

**TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

## Rachmaninoff Symphony No. 2

**Gianandrea Noseda**, conductor

**Timothy Chooi**, violin

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**Goffredo Petrassi**

**Concerto for Orchestra No. 2**

Calmo e sereno – Molto mosso, con vivacità –  
Allegretto tranquillo – Molto calmo, quasi adagio –  
Presto

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**Max Bruch**

**Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26**

I. Prelude: Allegro moderato

II. Adagio

III. Finale: Allegro energico

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### Intermission

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**Sergei Rachmaninoff**

**Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27**

I. Largo – Allegro moderato

II. Allegro molto

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro vivace

*Program 3*

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Thursday,  
October 24, 2024  
8:00pm

Saturday,  
October 26, 2024  
8:00pm

Sunday,  
October 27, 2024  
3:00pm

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The TSO Chamber Soloists

Sunday, October 27, 2024  
1:45pm

Miles Haskins, clarinet

Nicolas Richard, bassoon

Neil Deland, horn

Shane Kim, violin

Rémi Pelletier, viola

Lucia Ticho, cello

Jesse Dale, double bass

Charles Settle, percussion &  
vibraphone

Joseph Kelly, percussion &  
vibraphone

David Kent, vibraphone

Nicholas Matthiesen, vibraphone

Iman Habibi

*Haft*

Elliot Cole

No. 8 from *Postludes for*  
*Bowed Vibraphone*

*Flowerpot Music No. 1*

Goffredo Petrassi (1904–2003)

## Concerto for Orchestra No. 2

Composed 1951

18 min

### ONE OF ITALY'S LEADING MUSICAL FIGURES OF

the 20th century, Goffredo Petrassi was a highly regarded composer, conductor, and teacher. His music, which includes choral, instrumental, and orchestral works, was lesser known to the English-speaking world during his lifetime but over the last three decades has received more global attention, through research and scholarship as well as recording and public performance.

Petrassi wrote no fewer than eight concerti for orchestra, with the bulk of them (Nos. 2 to 6) composed during the 1950s. Indeed, he could be credited with establishing the concerto for orchestra as a special class of 20th-century concerto. With this impressive collection, he reveals the possibilities of the genre, exploring a wide range of compositional styles and processes, including neoclassicism and serialism, while also mounting creative displays of virtuosity for the orchestra's musicians.

He composed his Second Concerto for Orchestra in 1951 for Paul Sacher and his Basel Chamber Orchestra, 17 years after he completed his First. Although perhaps the least widely known of the series, No. 2 is arguably significant in demonstrating the maturation of Petrassi's distinctive compositional voice. Notably, it shows his skill in writing an effective showcase for a smaller ensemble, highlighted through transparent textures and the organic flow and exchange of musical material.

The Concerto for Orchestra No. 2 unfolds as a single movement, though in a four-movement shape with a "calm and serene" introduction. Petrassi once said he intended the work to convey "an abstraction of Spring," which works as a stimulus to

imagine what the music may be evoking. After a stark unison proclamation, the strings interweave gently arched phrases, suggesting the stirrings of life emerging out of the cold of winter. Woodwinds and brass gradually enter the texture; listen out for a jaunty tune (first piped by the oboe)—an allusion to a song of the Roman Campagna Petrassi knew from childhood. Intensity builds and soon the music becomes animated and chaotic ("Molto mosso, con vivacità"). It eventually disintegrates mysteriously, and a motif of repeated chords emerges and is picked up by the strings. Overtop their march-like accompaniment, the flute intones a wandering melody ("Allegretto tranquillo"); other instruments carry it on in crystalline fashion, until an extended outburst seems to melt the once-frosty sounds into an ethereal mist.

The ensuing "Molto calmo, quasi adagio" begins with haunting "night music" that then transforms into a romantic nocturne in the lilting *siciliana* rhythm of a serenade. Various groups of instruments sing its melodic strains in turn; they reach an impassioned peak, then calmly recede. The unison that opens the concerto returns at the start of the "Presto". This time, however, it heralds the arrival of spring, with the orchestra conjuring up the sounds and movements of nature bursting to life, developing them dynamically to a boisterous finish.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

### 2024/25 CONCERTI FOR ORCHESTRA SERIES

This season, to shine a spotlight on the collective talents of the TSO's musicians, we are pleased to present a series of six concerti for orchestra performed on select Masterworks programs.

The Petrassi concerto is the second in our series, which continues with Ana Sokolović's Concerto for Orchestra, opening our *Fire & Ice: Shostakovich & Sibelius* concert on November 16 and 17, 2024.

Max Bruch (1838–1920)

## Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26

Composed 1864–1866

24 min

### NO ONE COULD ACCUSE BRUCH OF LAZINESS.

In addition to composing three operas, three symphonies, several oratorios, more than 40 additional pieces for chorus, and numerous works in other forms, he worked extensively as a teacher and conductor. He held major posts in Liverpool, Breslau, and Berlin, and undertook guest conducting engagements that brought him as far afield as North America.

Regarding long-term achievement, not one of the above-mentioned pieces has gained a foothold in the standard repertoire. The sifting process of time has left just a trio of Bruch's works to warm themselves in the sun: two of his nine works for violin and orchestra—the Concerto No. 1 and *Scottish Fantasy*—plus his *Kol Nidrei* for cello.

The reasons for the concerto's esteem are crystal clear. It is a compact work that combines the dramatic, the lyrical, and the virtuosic in perfect balance. It also demonstrates Bruch's deep understanding of the violin. He once stated that the instrument "can sing a melody better than a piano, and melody is the soul of music."

Although this concerto—his most enduringly popular composition—sounds smooth and effortless, it followed a difficult course to its final form. It won a favourable reception at its first public performance, but it still left Bruch unsatisfied. Seeking advice on how to improve it, he consulted with the widely respected Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim who gave him a long, detailed evaluation. Relieved by this expert counsel, Bruch dedicated the concerto to Joachim. The *début* of the revised edition drew a warm response from audience and composer alike.

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*Every fortnight another one comes to me wanting to play the first Concerto; I have now become rude, and have told them: 'I cannot listen to this Concerto any more—did I perhaps write just this one?'*

—MAX BRUCH

Bruch titled the concerto's opening section "Prelude", suggesting that it serves primarily as an introduction to the more important second movement, the "Adagio". The "Prelude" opens in an air of quiet, brooding melancholy before breaking out into a full-blown and impassioned allegro. It builds up to two major climaxes before dying away in emotional exhaustion. Bruch then segues without pause into the heartfelt central "Adagio", which begins in a prayer-like atmosphere, then gradually gains both in activity and expressiveness. It features some of the most beautiful writing in the entire literature for violin.

Bruch concludes the concerto with a propulsive, Romani-style finale, anticipating the last movement of the concerto that Johannes Brahms wrote ten years later—a work also dedicated to, and premièred by, Joseph Joachim. The second theme has a noble contour, more elevated than heroic. It's definitely a dance but, in keeping with the concerto's overall character, it's still a rather serious one until a final *accelerando* hurtles the concerto across the finish line.

—Program note by Don Anderson

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

## Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27

Composed 1906–1907

60 min

### IN 1897, THE PREMIÈRE OF RACHMANINOFF'S

ambitious and intensely dramatic First Symphony proved such an unmitigated disaster that it plunged the 24-year-old composer into a depression so profound that he was virtually unable to compose. He needed three years and the help of a psychiatrist to revitalize his creative muse.

By the autumn of 1906, he came to feel that his activities as a pianist and a conductor were leaving too little time for his first love—composition. Seeking a retreat, he chose Dresden, Germany. He leased a villa, where he would spend several months during each of the next two and a half years. In that idyllic setting, he was free to relax, to ponder, and to allow his inherently expansive creative impulses to define their limits.

During this period, he composed several important scores, including his Piano Sonata No. 1 and the symphonic poem *Isle of the Dead*. Having finally exorcised the demon of his First Symphony's failure, he was able to consider the creation of a successor. He took great care with it, sincerely

wishing it to succeed. His efforts won total vindication when the first performance, which he conducted himself in St. Petersburg on February 8, 1908, scored a resounding triumph.

As with all three of his symphonies, the Second Symphony is bound together by a brief, simple recurring theme or "motto." This one is played by the double basses at the beginning of the first movement's slow, brooding introduction. The main "Allegro" presents a balance of restless, dramatic, and yearning elements. In its urgency and rhythmic drive, the following scherzo leans toward the tart style of Prokofiev, but only Rachmaninoff (or perhaps his idol, Tchaikovsky) could have written the soaring second theme.

The third movement "Adagio" is the symphony's beating heart, an outpouring of passionate lyricism virtually unsurpassed in all music. The principal theme is a long, glowing melody introduced by solo clarinet. As the movement develops, it touches repeated heights of rapture, before dying away into contented stillness. The symphony concludes with a surging, joyful rondo. Fleeting reminiscences of previous movements crop up, en route to the exhilarating conclusion.

—Program note by Don Anderson



An autograph manuscript of Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony, presumed to have been lost shortly after the work's première in 1908, was discovered in a private collection in 2004—complete with the composer's handwritten annotations and revisions—and sold at auction in May 2014 for £1,202,500.



## Gianandrea Noseda, conductor

Gianandrea Noseda made his TSO debut in April 2002.

Gianandrea Noseda is one of the world's most sought-after conductors, equally recognized for his artistry in both the concert hall and opera house. The 2024/25 season marks his eighth as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) in Washington, DC.

Noseda's leadership has inspired and reinvigorated the NSO, which makes its home at the Kennedy Center. The renewed artistic recognition and critical acclaim has led to invitations to Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and international concert halls; digital streaming; and the launch of a new record label distributed by LSO Live for which Noseda records as principal guest conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. The label's most recent releases include the complete *sinfonias* by George Walker, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington, DC native, and the NSO's first-ever recorded Beethoven cycle. He has made more than 80 recordings of an enormous range of repertoire for various labels, including Deutsche Grammophon and Chandos, for which his recordings included the *Musica Italiana* series dedicated to neglected Italian composers.

Noseda began his tenure as General Music Director of the Zurich Opera House in September 2021 and reached an important artistic milestone in May 2024 with two performances of Wagner's complete *Ring* cycle. Since April 2022, international critics have praised his interpretations of each individual *Ring* opera, leading the German OPER! AWARDS 2023 to recognize him as Best Conductor.

From 2007 to 2018, Noseda served as Music Director of the Teatro Regio Torino, where his leadership marked the opera house's golden era.

Noseda has conducted the most important international orchestras, opera houses, and festivals, and has had significant roles at the BBC Philharmonic (Chief Conductor), Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Principal Guest Conductor), Mariinsky Theatre (Principal Guest Conductor), Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI (Principal Guest Conductor), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Victor DeSabata Chair), Rotterdam Philharmonic (Principal Guest Conductor), and Stresa Festival (Artistic Director).

Noseda is very committed to working with the next generation of musicians and in 2019 was appointed the founding Music Director of the Tsinandali Festival and Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra in the village of Tsinandali, Georgia.

A native of Milan, Noseda is Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, marking his contribution to the artistic life of Italy. He has been honoured as *Musical America's* Conductor of the Year (2015), the International Opera Awards Conductor of the Year (2016), and the OPER! AWARDS "Beste Dirigent" (2023), and with the Puccini Award (2023).



## **Timothy Chooi, violin**

Timothy Chooi made his TSO *début* in May 2018.

Internationally acclaimed violinist Timothy Chooi (pronounced “Chewy”) continues to mesmerize global audiences with his electrifying performances and profound musical interpretations. Renowned for his passionate renditions and extensive repertoire, Chooi has cultivated a vast following, with millions of viewers captivated by his artistry both on stage and across digital platforms.

Chooi first burst onto the international scene by securing First Prize at the Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Hannover, Germany, and Second Prize at the prestigious Queen Elisabeth International Competition. His accolades also include the highly coveted Yves Paternot Prize from the Verbier Festival in Switzerland. These achievements have led to performances with top-tier orchestras, including the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Belgian National Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Wiener Concert-Verein. His appearances at iconic venues such as Carnegie Hall, Musikverein Wien, Berliner Philharmonie, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, and London’s Royal Albert Hall have garnered critical acclaim.

The upcoming touring season promises to be a thrilling chapter in Chooi’s career. He is set to collaborate with London’s Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring Emmy-nominated composer Brian Tyler. He will also make highly anticipated returns to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and Concertgebouw.

Chooi’s music is broadcast globally on prestigious stations, and in 2023 he recorded with Anne-Sophie Mutter and Mutter’s Virtuosi for Deutsche Grammophon. His performance with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic was featured on *medici.tv*, and his work has been aired on Amsterdam’s NPO Klassiek radio, New York’s WQXR, Belgium’s RTBF, Swiss Public Radio, CBC Radio, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and Danish Public Radio.

Born in Canada, Chooi possesses multicultural heritage that includes Chinese, Indonesian, and Malaysian roots. His journey began at the age of 16, with a *début* performance with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra that launched his career on the global stage. Inspired by his older brother, Nikki Chooi, Timothy has since established himself as one of the leading violinists of his generation.

In addition to his performance career, Chooi is deeply committed to the art of teaching. As Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa, he is recognized not only for his virtuosic playing but also for his dedication to nurturing the next generation of musicians. Chooi is celebrated for his innovative teaching methods, which combine traditional techniques with contemporary approaches to violin performance. His students have benefited from his unique perspective as an active performer on the world stage, gaining insights into both the technical and artistic aspects of playing. Under his mentorship, many students have gone on to win prestigious competitions and secure positions in leading orchestras worldwide.

Chooi performs on a distinguished collection of violins, including the 1741 “Titan” Guarneri del Gesù, on loan from Canimex of Drummondville, Quebec, since 2023; the 1709 “Engleman” Stradivarius, provided by the Nippon Music Foundation in Japan; and the 1761 Landolfi violin, which is endowed to him as Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa.