

# SCHUBERT UNFINISHED



## THE RETURN OF CHRISTIAN KLUXEN

Two years of cancelled plans and shifting waves have left us with an appreciation for work interrupted. In our season opening we include Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony No. 8 – and challenge audiences to decide for themselves whether it is incomplete or utter perfection. Alongside it, we take a celebratory turn, with Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* raising us up, while Concertmaster Terence Tam inspires with Brahms' virtuosic *Violin Concerto*.



VICTORIA  
SYMPHONY

Christian Kluxen, Music Director

Sandra  
Lackenbauer

*Season Underwriter*

## **Season Opening: Schubert Unfinished**

Sunday, September 18, 2022, 2:30 pm

Royal Theatre

**CHRISTIAN KLUXEN**, conductor

**TERENCE TAM**, violin

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

### **Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77**

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace – Poco più presto

## **INTERMISSION**

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

### **Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D. 759 “*Unfinished*”**

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

### ***The Firebird (L’Oiseau de feu) – Suite (1919)***

Introduction

The Firebird and its dance

Variation of the Firebird

Ring Dance of the Princesses (Khorovod)

Infernal dance of King Kashchei

Berceuse (Lullaby)

Finale

*This concert is underwritten in part by a generous gift from*

***Fritz & Dora Boehm***

## Season Opening: Schubert Unfinished

After the cancellations, postponements, precautions, and worries of the COVID-19 epidemic, the first concert of the Victoria Symphony's 2022–2023 season is both a chance to bask in some eternal verities which have not, fortunately, been upended by the Great Reset, and an occasion to celebrate the orchestra's metaphorical rebirth. Although he died in 1897, Johannes Brahms is still with us, and as VS concertmaster Terence Tam proclaims, his Violin Concerto remains "one of the pinnacles of the concerto repertoire." And of course Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* is one of the most powerful tellings of the ancient phoenix legend, its titular bird standing in for music itself, which is forever being reborn in the minds of fresh generations of performers, composers, and listeners.

But the season opener, **Schubert Unfinished**, is also a tying up of loose threads, and what more appropriate way to resume operations after an unanticipated break than with Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8 in B minor. Dubbed the "Unfinished Symphony" not long after its posthumous premiere in 1865, it has been the subject of much musicological speculation. Why did the great Austrian composer set it aside in 1822, six years before his death? Some think it was due to illness, perhaps the syphilis that would ultimately kill him. Was his intended finale repurposed as incidental music for Helmina von Chézy's play *Rosamunde, Fürstin von Zypern*? We'll likely never know, but it's plausible.

Questions aside, however, the Victoria Symphony's Music Director Christian Kluxen thinks that the truncated work is both symbolically apt and perfect in itself. "I always see being incomplete as perfection," he argues. "I think 'incomplete' is *always* perfection. As a creative artist, whenever you try to round something off in the 'right' way, it almost feels unmet. Then it actually feels unfinished. The best art—the most *complete* art, in my opinion—is the art that is officially, from the perspective of the artist, unfinished or incomplete."

Kluxen cites Fredensborg Palace, a former royal residence just outside his native Copenhagen. "In the hall where the Queen often has her banquets, the marble floor is made with black and white tiles in a beautiful pattern—but there is one square where the pattern is intentionally broken." That is, he says, a reflection of the artistic and spiritual philosophy—common to Islamic weavers, Japanese potters,

and, apparently, Danish stonemasons—that only God’s creations can be flawless. Man always falls short.

Tam, however, might disagree. The Victoria Symphony Concertmaster, who’ll take the soloist’s role in the Brahms, is effusive in his praise of the Violin Concerto. “It’s a great piece, yet it’s incredibly challenging,” he says. “It doesn’t matter that I’ve known this concerto since my teen years and have performed it with orchestra several times; it remains technically demanding, musically demanding...I mean, it’s such a complete piece. It could be another Brahms symphony, in a way.”

And while future concerts in the Victoria Symphony’s **Being Robert Schumann** series will examine the tangled relationships between Brahms, Schumann, and Schumann’s wife Clara, Tam is more intrigued by Brahms’ interplay with violinist Joseph Joachim, who premiered the Violin Concerto in 1879. “He was super-influential with many composers, but definitely with Brahms,” Tam says. “Brahms is known in the world of string players as being a very awkward composer in the way that he writes; we call it ‘not very violinistic.’ In other words, he writes as a non-violinist would write...and that’s why he had to consult a great violinist like Joachim. You can kind of feel that in this piece. You can feel that it could have been much more awkward than it is—and it is still awkward. The thing is, what Brahms is trying to do with the music is of course paramount, and so he’s never going to sacrifice that to make things more violinistic.”

Tam reserves his highest praise for Joachim’s cadenza, which he’s excited about performing. “It’s commonly played, but for good reason,” he explains. “It’s probably the best cadenza ever written, and it’s kind of seamless. You get into the cadenza at the end of the first movement, and you would never question ‘I wonder who wrote this cadenza?’ You think it’s Brahms, in a way. It’s kind of like [Joachim] was inside Brahms’s mind. It’s truly a virtuoso tour de force, and yet it sounds like Brahms.”

If Joachim is on Tam’s mind in the run-up to the season opener, Tam was on Kluxen’s while he was programming the event. “What saved us, over these past two years, was that we had very, very good musicians in the orchestra who are able to be soloists,” the conductor says. “And one of these is Terry Tam. So I thought it was appropriate to feature him—and not just during the pandemic, where he did several programs, both as a leader and as a soloist.

“I know Terry’s playing,” Kluxen continues. “I know he is extremely expressive, he’s romantic in his playing, and he is someone who knows the core repertoire very well. So I thought ‘Why not go for the most?’ It’s not the most difficult concerto, but it’s the most difficult violin concerto to actually realize. It’s not as technically difficult as Beethoven or Tchaikovsky or Britten, but it has a much larger depth of emotion. So why not ask him to do that?”

Such reasoning also speaks to the central theme of the Victoria Symphony’s 2022–2023 season: “the light that comes after a time of darkness,” as Kluxen puts it. Yes, the pandemic has been a time of darkness, even despair, for orchestras, listeners, and especially performers, but the brilliant light of music will lead us forward into new and better times.

Notes: Alex Varty

---

## ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS - SEPTEMBER 18

### VIOLIN

Bennet Chiu  
Tyson Doknjas  
Barb Gilroy  
Paul Luchkow  
Paule Prefontaine  
Kate Rhodes  
Misako Sotosaki  
Kathryn Wiebe

### VIOLA

Jessica Pickersgill

### CELLO

Alasdair Money  
Rachel Pomedli

### BASS

Bruce Miekle

### FLUTE

Mary Byrne

### HORN

Andrew Clarke

### PIANO

Robert Holliston

### PERCUSSION

Masako Hockey  
Rob Pearce

## Christian Kluxen, Music Director

Now in his sixth season as Music Director of the Victoria Symphony in Canada, and fifth season as Chief Conductor of the Arctic Opera and Philharmonic in Norway, Christian Kluxen is regarded as one of the most exciting conductors to emerge from Scandinavia. Born in Copenhagen in 1981 to Danish-German parents, Kluxen has a natural affinity towards the Germanic and Scandinavian repertoire, particularly the works of Beethoven, Brahms, Richard Strauss, Nielsen and Sibelius. Throughout his two positions in Canada and Norway he is being recognized for his sincere and transparent leadership, innovative programming and his bold, imaginative and energetic interpretations.

Recent and forthcoming guest engagements include Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne—to which he was immediately re-invited



following his debut in 2022—Odense Symphony, Turku Philharmonic and Norrköping Symphony. On the operatic stage, Kluxen has conducted extensive tours of *Don Giovanni* and *Madama Butterfly* with the Danish National Opera, followed by his Berlin conducting debut with *Die Zauberflöte* at Komische Oper. In 2017, he led highly successful performances of *Die Fledermaus* with Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, and *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Arctic Opera and Philharmonic. In 2019, he led two full productions of Bizet's *Carmen*; in Denmark at Opera Hedeland and in Norway with Arctic Opera and Philharmonic.

Kluxen's concerts have been broadcast live in Denmark, the UK, Sweden, Norway and Canada. He has received several prestigious awards and prizes, and in 2016 he was nominated by the International Opera Awards as "Young Conductor of the Year."

## Terence Tam, Violin Soloist / Concertmaster

Consistently praised for his intense musicality and impressive technique, Canadian violinist Terence Tam has performed in Canada, the US, Australia, Europe and Japan as a recitalist and chamber musician.

Currently concertmaster of the Victoria Symphony, he also previously held this prestigious position with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in Australia and Symphony Nova Scotia in Canada. Tam has appeared as a concerto soloist with orchestras in Canada, including those in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Halifax. An active chamber musician, Tam's performances have taken him to many festivals, including those presented by

the Montreal Symphony, Sitka, Pender Harbour, Sarasota, Ravinia, Meadowmount, Banff, Aspen, Encore, Hamptons, Scotiast, Sweetwater, Music in the Morning and La Conner music festivals. Tam made his New York debut at Carnegie Recital Hall in 1994; for his Paris concerto debut in 2000, he played the Ligeti Violin Concerto with the Academy of 20th Century Music Orchestra. His CD recording of composer Wim Zwaag's Violin Concerto with the Victoria Symphony was chosen as one of *CBC In Concert's* best classical recordings of 2011.

Mr. Tam's musical studies took place at Toronto's Glenn Gould School, Baltimore's Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, and Berlin's Hanns Eisler Music School in Germany.



# THANK YOU TO OUR ORCHESTRA UNDERWRITERS

The VS gratefully acknowledges these generous donors  
who help our orchestra

<b>Season Underwriter</b>	<i>Sandra Lackenbauer</i>
<b>Sean O'Loughlin, Principal Pops Conductor</b>	Devi & Robert Jawl
<b>Pops Series</b>	Devi & Robert Jawl
<b>Alana Despins</b>	Helen Stuart & Bob Hoogendoorn Mozart Fund

Victoria Symphony Society  
charitable registration #1192 85286 RR0001

Foundation for the Victoria Symphony  
charitable registration #1192 85278 RR0001



Christian Kluxen, Music Director

620 View Street, Suite 610 Victoria, BC V8W 1J6