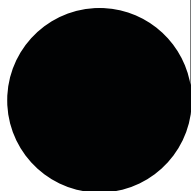


**Saturday,
November 14, 2026
11:00am**

**Relaxed Performances
are designed for the
Neurodiverse and Disability
communities, and those
who enjoy a more relaxed
concert setting created for
comfort and inclusivity.**

*Eric Abramovitz is the
Sheryl L. & David W. Kerr
Principal Clarinet Chair.*



TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

Relaxed Performance: Mozart & Beethoven

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor
Eric Abramovitz, clarinet

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major, K. 543
IV. Finale: Allegro

José González Granero
Canto y Danza

Ludwig van Beethoven
Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60
I. Adagio – Allegro vivace
II. Adagio
III. Menuetto: Allegro vivace
IV. Allegro ma non troppo



If you need to move, make some noise, go to the back of the hall, or take a break in the quiet room, you are welcome to. Please visit the lobby if you'd like to borrow a pair of noise-dampening earmuffs, or if you find the performance too bright or too loud. There, you can also pick up a fact sheet describing each piece of music that the orchestra will perform today, or scan the QR code.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major, K. 543

Composed 1788

30 min

After a gap of nearly two years, Mozart returned to composing symphonies during the summer of 1788. In the space of three months he created his three final and greatest works in this form.

Several mysteries surround them. No commission that would have inspired their creation has come down to us. Yet, given Mozart's supremely practical nature, it's unlikely that he composed them simply to satisfy himself. Uncertainty also exists regarding their performance during his lifetime, but circumstantial evidence points to one or more of them being played on several occasions.

Each is a masterpiece, and quite different from its comrades. In its drama and pathos, Symphony No. 40 in G Minor reflects Mozart's own downtrodden feelings at the time. No. 41 in C Major is one of his grandest and most confident statements. Its nature is perfectly characterized in its nickname, "Jupiter".

Symphony No. 39 is different again—elegant, witty, and superbly entertaining. The

orchestration includes clarinets instead of the more usual oboes. This gives the symphony a particularly mellow sound and atmosphere.

It is the only one of the final trilogy to begin with an introduction in slow tempo. Mozart followed this practice only occasionally, in contrast to his friend Haydn, who used it in the majority of his mature symphonies. The preparatory section to Symphony No. 39 is a shade on the pompous side. Perhaps Mozart considered it a humorous contrast to the graceful and carefree "Allegro" that follows.

The symphony's playful character continues in the slow second movement, with an overlay of warmth added. Threats presented by the occasional turbulent outbursts prove temporary, evaporating quickly in the general atmosphere of good humour. The outer sections of the third-movement minuet are all ballroom stateliness. The central trio belongs squarely to the countryside. Based on a dance tune from Switzerland, its rustic nature is enhanced by the sound of clarinets. The symphony wraps up with a nimble and witty finale, summoning images of the comic-opera world that Mozart understood so fully.

—Program note by Don Anderson

José González Granero (b. 1985)

Canto y Danza

Composed 2021

5 min

FROM THE COMPOSER:

Canto y Danza (*Song and Dance*) was written in 2021 and is based on the time I spent in Granada while I finished my bachelor's degree at the Royal Conservatory of Music there. During the four years I lived in Granada, I experienced the beauty of that multicultural city—and this piece evokes the deep artistic traditions of the ancient place and the many cultures that have influenced it over the centuries, including Arab, Jewish, and other communities.

While there, I also visited Manuel de Falla's home in the Antequeruela, a neighbourhood near the Alhambra where Falla was based for 20 years and where he wrote most of his masterworks. Being around the influence of flamenco and witnessing the roots of the mix of cultures, I wrote *Canto y Danza* as a homage to those roots—of Spain and Falla. The flamenco singing and dancing I heard throughout the streets of Granada, especially in the Mirador de San Nicolás (St. Nicholas Viewpoint), which is one of the best places to observe the stunning vista of the Alhambra, inspired me from an early age to continue the tradition of Spanish folk music. Manuel de Falla has been the main influence on my music to this day.



COMPOSER BIO:

José González Granero is a Spanish-American multi-award-winning composer and clarinetist based in the

San Francisco Bay Area. His upcoming premières as a composer include performances at the Teatro Real in Madrid and the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming. His music is exclusively published by Universal Edition.

Granero's compositions have been widely performed and premiered in North America, Europe, and Asia by such orchestras as the Académie du Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, Stanford Philharmonia, Santa Cruz Symphony, London City Orchestra, and University of Granada Orchestra. Granero has also received chamber music commissions from the Music in May festival, Farallon Quintet, Proemium Metals, clarinetist István Kohán, Ensemble SF, and Stanford Philharmonia.

His skill and talent as a composer has been recognized across the globe. In both 2020 and 2022, he was a finalist in the Bartók World Competition in Hungary. Additional accolades for composition include first prize at the Villiers Quartet New Works Competition (UK), second prize in the Ville de Comines-Warneton competition (Belgium), and two Hollywood Music in Media Award nominations. As a clarinetist, Granero has also received numerous awards including the Grand Prize for Exceptional Talent and Musicianship at the Pasadena Showcase House Instrumental Competition, first prize at the Burbank Philharmonic Concerto Competition, and second place at the Downey Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition.

He was Principal Clarinet of the Andalusia Philharmonic Orchestra from 2005 to 2007, and he has performed as guest principal clarinet with orchestras throughout Europe and in the US. Granero also had the privilege of touring as a soloist with UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, performing Mozart's Clarinet Concerto throughout Spain. As an active chamber musician, he has performed with Susan Graham, Music@Menlo, the Oregon Bach Festival, Music in the Vineyards, Music in May, and Ensemble SF.

Presently, Granero is the Principal Clarinet of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 60

Composed 1806

32 min

Around 1802, the year he first acknowledged his growing deafness, Beethoven professed dissatisfaction with his music to date, and vowed to seek a “new path” into a radically transformed style. In the decade that followed, this “new path” brought him to one innovative masterpiece after another. His output was particularly astonishing in 1806, when he completed the Fourth Symphony, the Piano Concerto No. 4, the Violin Concerto, and the three string quartets of Op. 59, among other things.

At first glance, the Fourth Symphony might seem like a retreat from the “new path” into the safer, more familiar territory of the late 18th-century symphony, but in fact Beethoven’s newly won and personal stylistic priorities are very much in evidence here. This is Haydn seen through the prism of the “Eroica”. Each movement, while superficially adhering to late 18th-century conventions of form and expression, is disrupted, disturbed, and deepened in unexpected, sometimes shocking ways.

The listener is jolted right at the start, by a suspenseful slow introduction full of dissonant harmonies, surprise modulations, stark bare chords, and slowly tiptoeing arpeggios. Nothing about this introduction is conventional: the textures and rhetoric are strange, and the main key is never prepared. And apparently it is all a joke. Beethoven suddenly shoves the music (that’s the best way to put it) into B-flat major, and, with the full orchestra ablaze, dispels the gloom by launching into a boisterous “Allegro vivace”. The transition is brief but remarkable;

the “Allegro vivace” is hurled out of the “Adagio”, like a huge top pumped up and sent spinning. Beethoven maintains the thrilling rhythmic momentum thus created through the whole first movement, and insistently develops the motifs that straddle the transition.

The second movement, unusually slow and worked out in full sonata rondo form, is not merely lyrical and tranquil: from the ninth bar on, Beethoven plumbs dark emotions and psychological depths. (Listen for various outbursts of militaristic clangour, and a surprisingly fierce, dissonant, operatic episode in the middle of the movement.)

The label “Menuetto” at the head of the third movement bows to 18th-century convention, but is misleading, for this is a true Beethovenian scherzo. (The additional marking, “Allegro vivace”, and the composer’s own metronome marking, utterly contradict the conventional label.) This scherzo, incidentally, is in five parts, with the scherzo-trio pair repeated an extra time, transforming the usual ABA form into a longer ABABA.

The finale, in sonata form, is based on the opening perpetual-motion theme (strings), from which emerge wisps of melody and, eventually, a tuneful second subject (woodwinds). Here, too, Beethoven bursts the bounds of Classical convention. This is no relaxed, dancing finale, as one might expect. It is not so much playful as manic, and the high spirits are disrupted by noisy, dissonant explosions. The long coda surges and subsides, drives and droops, as though reluctant to come to an end; when it does end, finally, all ambiguities are swept away by a short, hearty guffaw.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



Eric Abramovitz, clarinet

Eric Abramovitz made his TSO soloist début in November 2022.

Eric Abramovitz, a Montreal-born clarinetist acclaimed for his colourful and dynamic artistry, has served as Principal Clarinet of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 2021, having joined the TSO in 2018 as Associate Principal & E-flat Clarinet. He has previously held positions with the Nashville and Santa Barbara Symphonies. An active and versatile performer, Abramovitz is a frequent guest principal clarinetist with both the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and The National Ballet of Canada Orchestra. He is a familiar presence throughout Toronto's musical landscape, regularly appearing in chamber music performances and collaborative projects across the city. He has also appeared as a soloist with numerous Canadian orchestras, earning recognition for his expressive musicianship and compelling stage presence.

A multi-faceted artist, Abramovitz is the co-founder of the Toronto-based klezmer ensemble Schmaltz & Pepper, with whom he performs, composes, and arranges original music. The ensemble has toured throughout Canada and the US, and its début album earned Abramovitz a Canadian Folk Music Award for Instrumental Composer(s) of the Year. As a composer, his works increasingly bridge the worlds of classical music and Jewish folk traditions. His composition *Mozart in the Shtetl* for clarinet and strings was premièred by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 2025, and he was commissioned by the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra to compose *Oy Weber* for clarinet and symphony orchestra.

Abramovitz obtained his bachelor's degree at McGill University's Schulich School of Music and pursued graduate studies at the University of Southern California. His teachers include Zaven Zakarian, Alain Desgagné, Robert Crowley, Simon Aldrich, Jean-François Normand, Kimball Sykes, and Yehuda Gilad.



TSO Principal Clarinet
Eric Abramovitz performs
Mozart's Clarinet Concerto
with the orchestra and guest
conductor Anja Bihlmaier as
part of *Dvořák's New World
Symphony* on January 9, 2025.