TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Program 3

Thursday, October 8, 2026
7:30pm

Friday, October 9, 2026
7:30pm

Saturday, October 10, 2026
7:30pm

Beethoven's Fifth

Riccardo Minasi, conductor
Angela Hewitt, piano (2026/27 TSO Spotlight Artist)

Jörg Widmann
Con brio Concert Overture for Orchestra

Ludwig van Beethoven
Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante con moto
III. Rondo: Vivace

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven
Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67
I. Allegro con brio
II. Andante con moto
III. Allegro
IV. Allegro

The TSO Chamber Soloists

Friday, October 9, 2026
6:15pm

Angela Hewitt, piano
Matthew Hakkarainen, violin
Clare Semes, violin
Theresa Rudolph, viola
Evalynn Tyros, viola
Lucia Ticho, cello
Christopher Laven, double bass
Kelly Zimba Lukić, flute
Eric Abramovitz, clarinet
Christopher Gongos, horn

Ludwig van Beethoven
Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Major
I. Allegro vivace
II. Adagio con espressione
III. Rondo: Allegro

Andrew James Clark
*The Earth Above, The Sky Below**
I. Reflection
II. Articulation
III. Prayer
IV. Lamentation
V. Ascension
VI. Evensong
VII. Memory

**Created for the Art of Healing program in collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*

The TSO Spotlight Artists are generously supported by Zenovia Zmiyiwsky.

Jörg Widmann (b. 1973)

Con brio Concert Overture for Orchestra

Composed 2008

12 min

Con brio, an homage to Beethoven, was performed for the first time by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Mariss Jansons. It was at the world première of the piece that Jansons suggested that Jörg Widmann refers to musical characteristics of Beethoven's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies in his composition. His starting points primarily are specific fast types of movement in the Beethoven works, which he translates into his tonal language. Widmann has chosen the same instrumentation as the Beethoven symphonies and takes on the task of causing a similar "stir and rhythmic pressure" (Widmann) with these economical means.



COMPOSER BIO:
Jörg Widmann is one of the most remarkable and versatile artists of his generation. He is Artistic Director of the Lucerne Festival Academy, Associated Artist of SWR Experimentalstudio, Principal Guest Conductor of NDR Radiophilharmonie, and Associate Conductor of Münchener Kammerorchester. In 2026/27, he is set to take on a dual role with Staatskapelle Dresden: for the first time in the orchestra's history, a single artist will serve as both Capell-Compositeur and Capell-Virtuos. He also serves as Artist in Residence of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin.

This season, Widmann appears worldwide in all his facets, as a clarinetist, conductor, and composer. A particular highlight awaits in March 2027, when he will conduct the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra for the first time. Reinvitations will take him to the Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and WDR Sinfonieorchester, among others. His new work, *Overture on B-A-C-H based on late sketches by Ludwig van Beethoven*, will receive its world première from the Gewandhausorchester and Andris Nelsons as part of a Beethoven cycle. Prior to that, the Staatskapelle Dresden and Daniele Gatti will première his new arrangement of his String Quartet No. 8 (Beethoven-Study III) as part of a major Beethoven cycle at the Semperoper Dresden.

Widmann's compositions are performed regularly by the world's leading conductors and orchestras. He was Composer in Residence with Berliner Philharmoniker during the 2023/24 season, and the residency culminated in the world première of his Concerto for Horn, with Stefan Dohr as soloist and Sir Simon Rattle conducting. February 2025 saw the world première of his *Cantata in tempore belli* at the Elbphilharmonie with Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg under Kent Nagano, who also performed the work in Kyiv in June 2025. His latest composition, *Jupiter-Etüde*, had its world première as part of the Mozart Festival Würzburg in June 2026.

Widmann studied clarinet with Gerd Starke in Munich and Charles Neidich at The Juilliard School in New York. He studied composition with Kay Westermann, Wilfried Hiller, Hans Werner Henze, and Wolfgang Rihm. His works continue to receive many prestigious awards.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58

Composed 1805–1806

34 min

Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto had its première in Vienna on December 22, 1808, with the composer conducting from the keyboard—the last time he performed a concerto in public. (He "played astonishingly well at the fastest possible tempos," one listener noted.) In this most lyrical, poetic, and fantastical of his concertos, Beethoven does not abandon Mozartian concerto form but imbues it with a genuinely Romantic voice, reconceived in ways all the more expressive for their audacity. The work is rich in themes, some of them appearing as dreamy digressions or with piquant details of harmony, texture, and ornamentation. All three movements feature sudden shifts of mood; the work is ardent and melancholy, heroic and ethereal, anguished and whimsical. Beethoven draws novel, vibrant colours from both orchestra and piano (this was his first concerto to exploit the tonal resources of the new six-octave Viennese fortepiano), and the relationship of the two forces is unusually complex and dramatic. The piano writing is brilliant and rhapsodic, full of sensuous melodies, sweeping scales and arpeggios, and decorative figuration in the highest register.

In the "Andante con moto", an astonishingly original conception, the two forces play utterly different music: the orchestra (strings only) makes jagged, forceful pronouncements to which the piano replies with quiet chords and poignant melody, and, as this dialogue unfolds, the strings are calmed by the piano's entreaties. (At the première, Beethoven "sang on his instrument with a deep melancholy feeling.") The rhetoric of protagonist and antagonist, and the recitative-like textures hint at a dramatic situation. Indeed, many commentators have heard this movement as a meditation on the myth of Orpheus, who, shielded by the music of his lyre, braves the underworld to retrieve his dead beloved, Eurydice, winning over hostile Furies with his song, guiding Eurydice through the gloom, but losing her again when he breaks his vow and looks back at her. (Note the piano's heart-rending dissonance on the downbeat of the last bar.)

The whole work, in fact, may relate to the myth; it would explain certain curious features in the outer movements. The meditative chords for unaccompanied piano in the opening bars—in a striking departure from concerto convention—perhaps evoke Orpheus tuning his lyre (Carl Czerny, Beethoven's pupil and close friend, recommended that the chords be broken, harp-like). Musicologist Owen Jander, for one, viewed the whole work as a cycle—an "Orpheus concerto"—and related the outer movements to other episodes of the myth: the first movement to "the Song of Orpheus" (during which Orpheus amazes all of nature), and the closing rondo to "the grisly tale of Orpheus torn limb from limb by the vengeful Bacchantes." The playful and dance-like finale seems to undercut the Orphean argument. Yet there may be at least one telling correspondence: according to Ovid, the Bacchantes drown out Orpheus's magical lyre by playing "wind instruments, brass instruments, and drums"; Beethoven pointedly withholds the trumpets and drums of his orchestra until bar 32 of the finale.

No documentary evidence proves that Beethoven wrote this concerto with Orpheus in mind, though the correspondences between myth and music are so compelling, and make sense of so many strange departures from Classical models, that they are difficult to dismiss as coincidental. Regardless, this music is unusually vivid, picturesque, and imaginative—that much is undeniable.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

Composed 1807–1808

36 min

The Fifth Symphony may be the most familiar work in all of classical music, and today it is a struggle to recapture the astonishment with which it was received in Beethoven's day, or to appreciate how replete with novelties—how radical—it was. In a review of the Fifth Symphony published in 1810, E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote that Beethoven "unlocks the marvellous realm of the infinite," "awakens that endless longing that is the essence of Romanticism," and "surrenders himself to the inexpressible." It was a pathetic work, in the old sense of the word—impassioned, full of emotion and pathos. Unrestrained by conventional notions of beauty, order, and good taste, this was no mere pleasant half-hour for an early 19th-century audience accustomed to regarding a symphony as public entertainment, but an elevated, edifying, sometimes disturbing, ultimately uplifting musical drama. As Hoffmann noted, a symphony could be philosophical and metaphysical—and reveal a composer's whole world view.

In all four movements, Beethoven plays fast and loose with Classical conventions, yet his forms are as logical and organic as they are unpredictable. Note, for instance, his near-obsessive developing of the famous "da-da-da-daaah" four-note motif with which the piece begins ("Thus Fate knocks at the door!" he supposedly remarked of that motif). The result is a dense, driven first movement in which tension accumulates steadily and finally explodes in furious convulsions.

The ingenuity of the Fifth extends beyond the individual movements to the structure of the whole: the four movements form a unified cycle in which the confident finale, in radiant C major, is eventually heard as the goal to which the work's stormy opening bars aspire. The brassy, celebratory finale resolves and transcends the musical argument of the previous movements: militaristic episodes in the march-like slow movement look ahead to it; and Beethoven links the finale directly to the third movement (a scherzo in all but name) with a tense, dramatically charged transition. He also inserts a ghostly recollection of the scherzo in the middle of the finale, casting a momentary shadow over the prevailing mood of triumph.

The massive, often clangorous scoring of the Fifth was much indebted to the "public" music of the French Revolution and to the operas of Gluck. The woodwinds and brass often evoke band music, especially in the finale, where Beethoven employs several instruments associated with the military: piccolo, contrabassoon, and trombone. It is perhaps no coincidence that by the time the symphony was completed, in the spring of 1808, Austria was at war with Napoleon's France, and the music often strikes a militaristic note that surely reflected the patriotic sentiments then sweeping through German-speaking lands.

The Fifth had its première as part of a long, all-Beethoven program, conducted by the composer on December 22, 1808. Inadequately rehearsed and fraught with problems, the concert ran for four hours in a freezing-cold hall, and, not surprisingly, the music had a mixed reception. Posterity, to say the least, has been kinder to it.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



Riccardo Minasi, conductor

These performances mark Riccardo Minasi's TSO début.

Italian-Japanese conductor Riccardo Minasi currently serves as Principal Guest Conductor of Ensemble Resonanz, which is resident at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie. His previous appointments include co-founder and conductor of Il Pomo d'Oro from 2011 to 2016, Chief Conductor of the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg from 2017 to 2022, and Artistic Director of Orchestra La Scintilla at the Zurich Opera House and Music Director of Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa from 2022 to 2025.

In the 2026/27 season, Minasi returns to several prominent ensembles with whom he has established ongoing relationships, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Further highlights of the season include engagements with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Warsaw Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker, Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de chambre de Paris, and Essener Philharmoniker. On the operatic stage, he makes a major début at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where he will conduct two Mozart productions—*Le nozze di Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*.

His ongoing collaboration with Ensemble Resonanz has included appearances at Beethovenfest Bonn, the Berliner Philharmonie, the Kölner Philharmonie, the Wiener Konzerthaus, and the Concertgebouw, among others, as well as a critically acclaimed 2024 début at the BBC Proms, to which he returned in the summer of 2025, leading the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in a production of *Le nozze di Figaro*. In the current season, he reunites with Ensemble Resonanz for a European tour, performing Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 across major international venues.

These engagements follow a highly active 2025/26 season, during which Minasi was Artist in Residence at the Elbphilharmonie, leading five programs. Further appearances included the Münchner Philharmoniker, Luxembourg Philharmonic, SWR Symphonieorchester, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic, and Dresdner Philharmonie, a European tour with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and Beatrice Rana, and a South American tour with James Ehnes. He also made his début with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and conducted the West Australian and Queensland Symphony Orchestras.

Past highlights include performances with the Berliner Philharmoniker, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, and Swedish Radio Symphony. On the opera stage, Minasi has conducted *Die Zauberflöte*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, and *Rodelinda* at the Dutch National Opera; *Dialogues des Carmélites* and *Don Giovanni* at Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía; *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Così fan tutte* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; and numerous productions at the Opernhaus Zürich, Staatsoper Hamburg, Opéra national de Lyon, and Teatro Carlo Felice.

Minasi has an extensive, award-winning discography, which includes multiple Diapason d'Or de l'Année awards, four Echo Klassik awards—all received in 2016—and a GRAMMY® Award nomination.

His performances are grounded in musicological research. He has served as a historical advisor for the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and, alongside Maurizio Biondi, curated and edited the 2016 Bärenreiter critical edition of Bellini's *Norma*—a work he subsequently conducted in Hamburg, Cologne, and Genoa, and at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.



Angela Hewitt, piano (2026/27 TSO Spotlight Artist)

Angela Hewitt made her TSO début in July 1979.

Angela Hewitt occupies a unique position among today's leading pianists. With a wide-ranging repertoire and frequent appearances in recital and with major orchestras throughout Europe, the Americas, and Asia, she is also an award-winning recording artist whose performances of Bach have established her as one of the composer's foremost interpreters. In 2020 she received the City of Leipzig Bach Medal—a huge honour that for the first time in its 17-year history was awarded to a woman.

This season, Hewitt presents the final performances of the *Mozart Odyssey*—her latest major project following her highly acclaimed *Bach Odyssey* cycle (2016–2022), in which she performed the complete keyboard works of Bach across 12 recitals worldwide. Concluding in December 2026, the Mozart project has comprised Hewitt performing the composer's complete concertos, spreading the works between various orchestras. Recent and upcoming conductor-led performances include a Los Angeles début at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, Brussels Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic, Estonian National Symphony, Tampere Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony, Montreal Symphony, and Danish Chamber Orchestra, while previous/forthcoming play-conduct engagements include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Kammerorchester Basel, Cameristi della Scala, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Bochumer Symphoniker, Royal Northern Sinfonia, London Mozart Players, Dunedin Consort, and Malaysian Philharmonic. Other highlights of 2026/27 include two engagements with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, where Hewitt is one of the designated Spotlight Artists for the season, and a return to the National Arts Centre Orchestra with new chief conductor John Storgårds, whilst her busy recital schedule extends to concerts in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Vienna, Leipzig, Rome, Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, and Manchester, as well as her regular appearances at London's Wigmore Hall.

Hewitt's award-winning cycle for Hyperion Records of all the major keyboard works of Bach has been described as "one of the record glories of our age" (*The Sunday Times*). Her discography also includes albums of Couperin, Rameau, Scarlatti, Mozart, the complete Beethoven piano sonatas, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Fauré, Debussy, Chabrier, Ravel, Messiaen, and Granados. In 2023, Hewitt's complete catalogue became available on all major streaming platforms following Universal Music Group's acquisition of Hyperion, including her Diapason d'Or–winning recording of the *Goldberg Variations*. Hewitt is a regular on the US *Billboard* chart, and her album *Love Songs* topped the Specialist Classical Chart in the UK for months after its release. In 2015 she was inducted into *Gramophone* magazine's Hall of Fame.

Born into a musical family, Hewitt began her piano studies at age 3, performing in public at 4, and a year later winning her first scholarship. She studied with Jean-Paul Sévilla at the University of Ottawa and, in 1985, won the Toronto International Bach Piano Competition, which launched her career. In 2018 Hewitt received the Governor General's Lifetime Achievement Award, and in 2015 received the highest honour from her native country—becoming a Companion of the Order of Canada (which is given to only 165 living Canadians at any one time). In 2006 she was awarded an OBE from Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She is a member of the Royal Society of Canada, has seven honorary doctorates, and is a Visiting Fellow of Peterhouse college at Cambridge. In 2020 Hewitt was awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal in recognition of her services to music and 35-year relationship with the hall.

Hewitt lives in London but also has homes in Ottawa and Umbria, Italy, where, 22 years ago, she founded the Trasimeno Music Festival, which draws an international audience yearly.