

**TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Gustavo Gimeno, Music Director

*Prokofiev's Piano*

**Ryan Bancroft**, conductor  
**Isata Kanneh-Mason**, piano

---

**Anna Clyne**  
*Within Her Arms*

---

**Sergei Prokofiev**  
**Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26**  
I. Andante – Allegro  
II. Tema con variazioni  
III. Allegro ma non troppo

---

**Intermission**

---

**Dmitri Shostakovich**  
**Symphony No. 10 in E Minor, Op. 93**  
I. Moderato  
II. Allegro  
III. Allegretto  
IV. Andante – Allegro

*Program 2*

---

Friday,  
March 22, 2024  
7:30pm

Saturday,  
March 23, 2024  
8:00pm

Sunday,  
March 24, 2024  
3:00pm

---

Anna Clyne (b. 1980)

## Within Her Arms

Composed 2008–2009

14 min

**DESCRIBED AS A “COMPOSER OF UNCOMMON GIFTS** and unusual methods” in a *New York Times* profile and as “fearless” by NPR, GRAMMY®-nominated Anna Clyne is one of the most in-demand composers today, working with orchestras, choreographers, filmmakers, and visual artists around the world. Clyne was named by *Bachtrack* as one of the top ten most performed contemporary composers in the world and the most performed living female British composer in both 2022 and 2023.

Clyne’s works are frequently choreographed for dance, with recent projects including the world première of choreographer Pam Tanowitz’s dance set to *Breathing Statues* for the Royal Ballet in London and performances of *DANCE* by the San Francisco Ballet with choreography by Nicolas Blanc. Her fascination with visual art has inspired several projects including *ATLAS*, inspired by a portfolio of work by Gerhard Richter; *Color Field*, inspired by the artwork of Mark Rothko; and *Abstractions*, inspired by five contemporary paintings. In addition, Clyne seeks innovation through new technology, developing the Augmented Orchestra with sound designer Jody Elff; the technology expands the sound-world of the orchestra through computer-controlled processes, and was premièred in *Wild Geese* at the 2023 Cabrillo Festival.

Clyne is deeply committed to music education and to supporting and mentoring

the next generation of composers. She has taught master classes and workshops throughout the US and internationally and was the founding mentor for the Orchestra of St Luke’s Degaetano Composition Institute, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra’s New Stories program, and the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra’s Emerging Composers Program.

Composed for a chamber orchestra and premièred by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2009, *Within Her Arms* is an elegiac contemplation on loss that proceeds from a four-note motif announced first on solo violin. The composer provides the following note on the work:



↑  
Anna Clyne

*Within Her Arms* is music for my mother, with all my love.

*Earth will keep you tight within her arms dear one—  
So that tomorrow you will be transformed into flowers—  
This flower smiling quietly in this morning field—*

*This morning you will weep no more dear one—  
For we have gone through too deep a night.*

*This morning, yes, this morning, I kneel down on the green grass—*

*And I notice your presence.  
Flowers, that speak to me in silence.*

*The message of love and understanding has indeed come.*

— Thich Nhat Hanh (From “Message” in *Call Me by My True Names*, 1999, with permission of Parallax Press)

—Program note compiled and edited by  
Michael Zarathus-Cook

## Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26

Composed 1921

28 min

### **SERGEI PROKOFIEV POSSESSED A TREMENDOUS GIFT**

for melodic invention, and had no problem coming up with material—for him, however, the challenge lay in the selection and arrangement of that material. Such would be the case when it came to the C-major Piano Concerto. In the summer of 1921, Prokofiev rented a cottage on the Brittany coast where he could work in peace. He wrote:

“As far back as 1911 while working on the First Piano Concerto, I had planned a large-scale virtuoso concerto. I made very little progress with it however, and preserved only a passage of rising parallel triads. This I now inserted at the end of the first movement of the Third Concerto. In 1913, I had composed a theme for variations which I kept for a long time for subsequent use. In 1916–17, I had tried several times to return to the Third Concerto; I wrote a beginning for it and two variations on the theme of the slow movement. Two other themes from an unfinished string quartet went into the finale. Thus, when I began work on the Third Concerto, I already had all

the thematic material, with the exception of the subsidiary theme of the first movement and the third theme of the finale.”

Despite the intensive labour behind its composition, the Third Piano Concerto, with its high spirits and uninhibited tunefulness, has become one of Prokofiev’s most popular. At its première in October 1921, with Prokofiev as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, it immediately took

a place alongside Tchaikovsky’s First and Rachmaninoff’s Second as one of the “warhorses” of the genre.

The C-major Concerto is the only one of the five set in traditional three-movement form. The first movement’s brief “Andante” introduction begins with a Russian-flavoured tune played by one, then two, clarinets. Four energetic themes are presented in the following “Allegro”: the first is brilliant, the next powerful and chordal, the

third jaunty and humorous, and the fourth a fantastical whirlwind.

A theme with five variations forms the central movement. The gavotte-like melody of the theme is introduced initially by the flute and clarinet, then picked up by the other woodwinds. In the first variation



↑  
Sergei Prokofiev—by Kalya Ramu

("Andantino"), the piano, and later the orchestra, elaborates on the theme—in the second, marked "Allegro", a trumpeter plays solo while the pianist weaves filigree with scale passages. Triplets are the mainstay of the third variation, while the atmospheric fourth, with its gentle feel and air of mystery, is reminiscent of a Chopin nocturne with the piano in the spotlight, and the orchestra as subtle accompanist. The assertive final variation leads into an embellished recapitulation of the theme.

The jogging main theme of the rondo finale is first played by two bassoons in unison. Its companion is a more vigorous, caution-to-the-wind melody presented by the piano and orchestra. A central episode of large proportions and heavenly lengths sets out a new lyrical theme introduced by the clarinet and oboe, followed by another piano motif, an ostinato with repeated notes and an upward fling. A strident, rhythmic coda makes for an exhilarating conclusion.

—Program note by Walter T. Lemiski

---

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

## Symphony No. 10 in E Minor, Op. 93

Composed 1953

57 min

**IN 1948, IN A NOTORIOUS COMMUNIST PARTY DECREE**, Shostakovich was condemned as a "formalist" whose music was not compatible with Soviet values. Only after the death of Stalin in March of 1953 would he risk going public with a new symphony—his Tenth, composed quickly that summer and fall. First performed in Leningrad on December 17, it aroused some heated criticism in official circles (too modernistic, too gloomy), but was a great success with musicians and the public, and ultimately rescued Shostakovich's reputation and career.

The *meaning* of the Tenth Symphony, however, is by no means clear.

Shostakovich's own public comments on the work, tailored to Soviet tastes, offer little insight, often reading like parodies of Communist banalities ("in this work,

I wanted to convey human feelings and passions"). However, in *Testimony: The Memoirs of Shostakovich*, "related to and edited by" Solomon Volkov, a book that caused a sensation when published in 1979 he is quoted as saying that in the Tenth he intended to depict the tragedy of Stalinism,

and that the scherzo was actually "a musical portrait of Stalin." But again, these words cannot be taken at face value: there was and still is fractious debate about the authenticity of *Testimony*. A Russian musicologist, Nelly Kravetz, in an article written in the mid-1990s but published in English only in 2000, discovered that the elusive "Allegretto" was inspired by a romantic fixation Shostakovich had developed for a former student, Elmira Nazirova—with the

enigmatic, pastoral horn motto that haunts the middle of the "Allegretto" being a musical monogram of her name. Similarly, the outer sections of the movement incorporate,



↑  
Dmitri Shostakovich—by Kalya Ramu

for the first time, Shostakovich's four-note musical monogram for *himself*, (D, E-flat, C, B-natural). Those four notes, according to the German musical alphabet, spelled "DSCH," his abbreviation for his own name as it was spelled in German, and it is a motif that goes on to haunt much of his later music. So whatever the politics of the work may be, an "inner program" of a romantic nature seems also to be in play here.

The symphony as a whole is predominantly tragic. The first movement is a dark and sometimes bitter meditation that unfolds gravely, its sonata-form outlines clear despite the epic scale of the music. It is organized as a great dramatic arc: it builds to a furious, painfully dissonant climax, in which massive brass sonorities are unleashed to overwhelming effect, but ends as it began—in gloom. The concise "Allegro" that follows, by contrast, is unrelentingly fast and furious, mostly *fortissimo*. The music is raw, grim, and brutal; whether it really represents Stalin or not, it certainly offers a fearsome and sinister portrait of power and

violence wielded without constraint. There is tragedy, too, in the somber, portentous "Andante" that introduces the finale, but the more upbeat "Allegro" that follows, like many of Shostakovich's finales, is problematic. Some hear it as a sincere effort at a plausibly optimistic finale in accord with Soviet aesthetics; others hear a *critique* of Soviet aesthetics, an enforced gaiety that implies an ironic or subversive stance; still others hear a cynical, bitter capitulation to authority, and the forced betrayal of a work that is otherwise a tragedy. There is little doubt that the "Allegro" is only superficially a "happy ending," for the music is complex and mercurial both structurally and psychologically, and does eventually acquire something like the tragic power of the first movement. In any event, the ambivalence of this finale suggests that its meaning—the meaning of the whole symphony, in fact, in both the personal and political senses—is informed by the fact that it is a work, after all, that Shostakovich put his name not only *on*, but also *in*.

—Program note by Kevin Bazzana



### Ryan Bancroft, conductor

Ryan Bancroft made his TSO debut in March 2022.

Ryan Bancroft grew up in Los Angeles and first came to international attention in April 2018 when he won both First Prize and Audience Prize at the prestigious Malko Competition for Young Conductors in Copenhagen. Since September 2021 Bancroft has been Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Following his first visit to work with the Tapiola Sinfonietta in Finland, Bancroft was invited to become their Artist in Association from the 2021/22 season onward. In 2021, Bancroft was announced as Chief Conductor

Designate of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, and took up the Chief Conductor position in September 2023.

Bancroft's first season as Chief Conductor in Stockholm sees him open the season with the orchestra's first performance of Sven-David Sandström's *The High Mass*, together with the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir. Throughout the season Bancroft will continue to conduct a wide range of repertoire with the orchestra, including premières by Börtz and Hillborg, whilst working with soloists including Emanuel Ax and Seong-Jin Cho.

Since winning the Malko Competition, Bancroft has conducted a number of other leading European orchestras including the London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse, City of Birmingham Symphony, Swedish Radio Symphony

Orchestra, Danish National Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Rai Torino, and the Ensemble intercontemporain.

Bancroft has a passion for contemporary music and has performed with Amsterdam's acclaimed Nieuw Ensemble, assisted Pierre Boulez in a performance of his *Sur Incises* in Los Angeles, premiered works by Sofia Gubaidulina, John Cage, James Tenney, and Anne LeBaron, and worked closely with improvisers such as Wadada Leo Smith and Charlie Haden.

Bancroft studied trumpet at the California Institute of the Arts, alongside additional studies in harp, flute, cello, and Ghanaian music and dance. He then went on to receive a Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. While studying in Scotland he played trumpet with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra on many occasions. He continued his conducting studies in the Netherlands and is a graduate of the prestigious Nationale Master Orkestdirectie run jointly by the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague. As a student, he was mentored by Edward Carroll, Kenneth Montgomery, Ed Spanjaard, and Jac van Steen.



### Isata Kanneh-Mason, piano

These performances mark Isata Kanneh-Mason's TSO début.

Pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason is in great demand internationally as a soloist and chamber musician. She offers eclectic and interesting repertoire with recital programs encompassing music from Haydn and Mozart to Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann, Chopin and Brahms to Gershwin and beyond. In concerto, she is equally at home in Felix Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann (whose piano concerto featured on Isata's chart-topping début recording) as she is Prokofiev and Dohnányi.

Highlights of the 2023/24 season include performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, London Mozart Players, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on tour in the US and Germany, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Cleveland Orchestra, and Stockholm Philharmonic. With her cellist brother, Sheku, she appears in recital in Japan, Singapore, and South Korea in addition to an extensive European recital tour. Kanneh-Mason also gives a series of solo recitals on tour in the USA and Canada as well as at London's Wigmore Hall, at the Lucerne Festival, and across Germany.

Kanneh-Mason is a Decca Classics recording artist. Her 2019 album, *Romance—The Piano Music of Clara Schumann*, entered the UK classical charts at number one, with *Gramophone* magazine extolling the recording as "one of the most charming and engaging debuts." This was followed by 2021's *Summertime*, featuring 20th-century American repertoire including a world-première recording of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Impromptu No. 2 in B minor, and 2023's endearingly titled album, *Childhood Tales*, is a tour-de-force showcase of music inspired by a nostalgia for youth.

2021 also saw the release of Isata's first duo album, *Muse*, with her brother Sheku Kanneh-Mason, demonstrating the siblings' musical empathy and rapport borne from years of playing and performing together. Isata and Sheku were selected to perform in recital during the 2020 BBC Proms, which was a vastly reduced festival due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they performed for cameras to an empty auditorium. 2023 saw her BBC Proms solo début, this time to a fully open Royal Albert Hall, alongside Ryan Bancroft and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Kanneh-Mason was an ECHO Rising Star in 2021/22 performing in many of Europe's finest halls. She is also the recipient of the coveted Leonard Bernstein Award and an Opus Klassik Award for Best Young Artist, and is one of the Konzerthaus Dortmund's Junge Wilde artists.