



ORCHESTRE  
SYMPHONIQUE  
DE MONTRÉAL

Presented by



*together,*  
**ON THE  
BEAT!**

Elementary Schools  
2017-2018 Season

concert  
guide

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## The concert

# Together on the Beat!

The TorQ Percussion Quartet has big dreams! Together, these four close friends are hoping to grow and accomplish great things. Their host at the Maison symphonique will be the charismatic Patrice Bélanger, who will join the quartet on their quest as they journey through the music of different cultures. Follow them along their path and share their adventures with the OSM! Inclusion, camaraderie and ensemble will take centre stage at this concert.

## The artists



### Adam Johnson, assistant conductor of the OSM

Born in Alberta, Adam Johnson holds a doctorate in (piano) performance from the Université de Montréal and won a conducting prize at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal. He also studied at the Pierre Monteux School in Maine. After three seasons with the Calgary Philharmonic, where he was conductor-in-residence and then assistant conductor, he became the assistant conductor of the OSM in September 2016. In 2015, he received the Jean-Marie Beaudet Award in Orchestra Conducting from the Canada Council for the Arts.



### Patrice Bélanger, host

A seasoned and famously spontaneous host, and an actor with a gift for both the poignant and the comedic, Patrice Bélanger was quick to make his mark. Today, he has become a favourite personality among both children and adults. Whether as a television host on shows such as *Banzaï*, *Les testeurs*, and *Sucré salé*, or as a guest of honour at major events and festivals, Patrice excels at the art of sharing his joie de vivre and unwavering good humour. He is well-known for his film credits, including *Bon Cop*, *Bad Cop*, *Les Lavigreur*, *la vraie histoire*, *Les Boys*, and *Lance et compte, la finale*, and for his roles in the television series *Mon ex à moi* and *Jean Béliveau*.



### TorQ Percussion Quartet

Since their founding in 2004, TorQ has been bringing new vitality to percussion repertoire through engaging and accessible performances. Its four members, all University of Toronto graduates, are committed to sharing their passion with both young and old while exploring an exciting and varied repertoire.

**Richard Burrows** holds both a Masters of Arts in Music Education and a Masters of Music in Performance Percussion. He plays regularly with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra and is involved in several improvisation projects.

**Adam Campbell** explores contemporary repertoire and world music. He is a member of Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan and Persian/Serbian fusion group Ladom, as well as a highly versatile freelance drummer.

**Jamie Drake** is currently completing his Doctorate of Musical Arts dissertation on the history and current usage of the cajón. He plays regularly with the Mississauga Symphony and Mississauga Philharmonic Orchestra, in addition to being a very active drummer and a founding member of indie group Muskox.

**Daniel Morphy** is an avid orchestral and chamber musician who plays with several of Toronto's most highly respected ensembles. Always busy with new projects, he is currently working to develop solo repertoire for the marimba.



## What is a percussion instrument, exactly?

Percussion instruments take many forms. They can be made from metal or wood, or from a piece of animal skin—called a “membrane”—stretched over a frame. They are divided into two main categories, membranophones and idiophones, depending on how they are made to vibrate. **Membranophones** produce sound when a membrane is set into vibration, whereas **idiophones** produce sound when the instrument itself vibrates. For example, the timpani are made of a skin stretched over large “bowls.” When the percussionist hits this skin with a mallet, the membrane vibrates and produces sound. Therefore, the timpani belong to the membranophone category. Xylophones and vibraphones, on the other hand, are made of metal or wooden bars that vibrate when struck with mallets. These two instruments are idiophones.

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## Quartet vs. symphony orchestra

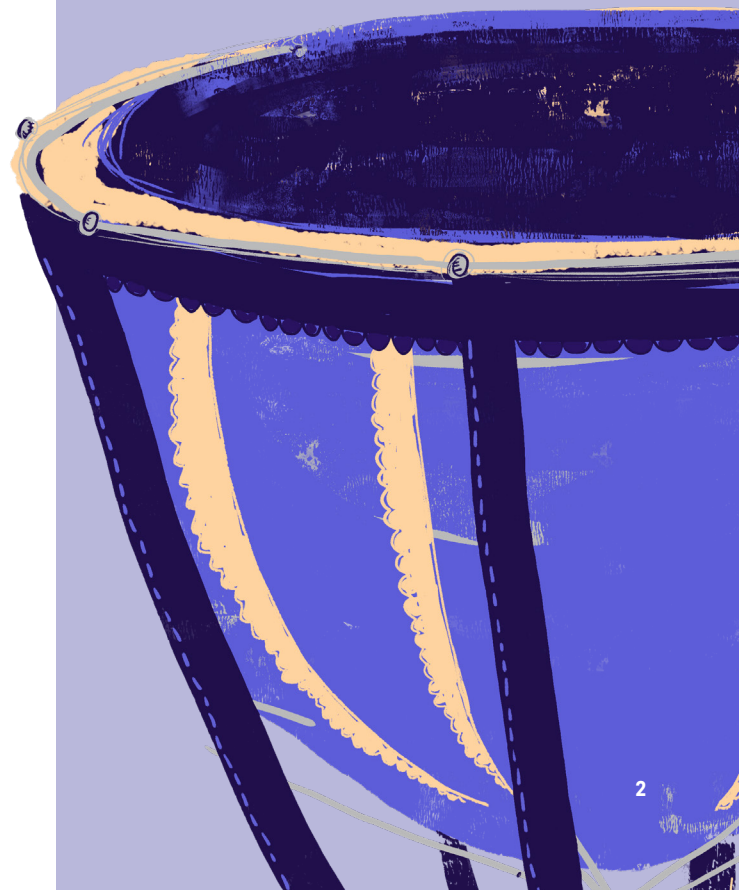
What does the word “quartet” sound like? Among other things, the word “quarter,” which is another way of saying *fourth*. In music, then, a quartet is a group of four people playing together. Of course, composers get very different results when they write for quartet and when they write for a symphony orchestra! Music composed for any kind of quartet – including vocal quartet, string quartet, wind quartet, and percussion quartet, featured in this concert – is part of what we call **chamber music**, because it was once performed in the “chambers,” or homes, of noble men and women. Meanwhile, music composed for orchestra falls under the heading of **symphonic music**.

## *Spice it up with percussion!*

Every percussion instrument brings a different colour to the orchestra, and composers can choose from this palette of sounds, or timbres, to create special effects. For example, cymbals are often used as emphatic punctuation at key moments in a piece. They add brilliance and grandeur. More dramatic passages often feature drumrolls on the timpani, while the celesta can be used to create a fairy-tale ambiance. Percussion instruments are like spices for the orchestra: they give to the music a distinctive flavour!

## *Playing percussion – it’s a stressful job!*

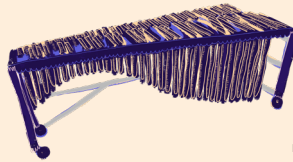
Because percussion is rarely used throughout an entire piece, percussionists often must count through extremely long rests – bars and bars... and bars of silence. For example, Bruckner’s Symphony no. 7 is over an hour long, and the triangle only chimes twice in the whole symphony! However, this means that percussionists have to maintain concentration even when they aren’t playing, because a cymbal crash that comes too early or too late could be a disaster for the orchestra!



# Orchestral percussion instruments



TRIANGLE



MARIMBA



CELESTA

## The triangle: easy as 1-2-3?

The triangle might seem easy to play, but it deserves some credit nonetheless! This metal idiophone is played by hitting the instrument with a small metal beater. It has a high-pitched, crystal clear sound that is very easy to hear over the orchestra. Imagine, then, if the percussionist made a mistake and hit the triangle at the wrong time!

## Percussion instruments with keyboards?

Some percussion instruments, such as the **marimba**, the **xylophone**, and the **vibraphone**, are keyboards made up of wooden or metal bars of different sizes. The smaller the bar, the higher the sound, and the longer the bar, the lower. Like the piano, these instruments have two rows of keys or bars: the first row contains only natural notes (like the white keys on the piano) and the second, only sharps and flats (like the black keys on the piano). These keyboard percussion instruments are played with mallets – sometimes as many as four at a time!

## What about the celesta?

Have you ever noticed a small “upright piano” in an orchestra? This instrument is actually a **celesta**. Like the piano, it belongs to the percussion family because the sound is created by little hammers, which strike metal plates instead of strings. The celesta’s sound is similar to the sound of little bells, and is often used to create a magical ambiance, as in *The Nutcracker* ballet by Tchaikovsky.

## Did you know?

In the piano, sound is produced by little hammers hitting strings. Therefore, the piano belongs to both the percussion and the string families of the orchestra!

## Percussion around the world

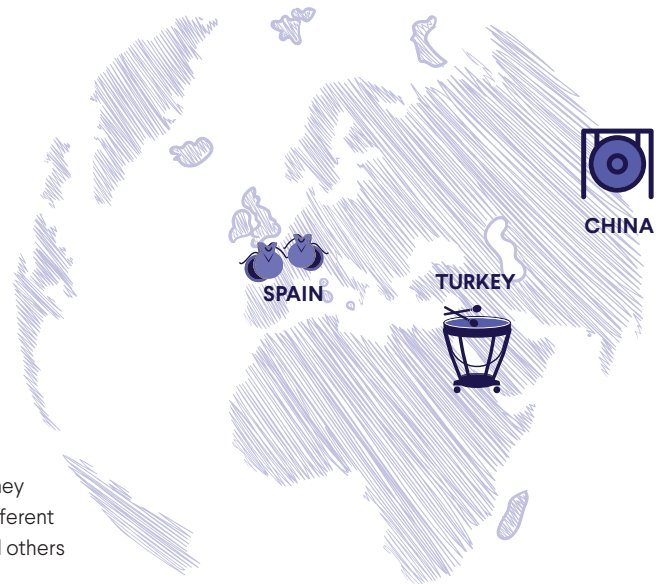
Humans have always used rhythm as a means of communication and expression, whether by making a membrane vibrate, hitting a piece of wood, or simply clapping. Percussion instruments are thus the oldest instruments in human history, and the ones found in symphony orchestras come from many places, such as Turkey (the timpani), Spain (castanets), and China (the tam-tam or Chinese gong).

Percussion instruments exist in every culture, but they play different roles in different places. They can accompany rites of passage, official ceremonies, or even military battles, as well as traditional dances: this is illustrated by Bernstein’s “Mambo” and Arturo Márquez’s *Danzón no. 2*.

## Hit, shake, and scrape!

There are dozens upon dozens of different percussion instruments! Although they all belong to the same family, they don’t all work the same way, and there are different ways to play them. Some are meant to be hit, some are meant to be shaken, and others are meant to be... scraped!

**Can you name one instrument for each of these three ways to play percussion?**



## Did you know?

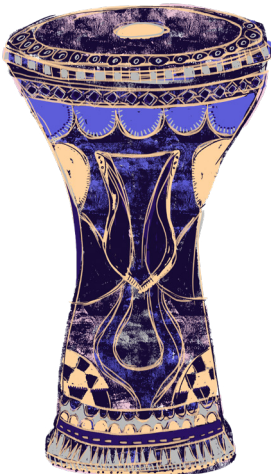
Scores for percussion instruments of indefinite pitch (that is, for instruments that do not produce precise notes) do not have five-line staves like other orchestral instruments do. Instead, there is only one line, which is used to write out the rhythm. Look at the snare drum, güiro, and bass drum parts in the score below (an excerpt from Arturo Márquez's *Danzón no. 2*).

The image shows a musical score for six percussion instruments. Each instrument has a single-line staff with rhythmic notation. The instruments listed are Cymbals, Snare Drum, Tom-Toms, Claves, Güiro, and Bass Drum. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accents.



## Follow the leader!

Orchestra conductors do a lot of things! In addition to telling musicians when and how to play (that is, with what volume, articulation, and emotion), the conductor has to keep a steady beat and a consistent tempo – unless there are special markings in the score. Musicians would have a hard time following the conductor if he or she were randomly speeding up or slowing down!



## Did you know?

Orchestral percussionists have to know how to play several different percussion instruments. Some have specific roles (such as the timpanist, who never leaves the timpani), but others can go from xylophone to bass drum to tubular bells to triangle within a single piece! Sometimes, percussionists even have to create special effects, imitating the sound of a door slamming or the patter of falling rain.

## The double bass doubles... as a drum?

In the orchestra, the percussion section obviously plays a crucial role when it comes to the rhythmic elements of symphonic music. But instruments in other families can also act as “percussion.” Other musicians can enhance the rhythm of a piece by accenting certain notes or even by hitting or slapping the body of their instrument.

## Your turn to play!

Prepare to become a percussion instrument by learning the body percussion choreography available on our website [osm.ca](http://osm.ca)!



## Invent an instrument!

The basic definition of a percussion instrument is “any instrument that is struck in order to produce sound.” This means that almost anything can become one! You can turn pots, bottles, boxes, garbage cans, and even your own body into a percussion instrument!

Have fun using everyday objects to create percussion instruments!

## The composers and their work



### Bedřich Smetana

(1824–1884), Czech Republic

#### *My Country: “The Moldau”*

A proud representative of Czech nationalist music in the 19th century, Smetana was one of the first composers to draw on the folk music of his country, the Czech Republic.

“The Moldau,” composed in 1874, belongs to a cycle of six **symphonic poems** called *Má Vlast* (My Country). Each movement is based on an element of the Bohemian landscape or an episode from Bohemian history. Specifically, this well-known piece is a musical description of a river that runs through the Czech Republic: the Moldau.



### Leonard Bernstein

(1918–1990), United States

#### *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story, “Mambo”*

Pianist, conductor, teacher, and composer Leonard Bernstein wrote *West Side Story* in 1957. This famous musical tells the story of two young lovers from rival street gangs in New York City, and at the dance where they meet for the first time, they hear a feverish mambo. The **mambo** is a dance of Cuban origin, in 4/4 time, in which the dancers’ steps are mirror images of each other. From time to time throughout this piece, Bernstein has the whole orchestra shout “Mambo!” (a word that originally meant “voices in chorus”).



### Arturo Márquez

(born in 1950), Mexico

#### *Danzón no. 2*

Arturo Márquez was the son and grandson of traditional Mexican musicians, and was exposed to different musical styles at a very young age. Of the many Latin dances that profoundly affected him in his youth, it was the **danzón** – from Cuba originally, but also very present in the Veracruz region of Mexico – that compelled him to compose the *Danzones* suite. The second movement, *Danzón no. 2*, has been so successful since its 1994 premiere that it has become known as the “second national anthem of Mexico.”

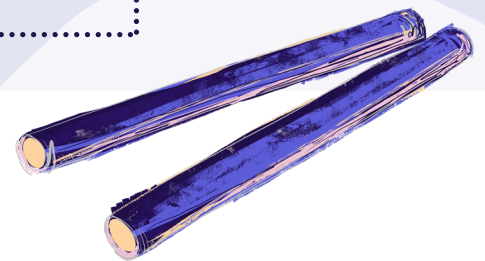


### *To listen to excerpts*

from the works presented in this concert, see the online resources in the **Education** section of our website, [osm.ca](http://osm.ca).

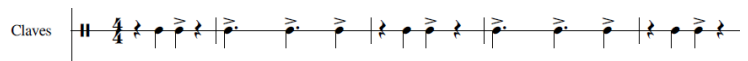
## Symphonic poems: when music is worth a thousand words!

When you listen to music, do you ever feel as though someone is telling you a story? Some pieces are indeed meant to create stories and images: they might conjure up a passage of text, a painting, a place, a hero, or an adventure. The **symphonic poem** – an orchestral genre in which an extra-musical idea inspires a single, free-form movement – belongs to this category of music, called “program music.”



## *Instrument or rhythm?*

“Clave” can refer to a percussion instrument made out of two small wooden sticks that are knocked together (the claves), as well as to a rhythmic pattern used in many Latin dances. Arturo Márquez’s *Danzón no. 2* is also based on the clave rhythm. Can you clap it with the music?





**Ed Argenziano**

(born in 1958), United States

***Stinkin' Garbage***

American composer and percussionist Ed Argenziano was director of music at a New Jersey high school for 32 years. He has composed and arranged multiple pieces for percussion.

*Stinkin' Garbage* was composed for six... garbage cans! Inspired by street musicians in the big city, Ed Argenziano uses this piece to explore the metallic sounds of these everyday "percussion instruments." The result is incredibly catchy!



**Ken Shorley,**

(born in 1969), Canada

***The Bright Side***

Ken Shorley is a versatile percussionist and composer who juggles many different styles and sources of inspiration. He has a special interest in music from South India, Indonesia, the Arab world, and Turkey, as well as in Western classical music.

*The Bright Side* – written for TorQ in 2009 – features four percussion instruments from around the world: the darbuka (a vase-shaped Turkish drum), the riqq (a tambourine from the Middle East), the cajón (originally a crate for carrying fruit), and the caxixi (a bell-shaped rattle made from a wicker basket and shaken like maracas).



**Monica Pearce**

(born in 1984), Canada

***whirly (commissioned by TorQ, world premiere)***

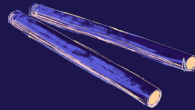
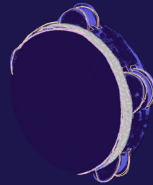
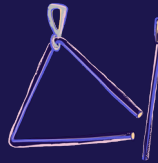
Canadian composer Monica Pearce has a particular affinity for solo and chamber music, opera, and musical theatre. She co-founded Toy Piano Composers, a Toronto-based emerging composer collective that presents imaginative new music to curious audiences. With works for toy piano, tabla, bicycle bells, and a "pocket opera" for the Bicycle Opera Project, Monica Pearce never ceases to surprise.

Commissioned by the TorQ Percussion Quartet, *whirly* is scored for plastic tubes – called "whirly tubes" in English and "tubes hurleurs" in French – that produce sound when they are spun around in the air; players can change the pitch by spinning the tubes faster or slower. This whirlwind of a piece will be performed for the first time ever during your visit to the Maison symphonique!



***Living composers?***

We often imagine classical composers to be people who lived a long time ago – people who wore wigs and old-fashioned clothing. But there are also many classical composers from our own time! Composers who live in the same time period as we do are called contemporary composers. In this concert, you will hear four pieces by composers who are still alive: *Stinkin' Garbage*, *The Bright Side*, *Danzón no. 2* and *whirly*.



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