

25 | WHERE MUSIC
26 | COMES ALIVE!



OPENING NIGHT: MOZART, RAVEL AND BEYOND

OCTOBER 4, 2025 | 7:30 pm | Metropolitan United

Guest Artists

- Cosette Justo Valdés, *conductor*
- David Jalbert, *piano*

Presenting Partner: *Serenata Music*

London
Symphonia



JOSH MORGAN MAYOR

October 4, 2025

The London Symphonia Concert Program

Dear Friends,

On behalf of London City Council, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to London Symphonia's 2025–2026 Season. We are honored to have such a distinguished ensemble in our community, and we eagerly anticipate the musical experiences you will bring to our residents.

London Symphonia has long been a shining star in our city's artistic constellation, and your unwavering dedication to musical excellence continues to enrich the lives of residents across all ages. Each performance you deliver resonates deeply, creating treasured memories and nurturing a lasting love for the arts in our community.

As you enter your ninth season, we celebrate not only the enduring legacy of the Symphonia but also the exciting diversity of this year's program. From timeless classics to innovative contemporary works, the season promises something to captivate every listener. We are especially proud that many concerts will feature guest artists from London and the surrounding region - highlighting the incredible talent that thrives right here at home.

The beautiful Metropolitan United Church offers an inspiring setting where the power of live orchestral music can truly come alive, bringing people together to share in moments of joy, reflection, and unity. As we gather to enjoy this season's offerings, let us remember the unique ability of music to inspire, heal, and connect us all. Whether you are a longtime supporter or experiencing London Symphonia for the first time, I invite you to immerse yourself fully in the magic of this remarkable ensemble.

Thank you for your commitment to enriching our community through the power of music. Here's to a season filled with unforgettable performances and shared inspiration.

Kind regards,

Josh Morgan
Mayor, City of London

City of London
Office of Mayor Josh Morgan
300 Dufferin Avenue
P.O. Box 5035
London, ON N6A 4L9

WELCOME TO LONDON SYMPHONIA'S 9TH SEASON!

There's always special excitement in the air on Opening Night. Thank you for joining us as an incredible world of music comes alive this season, starting with [Opening Night: Mozart, Ravel and Beyond](#). We have so much to celebrate, including Ravel's 150th birthday.

This concert is packed with great music, brilliant artistry and new discoveries that will give you a taste of the dynamic programming and outstanding performances to come in the 2025-26 Season. We are thrilled to welcome back virtuoso pianist **David Jalbert** to play **Ravel's jazz-infused Piano Concerto in G Major**. We are pairing this masterpiece with **Mozart's Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major**. Regarded as one of his greatest symphonies, it gives London Symphonia many opportunities to shine.

Adding to the excitement, **Cosette Justo Valdés**, a rising star on the world stage, is making her conducting debut with London Symphonia. Passionate about orchestral music from her native Cuba and a champion of female composers, Maestra Valdés has selected works by two composers you may not be familiar with: Rodrigo Prats and Augusta Holmès, a widely acclaimed composer in 19th-century France but largely forgotten since her death.

If you haven't already, we hope you'll visit **London Symphonia's new Watch and Listen video on demand channel**. You can subscribe and enjoy every concert in the 2025-26 Season plus access a treasure trove of outstanding concerts from the past three seasons, along with companion materials. You can also rent individual concerts. Click [HERE](#) to find out more.

To all our patrons and donors thank you for your friendship, encouragement and support. You are vital to London Symphonia's continuing success, not just in bringing performances like the one tonight to life but through our comprehensive education and outreach programs. On behalf of the musicians, staff, and Board of Directors, our heartfelt thanks.

We hope you will enjoy tonight's concert and spread the word to family and friends.

Looking forward to seeing you often in the Season ahead.

Sincerely,



April Voth
Executive Director



Andrew Chung
Artistic Producer



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OCTOBER 4, 2025 | 7:30 pm | Metropolitan United

Guest Artists

- Cosette Justo Valdés, *conductor*
- David Jalbert, *piano*

Augusta Holmès

La Nuit et l'amour

Rodrigo Prats

Canto et Carretero Cuando Dan Les Seis

Maurice Ravel

Piano Concerto in G Major

- I. Allegramente
- II. Adagio assai
- III. Presto

INTERMISSION

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major, K.543

- I. Adagio – Allegro
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Menuetto e Trio
- IV. Allegro

Supported by Continental Cork Company



The program runs approximately 1 hours and 45 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.

MEET COSETTE JUSTO VALDÉS AND DAVID JALBERT AFTER THE CONCERT

Join us in the Great Room behind the stage and speak with the musicians.



TONIGHT'S MUSICIANS

Violin 1

Elizabeth Loewen
Andrews
Andrew Chung
Mikela Witjes
Yanet Campbell-Secades*
Mel Martin
Peter Carter

Violin 2

Émilie Paré
Calvin Tsang
Sarah Wiebe
Julian Trippell*
Sheilanne Lindsay

Viola

Marie-Eve Lessard
Jody Davenport
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Lincoln St John*

Cello

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Abigail Greenland*
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Joel Tangjerd

Bass

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Harp

Lori Gemmell

*London Symphonia Fellows from Western University

Photography and video/audio recording of any kind is not permitted during the performance.

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London Symphonia wishes to acknowledge and honour the land on which we are meeting as the traditional territory of the First Nations peoples; the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (part of the Anishinaabe), the Oneida Nation of the Thames (part of the Haudenosaunee) and the Munsee-Delaware Nation (part of the Leni-Lunaape). Let us reflect on how we as individuals and as a community can carry this spirit of gratitude into everything we do to honour the work that all the First Nations peoples of the Turtle Island have done, and continue to do, for the land that supports us all.



Cosette Justo Valdés

With her “incisive presence on the podium,” “emotive ...without being in any sense showy” (Mark Morris, *Edmonton Journal*), Cuban-born conductor Cosette Justo Valdés has emerged as a rising star on the world concert stage. Beloved as a musician who wins the respect of her colleagues and the hearts of audiences, Ms. Valdés is currently the Artistic and Music Director of the Vancouver Island Symphony (British Columbia). Previously she was Resident Conductor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.

Her debut appearances in 2024-25 with L’Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Pacific Symphony Orchestra (Orange County, California), the Winterthur Symphony (Switzerland), the Utah Symphony, the Brevard Music Festival (North Carolina) and the Sacramento Philharmonic mark the tempo of a conducting career whose recent highlights include a “mindblowing” (Ottawa Citizen) collaboration with Esperanza Spalding and the National Arts Centre Orchestra Ottawa, a celebrated production of Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* at the Edmonton Opera which she conducted from the harpsichord, two self-curated concert experiences merging the music of living composers with the words of living poets at the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the birth of a new opera by Ian Cusson *Indians on Vacation*, with a libretto by Royce Vavrek, and the world premiere performances of compositions written by Indigenous Canadian composers from all corners of Canada including cellist and Carnegie Hall artistic partner Cris Derksen, as well as four uniquely staged and theatrical renderings of Handel’s *Messiah* with four different orchestras.

In the coming seasons, Ms. Valdés will debut with some of the finest orchestras in Europe – the Tonkuenstler Orchestra of Austria, the Brussels Philharmonic, the Residentie Orchestra of The Hague, the Ulster Orchestra, the BBC Concert Orchestra London, and others – and in North America she will make her first appearances with the San Francisco Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Florida Orchestra, and the National Philharmonic. In Canada, she returns to the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

David Jalbert



A five-time Juno Award nominee, pianist David Jalbert has established himself among the elite of his generation of classical musicians and was named by the CBC among the 15 best Canadian pianists of all time. With his personal style, incomparable stage presence and refined ear, he has wowed audiences and critics everywhere: “Playing that oozes hedonistic charm” (*Gramophone*); “In an age of knuckle-busting keyboard technicians fixated on a single era, composer or concerto, it is a great pleasure to encounter an artist of Jalbert’s stature for whom the piano is simply a transcendent means of human expression” (*WholeNote*); “A virtuoso in the best sense of the word” (*La Presse*); “Wide-ranging musical imagination, phenomenal technique, and an unerring lightness of being” (*The Toronto Star*).

Mr. Jalbert performs regularly as a soloist and recitalist in Canada and across the globe. His solo recordings – of the Goldberg Variations, the Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues, of American, French and Russian piano music – have all garnered praise internationally in venues ranging from *Fanfare* to *France-Culture*. As a soloist, he has appeared with orchestras such as OSM, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, the National Symphony of Ireland, and has performed many times with Orchestre Métropolitain and its maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Equally prolific as a chamber musician, he has collaborated with artists such as Nicola Benedetti, Charles Richard-Hamelin, Joel Quarrington, James Campbell and Rachel Barton Pine, and has recorded with Pentaèdre, cellist Denise Djokic, and with his trio *Triple Forte* (with Jasper Wood and Yegor Dyachkov). Mr. Jalbert has won six times at the Prix Opus and is a recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts’ Virginia Parker Prize. He holds degrees from the Juilliard School, the Glenn Gould School, Université de Montréal and Conservatoire de Musique du Québec and is now a Professor of Piano at the University of Ottawa and a member of the faculty at the Orford Music Academy.



PROGRAM NOTES

Augusta Holmès (1847-1903)

La Nuit et l'amour (The Night and Love)

Before hearing a note of her music, the first thing one notices about Augusta Holmès is the accent over the e in Holmes. It's not a gimmick though, like the umlaut in Motley Crüe – Holmès added it to the English surname inherited from her Irish father when she took French citizenship at the age of 25. One source says that she not only wanted to affirm her French nationality after having lived in Paris all her life, but to protest the English suppression of the Irish as well. In any event, it looks like English, is pronounced like French, and sounds vaguely like Spanish: Ohi-MEZ.

Considering her later obscurity, Holmès was astonishingly prominent in the Parisian artistic community from the 1860s to 1890s, praised by leading composers, idolized in poetry, depicted by painters, and pursued by all of them. She was a fine pianist and a respected singer, but composition was her profession, and it was not restricted to the songs and salon pieces expected of women: in addition to symphonic poems and cantatas she wrote four operas, the last of which was produced at the Paris Opéra. Her Triumphal Ode for the centenary of the French Revolution was performed on that occasion by some 1,200 choristers and musicians.

La Nuit et l'amour is excerpted from the 1888 'ode-symphony' *Ludus pro patria* (Patriotic Games), from the title of a painting by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. Although a pupil of César Franck, Holmès was a disciple of Richard Wagner, similarly writing her own poetry for her vocal works. The narrator of the ode is silent during this symphonic interlude, but the associated text is translated as follows:

"Love! Inspiration of Fruitful Ecstasy! Love!
Conqueror of conquerors who makes the virgin
blush at the touch of your wing... Join together
lips and hearts!"

Whew.

While Holmès employs some Wagnerian techniques in its construction, aficionados of 19th century French opera will feel quite at home with this brief 'symphonic interlude'. Magical wind chords introduce a warm and yearning melody in the cellos, increasing in ardour until the full orchestra declares its devotion – and blissfully subsides.

As they used to say, "Ain't Love grand?"

Rodrigo Prats (1909-1980)

Canta el Carretero Cuando Dan Las Seis (The Cart Driver's Song at 6)

Apart from “Malagueña” by Ernesto Lecuona – a pops concert standard for decades – Cuban composers have rarely appeared on Canadian symphony orchestra programs, although Cuban artists have long been prominent in popular music. So – introducing Rodrigo Prats! – a violinist, conductor, composer and arranger active in the theatrical, radio and television institutions of mid-20th century Cuba. Zarzuela, the Spanish form of musical comedy, comprises a major portion of his output, in addition to light popular numbers like *Canta el Carretero Cuando Dan Las Seis*.

Whether the jolly cart driver is singing at the beginning or end of his day is unclear – the opening bird song suggests bright and early. However, the rambunctious conclusion suggests he may have big plans for the evening.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in G Major

It has been said that the concerto is a young composer's form. Ravel's two concertos were his next-to-last completed works. So much for that. Perhaps it could more accurately be said that the concerto used to be a young composer's form, prior to the near extinction of the composer as performer: in our days of specialization few young musicians write concertos to advance their playing careers, as was commonly the case from Mozart to Shostakovich.

Ravel nearly upheld the tradition. In his younger days he had indeed begun a piano concerto, which had to be abandoned when he enlisted for service in World War I. Revisiting the idea in the mid-1920s, he promised a concerto to Marguerite Long, the pianist who had premiered his *Tombeau de Couperin*; but as he composed, the desire to play it himself took hold, to the point where he was devoting considerable time to practising. To no avail, however; Ravel finally had to let Long do the honours on 14 January, 1932, taking to the podium instead. After they had toured the Concerto through Europe for three months, Long recorded it while Ravel supervised from the booth, driving everyone crazy by demanding take after take until about 3 a.m.

The Concerto in G took Ravel from 1929 to 1931 to write, in part due to health problems, but largely because in 1930 he received a commission from a pianist who had lost his right arm in the war for a piano concerto to be played with the left hand alone. And from writing no concertos for 35 years Ravel found himself writing two very different piano concertos at once.

Interestingly, the Concerto for the Left Hand has the larger orchestra and fuller sounding solo part, because Ravel strove to provide no aural clue that the pianist was using only one hand. The Concerto in G, having nothing to justify in that department, is by comparison neo-classical, lean in texture with a chamber orchestra accompaniment. The concertos of Mozart and Saint-Saëns were its models. As Ravel observed, “A concerto can be gay and brilliant and need not try to be profound or strive after dramatic effects.”

There were other sources of inspiration. Ravel’s music often reflects his birth near the Franco-Spanish border: launched with a crack of the whip, the Concerto’s opening piccolo tune – conceived on a train between London and Oxford – has a Basque colour, while the piano’s second theme embodies the languor of Spain. Jazz is next, first in a blues-tinged interjection with wood-block off-beats and then in a rising pentatonic melody that will soon launch the first bassoon into the stratosphere. Indeed, Ravel exploits the limits of orchestral technique in this piece, with especially wicked solos for the trumpet, and a cadenza for the harp as well as the piano.

Following the exhilarating chatter of the first movement, with its surprising conclusion – attaching the top half of a major scale to the top half of a minor scale – the Adagio is seamless serenity, studiously avoiding any cadence even after the orchestra has crept in underneath an expectant Mozartian piano trill. The repose of Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet larghetto was in fact Ravel’s goal and writing it was a bar-by-bar battle: “It nearly killed me!” he told Long when she remarked on it.

Shrill woodwinds in the wrong key have the first theme of the finale, imparting a circus atmosphere to the proceedings, with a sassy insouciance added by jazzy take-offs of ‘Good evening, friends’. Except for the initial five cadential chords, which return periodically to mark sections, ‘semi-perpetual motion’ is the driving force and when the torrent of notes flags, fanfares (and the whip) urge everyone back to business.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Symphony No.39 in E-flat Major, K.543

Mozart’s three greatest symphonies, No.39 in E-flat Major, No.40 in G Minor and No.41 in C Major known as the “Jupiter” Symphony, were all written in the space of about three months in the summer of 1788 (a stupendous achievement even without the two piano trios he sandwiched in between them). The year was a difficult one: Austrian economic times were hard, with bad harvests and war expenditures constricting

the musical market, and Mozart's income was significantly down and his debts alarmingly up. In June he was forced to move to cheaper lodgings in the suburbs; furthermore, his infant daughter was ill (she died three days after he completed the E-flat symphony) and his letters to moneylenders became desperate. As a financial remedy – and as a form of collateral for loans – he apparently planned a series of concerts with new symphonies as drawing cards, which however he was unable to bring off. So, the three symphonies landed on the shelf unplayed.

Or so it was thought. Although there are no specific references to a performance of any one of these works in Mozart's remaining three years, circumstantial evidence suggests that the assumption that he never heard them is incorrect. As many as three unidentified symphonies were performed during Mozart's tour to Germany in 1789, and it seems natural that at least one of the new masterpieces would have been included. And tellingly, a music dealer's 1790 catalogue lists a Mozart Symphony in E-flat with trumpets and drums which must be No. 39; the implication is that if parts were circulating, the work had already been played.

Unfortunately, no one seems to have commented on either it or the other two, which is almost as astonishing as the symphonies themselves. No. 39 is the only one of them with a slow introduction, notable for its daring repeated clash of a minor second high in the violins and

the rather cryptic bit of canon that leads to the lyrical main Allegro. The rapid violin scales of this opening Adagio soon reappear in a most exhilarating way.

In the second movement the main theme's calmly composed exterior is unexpectedly shattered by two outbursts of the most harrowing, tortured emotion Mozart ever penned, the second of them particularly extended and keening – visions of unbridled anguish over which control is quickly reasserted. Contrasted with the decorum of the Minuet and the hijinks of the Haydnesque finale these episodes are even more remarkable, and the temptation to connect them to the contemporary hardships of the composer's life is strong. But of course, Mozart was a consummate professional who could create any required mood irrespective of circumstances.

Of all Mozart's symphonies the E-flat Major comes closest to satisfying Mahler's 1907 dictum that the symphony, "like the world, must embrace everything". One finds in it majesty, mystery, serenity, ebullience, agony, poignancy, tenderness, resignation, formality, drama and wit. Perhaps that is why, among Mozart's final six symphonies, the E-flat is unique in having attracted no nickname.

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Opening Night: Mozart, Ravel and Beyond
David Jalbert, *piano*.

January 17, 2026

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February 15, 2026:	Rossini, <i>The Barber of Seville</i>
May 10, 2026:	Bartok, <i>Bluebeard's Castle</i>
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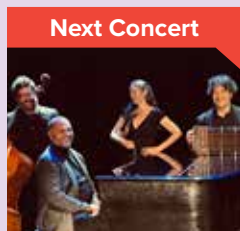
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Abby Bright, *Stage Manager*
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Thank you for helping us make every performance enjoyable for all.

CONCERT POLICIES

- **Photography and video/audio recording of any kind is not permitted during the performance.**
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- Mask wearing is not currently required. Not everyone may have the same degree of comfort with the lifting of restrictions, and we ask that you please respect the personal space and comfort level of those around you.
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