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# FESTIVAL DE Ianaudière



## CLOSING CONCERT : NÉZET-SÉGUIN AND GRIMAUD

PRESENTED BY



**POWER  
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ORCHESTRE MÉTROPOLITAIN  
Hélène Grimaud, piano  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor

**AUGUST 7, 2022 | 4:00 PM**

Amphithéâtre  
Fernand-Lindsay

# CLOSING CONCERT : NÉZET-SÉGUIN AND GRIMAUD

## PROGRAM

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**Fanny Mendelssohn** (1805–1847)  
Overture in C major

**Robert Schumann** (1810–1856)  
Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54

- I. Allegro affettuoso
- II. Intermezzo: Andante grazioso
- III. Allegro vivace

**Felix Mendelssohn** (1809–1847)  
Symphonie No 3 in A minor, Op. 56 “Scottish”

- I. Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato
- II. Vivace non troppo
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai

ORCHESTRE MÉTROPOLITAIN  
**Hélène Grimaud**, piano  
**Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, conductor

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### FANNY MENDELSSOHN: OVERTURE IN C MAJOR

FANNY MENDELSSOHN: Born in Hamburg, November 14, 1805; died in Berlin, May 17, 1847

Like her younger brother Felix, Fanny Mendelssohn was a highly accomplished pianist and a fine composer as well. If her skill as a composer was not quite on the level of Felix's, Fanny was still one of the foremost women composers of the nineteenth century. Fanny's output was considerable, consisting mostly of songs, piano pieces, and chamber music. The overture on tonight's program is her sole purely orchestral composition (there also exist some choral and vocal works with orchestra). It was written probably sometime between 1830 and 1832, and published only in 1994 by Furore-Edition in Kassel, Germany. The ten-minute Overture conforms closely to most other works of its kind by Schubert, Weber, Schumann, or Felix Mendelssohn. It opens with a slow introduction (“not so much starting as awakening,” as one commentator put it). This leads into the *Allegro di molto* main section, laid out in standard sonata form with two principal themes (the first energetic, the second flowing and songlike, both presented by violins), a development section, recapitulation, and majestic coda.

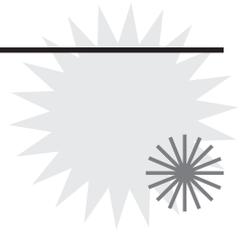
### ROBERT SCHUMANN PIANO CONCERTO IN A MINOR, OP. 54

ROBERT SCHUMANN: Born in Zwickau, Saxony, June 8, 1810; died in Endenich [near Bonn], July 29, 1856

The world premiere of Schumann's only piano concerto took place in Dresden on December 4, 1845, in the auditorium of the Hôtel de Saxe [a private affair]. The composer's wife Clara was the soloist, and his friend Ferdinand Hiller, to whom the concerto was dedicated, conducted.

Schumann dispenses with the traditional orchestral exposition found in classical concertos. Instead there is a peremptory “shout” from the full orchestra, followed by a cascade of chords from the soloist. A wistful, plaintive theme from the solo oboe – as tenderly lyrical and poetic an idea as any Schumann ever conceived – is taken up immediately by the piano, indicating at this early stage the close relationship that will prevail between soloist and orchestra.

Schumann's desire to create a totally unified, cogent piece of work manifests itself in the continuing presence of the pervasive theme of the first movement, which becomes the basis of the following two movements as well. The coy, playful, four-note idea that figures prominently in the opening



section of the *Intermezzo* is really no more than a cleverly disguised fragment of the familiar first-movement theme. One of the most ravishing passages in the whole concerto is the *Intermezzo*'s central episode featuring cellos in a theme of soaring lyricism and romantic passion.

Following the return of the *Intermezzo*'s opening material comes a short bridge passage which contains the embryo of the final movement's main theme. This, to no one's surprise by now, is also generated by the fertile theme from the first movement. The most notable feature of the movement may well be the recurring second theme with its tricky syncopations.

## FELIX MENDELSSOHN SYMPHONIE NO 3 IN A MINOR, OP. 56 "SCOTTISH"

FELIX MENDELSSOHN: Born in Hamburg, February 3, 1809; died in Leipzig, November 4, 1847

During July and August of 1829, the twenty-year-old Mendelssohn enjoyed himself touring Scotland. One day in Edinburgh he came upon the picturesque ruins of the Palace of Holyrood, in which Mary, Queen of Scots, had once lived. On July 30, Mendelssohn, wrote that "I believe that I have found there today the beginning of my Scottish Symphony." This consisted of a mere scrap of paper containing a few bars of music. That is all that became of the symphony until twelve years later. In 1831, he wrote from Italy that he could "not find his way back into the Scottish fog mood," a quite understandable condition given Italy's sunny climes. *The Scottish* [or *Scotch* - no one seems sure which is correct] Symphony was eventually completed in January of 1842, making it Mendelssohn's last major orchestral work. Hence, though called "No. 3," it is really the fifth of his five important symphonies. (There also exist some twelve works belonging to his juvenilia.) The symphony received its premiere in Leipzig on March 3, 1842, with Mendelssohn on the podium.

Is there anything particularly "Scottish" about the work? Well, yes and no. The degree of "Scottishness" is dependent on the individual listener's susceptibility to programmatic suggestion and on hindsight. The sombre, melancholic opening is certainly at least suggestive of the brooding, misty Scottish land; the ebullient clarinet theme of the Scherzo may be based on a Scottish folk air, since the scale pattern corresponds to that of the country's folk music; the leaping, vigorous, dance-like main theme of the finale is thought by some to be a musical representation of the gathering of the clans.

The symphony opens with a dour, hymn-like theme, which is in fact the scrap of melody Mendelssohn had jotted down just after visiting Holyrood. A variant of it serves as the first, agitated theme of the movement's main *allegro* section. The second theme is also given initially to violins—broadly flowing, passionately yearning. The development section and recapitulation unfold normally. The coda is in two parts: a surging storm scene followed by a calm restatement of the quiet opening hymn.

The next movement uses the same basic theme of the previous movement, but in radically different form and mood—now bright and zesty, first played by the clarinet. Though in duple metre, the music has the character of a lively scherzo [normally in triple metre].

The third movement shows Mendelssohn at his most lyrical—and his most militaristic. Violins begin with a sweetly sentimental, long-breathed melody [27 bars!]. This theme alternates three times with a stately, march-like subject that features the wind section. When the full orchestra takes over, the music assumes menacing proportions.

The finale is highly energetic, boisterous, even at times fiercely aggressive. No fewer than four themes are introduced and worked out. The key is mostly A minor, but for a final peroration Mendelssohn switches to A major, and the symphony ends gloriously.

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# Benoit Brière

## A passionate spokesperson

Mr. Brière is basically wedded to classical music, given that his spouse is a cellist—and in addition, Joliette-born. “A person who marries must adopt their wife’s hometown.” One might say that our Spokesperson is steeped in classical music everyday from morning to night!

“Don’t search for me this summer: I’ll be at the Festival de Lanaudière.”

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