

Presented by

TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Program 1

Saturday,
February 7, 2026
7:30pm

National Arts Centre Orchestra's Eroica

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano
National Arts Centre Orchestra, guest orchestra

Jocelyn Morlock
My Name is Amanda Todd
(NAC Orchestra Commission)

Camille Saint-Saëns
Piano Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103
"Egyptian"
I. Allegro animato
II. Andante
III. Molto allegro

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven
Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 "Eroica"
I. Allegro con brio
II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace
IV. Finale: Allegro molto

A Message from Alexander Shelley

It is a joy for the National Arts Centre Orchestra to share this evening with you at Roy Thomson Hall—a venue that has long felt like home thanks to the warmth and generosity of your welcome. Our Toronto performances are a cherished part of each season, and we are deeply grateful to our friends at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra for hosting us once again.

Tonight is especially meaningful for me, as it marks my final performance at Roy Thomson Hall after more than a decade as NACO's Music Director. Leading this extraordinary ensemble and collaborating with these brilliant musicians has been one of the great privileges of my life. My tenure has been enriched by the partnership between our orchestra and the TSO—rooted in mutual respect and admiration—and I look forward to seeing this uniquely Canadian collaboration continue to flourish.

Thank you for being here tonight and for continuing to support the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Enjoy the concert! *Bon spectacle!*

Jocelyn Morlock (1969–2023)

My Name is Amanda Todd

NAC Orchestra Commission

Composed 2015

12 min

The late Jocelyn Morlock was one of Canada's leading composers, who wrote compelling music that has been recorded extensively and receives numerous performances and broadcasts throughout North America and Europe. Born in Winnipeg, she studied piano at Brandon University and later earned master's and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of British Columbia, where she was a recent instructor and lecturer in composition. The inaugural composer-in-residence for Vancouver's Music on Main Society (2012–2014), she took on the same role for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra from 2014 to 2019.

*Morlock had close ties with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, which, in 2015, commissioned *My Name is Amanda Todd*, a powerful work about the teen from Port Coquitlam, BC, who took her own life due to cyberbullying. It subsequently won the 2018 JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year.*

Here is Morlock's description of the work:

WHEN I FIRST APPROACHED writing this piece, I was focused on what happened to Amanda, and was feeling how devastating

it must be to have people endlessly sharing bad messages and comments about you, especially at such a young age. That negativity seemed overwhelming. When talking to her mother, Carol Todd, and to the NAC Orchestra's [then Managing Director] Christopher Deacon, I became aware of how transformational and empowering it would be for this young girl, Amanda, to take control and to tell her own story on this very same platform that people were using against her.

When I met Carol, she told me about all the places that she would be speaking, because people are finally recognizing the need to do something to stop cyberbullying. She told me about the kids who reach out to her and are looking for help, or who reach out to her to tell her that Amanda's videos and her story have helped them; kids who, because of Amanda and Carol, found hope in their situation. I'm left with a feeling of profound joy in Amanda's bravery and Carol's message.

Musically, the opening of the piece *My Name is Amanda Todd* draws first on overwhelming sorrow, which grows into a furtive, somewhat frenzied negative energy, like the uncontrolled proliferation of negative comments and images. I then use almost the same musical material (very similar small gestures, pitches, and rhythms) and gradually modify it to create increasingly powerful, positive music.

—Program note courtesy of the NAC Orchestra



The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is Canada's largest mental health and addiction

teaching hospital, and a world-leading research centre in its field. CAMH combines clinical care, research, education, policy development, and system leadership to help transform the lives of people affected by mental illness and addiction.

Help & Resources

Where there is help, there is hope. Visit camh.ca/en/today-campaign/help-and-resources for suicide prevention, youth mental health, addiction, and general mental health resources.

9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline

Call or text 9-8-8, toll-free, 24/7/365.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Piano Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103 “Egyptian”

Composed 1896

29 min

THROUGHOUT HIS LONG CAREER as a French composer and virtuoso pianist of international renown, Saint-Saëns was an avid traveller—his concert tours alone took him from England to southern Europe and Scandinavia, as well as to East Asia, South America, and the United States. Algiers became a favourite retreat, for it was where he could compose without the distractions and pressures of Parisian life. Saint-Saëns’s visits to Egypt were also formative; in January 1896, he completed his Fifth (and final) Piano Concerto during a stay in Cairo. He performed the solo part at the May 6 première in Paris, as part of a concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first recital at the Salle Pleyel. Critics reviewed the new work enthusiastically: “Never have we heard a more colourful and gripping work,” wrote Édouard Mangeot in *Le Monde musical*. With several subsequent performances given by Louis Diémer, the work’s dedicatee, the concerto quickly entered the repertoire.

By turns graceful and powerful, the Fifth Piano Concerto demands extraordinary virtuosity: “the piano part is formidable,” explained Saint-Saëns to his publisher Auguste Durand, with many passages “to make one tremble,” including blazing scales, cascades of chords, trill sequences, and dazzling octaves. In all three movements, Saint-Saëns significantly loosened traditional formal structures to enable such displays. The first movement, for one, unfolds like a fantasia on two main themes—a lilting chorale-like tune and a wistful melody with a rocking motive. As the piano and the orchestra develop these themes, the music also intensifies with passionate agitation, sometimes arriving at dramatic quasi-cadenzas for the soloist. Eventually,

the anxieties are resolved: listen out for the piano’s transformation of the wistful melody into a warm memory, after which sparkling runs draw the movement to a sunny close.

The concerto acquired its moniker “Egyptian” from the second movement, which Saint-Saëns described as a “kind of journey eastward,” likely inspired by a trip he took to Saigon by way of Spain and Egypt in 1895. Evoking various ports of call, four main themes are revealed in succession. Firstly, the piano, propelled by energetic syncopations from the orchestra, presents an Arabic-sounding theme on which it rhapsodizes extensively. This gives way to a tender melody, also introduced by the piano, that Saint-Saëns acknowledged “is a Nubian love song that I heard boat operators sing on the Nile as I travelled downriver on a dahabieh.” (Whether it is authentically Egyptian is unknown.) Together, piano and orchestra elaborate on the song, which leads into musings on a sweet and graceful tune. From here, the musical journey “extends to the Far East,” noted the composer, with an episode featuring a delicate pentatonic melody. A Spanish guitar-like cadenza follows, after which the opening material is recalled, and the movement fades out hauntingly.

The finale is a brilliant toccata-style movement that expresses “the joy of a sea crossing, a joy that not everyone shares,” as Saint-Saëns had told French pianist Isidor Philipp. Following a motoric lead-up, the solo piano launches into the glittering first theme (woodwinds soon state a more clear-cut version). Then, via a transition of upward-sweeping phrases, the second theme emerges on piano: bouncy and dancing at first, then lyrical and tender. Thereafter, through further development of the themes, the music builds in power and intensity, ultimately reaching a triumphant frenzy at the concerto’s conclusion.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD,
courtesy of the NAC Orchestra

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 “Eroica”

Composed 1802–1804

47 min

ONE OF WESTERN ART MUSIC’S GROUNDBREAKING WORKS, Beethoven’s Third Symphony arose from a significant turning point in the composer’s life. He began work on it in 1802, after having weathered a personal crisis over his deafness, out of which he discovered a new artistic path. He initially dedicated the symphony, completed in 1804, to Napoleon Bonaparte, whom he saw as a champion of freedom and the hero of the French Revolution. However, before Beethoven could send the score to Paris, Napoleon had crowned himself Emperor of France; in a fury over the ruler’s ambitions, the composer tore up the title page (an existing manuscript shows the name “Bonaparte” so vigorously scratched out that a hole was made in the paper). Following the symphony’s first public performance on April 7, 1805, at the Theater an der Wien, Beethoven’s misgivings about Napoleon led him to eventually publish the work simply as “Sinfonia eroica” (“Heroic Symphony”).

Under this generic title, the Third Symphony came to embody the universal qualities of heroism—that of confronting adversity to bring forth new creative possibilities. Its musical content is, to an extent, bound up with Beethoven’s 1801 ballet score *The Creatures of Prometheus*, based on the mythic titan who stole fire from the gods to ennoble humankind with his gifts of knowledge and civilization. For one, the main theme of the symphony’s finale is drawn from the ballet’s final number. Furthermore, the symphony’s four movements trace a Promethean hero’s journey—from struggle to death to rebirth to apotheosis. To convey this arc, Beethoven expanded the scope and expressive

capabilities of symphonic form; the result is a work of hitherto unprecedented scale and extraordinary emotional power that continues to resonate with listeners today.

The hero’s struggle is evoked in an opening movement of immense breadth. Within moments, the noble main theme on cellos descends to a dissonance—a symbolic thorn in the movement’s side. In the vastly expanded central development section, the crisis comes to a peak with a great syncopated passage that reaches a cataclysmic silence; with nowhere else to go, a new melancholy-tinged melody emerges. It wanders searchingly and is confronted and seemingly “dealt with” by the heroic main tune before the recap of themes. Yet, this melody reappears later, its presence so disruptive that the ensuing instability can only be resolved by a closing coda of considerable length.

In the following movement, a majestic funeral march commemorates the hero’s death. The first section proceeds with solemn grandeur, after which we catch a glimpse of the heavenly realm that awaits the fallen hero. When the march returns, it takes a new path with a sombre theme that is picked up in turn by sections of the orchestra, resolutely building up in layers to a terrifying climax. The movement expires on the march disintegrated into fragments. Out of these musical ashes, a whirling scherzo materializes from chattering figures to a full-blown tune suggesting the hero’s spirit reborn.

After a grand opening flourish, the strings pluck the bare bones of the finale’s theme. What begins as humorous clunkiness is subjected to further refinement and playful metamorphosis in an inventive series of variations. Indeed, the entire finale can be read as a metaphor for creativity unleashed, free to revel in transformative possibilities.

—Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley, PhD, courtesy of the NAC Orchestra



Alexander Shelley, conductor

The 2025/26 season is Alexander Shelley's 11th and final season as Music Director of Canada's National Arts Centre (NAC) Orchestra. Since assuming the role in 2015, Shelley has shaped the NAC Orchestra's artistic vision, building on the legacy of his predecessor, Pinchas Zukerman, who led the ensemble for 16 seasons.

Shelley has championed new works by Canadian composers and expanded the NAC Orchestra's reach through national and international tours, livestreams, and critically acclaimed recordings. His visionary programming has been credited with transforming the ensemble "almost overnight...into one of the more audacious orchestras in North America" (*Maclean's*).

Under his leadership, the NAC Orchestra has undertaken major tours of Canada and Europe, and to Carnegie Hall. In spring 2025, the orchestra embarked on a landmark tour of Asia—returning to Japan for the first time in 40 years and making its *début* in the Republic of Korea.

Shelley also serves as the Principal Associate Conductor of London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Music and Artistic Director of Artis—Naples and the Naples Philharmonic in Florida. Beginning in the 2026/27 season, he will assume two new roles: Artistic and Music Director of the Pacific Symphony in Orange County, California, and Principal Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra Ireland. From 2009 to 2017, Shelley was Chief Conductor of the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra in Germany.

Born in London to concert pianists, Shelley studied cello and conducting in Germany. He gained international attention in 2005 when he won first prize at the Leeds Conductors Competition, with the press hailing him as "the most exciting and gifted young conductor to have taken this highly prestigious award."



Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano

Through elegant musicality and an insightful approach to contemporary and established repertoire, Jean-Yves Thibaudet has earned a reputation as one of the world's finest pianists. He is especially known for his diverse interests beyond the classical world, including numerous collaborations in film, fashion, and visual art. He is the first-ever Artist-in-Residence at the Colburn School, which awards several scholarships in his name.

This season, Thibaudet appears in concerts and recitals around the world in works ranging from Gershwin's *Concerto in F* to Saint-Saëns's *Piano Concerto No. 5*, Bernstein's *Symphony No. 2 "The Age of Anxiety"*, Scriabin's *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*, and Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*. A major champion of Khachaturian's *Piano Concerto*, Thibaudet performs the piece with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and New York Philharmonic. In addition to his orchestral dates, Thibaudet joins violinist Lisa Batiashvili and cellist Gautier Capuçon on a fall trio tour, with stops throughout western Europe. He also continues his multi-season focus on Debussy's *Préludes*, performing both books in their entirety at recitals around the world.

A prolific recording artist, Thibaudet has appeared on more than 70 albums and six film scores; his extensive catalogue has received two GRAMMY® nominations, two ECHO Awards,

the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik, the Diapason d'Or, the CHOC du Monde de la Musique, the Edison Prize, and Gramophone Awards. Recent recordings include *Khachaturian*, a celebration of the Armenian composer including his Piano Concerto and several solo piano pieces; and *Gershwin Rhapsody*, a selection of Gershwin pieces recorded with Michael Feinstein, including four newly discovered ones. He is the soloist on Dario Marianelli's recently reissued score for *Pride & Prejudice*, which was certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America in 2025. His playing can also be heard on Marianelli's score for *Atonement*, Alexandre Desplat's scores for *The French Dispatch* and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, and Aaron Zigman's score for *Wakefield*. His concert wardrobe is designed by Dame Vivienne Westwood. Thibaudet records exclusively for Decca Classics. Thibaudet's worldwide representation: HarrisonParrott.

National Arts Centre Orchestra

The National Arts Centre (NAC) Orchestra, based in Ottawa, is one of Canada's most vibrant and acclaimed ensembles. Since its founding in 1969, the NAC Orchestra has earned recognition for its passionate performances, innovative learning and engagement programs, and unwavering commitment to Canadian creativity.

Led by Music Director Alexander Shelley, the orchestra reflects the fabric and values of Canada, engaging communities from coast to coast to coast through inclusive programming, compelling storytelling, and visionary partnerships. Under Shelley's leadership, the ensemble has championed Canadian creation through major tours, critically acclaimed recordings, and the commissioning of more than 50 new works by Canadian composers. In fall 2025, the orchestra announced an exciting new chapter with the appointment of world-renowned Finnish conductor John Storgårds as its next Music Director, beginning in the 2026/27 season.

The orchestra regularly collaborates with internationally celebrated performers, including James Ehnes, Angela Hewitt, Renée Fleming, Hilary Hahn, Jeremy Dutcher, Jan Lisiecki, Ray Chen, and Yeol Eum Son—affirming its reputation as a destination for world-class talent and the next generation of artists.

Beyond the concert stage, the NAC Orchestra's learning and engagement initiatives strengthen local arts ecosystems, deepen community connections, and foster cultural exchange. Its family and school programs feature interactive performances, side-by-side mentorship with young musicians, and community concerts designed to spark curiosity and inspire a lifelong love of music.

The NAC Orchestra is also deeply committed to professional development, offering emerging artists opportunities to refine their craft through its annual Mentorship Program and two-year Resident Conductor position.

Touring regularly across Canada and internationally, the orchestra has performed in every province and territory, as well as in North America, Europe, and Asia.

Members of the National Arts Centre Orchestra

Alexander Shelley, Music Director

John Storgårds, Principal Guest Conductor and Music Director Designate

Pinchas Zukerman, Conductor Emeritus

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, Principal Youth Conductor and Community Ambassador

Henry Kennedy, Resident Conductor

FIRST VIOLINS

Yosuke Kawasaki
(concertmaster)
Jessica Linnebach
(associate concertmaster)
Noémi Racine Gaudreault**
(assistant concertmaster)
Jeffrey Dyrda
Jeremy Mastrangelo
Emily Westell
Oleg Chelpanov*
Renée London*

SECOND VIOLINS

Emily Kruspe (principal)
Mark Friedman
Jessy Kim
Carissa Klopoushak
Manuela Milani
Frédéric Moisan
Leah Roseman
Marjolaine Lambert**
Karoly Sziladi**
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Andréa Armijo Fortin*
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VIOLAS

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David Marks
(associate principal)

David Goldblatt
(assistant principal)
Tovin Allers
Paul Casey
David Thies-Thompson
Sonya Probst*

CELLOS

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Julia MacLaine**
(assistant principal)
Timothy McCoy
Marc-André Riberdy
Leah Wyber
Desiree Abbey*
Karen Kang*
Sonya Matousova*
Daniel Parker*
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Max Cardilli
(assistant principal)
Vincent Gendron
Travis Harrison*
Paul Mach*

FLUTES

Joanna G'froerer (principal)
Stephanie Morin
Kaili Maimets*

OBOES

Charles Hamann
(principal)
Anna Petersen**
Melissa Scott*

ENGLISH HORN

Anna Petersen**

CLARINETS

Kimball Sykes (principal)
Sean Rice

BASSOONS

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(associate principal)
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Nate Fanning*

BASS TROMBONE

Zachary Bond

TUBAS

Chris Lee** (principal)
Justin Hickmott*
(guest principal)

TIMPANI

Paul Philbert MBE
(principal)

PERCUSSION

Andrew Johnson
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ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL COORDINATOR

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*Additional musicians
**On leave

NAC Acknowledgements

Annabelle Cloutier, President and Chief Executive Officer



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