

**TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

## Pictures at an Exhibition

**Gustavo Gimeno**, conductor

**Jan Lisiecki**, piano (2024/25 TSO Spotlight Artist)

**Jonathan Crow**, violin

**Joseph Johnson**, cello

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**Carlos Simon**

*Wake Up! Concerto for Orchestra*

(Canadian Première)

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**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Cello  
in C Major, Op. 56

I. Allegro

II. Largo

III. Rondo alla polacca

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### Intermission

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**Modest Mussorgsky/orch. Sergei Gorchakov**  
*Pictures at an Exhibition*

Promenade 1

No. 1. Gnomus

Promenade 2

No. 2. Il vecchio castello [The Old Castle]

Promenade 3

No. 3. Tuileries (Dispute d'enfants après jeux) [Tuileries  
(Dispute between Children at Play)]

No. 4. Bydlo [Cattle]

Promenade 4

No. 5. Balet nevylyupivshikhsva ptentsov [Ballet of the  
Unhatched Chicks]

No. 6. Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle

Promenade 5

No. 7. Limoges. Le marché. (La grande nouvelle) [Limoges.  
The Market. (The Big News)]

No. 8. Catacombæ (Sepulcrum romanum). Con mortuis  
in lingua mortua [With the Dead in a Dead Language]

No. 9. Izbushka na kur'ikh nozhkakh (Baba-Yaga)  
[The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba-Yaga)]

No. 10. Bogatyrskie vorota (vo stol'nom gorode vo Kieve)  
[The Knight's Gate (in the Ancient Capital, Kiev)]

SEPTEMBER 25, 26 & 28, 2024

*Program 1*

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Wednesday,  
September 25, 2024  
8:00pm

Thursday,  
September 26, 2024  
8:00pm

Saturday,  
September 28, 2024  
8:00pm

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*Gustavo Gimeno's  
appearances are generously  
supported in memory  
of Hans and Susan  
Brenninkmeyer.*

*The September 25  
performance is generously  
supported by the TSO Board  
of Directors.*

*The September 26  
performance is generously  
supported by the Trustees  
of the Toronto Symphony  
Foundation.*

Carlos Simon (b. 1986)

## **Wake Up! Concerto for Orchestra**

Canadian Première

Composed 2023

20 min

**FROM THE COMPOSER:** This concerto for orchestra is inspired by the poem “Awake, Asleep” written by the Nepali poet Rajendra Bhandari. In this profound poetic offering, Bhandari warns of the danger of being obviously asleep in a social world, but yet how collective wakefulness provides “a bountiful harvest of thoughts.” My goal in writing this work was not only to wake a sleeping hall with the sound of the orchestra, but to leave those who hear the piece with the question: Am I asleep? For these reasons, I chose to compose a two-note rhythmic motif that acts as a “wake up call” throughout the composition—as if the orchestra is speaking to the hall and the audience, “WAKE UP!”

“  
*Like sleep, wakefulness too is  
contagious,  
One rubs his eyes as he awakes,  
sighs and coughs...  
another coughs, another sits up, talks.  
all talk to each other,  
the talking growing into a din...  
Like a sprouting shoot of thought  
One thought sprouts, and another...  
and another.  
becoming a bountiful harvest of  
thoughts.*

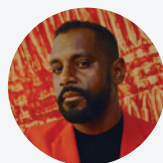
—EXCERPT FROM “AWAKE, ASLEEP” BY RAJENDRA BHANDARI,  
TRANSLATED FROM NEPALI BY PANKAJ THAPA

**COMPOSER BIO:** Atlanta native Carlos Simon’s music ranges from concert works for large and small ensembles to film scores with influences of jazz, gospel, and neo-romanticism. He is Composer-in-Residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and frequently writes for the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera. He is also the inaugural Composer Chair of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The 2024/25 season will see première performances of works by Simon from the National Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra for the Last Night of the Proms, Jacksonville Symphony, Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, and National Youth Orchestra of the USA at Carnegie Hall. Further, Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic will première his *Gospel Mass*—a work reimagining the traditional mass with gospel soloists and choir.

Simon’s celebrated discography includes the orchestral album *Four Symphonic Works; Together; brea(d)th*, a landmark work written in response to the murder of George Floyd; and the GRAMMY®-nominated *Requiem for the Enslaved*; among others.

Simon earned his doctorate at the University of Michigan and is an Associate Professor at Georgetown University. He was a recipient of the 2021 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, the highest honour bestowed by the Sphinx Organization to recognize extraordinary classical Black and Latinx musicians.



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

## Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Cello in C Major, Op. 56

Composed 1803–1804

34 min

**COMPOSED BETWEEN 1803 AND 1804**, and unique in Beethoven's output, the Triple Concerto was a late specimen of the *symphonie concertante*, a sort of concerto for multiple soloists that was popular in the later 18th century. The genre tended to be a vehicle for light entertainment, for showing off virtuoso soloists, but the Triple Concerto has the grand scale, heroic rhetoric, and orchestral brilliance typical of Beethoven's middle-period style (if not quite the profundity of, say, the "Eroica" Symphony). With its three soloists forming a detachable piano trio, set against the backdrop of a full orchestra, it gave Beethoven the opportunity to explore an enormous range of thematic ideas, instrumental textures, and tone colours. Surprisingly, he gave the most prominent solo role to the cello, not, as one might expect, the violin or piano; moreover, he carefully controlled the piano writing to keep it from overwhelming the trio.

The first movement is already full of surprises—a splendid orchestral introduction, a spacious and theme-rich solo exposition, modulations to unexpected keys, massive deceptive cadences at crucial junctures, and a tense development section brimming with new ideas. The second movement opens with a broad singing melody that seems to promise a very spacious slow movement; instead, the three soloists, after embellishing and briefly extending the melody, lapse into a striking recitative-like episode that takes us into the finale. The second movement, it turns out, is merely an extended introduction to the

third. (This was the first concerto in which Beethoven linked the last two movements—the norm in all of his later concertos.)

The finale, "Rondo alla polacca", is in the style of the polonaise, which was a popular Polish dance in Beethoven's day. The march-like triple time of the polonaise is present from the start, though Beethoven's conception of the dance is more graceful and aristocratic than heroic. In this movement, too, there are many surprises—new themes, harmonic detours, and felicities of instrumentation. The coda is remarkable: switching from triple to duple time and quickening the tempo to allegro, Beethoven offers two splendid variations on his main theme, then a written-out cadenza for the trio, before bringing back the original polonaise (now with a witty dialogue between trio and orchestra) and appending a brilliant close.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



↑ Beethoven's Triple Concerto was premièred in 1808 at the Palais Augarten in Vienna. Constructed in 1692, and occupied by members of the Habsburg family until the early 20th century, Augarten also hosted W. A. Mozart, Schubert, Wagner, and Liszt over the years. Since 1948, it has been the headquarters of the Vienna Boys' Choir.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881)/  
orch. Sergei Gorchakov (1905–1976)

## ***Pictures at an Exhibition***

*Composed 1874; orchestrated 1954*

**31 min**

**AS ONE OF THE FIVE COMPOSERS** of the *Moguchaya kuchka* (the Mighty Handful), Modest Mussorgsky sought to create a distinctly “Russian” music by incorporating Russian folk idioms, such as traditional melodies, harmonies, and folk-art topics, into his works. The architect and artist Viktor Hartmann, whom he met in 1870, shared a similar interest in using Russian elements in his designs and paintings. Following Hartmann’s sudden death in 1873, a memorial exhibition of his work was mounted. As tribute to his friend, Mussorgsky created *Pictures at an Exhibition*, based on a selection of Hartmann’s artworks, which he evoked using techniques of musical realism.

*Pictures* is probably Mussorgsky’s best-known work. Although originally conceived by the composer as a cycle of piano miniatures, its popularity is a result of there being many transcriptions of it, at least nine created for orchestra alone. The most frequently performed and recorded of these is by Maurice Ravel from 1922, which cemented the piece’s status in the concert repertoire.

Tonight, you’ll hear the 1954 transcription by Russian composer Sergei Gorchakov. Compared to the French Impressionistic palette of Ravel’s version, Gorchakov’s emphasizes the lower strings, woodwinds, and brass, thereby creating deeper timbres and sonorities. Overall, the distinctive colours of instruments and instrumental sections are maintained rather than blended. Such aspects give the work a more “Russian” character, and in this sense may be considered more faithful to Mussorgsky’s original conception.

The opening folk-inspired melody portrays the composer’s/promenader’s

leisurely stroll through the exhibition. This theme returns four more times, reflecting changes in mood, as the promenader contemplates the artworks just “viewed.” Following the first “Promenade”, a lurching rhythm evokes the awkward gait of a “nutcracker” gnome, its grotesque features represented by dissonant harmonies. In the second “picture,” of a troubadour singing outside a medieval castle, a muted trumpet (in this version) croons a Russian “serenade without words”. Next, playful music depicts children in the Tuileries Garden as they taunt their “Niania” (Russian for “nanny”), mimicked in the repeated falling figure on clarinet. This picture of privilege is contrasted with that of the sudden appearance of a Polish ox-drawn cart, its bulky wheels and the heavy tread of hooves characterized by ponderous chords. Horns and trombones intone a melancholy folk-like melody reminiscent of those sung by cart drivers.

Wandering back to more transparent textures, piccolo and flutes imitate the sounds of chicks tapping their shells, breaking out of them and tottering around. Expressive portraits of a rich and a poor Jew (named by Mussorgsky in the piece’s title) follow, combining the former’s commanding speech, first articulated by clarinets and strings, with the latter’s lamenting whine and trembling demeanour on soprano saxophone. The “Promenade” theme next leads into a musical depiction of a crowd of women loudly quarrelling in a Limoges market. We then plunge directly into the eerie atmosphere of the catacombs; the “Promenade” melody here becomes chant-like, as Mussorgsky evokes the skulls glowing in the lamplight. Thereafter, we encounter the terrifying witch from Russian fairy tales, Baba-Yaga, who lives in a hut on hen’s legs. Nightmarish music depicts her riding in her mortar, propelled by a pestle, which she uses to crush the bones of lost children.

*Pictures* culminates in a grand musical fantasy inspired by Hartmann's elaborate architectural design for a commemorative gate at Kiev that he created for a competition but was never realized. Here, the "Promenade" melody is at last incorporated into one of the musical pictures, reworked as a majestic processional tune, as if the promenader is now part of the parade. Presented plainly at first, it alternates with quietly stark statements of the Russian hymn "As you are baptized in Christ". The theme later returns decorated with peeling bells, then a final climactic version brings this musical exhibition to a glorious close.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD

For a biography of Gustavo Gimeno, please turn to page 8.



### Jan Lisiecki, piano (2024/25 TSO Spotlight Artist)

Jan Lisiecki made his TSO début in January 2012.

Canadian pianist Jan Lisiecki looks back on a career spanning a decade and a half on the world's greatest stages. He works closely with the foremost conductors and orchestras of our time, performing more than a hundred concerts a year.

The 2024/25 season will see him returning to the Boston Symphony, London Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, and Seattle Symphony. He will lead the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in 19 concerts on a tour throughout Germany and Austria, including the complete Beethoven cycles in residencies at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, in Munich, and in Cologne. As a Toronto Symphony Orchestra 2024/25 Spotlight Artist, he will inaugurate the orchestra's season and return to lead them from the piano in a complete cycle of Beethoven concertos.

He will be bringing his acclaimed Preludes solo-recital program, recently celebrated at Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, to La Scala in Milan, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, and the Klavier-Festival Ruhr. A duo program of Mozart, Beethoven, and R. Schumann together with Julia Fischer brings him to 15 venues across Europe and the US, including New York's Lincoln Center, Chicago's Symphony Center, Boston's Jordan Hall, Berlin's Philharmonie, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, and Munich's Prinzregententheater.

Recent return invitations include the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, and Staatskapelle Dresden. He made his début with the Berlin Philharmonic in spring 2024. Lisiecki is a fixture at major summer festivals across Europe and North America, has performed at the Salzburg Festival, and recently made his third appearance at the BBC Proms. His previous recital program was celebrated in more than 50 cities around the globe.

Lisiecki was offered an exclusive recording contract by Deutsche Grammophon at the age of 15. Since then, he has recorded nine albums, which have received a JUNO Award, ECHO Klassik, *Gramophone* Critics' Choice, Diapason d'Or, and Edison Klassiek.

At 18, he received both the Leonard Bernstein Award and *Gramophone's* Young Artist Award, becoming the youngest-ever recipient of the latter. He was named UNICEF Canada Ambassador in 2012.



### **Jonathan Crow, violin**

Jonathan Crow made his TSO solo début in September 2011.

One of Canada's most dynamic talents, violinist Jonathan Crow exudes "masterful coolness" (*Montreal Gazette*) as Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. A native of Prince George, BC, Crow joined the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in 1998 as Associate Principal Second Violin, and was Concertmaster from 2002 and 2006, becoming the youngest concertmaster of a major North American orchestra. Crow performs as guest concertmaster with orchestras around the world, including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Boston and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia de Lanaudière, and Pernambuco Festival Orchestra (Brazil).

Crow has appeared as a soloist with most major Canadian orchestras including the Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras, the National Arts Centre and Calgary Philharmonic Orchestras, the Victoria and Kingston Symphonies, and Orchestra London, under such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Andrew Davis, Peter Oundjian, Gustavo Gimeno, Kent Nagano, Mario Bernardi, and João Carlos Martins.

An avid chamber musician, Crow has performed at many chamber music festivals in Europe and North America, and is the Artistic Director of Toronto Summer Music and the founder and curator of The TSO Chamber Soloists. He is also a founding member of the JUNO Award-winning New Orford String Quartet. Crow is currently Associate Professor of Violin at the University of Toronto.



### **Joseph Johnson, cello**

Joseph Johnson made his TSO solo début in November 2010.

Principal Cello of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since the 2009/10 season, Joseph Johnson previously held the same position with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He also serves as Principal Cellist of the Santa Fe Opera, and was acting Principal Cellist of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra in 2008/09. Johnson has performed as Guest Principal Cellist with the San Francisco, Detroit, and Trondheim Symphonies and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Prior to his Milwaukee appointment, he was a member of the Minnesota Orchestra cello section for 11 years. He was also a founding member of the Prospect Park Players and the Minneapolis Quartet, which was honoured with The McKnight Foundation Award in 2005.

A champion of new music, Johnson has played the Canadian Premieres of the Unsuk Chin, Miguel del Aguila, and Marc-André Dalbavie Cello Concertos, and the North American Premiere of the Peter Eötvös Cello Concerto.

A gifted and inspiring teacher, Johnson was recently named Associate Professor of Cello at the Eastman School of Music. He previously taught at the University of Toronto. He is a coach and teacher at the New World Symphony in Miami, and was the cello coach for the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra for ten years. He has also conducted numerous master classes for a wide range of institutions and ensembles. Johnson performs on a J. B. Vuillaume cello from 1840.