

CANADIAN SINFONIETTA Presents

CANADIAN MOSAIC

ALBUM INFORMATION

Tracks

1. **An-lun Huang - Seven Canadian Folk Songs in Chinese Style**, for Chamber Orchestra (21:01) – Canadian Sinfonietta, Tak-Ng Lai, Conductor

2. **Ronald Royer - Mirage**, for Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano (9:26) - Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Players: Kaye Royer, Clarinet; Joyce Lai, Violin; Andras Weber, Cello; Talisa Blackman, Piano; with Guest Máté Szücs, Viola

3. **Tak Ng-Lai – Romance No. 2**, for Violin and Strings (8:32) –

Joyce Lai, Solo Violin; Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Players: Tak-Ng Lai, Conductor; Jin Lee Youn and Alain Bouvier, Violins; Ian Clarke, Viola; Andras Weber, Cello; Tim FitzGerald, Bass

4. **Ronald Royer - Night Star**, for Clarinet and Chamber Ensemble (8:30) –

Kaye Royer, Solo Clarinet; Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Players: Tak-Ng Lai, Conductor; Erica Goodman, Harp; Lorne Grossman, Glockenspiel; Joyce Lai and Jin Lee You, Violins; Ian Clarke, Viola; Andras Weber, Cello; Tim FitzGerald, Bass

5. **Michael Pepa – Liliane**, for Mezzo Soprano and Chamber Orchestra (8:40) –

Maria Soulis, Mezzo Soprano; Canadian Sinfonietta; Tak Ng Lai, Conductor

6. **Bruno Degazio – Pilgrimage**, for Octet (8:35) –

Canadian Sinfonietta Chamber Players: Ronald Royer, Conductor; Stephen Tam, Flute; Kaye Royer, Clarinet; Kristin Day, Bassoon; Joyce Lai and Alain Bouvier, Violins; Ian Clarke, Viola; Andras Weber, Cello; Talisa Blackman, Piano

World Premiere Recordings (Tracks 1, 3, 5 & 6)

Tracks 2 & 4 previously released on Night Star, Chamber Music by Ronald Royer– Akashic Classics, AE 23001.

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Sinfonietta (CS) is a Toronto based classical music organization that performs a variety of concerts every year, featuring a large-scale orchestra, small intimate chamber ensembles, as well as a youth orchestra concerts and other activities. The mission of the Canadian Sinfonietta is to attract a new generation of concert goers by presenting concerts that have a balance of traditional and newly composed or culturally interesting programs. Our concerts are both accessible as well as new and fresh. Our programs often feature interdisciplinary artistic presentations, multi-cultural music, non-western instruments and diverse Canadian artists.

We are excited to present our first commercial album: **Canadian Mosaic**. Our ensemble, founded in 1998, is thrilled to be able to share our music worldwide. Performing Canadian music is part of our mandate, so it made sense to record music by some of the composers involved in our community. The music on this album finds its inspiration from various cultures from around the world, from Canada to the USA, France, China and more. Our hope is this Canadian musical mosaic will take you on an engaging and enjoyable journey.

We started planning the album in 2018, and recorded *Mirage* in the fall of 2019. We booked more recording sessions for June 2020 but had to cancel due to the pandemic. We didn't give up and were able to record *Romance No. 2* and *Night Star* in June 2022. We completed recording in February and June of 2024. We were thrilled to finally release the album on November 15, 2024 using the Toronto based record label, Akashic Records with their distributor, the Universal Music Group.

This project has been a special experience, allowing the musicians to work closely together creating a feeling of family and friendship. There was a lot of passion and love for music in creating this album, particularly since every piece is by a composer in our community. Thus the process began not just in the practice room, but with the composer, with whom the musicians could closely work with to create the best possible performance.

This album is the culmination of many years of work and perseverance by a group of devoted people in the organization. Tak Ng Lai, the founder and music director of the Canadian Sinfonietta, has given us his constant leadership and musical guidance. Tak Ng conducted four of the compositions on the album and provided his *Romance No. 2*. Aster Lai, the wife of Tak Ng, has been tireless working to raise money, not just for the album but for the over 26 years of concerts and events that the orchestra has been involved with. Plus, there are all the supporting members of the family who both play for and help with each and every event.

This album is co-produced by artistic director and concertmaster Joyce Lai along with composer and conductor Ronald (Ron) Royer, each bringing their own expertise to the album. They led the planning and organization of the album, ran the recording sessions, and were involved with editing and the distribution of the music. Joyce also performed on every work on

the album, and Ron provided two compositions (Mirage and Night Star) and conducted the CS ensemble for Pilgrimage.

Acknowledgement needs to be given to the other composers involved on this album: CS composer-in-residence Michael Pepa, An-Lun Huang, and Bruno Degazio, who composed their works especially for the orchestra.

There are other wonderful musicians on the album, many of whom have performed with the ensemble for all 26 years. Two of our musicians were asked to take on a solo role, clarinetist Kaye Royer and mezzo soprano Maria Soulis. A special thank you goes to violist Máté Szücs, Hungarian born soloist and former principal violist of the Berlin Philharmonic, who graciously recorded with CS while on tour in Southern Ontario in 2019. Thanks also need to be given to the recording engineers and editors and all the people behind the scenes who helped. Finally a big thank you to all the sponsors who's donations made this recording happen.

ALBUM SPONSORS

Kate Chan	Ronald and Kaye Royer
Alison Clarke	John Gray
Robert Clarke and Eileen Hayden	Benjamin Lau, PRMosaic.com
Crystal Liu	Alina Mirzoev, Unionville Music Competition
Joanne Ni	Jessica Esch, Incellderm Skincare Distributer
Paul Lau and Tiffany Lam	Bruno Degazio
Maria Soulis and Eric Severn	Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra
Sharon Chen, Dragon Legend Buffet	Tania Tetreault and David Knox
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Yeung	Miranda Wong
Karin Hui	Gordon Lam

PROGRAM NOTES

An-lun Huang - Seven Canadian Folk Songs in Chinese Style

The Seven Canadian Folk Songs in Chinese Style was originally commissioned by Canadian clarinetist, James Campbell, as a septet in 1984 for his China tour. Campbell suggested Huang combine the folk music of Canada and China in this new work. The world premiere took place at the Festival of the Sound in Parry Sound, Ontario before the work embarked on it's China tour. The initial septet consisted of seven leading Canadian musicians: Moshe Hammar (violin), Steven Dan (viola), Sophie Rolland (cello), Joel Quarrington (bass), Anton Kuerti (piano), Robert Aitken (flute), and James Campbell (clarinet). The piece has met with such resounding success that Maestro Tak Ng Lai asked An-lun Huang to make a version for chamber orchestra that the Canadian Sinfonietta could perform and it's audience could enjoy.

Canadian audiences will recognize folk tunes from both Indigenous Peoples and Early Canadian settlers, spanning provinces across Canada. The work is divided into seven

continuous parts, each with its own folk tune. Tune 1 is from British Columbia, Tune 2 is from Alberta, Tune 3 and 4 is from Ontario, Tune 5 from Saskatchewan, Tune 6, a Quebec folk dance, and Tune 7 is from Newfoundland.

Ronald Royer - Mirage, for Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano

The intent in this composition is to explore the shifting and illusionary world of the dream state. Mirage begins with a slow meditative introduction representing the act of falling asleep. A solo viola cadenza follows, starting a sequence of musical episodes, each emphasizing different emotions and parts of a dream. As the ensemble enters, the music takes on a melancholy air with occasional mysterious interludes. In the next section, the music accelerates and takes on a restless and more intense character employing a bluesy jazz-infused theme. The music moves into a more flowing and serene section before leading into an even faster and more agitated section representing the dream taking a more troubled direction. Leading to an unsettling climax, the music abruptly stops, leaving silence. The original meditative music returns as the world of dreams fades away and the dreamer is left wondering if their experience was real or not.

Mirage was originally composed for orchestra in 2007 and has been arranged for string orchestra (2007), chamber orchestra (2008), and then revised for quintet (2019).

Tak Ng-Lai - Romance No. 2

Romance No. 2 for Violin and Strings is a self-portrait of the composer through music, based on a poem he wrote as a young man. The piece translates the Chinese traditional style of pentatonic scales and joyful folk-like rhythms into a western work of music where the singing and virtuosic quality of the violin is displayed at its fullest. Originally composed in 1995 for violin and piano, Lai arranged it for solo violin and string orchestra in 2002.

Ronald Royer - Night Star

The composer's in-laws live in a beautiful small town, Cayuga, in rural Ontario. Night Star represents a night of stargazing in the countryside. The opening somber music represents an overcast sky. When the solo clarinet enters, the sky starts to clear, and the magic starts. When the ensemble returns, the sky has cleared, and the stars are sparkling. The opening somber music and clouds return. The final section, with two clarinet cadenzas contrasted by ensemble entrances, represents stars trying to peak through the clouds.

Night Star was originally composed as the second movement of Echoes, a Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra (2010). In 2021, the Canadian Sinfonietta asked Ron Royer if he had a work for solo clarinet and small ensemble which could be included on an album of Canadian music. They wanted to feature their principal clarinetist (and Ron's wife), Kaye Royer. He decided to rewrite the second movement of Echoes, for an ensemble of clarinet, harp, glockenspiel, string quartet and bass. He made several changes to the composition, which

added a minute of music. He also included a harp part, which was written to be played by the distinguished Canadian harpist, Erica Goodman.

Michael Pepa – Liliane

The composer was inspired to compose Liliane after reading a 1987 essay in TIME MAGAZINE by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel. In it, Wiesel looked ahead to the trial of Klaus Barbie, known as the “Butcher of Lyons.” This trial, The State of France v Klaus Barbie, accused Barbie of deporting 7,500 Jews and murdering 4,000 people a half century earlier. One of the principal pieces of evidence against Barbie was an order he signed in 1944: “This morning, the Jewish children’s home ‘Children’s Colony’ at Izieu (near Lyons) has been removed. 41 children in all, aged three to thirteen, have been captured. Beyond that, the arrest of all the Jewish personnel has taken place, namely ten individuals, among them five women. It was not possible to secure any money or other valuables. Transportation to Drancy will take place on 4/7/44.” Liliane is dedicated to Liliane Gerenstein, an eleven-year-old girl, who was one of the children of Izieu. Liliane’s A Letter to God, which she scrawled before she was taken away, is the basis for this piece.

“It is thanks to You,
that I enjoyed a wonderful life before,
that I was spoiled,
that I had lovely things,
things that others do not have.
God?
Bring back my parents,
my poor parents,
protect them (even more than myself)
so that I may see them again as soon as possible. Have them come back one more time.
Oh!
I can say that I have had such a good mother, and such a good father!
I have such faith in You
that I thank You in advance.”

Liliane Gerenstein, 4/7/44

As Michael read her letter, Psalm 13 immediately came to his mind. The parallel is striking. Her original French words are set in an innocent recitativo style and are followed by a few lines in English of Psalm 13. The ‘aria’ is meant to re-enforce the similarity of thought and contrast in mood.

Bruno Degazio – Pilgrimage

This music was created to capture the emotional journey of a profound pilgrimage—beginning in solitude, moving through a heavy, determined march, and finally arriving at a moment of

transformation, where all turns to joy and gratitude. It reflects the deep inner struggle and ultimate grace found on such a path.

The piece is dedicated to Our Lady of the Cape, whose shrine at Cap-de-la-Madeleine in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, is the heart of Marian devotion in North America. The composer hopes his music will convey even a fraction of the reverence and love inspired by this sacred place.

Pilgrimage was written in 2020, and then revised prior to recoding in 2023, for Joyce Lai and the Canadian Sinfonietta.

BIOGRAPHIES



An-lun Huang, born 1949, is a member of the Canadian Music Centre and the Composer League of Canada. A prolific composer, Huang has composed music for almost every genre in the classical field. In addition to chamber works, sacred music, opera and ballet, he has also produced more than 40 symphonic compositions. He has won numerous awards internationally including the Canada National Art Pioneer Award in 2004 and more recently, OPUS KLASSIKS 2019 in Germany. Many renowned musicians

have performed his works, most notably pianist Lang Lang, who won 1st Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Youth Competition performing his Chinese Rhapsody No. 2 in 1995. Another notable pianist was Hsu Fei Ping, who won his Gold Medal at the International Rubinstein Piano Competition in 1989, also performing a work by Huang.

Huang is a three-time recipient of the China National Award. He has been performed by numerous orchestras around the world, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Canadian Sinfonietta. Huang graduated from the Middle School of the Central Conservatory of Music in China in the late sixties. As the composer-in-residence of the Central Opera House of China, he became a member of the China Musician's Association in 1979. He immigrated to Canada in 1980 to study composition at the University of Toronto before continuing his composition studies at Trinity College in London, England, and eventually receiving his MM at Yale University winning the Alumni's Prize in 1986. Huang has taught as guest professor at several universities including the Tianjin Conservatory of Music in China.



Tak Ng Lai, born 1941 in China, was a member of the first violin section in the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra before continuing his studies at the Vienna Conservatory of Music with a joint major in violin and conducting. He immigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1977, along with his wife, pianist Aster Lai and their daughter, Canadian violinist Joyce Lai. He is a past music director and conductor of both the Niagara and the Mississauga Youth Orchestras. He led the Etobicoke Philharmonic for 20 years before retiring. He also served as

the conductor of the Canadian Chamber Academy, and assistant conductor of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra in his early days. Lai was Principal Guest Conductor of the Canton Philharmonic and Choral Society and has guest conducted the Moscow Symphony, Ural State

Philharmonic, Vancouver Symphony, Windsor Symphony, Shanghai Philharmonic, Taiwan Symphony, Beijing Symphony, Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra of Bulgaria. Lai is the founder and music director of the Canadian Sinfonietta. Although he has been composing for most of his musical career, since the pandemic, his output has multiplied. A significant figure in the Canadian community, Lai has been instrumental in bringing Chinese music and musicians, both traditional and together with western, resulting in the production of hundreds of cross cultural concerts.



Michael Pepa has composed some 80 works for solo instruments, chamber groups, and orchestras. Most have been commissioned, performed, and broadcast in Canada as well as in the U.S., Netherlands, France, Italy, Austria, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, and Japan. As well as being the founder and artistic director of Les AMIS Concerts, he is the composer-in-residence of the Canadian Sinfonietta, a member of the

Canadian League of Composers, SOCAN, and an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre.

At the Music Biennale Zagreb, Festival of Contemporary Music, MBZ'15, the President of Croatia Ivo Josipović awarded Mr. Pepa a national award, Redom Danice Hrvatske S'Likom Marka Marulića. This is a cultural award in recognition of Pepa's contribution to the promotion of Croatian music in Canada and by Canadian composers in Croatia.

In 2019, at his 80th birthday concert, the Town of Cobourg Municipal Council presented Pepa with a Certificate of Honour and Canadian Sinfonietta's Conductor Tak-Ng Lai presented Pepa with a trophy, "With gratitude for your immense contribution to the Canadian Sinfonietta." In 2023, at the premiere performance of his Viola Concerto, Pepa was honoured with an award by the eminent Serbian violinist Jovan Kolundzija, director of Ustanova Kulture Gvarnerius, Belgrade, Serbia, in recognition for his contribution to the performances in Canada and Serbia, not only of his music, but music by Canadian composers of Serbian origin. As a guest composer at the 2024 'Days of New Music' festival in Chisinau, Moldova, Pepa was honoured by becoming an honorary member of Moldovan League of composers and musicologists.

Michael Pepa (1939) was born in Timisoara, Romania. He came to Canada in 1953, settling in Toronto with his family. He has lived in Cobourg, Ontario, since 2014.



With numerous performances, commissions and commercial recordings, **Ronald Royer** is a prominent Canadian composer who strives to connect with audiences. Justin O'Dell of The Clarinet magazine writes: "Ronald Royer's music is beautifully appealing and communicative", while Stanley Fefferman of Showtimemagazine.ca contributes, "These masterful and witty pieces live up to Royer's reputation for music that is both entertaining and imaginative."

Born in Los Angeles into a family of professional musicians, he began his career as a cellist, performing with such ensembles as the Toronto Symphony, Utah Symphony, Pacific Symphony, and American Ballet Theatre Orchestra, as well as working in the Motion Picture and Television Industry in Los Angeles during the 1980's.

As for composition, Mr. Royer's concert works have been performed worldwide by over 70 orchestras. He has composed for the theatre and film, including the Canadian motion picture *Gooby*, starring Robbie Coltrane and Eugene Levy.

His music is featured on 20 commercial recordings; performers include the Los Angeles Studio Orchestra, Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic (Czech Republic), iPalpiti Orchestra (Los Angeles), Sinfonia Toronto, 13 Strings of Ottawa, Toronto Sinfonietta, Winds of the Scarborough Philharmonic, Odin Quartet, pianist Alexander Panizza, flutist Louise DiTullio, oboist Sarah Jeffrey, clarinetists Kaye Royer and Jerome Summers, violinist Conrad Chow, cellist Simon Fryer, hornist Gabriel Radford, and trumpeters Brunette Dillon, Barton Woomert and Steven Woomert. His commercial recordings are regularly heard on radio, including the CBC and The New Classical FM in Canada, satellite radio, and a number of NPR stations in the USA.

Mr. Royer is presently serving as the music director and conductor of the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra and is married to clarinetist Kaye Royer.



Bruno Degazio is a composer and educator based in Toronto, Canada, with a strong background in cinematic sound design and music. His career highlights include special effects work on the Oscar-nominated IMAX film *The Fires of Kuwait*. For two decades, he served as Professor of Digital Tools in Sheridan College's renowned Animation program, helping to shape the skills of future animators and artists. A pioneer in the intersection of music and technology,

Bruno has published groundbreaking research on music composition using fractals and genetic algorithms. He is also the principal developer of *The Transformation Engine*, an innovative software system that merges music composition with data sonification, pushing the boundaries of how we experience sound.



Toronto-born mezzo-soprano **Maria Soulis** began her career as a principal artist with the Regensburg Opera in Germany, performing the roles of Carmen, Rosina, Nicklausse, Dido, and Adalgisa in theatres throughout Germany, France and the United Kingdom. In concert works from Bach to Mahler, her voice has been praised internationally by reviewers who have described it as "warm and powerful", as well as "gorgeous, dusky-toned"

with a "ruby red timbre".

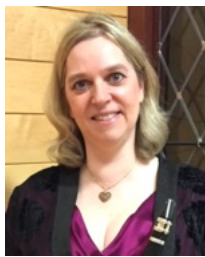
Maria's 2019-20 season included *La Ciesca* in Gianni Schicchi and the Monitor in Suor Angelica, in Pacific Opera Victoria's *Il Trittico*. Maria debuted as Marcellina in *Against the Grain* at Theatres

updated Figaro's Wedding, appeared as Flosshilde in Pacific Opera Victoria's Das Rheingold, and sang Clara in the world premiere of Oksana G. with Tapestry Opera.

Maria is honoured to have song cycles written for her by Canadian composers William Beauvais (Rounding the Human Corners), Colin Eatock (Three Songs from "The Prophet"), James Moffett (Songs for a Summer's Night), and Constantine Caravassilis (Four Songs from the Age of Rembetiko).

Upcoming projects include a concert of chamber music for voice and string quartet, featuring Jake Heggie's arrangement of Debussy's Chansons de Bilitis, and Constantine Caravassilis' Four Songs from the Age of Rembetiko, which were commissioned by and dedicated to Maria.

A member of the Toronto Heliconian Club, Maria performs often on its concert series as a singer and as a pianist and composer, recently performing excerpts from her piano suite, "Memories, Greece". Maria Soulis can be heard on the Juno-nominated Naxos CD "Vivaldi – Sacred Music" with Kevin Mallon and Aradia Ensemble.



Kaye Royer is an active soloist, chamber musician and orchestral performer. She is principal clarinet with the Brantford Symphony, Canadian Sinfonietta, Sinfonia Toronto, Scarborough Philharmonic, Casa Loma Orchestra and Stratford Symphony. She has performed with London Sinfonia, Kitchener Waterloo Symphony, Hamilton Philharmonic, Niagara Symphony, Ontario Philharmonic, Talisker Players, Toronto Concert Orchestra, Arcady Orchestra, and the Toronto Artists Symphony. She toured China as principal clarinet of the

Ontario Festival Symphony, performed on the Ontario portion of a Diana Krall world tour and the opening night of Luminato. As a recording artist, she was a featured soloist on Toronto Sinfonietta's Romancing Chopin, and Scarborough Philharmonic's Canadian Panorama, and performed on The Hollywood Flute of Louise DiTullio, and Conrad Chow's Premieres. Movie soundtracks include Gooby, Prisma, The Dog and The Happy Couple. Recent chamber music engagements include performing and recording a quintet with Máté Szücs, soloist and former Principal Violist of the Berlin Philharmonic, and performing with the Philadelphia Orchestra String Quartet.



Toronto based violinist **Joyce Lai** enjoys a career as a soloist and chamber musician. She has been featured as guest artist with numerous orchestras, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Szeged Symphony Orchestra of Hungary, the Canadian Chamber Academy, and the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. Joyce is a regular guest soloist in the Toronto area and has performed with the Stratford Symphony Orchestra, York Chamber Ensemble, Etobicoke Philharmonic, Scarborough Philharmonic, as well as the Cathedral

Bluffs Symphony Orchestra. As an avid chamber musician, Joyce has collaborated with numerous musicians at summer festivals and on concert tours in Canada, Europe and Asia.

Joyce is the Artistic Director of the Canadian Sinfonietta (CS), a Toronto based classical music organization who present a variety of events featuring large-scale orchestra concerts, small intimate chamber concerts, as well as youth orchestra concerts and other activities. Joyce performs regularly both as soloist and in collaboration with the Canadian Sinfonietta. As a passionate educator, Joyce has a studio of private students. In addition to regularly being invited to adjudicate competitions, she gives violin clinics and master classes.

Joyce holds a Bachelor of Music Degree from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, and a Masters of Music Degree and Performer Diploma from Indiana University. As a great supporter of new music, Joyce has had a number of works, including a violin concerto, composed for her. Her performances can be heard on all the streaming platforms.

ALBUM INFORMATION

Recorded in Toronto at Revolution Recording (tracks 1 & 5), Desert Fish Studios (Track 2), 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture (tracks 3 & 4), and Calvin Presbyterian Church (track 6), by Stephen Koszler (tracks 1 & 5), Kevin He (track 2), Jeff Wolpert (tracks 3 & 4) and John S. Gray (track 6).

Edited by Matt Antal (tracks 1 & 5), Jeff Wolpert (track 2), Brandon Walker (tracks 3 & 4), and Bruno Degazio (track 6).

Ronald Royer's Mirage was recorded in collaboration with Ronald Royer and the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra

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Canadian Sinfonietta - <https://canadiansinfonietta.com/>

Ronald Royer (SOCAN) - <https://ronaldroyer.com/>

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