is the co-author of *The Studio Musician's Handbook*, published internationally by Hal Leonard Music Publishing.



DRUMS DAN POTRUCH

Dan Potruch has been a working drummer in Los Angeles since 1986. He is a graduate of the acclaimed Musicians Institute in Hollywood, California, as well as studying with some of music's finest musicians and teachers including Greg Bissonette, Alex Acuna, and Richard Wilson.

In the mid 80s, Dan worked with Jazz artists Tony Guerrero, Doug Webb, and Deron Johnson of Miles Davis fame, as well as a host of R&B and Blues artists including Guitar Shorty and Kevin Moore - A.K.A. - Keb Mo. Through the 90s, Dan toured and recorded with Mark Lindsay, original lead singer of Paul Revere and the Raiders

Dan is a noted session drummer and producer Jack Douglas has said "Dan is one of my secret weapons in the studio."

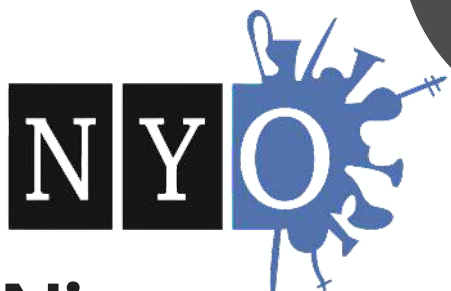
Former Capitol Records president and producer Andy Slater includes Dan in his Neil Young tribute group called Ragged Glory. Dan has also performed on various film soundtracks at Beacon Street Studios including *The Bachelorette*, *Anchorman II*, and *Casa De Mi Padre*. Dan also performed with Aerosmith guitarist Joe Perry on *The Tonight Show*.

Dan continues to stay very busy in and around Los Angeles with his Band Uncle Duane's Band. Dan exclusively uses Paiste Cymbals and Innovative Percussion Sticks.



KEYBORADS ZACHARY PROVOST

Zachary Provost is an in-demand keyboardist, singer, songwriter, and producer based in Los Angeles. He was Josh Groban's bandleader and pianist for five years and has performed with Elton John, John Williams, Carlos Santana, Willie Nelson, David Foster, Bela Fleck, Jason Scheff (former lead singer of Chicago), Uncle Kracker, Coolio, and many others. His most recent album *Walk That Road* can be found wherever you find music. Zachary Provost uses Dexibell keyboards exclusively.



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