

# ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

Canada's leader in new orchestral music

Alex Pauk, Music Director & Conductor

**For Immediate Release August 15, 2019**

## **Esprit Orchestra Announces 2019-2020 Concert Season**

Esprit Orchestra's thirty-seventh concert season begins with a dizzying hit to the head! **Founding Music Director & Conductor, Alex Pauk** has programmed a captivating subscription concert series to be performed in the acoustically renowned **Koerner Hall**. The main concert series includes no less than four **World Premieres** by composers **Brian Harman, Adam Scime, Christopher Goddard, and Eugene Astapov**. Programming also features celebrated composers such as **Thomas Adès, John Adams, Maki Ishii, Andrew Norman, Molson Prize winning Alexina Louie**, and more. Among of the most exciting artists of the 2019-2020 season are the numerous extraordinary guests who will appear with the orchestra: **artist Moira Ness, The Elmer Iseler Singers, Avan Yu, Véronique Mathieu, Marie Bérard, Stephen Sitariski, Stephen Clarke, James O'Callaghan, Shannon Mercer, Christopher Goddard, Eugene Astapov**, and the return of the very popular taiko drumming group **Nagata Shachu**. In addition, **Anishinaabekwe composer Barbara Croall** will be featured in her own work, performing as vocalist and traditional flautist. In addition to the main concert series, audiences can look forward to an expanded **New Wave Festival** to end the 2019-2020 season. The festival will be held at **Trinity St. Paul's Centre** from **April 16-18<sup>th</sup>**, and feature new works by emerging composers, as well as works by more established mentors and others.

Esprit's opening concert, ***I Hit My Head and Everything Changed***, an impactful evening of music, will leave the audience "seeing stars". Taking place on **Sunday October 6, 2019** in **Koerner Hall**, the concert begins with a blast of orchestral sound in **Thomas Adès' Overture to "The Tempest"**. The **World Premiere** of the title piece by **Brian Harman, *I Hit My Head and Everything Changed***, is an artistic collaboration between Harman and **artist Moira Ness**. The work explores the distortion of borrowed original music and text/lyrics as a way of creating an artistic confessional. Ness has been commissioned to create both a minimalistic text-based video piece that will be projected in the concert hall while Harman's piece is performed, as well as a large art installation which will be featured in the Koerner Hall lobby. Harman's music combines and distorts musical quotations ranging from Bach and Chopin to Depeche Mode and Demi Lovato, playing with temporality and self-expression. The concert also includes a **milestone award for renowned Canadian composer Alexina Louie**, who was announced as the recipient of the prestigious **Molson Prize in the Arts** for 2019; the award will be officially presented to her following the performance of her piece, ***Love Songs for a Small Planet***. The work, for chamber choir, harp, percussion and string orchestra, will feature **The Elmer Iseler Singers** as guest artists. Also on the program is the Canadian Premiere of **Hans Abrahamsen's** compelling concerto for the left hand, ***Left, alone***, which will showcase guest artist **Avan Yu** as one of Canada's hottest young pianists.

On **Sunday December 1, 2019**, Esprit's second concert, ***Sustain***, features America's most celebrated young composer **Andrew Norman**, with the Canadian Premiere of his new work ***Sustain***. While composing this work, Norman considered how audiences might perceive and be affected by orchestral music one hundred years from now. He then set out in a major new creative direction to produce what some have labeled a masterpiece. In keeping with Esprit's commitment to foster ongoing relationships with emerging composers, **Adam Scime's** new work ***Afterglow*** will receive its **World Premiere**. ***Afterglow***, a violin concerto, is the third panel of an orchestral triptyque commissioned by Esprit and will feature as soloist the outstanding violinist **Véronique Mathieu**. With inexorable force, **José Evangelista's *Accelerando*** draws listeners in and excites heartbeats in the same way his score affects the orchestra's playing. The work was commissioned and premiered by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in November 2016 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Montreal subway system, and transports listeners in musical movement parallel to that of a Metro train moving from station to station.

**Electric & Eclectic** on **Wednesday February 26, 2020** will include works by both established and emerging composers, as well as solo performances by Esprit's principal players. Renowned American composer **John Adams**' work **Son of Chamber Symphony** is a riveting score that changes meters rapidly and scurries all over the place. Also on the program is the **World Premiere** of **James O'Callaghan's Not non-other**. Electronic treatment of orchestral sound in the concert hall is rare, so O'Callaghan's multi-speaker, surround sound blending of transformed orchestral sound with computer sound files radiates new sonic dimensions. Finally, a remarkable concerto by **Alfred Schnittke** reveals the astounding vision and creative force of one of the greatest composers of the past century. Esprit will perform Schnittke's **Concerto Grosso No. 1** for two violins, prepared piano and string orchestra with Marie Bérard and Stephen Sitariski as violin soloists and Stephen Clarke on keyboards.

The finale concert of Esprit's Koerner Hall series, **Taiko Returns**, will take place on **Sunday March 22, 2020**. As the title suggests, the wildly popular taiko drumming group **Nagata Shachu** will return to the Esprit stage for another performance of **Maki Ishii's Mono-Prism**. This thrilling work demands physical power, delicate precision, emotional strength and willpower from both the orchestra and the guest artists. The concert also features several works written by composers who will also be soloists performing in their own compositions. **Christopher Goddard's** musical mastery extends to his performance as a pianist in what is, for the composer, a dream project that Esprit is thrilled to foster; his **Piano Concerto** will receive its **World Premiere** on the **Taiko Returns** program. **Eugene Astapov** will also be featured as guest conductor in the **World Premiere** performance of his work **A Still Life**. Astapov's work brings his Russian heritage to the fore, setting poetry by **Polina Barskova**, one of today's most important under-forty Russian poets. **Soprano Shannon Mercer** will perform as Esprit's guest artist in the World Premiere of **A Still Life**. **Anishinaabekwe composer and performer Barbara Croall's** work **Mijidwewinan (Messages)** brings a powerful plea for all humans to take care of our precious environment and listen to the messages given to us by the natural world around us. Croall herself will perform as vocalist and traditional flutist, personifying several spiritual beings as the piece takes listeners through a full day, from Morning Star to Evening Star, during a time when the earth experiences a crisis and shift. The composer writes, "just as every aspect of nature gives us 'messages' about the problems caused by human negligence and wastefulness, the shining stars in the sky above us – like the most ancient of spirit-beings – provide answers for our future".

Following the success of last year's **New Wave Reprise** event, Esprit is delighted to announce the continuation of the **New Wave Festival** for young composers. This year's festival has been expanded from one event into a three-day festival running from **April 16-18<sup>th</sup> at Trinity St. Paul's Centre**. The festival features concerts and events with music by young composers, mentors and others including: **Stephanie Orlando, Žibuoklė Martinaitytė, Misato Mochizuki, Alison Yun-Fei Jiang, Chris Paul Harman, Christina Volpini, Quinn Jacobs, Nico Muhly**. Renowned Canadian composer **John Rea** will reprise his role as keynote speaker, again providing captivating ideas about the vibrant world of contemporary classical music. All New Wave tickets will be available through the Esprit office; pricing and further details to come. All regular season **subscribers receive free admission** to the New Wave events & concerts.

# ESPRIT ORCHESTRA 2019/2020 CONCERT SEASON

## KOERNER HALL SUBSCRIPTION SERIES

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

Individual concert tickets start at: Adult \$45; Senior 65+ \$45; Under 30 \$27; Student \$25  
Please call (416) 408 0208 or visit [espritorchestra.com](http://espritorchestra.com)

All Pre-Concert Chats moderated by composer Alexina Louie

### Sunday October 6, 2019

Esprit Orchestra Presents: *I Hit My Head and Everything Changed*  
8:00pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat

**Programme:**

Thomas Adès (England)	<i>Overture to "The Tempest" op.22a</i> (2004) for orchestra
Brian Harman (Canada)	<i>I Hit My Head and Everything Changed</i> (2019)** for orchestra with video art projections by Moira Ness
Alexina Louie (Canada)	<i>Love Songs for a Small Planet</i> (1989) for chamber choir, harp, percussion and string orchestra
Hans Abrahamsen (Denmark)	<i>Left, alone</i> (2015)* for piano (left hand) and orchestra

#### Presentation of 2019 Canada Council Molson Prize in the Arts to Alexina Louie

Alex Pauk – conductor  
Moira Ness – artist  
The Elmer Iseler Singers – chamber choir  
Avan Yu – piano

\*Canadian Premiere

\*\*World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from the Ontario Arts Council

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### Sunday December 1, 2019

Esprit Orchestra Presents: *Sustain*  
8:00pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat

**Programme:**

Andrew Norman (U.S.A)	<i>Sustain</i> (2018)* for orchestra
Adam Scime (Canada)	<i>Afterglow</i> (2019)** concerto for violin and orchestra
José Evangelista (Canada)	<i>Accelerando</i> (2016) for orchestra

Alex Pauk, conductor  
Véronique Mathieu, violin

\*Canadian Premiere

\*\* World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from  
The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation

## Wednesday February 26, 2020

Esprit Orchestra Presents: *Electric & Eclectic*

8:00pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat

### Programme:

John Adams (U.S.A)

**Son of Chamber Symphony** (2007)

for orchestra

James O'Callaghan (Canada)

**Not non-other** (2020)\*\*

an interface between orchestra transformed electronically and surround sound electroacoustics

Alfred Schnittke (Russia)

**Concerto Grosso No.1** (1977)

for 2 solo violins, harpsichord, prepared piano and string orchestra

Alex Pauk – conductor

Marie Bérard, violin

Stephen Sitarski, violin

Stephen Clarke, harpsichord/prepared piano

James O'Callaghan, electronics

\*\*World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation

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## Sunday March 22, 2020

Esprit Orchestra Presents: *Taiko Returns*

8:00pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat

### Programme:

Barbara Croall (Canada)

**Mijidwewinan (Messages)** (2008)

for Anishinaabekwe performer and orchestra

Christopher Goddard (Canada)

**Piano Concerto** (2020)\*\*

concerto for piano and orchestra

Eugene Astapov (Canada)

**A Still Life** (2020)\*\*\*

for soprano and orchestra (poetry by Russian poet Polina Barskova)

Maki Ishii (Japan)

**Mono-Prism** (1976)

for taiko drumming group and orchestra

Alex Pauk, conductor

Shannon Mercer, soprano

Nagata Shachu, taiko drumming group

Eugene Astapov, conductor

Christopher Goddard, piano

Barbara Croall, Anishinaabekwe Performer (vocals/traditional flute)

\*\*World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from Chantal Perrot

\*\*\*World Premiere commissioned by Esprit Orchestra with generous support from The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation

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## NEW WAVE FESTIVAL

Trinity St. Paul's Centre

427 Bloor Street West

2019/2020 Subscribers entitled to FREE ADMISSION

Individual concert tickets go through Esprit office, more details to come

Please call 416-815-7887 or visit [espritorchestra.com](http://espritorchestra.com)

## April 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> 2020

Esprit Orchestra Presents: *New Wave Festival*

Featuring music by young composers, mentors and others, including:

**Stephanie Orlando** (Canada)  
**Misato Mochizuki** (Japan)  
**Christina Volpini** (Canada)  
**Žibuoklė Martinaitytė** (Lithuania)  
**Alison Yun-Fei Jiang** (Canada)  
**Quinn Jacobs** (Canada)  
**John Rea** (Canada)  
**Chris Paul Harman** (Canada)  
**Nico Muhly** (U.S.A.)

Season Sponsor:



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, TELUS, SOCAN Foundation, The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation, The Mary-Margaret Webb Foundation, Timothy & Frances Price, The Charles H. Ivey Foundation, The Amphion Foundation, Inc., and Anonymous for their generous support.

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