

MEDIA RELEASE

LONDON SYMPHONIA'S OPENING NIGHT CONCERT LAUNCHES NEW SEASON FILLED WITH TIMELESS CLASSICS, EXCITING NEW WORKS, TWO WORLD PREMIERES



OPENING NIGHT: MOZART, RAVEL AND BEYOND Saturday, October 4, 2025 at 7:30 p.m

LONDON, September 16, 2025 – London Symphonia's 2025-26 Season springs into life on October 4, 2025 with this dazzling season opener: *Opening Night: Mozart, Ravel and Beyond*. Virtuoso pianist, David Jalbert, ranked by the CBC as one of the top Canadian pianists of all time, performs Ravel's jazz-infused Piano Concerto in G Major. Maestra Cosette Justo Valdés, a rising star on the international stage, makes her debut conducting London Symphonia in this celebratory concert that also includes Mozart's Symphony No. 39, a timeless masterpiece, and works by Augusta Holmès and Rodrigo Prats. (Saturday, October 4, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. at Metropolitan United, London, ON.)

"Our Opening Night concert is jam packed with great music, brilliant artistry and new discoveries," said Andrew Chung, Artistic Producer of London Symphonia. "We are

thrilled to welcome back the phenomenal pianist David Jalbert and are looking forward to his interpretation of Ravel's stunning Piano Concerto in G Major. We are pairing this masterpiece with one of Mozart's greatest symphonies, his No. 39 in E-flat Major, which gives London Symphonia great opportunities to shine. Adding to the excitement is the debut of Cosette Justo Valdés, a highly accomplished artist who has conducted many of Canada's finest orchestras and is in demand across Europe and North America."

An innovative programmer, passionate about orchestral music from her native Cuba and a champion of female composers, Ms. Valdés has selected two works on the program that will be new experiences for many concert goers: *Canto et Carretero Cuando Dan Les Seis*, a colourful piece by Cuban composer Rodrigo Prats and *La Nuit et l'Amour* by Augusta Holmès, a widely acclaimed composer in 19th-century France but largely forgotten since her death.

Opening Night: Mozart, Ravel and Beyond is one of eight thrilling concerts in London Symphonia's 2025-26 Season which features a wide array of orchestral works performed by the orchestra and outstanding guest artists. Some are internationally renowned; others are locally acclaimed. Regardless, each will bring their own unique brilliance to the Metropolitan United stage.

Spanning classical masterpieces to bold contemporary compositions, including two world premieres, each concert has been designed to create a vibrant experience rich in storytelling. From the opening crack of the whip in Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major performed by virtuoso pianist, David Jalbert, to the powerful performance of Avner Dorman's Violin Concerto No. 2 by Lara St. John, from the timelessness of Mozart to the world premiere of a flute concerto written specifically for London Symphonia's Principal Flute, Laura Chambers, and from the captivating rhythms of the tango to the delight of popular love songs, this season is filled with excitement.

New this year is London Symphonia's first Family Concert featuring *Peter and the Wolf*, one of the best loved introductions to the orchestra ever written. The world premiere of a work by Spy Dénommé-Welch, an Algonquin-Anishinaabe storyteller and composer, that uses musical imagery to evoke the natural world, rounds out the program. Families can make an afternoon of it. Kids can create a music-related craft organized by The Children's Museum before the concert and further their introduction to the orchestra at the end at the Instrument Petting Zoo courtesy of Long & McQuade.

"There is so much on offer in each of the eight beautiful concerts we are presenting this season that it is easy to lose track of the London roots that underpin many of the performers joining us on stage," said Chung. "London is a wonderful space to live and create in. This year, we are delighted to put the spotlight on artists who credit London with helping to forge their creative identities. Jazz vocalist Denise Pelley is a local legend and a national treasure, and London-based composer Spy Dénommé-Welch is a groundbreaking creator and researcher. London Symphonia's own Principal Bass Joe Phillips is one of Canada's most versatile bassists. We are so pleased to be collaborating with him and the members of the internationally acclaimed tango band, Payadora. Lara St. John is a superstar violinist with a unique musical voice who grew up in London and will be making a long-awaited debut with London Symphonia."

Concertgoers can choose to attend each concert in person at Metropolitan United, home of London Symphonia, or virtually through London Symphonia's new Watch and Listen video on demand platform featuring high quality 4K HDR videos of 2025-26 concerts along a treasure trove of past seasons.

**LISTING INFORMATION:
LONDON SYMPHONIA CONCERT**

Opening Night: Mozart, Ravel and Beyond

London Symphonia

Cosette Justo Valdés, conductor

David Jalbert, piano

Sat. October 4, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Doors open at 6:30 pm

Metropolitan United, 468 Wellington St, London, ON

Subscriptions and Tickets on Sale Now

Ticket packages start at \$155 for 3-concert General Admission subscription and \$212 for Reserved Seating, plus fees and HST. 5-concert and 7-concert packages are also available. Individual adult tickets range from \$55 General Admission to \$75 Reserved Seating, plus fees and HST. Family Flex packs and free student tickets are also available. In person subscriptions and tickets can be purchased online now at londonsymphonia.ca.

Subscriptions to all eight concerts, including the Family Concert, and individual concert rentals will be available on London Symphonia's Watch and Listen video on demand platform beginning September 18, 2025. Find out more at londonsymphonia.ca.

London Symphonia is deeply grateful for the support of our government partners, London Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Ontario Arts Council.



2025-26 LONDON SYMPHONIA CONCERT HIGHLIGHTS

OPENING NIGHT: MOZART, RAVEL AND BEYOND – October 4, 2025

Virtuoso pianist, David Jalbert, ranked by the CBC as one of the 15 best Canadian pianists of all time, plays Ravel's spirited Piano Concerto in G Major. Mozart's Symphony No. 39, a timeless celebratory masterpiece, Augusta Holmès lush prelude *La Nuit et L'Amour* and Rodrigo Prats *Canto et Carretero Cuando Dan Les Seis* complete the program. Cosette Justo-Valdés, a rising star on the international stage, makes her debut conducting London Symphonia.

PAYADORA – THE SOUL OF TANGO – November 15, 2025

Composed of players who are each musical powerhouses, the Payadora Tango Ensemble is taking the world by storm! Together with London Symphonia, this dynamic performance will dig deeper into the meaning of tango as an art form, telling stories of resilience and grace with an unwavering respect for tradition. Scott Good, London Symphonia's Composer-in-Residence conducts.

THE SOUNDS OF HOME – December 6, 2025

The family holiday tradition continues. Alexandra Kane, frequent music director at London's Grand Theatre, well-known musical theatre performer and community activist, will lead this heartwarming festive celebration. Performed by stars of Canadian stage whose roots are in London, Ontario, the program includes holiday favourites, from traditional carols to contemporary works, including musical theatre. Guest artists include Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane, Tiffany Deriveau, Henry Firmston, Trevor Patt and the London Gospel Collective.

LARA ST. JOHN: THE ANCIENT FLAME – January 17, 2026

Acclaimed violinist Lara St. John makes her debut with London Symphonia performing Avner Dorman's brilliant Violin Concerto No. 2, "Nigunim". St. John has been bringing this

work to audiences around the world since she played its world premiere in 2018, the year it was awarded the Azrieli Music Prize. Bookending this example of tradition made new are works by two master composers of Jewish descent and icons of Western music: Felix Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*.

LOVE AND ROMANCE WITH DENISE PELLELY – February 14, 2026

This concert is an evening of musical wine and roses featuring some of the greatest romantic music ever written from pop to beloved orchestral masterworks. London's own Denise Pelley sings love songs by the Bee Gees, Stevie Wonder, Tina Turner and more; poet Roy Lewis reads original works that explore facets of love; and London Symphonia performs romantic favourites such as the Adagietto from Mahler's 5th Symphony (originally written as a love song to his wife.)

THE BRAHMS EFFECT WITH TOM ALLEN – April 18, 2026

The richness of Brahms' Clarinet Quintet has inspired generations of composers. CBC's Tom Allen guides the audience through the history of the Quintet and a sampling of some of the brilliant works inspired by it. Performed by London Symphonia's Principal Clarinet, Graham Lord, and the London Symphonia String Quartet.

BEETHOVEN, SHOSTAKOVICH, AND MARSH – May 2, 2026

A thrilling end to a brilliant season! Canadian Maestro Tania Miller returns to lead this performance of magnificent music. We are thrilled to present the world premiere of a flute concerto written by Alexis Marsh specially for London Symphonia's Principal Flute, Laura Chambers. Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony, an attestation of the resilience of the human spirit, together with Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, which ends with joy and triumph, form the perfect conclusion to this extraordinary concert and outstanding season.

New Family Concert

AN ENCHANTING AFTERNOON: PETER AND THE WOLF – March 8, 2026

Here's a family concert with a real twist! Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* has long been known as a terrific introduction to the orchestra that enchants audiences, no matter what their age. But when you add the world premiere of a work by Spy Dénommé-Welch, an Algonquin-Anishinaabe storyteller and composer, that uses musical imagery to evoke the natural world, the experience elevates to a new level. With a special pre-concert activity organized by The Children's Museum and a post-concert Instrument Petting Zoo courtesy of Long & McQuade, this will be a great family event. Family Flex Packs sponsored by Canada Life provide free tickets for up to 4 children as well as discounts on adult tickets.

Education and Community Programming in 2025-26

In addition to presenting concerts, London Symphonia will continue to provide greater access to music in the community through its schools and seniors programs. Open Rehearsals at Metropolitan United, in-school performances and high school ensemble coaching programs enable students in grades 4 to 12 to experience the power of music. Through The Joy of Music Seniors Programs, seniors groups and residents in retirement homes can experience the positive impact of music by attending an Open Rehearsal or a performance onsite in their retirement home.

ABOUT 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. Ms. Valdés will make her debut conducting London Symphonia in 2025-26. 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.

ABOUT DAVID JALBERT

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 publications 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.

ABOUT LONDON SYMPHONIA

London Symphonia is a professional symphony orchestra committed to performing vibrant and bold musical experiences for London and the region. With a core of 30 players, our versatile group meets the community's needs for quality programming by presenting well-known symphonies, Canadian premieres, and collaborations with some of Canada's finest singer-songwriters. We deliver a rich, artistic experience by seeking out the most accomplished performers and conductors representing a blend of locally, nationally and internationally recognized talent. A registered charitable organization, London Symphonia conducts dynamic music education programs and community outreach programs to provide greater access to music across the community.

Website: [**londonsymphonia.ca**](http://londonsymphonia.ca)

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For more information, please contact:

Janet Mowat

Sr. Marketing Consultant

[e] janet@londonsymphonia.ca

Jo-Dee Burbach

Digital Communications Associate

[e] jo-dee@londonsymphonia.ca

