

For Immediate Release: September 8, 2015 – Toronto, ON

World's Top Composers Featured in Esprit Orchestra 2015-16 Season

Music by the world's most important and influential composers combines with brilliant Canadian compositions in Esprit Orchestra's 2015-2016 Subscription Concert Series conducted by Alex Pauk. World Premieres of new Canadian compositions feature prominently along with exceptional guest artists including The Elmer Iseler Singers, hot young cellist Bryan Cheng and Esprit's principal trumpet player, Robert Venables. All concerts, starting at 8:00 pm at Koerner Hall, are preceded by informative pre-concert talks. Concert dates are: October 4, November 15, January 24 and March 31.

The series opens on **October 4th** with a concert titled ***Con Brio***, named after the work of German composer Jörg Widmann, whose piece sets the pace for the program. Hurling along at a speed set to create a sense of being "on the verge of the unplayable", Widmann's *Con Brio* produces a sense of daring and excitement as it transforms fast, furious characteristics from Beethoven's 7th and 8th symphonies into an effervescent torrent of sound.

Inspired by Nordic mythology and adapting Estonian folk idioms, the World Premiere of Canadian Omar Daniel's *Sinfonia Concertante*, subtitled *The Husband Killer's Dream*, portrays a mysterious intrigue. Canadian star Zosha Di Castri was the first young composer chosen for the New Voices project organized by conductor Michael Tilson Thomas with the New World Symphony (Miami) and San Francisco Symphony and music publisher Boosey & Hawkes. Esprit will perform her work *Lineage*, a major work alluding to an imagined culture from the past. The work was commissioned as the centrepiece for Zosha's New Voices stint.

Two pieces by the prodigious British composer Thomas Adès appear in Esprit's line-up this season, with the October concert, including the witty and surreal arrangement for large orchestra of *Dances from Powder Her Face*. *Powder Her Face* is the composer's chamber opera depicting the sex scandal and gossip surrounding the Duchess of Argyll in mid-20th century British aristocracy.

Play, Esprit's concert on **November 15th**, features two entire symphonies. The first, *Tevot* by Thomas Adès, in one grand movement, brings together the largest group of musicians Esprit has put onstage to date. Its title, in Hebrew, means bars of music and also, in the Bible, is the ark of Noah and the cradle in which the baby Moses is carried on the river. The astonishing, subtly-layered orchestral sonorities of this work affirm Adès' mastery of instrumental theatre.

The concert continues with *Play*, a kaleidoscopic 45-minute symphony by today's fastest-rising young American composer, Andrew Norman. In three movements (*Levels 1, 2 and 3*), the work encompasses various meanings of play with musical ideas furiously ricocheting off one another to evoke a variety of feelings – some light-hearted, some sinister. Critic William Robin generated controversy by boldly suggesting that *Play* "might be the best orchestral work that the 20th century has seen thus far".

Balancing the program will be a performance of Montreal composer John Rea's *Zefiro torna*, an Esprit-commissioned work of exquisite, sensuous beauty. The work's title makes reference to a sonnet of the same name written by Francesco Petrarca and set almost three hundred years later as a five-voice madrigal by Claudio Monteverdi.

Icelandic composer Daniel Bjarnason's ***Bow to String*** headlines Esprit's **January 24th** concert. In Esprit's performance of the cello and ensemble version of the piece, the solo part will be performed by gifted 18 year-old cellist Bryan Cheng, making a return visit with Esprit. Bryan was recently named by CBC Radio as one of Canada's hot 30 performers under the age of 30.

As a postlude and souvenir of Esprit's recent tour in China which featured Canadian music, the program includes two works which received tumultuous applause on tour: R. Murray Schafer's *The Falcon's Trumpet* and Alexina Louie's *Imaginary Opera*. Esprit's principal trumpet player, Robert Venables, is soloist in the Schafer and the orchestra's principal players are featured in Louie's mysterious, imagined ghost opera. Canadian composer Samuel Andreyev, living in France, will make a return appearance for the World Premiere of his *Movements and Measures*, the second work in a trilogy that began with a work he composed for Esprit last season.

Esprit's final concert of the season, on **Thursday March 31st**, takes its title and theme from the opening work on the program – Darius Milhaud's 1923 dance score ***La création du monde*** reflecting the 1920s Parisian rage for African and Afro-American art, fashion, dance and music. The piece relates an African mythological account of the world's beginning.

The Elmer Iseler Singers are Esprit's guest performers for the World Premiere of Alex Pauk's *Soul and Psyche* for choir and orchestra, a work drawing from a rich reservoir of myths, rituals and sacred systems to express powerful humanistic and spiritual themes. The Iseler Singers, conducted by their Music Director Lydia Adams, will perform devotional miniatures from Hussein Janmohamed's *Nur: Reflections on Light* for choir alone, originally composed for the opening of the Aga Khan Museum.

Finally, Esprit will perform the World Premiere of Douglas Schmidt's alluring *Sirens* which refers to the enchanting music and voices that, in many mythologies and cultures, represent seductive weapons of fatal destruction.

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA CONCERT SEASON 2015 - 2016

Con Brio, Sunday October 4, 2015

Zosha Di Castri (Canada)	Lineage (2013)
Jörg Widmann (Germany)	Con Brio (2008)
Omar Daniel (Canada)	Sinfonia Concertante* (2015)
	Mehetapja Meeli Unistus (The Husband Killer's Dream)
Thomas Adès (England)	Dances from Powder Her Face** (2007)

Featuring:

Alex Pauk – conductor

*World Premiere - commissioned by Esprit with funding from Ontario Arts Council

**Performance generously supported with funding from The Koerner Foundation

Play, Sunday November 15, 2015

Andrew Norman (U.S.A.)	Play* (2014)
Thomas Adès (England)	Tevot** (2007)
John Rea (Canada)	Zefiro torna (Zephyr Returns) (1994)

Featuring:

Alex Pauk – conductor

*Canadian Premiere

**Canadian Premiere generously supported with funding from The Koerner Foundation

Bow to String, Air to Breath, Sunday January 24, 2016

Daniel Bjarnason (Iceland)	Bow to String (2010)
	solo cello and ensemble version (2012)
Alexina Louie (Canada)	Imaginary Opera (2004)
Samuel Andreyev (Canada)	Movements and Measures* (2015)
R. Murray Schafer (Canada)	The Falcon's Trumpet (1995)
	for trumpet and orchestra

Featuring:

Alex Pauk – conductor

Bryan Cheng – cello

Robert Venables – trumpet

*World Premiere – commissioned by Esprit with generous support from The Koerner Foundation

La création du monde, Thursday March 31, 2016

Darius Milhaud (France/U.S.A.)
Hussein Janmohamed (Canada)

Douglas Schmidt (Canada)
Alex Pauk (Canada)

La création du monde (1923)
Nur: Reflections on Light (2014)
for choir
Sirens* (2016)
Soul and Psyche** (2016)
for choir and orchestra

Featuring:

Alex Pauk – conductor
The Elmer Iseler Singers
Lydia Adams – guest conductor

*World Premiere – commissioned by Esprit with generous support from The Koerner Foundation

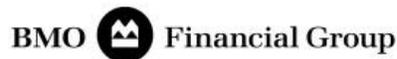
**World Premiere - commissioned by The Koerner Foundation through The Elmer Iseler Singers

Con Brio, Sunday October 4, 2015, Koerner Hall
8:00PM Concert | 7:15PM Pre-Concert Chat

**Royal Conservatory of Music TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, 273 Bloor Street West,
Toronto**

Individual concert tickets start at: Adult \$45; Senior 65+ \$40; Under 30 \$25; Student \$18

Please call (416) 408 0208 or visit performance.rcmusic.ca For more details: espritorchestra.com



Esprit Orchestra is Canada's only full-sized orchestra devoted exclusively to performing and promoting new orchestral music. Esprit Orchestra gratefully acknowledges Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Foundation, Business for the Arts, SOCAN Foundation, The Koerner Foundation, The Hal Jackman Foundation, The Mary Margaret Webb Foundation, and The Max Clarkson Family Foundation for their generous support.

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