

---

## The RBC Piano Extravaganza brings today's greatest pianists to the TSO for blockbuster programming February 4 – 14, 2015

*Pianos in the City kicks off the festival on February 4 with Steinway pianos across downtown Toronto for free interactive programmes*

**Wednesday January 14, 2015** – The piano is one of Western music's most familiar instruments – a staple of popular songs and a star of orchestral repertoire, the instrument is mastered by powerful virtuosos and explored by children playing simple melodies. The TSO's RBC Piano Extravaganza celebrates the instrument, its players and repertoire, and marks the début of the TSO's new New York Steinway grand piano. Curated by GRAMMY® Award-winning pianist **Emanuel Ax**, the festival of concerts and community activities is presented in partnership with the Royal Conservatory of Music, and runs February 4 – 14, 2015. [TSO.CA/Piano](http://TSO.CA/Piano)

“Whether played in the comfort of your home, in collaboration with friends, or on stage with a full orchestra, the piano is a versatile and accessible instrument that opens unlimited avenues of expression and creativity to the performer,” says **Emanuel Ax**. “As artists, we want to explore these possibilities, and examine how the piano speaks to us.”

At the centre of the RBC Piano Extravaganza are orchestral concerts packed with works for solo piano, duo piano and orchestra. Appearing throughout the festival on the Roy Thomson Hall stage are some of the most acclaimed pianists performing today including **Emanuel Ax**, **Stewart Goodyear**, **Jan Lisiecki**, **Pavel Kolesnikov**, **Yefim Bronfman** and piano duo **Anagnoson & Kinton** playing the music of Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Mozart, and Ravel. TSO Music Director **Peter Oundjian** leads each Toronto Symphony Orchestra masterworks performance, and for one night only, the TSO presents the **National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO)** with pianist **Yefim Bronfman** as **Pinchas Zukerman** makes his final Toronto appearance as NACO Music Director.

The two-week festival features an array of concerts and activities for all ages and interests. In a special programme for young audiences, Music Director Peter **Oundjian** and the TSO's newly-appointed RBC Resident Conductor **Earl Lee** share the podium at a Saturday afternoon programme where pianists from the Royal Conservatory of Music join **Emanuel Ax**, TSO Principal Keyboard **Patricia Krueger** and **other pianists**. The TSO's What Makes it Great?® concert explores the piano, as conductor and commentator **Rob Kapilow** and **Emanuel Ax** examine Beethoven's radiant Piano Concerto No. 4.

---

The RBC Piano Extravaganza kicks off on Wednesday February 4 with *Pianos in the City*. Between 11:00am and 2:00pm, Steinway pianos will be across downtown Toronto in the CBC Atrium, RBC Plaza, City Hall Rotunda, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), and Union Station. Torontonians are invited to play these pianos and Emanuel Ax will stop in at each venue for a brief performance.

“As a committed supporter of the Arts and long-time partner to the TSO, RBC is thrilled to be part of this unique event that invites music lovers from across the city to celebrate the piano in such an open and inclusive way,” said George Lewis, Group Head, RBC Wealth Management & RBC Insurance. “We’re equally proud to support the TSO’s newly appointed RBC Resident Conductor Earl Lee as he makes his much-anticipated public *début* during the festival, and congratulate RBC Affiliate Composer Kevin Lau on the world première of his new work *Foothills of Heaven*.”

In addition to the *Pianos in the City* launch event on February 4, free events include a lunchtime concert featuring opera transcriptions for piano at the Four Seasons Centre (February 5); a piano marathon at Koerner Hall (February 8); a masterclass led by Emanuel Ax at the Royal Conservatory of Music (February 13); and a chance for piano students to play the TSO’s new New York Steinway grand piano on stage at Roy Thomson Hall (February 14).

## CONCERT LISTINGS

All concerts at Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St, unless otherwise noted

Call the TSO ticket line at 416-598-3375 or order online tickets at [TSO.CA](https://www.tso.ca)

**ABOUT EMANUEL AX:** Born in Lvov, Poland, Emanuel Ax moved to Winnipeg, Canada with his family when he was a young boy. Ax’s contributions to the world of classical music are immeasurable. Equally at home with the music of 20th century composers as he is with the music of Haydn and Beethoven, Ax has premiered works by composers such as John Adams, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Christopher Rouse. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Science and holds Honorary Doctorates of Music from Yale and Columbia Universities. Emanuel Ax is “an extremely satisfying pianist; he is at home in a wide variety of music and his pianism is always thoughtful, lyrical, lustrous” (The Washington Post).

**ABOUT THE TSO:** Founded in 1922, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra is one of Canada’s most important cultural institutions, recognized internationally as an outstanding orchestra. Music Director Peter Oundjian leads the TSO with a commitment to innovative programming and audience development through a broad range of performances that showcase the exceptional talents of the Orchestra along with a roster of distinguished guest artists and conductors. The TSO also serves the larger community with TSO SOUNDCHECK, the original under-35 ticket programme; the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra; and music education programmes that reach over 50,000 students each year.



Toronto  
Symphony  
Orchestra

Peter Oundjian  
Music Director

TSO.CA/Media

---

**ABOUT RBC'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY:** Royal Bank of Canada (RY on TSX and NYSE) is Canada's largest bank and one of the largest banks in the world, based on market capitalization. We employ approximately 78,000 full- and part-time employees who serve more than 16 million personal, business, public sector and institutional clients through offices in Canada, the U.S. and 38 other countries. For more information, please visit [rbc.com](http://rbc.com). RBC is recognized among the world's financial, social and environmental leaders and is listed on the 2014 Dow Jones Sustainability World Index, the DJSI North American Index, the Jantzi Social Index and the FTSE4Good Index. RBC is one of Canada's Greenest Employers, and one of Canada's 50 Most Socially Responsible Corporations.

RBC contributed more than \$100 million in 2014 to causes that will have a positive and lasting social, economic and environmental impact for generations to come. We are actively involved with charitable organizations around the world and we support our employees in their volunteering efforts. Learn more at [www.rbc.com/community-sustainability](http://www.rbc.com/community-sustainability).

RBC Resident Conductor and RBC Affiliate Composer are part of the RBC Emerging Artists Project, supported by the RBC Foundation. These positions are also supported in part by the Canada Council for the Arts.

The RBC Piano Extravaganza Presenting Sponsor is RBC Wealth Management.

Pianos provided by Steinway Piano Gallery/Toronto.

The TSO Season Presenting Sponsor is BMO Financial Group.

The TSO Official Airline is Air Canada.

The TSO Season Patrons are Pam and Chris Hodgson.

In gratitude for their generous philanthropy, Blake and Belinda Goldring are recognized as Patrons of Emanuel Ax's appearances on February 4 & 5

Hans and Susan Brenninkmeyer are patrons of the TSO's New York Steinway Concert Grand Piano.

Media Contacts:

Francine Labelle/flINK, 416.593.7769 X267, [flabelle@TSO.CA](mailto:flabelle@TSO.CA)

Laura Quinn, Director of Communications, 416.593.7769 X232, [lquinn@TSO.CA](mailto:lquinn@TSO.CA)

Tony Maraschiello, RBC Wealth Management, 416.974.9334, [tony.maraschiello@rbc.com](mailto:tony.maraschiello@rbc.com)

---

ADMINISTRATION  
T 416.593.7769  
F 416.977.2912

TSO.CA  
[@torontosymphony](https://twitter.com/torontosymphony)  
[facebook.com/torontosymphonyorchestra](https://facebook.com/torontosymphonyorchestra)  
[youtube.com/torontosymphony](https://youtube.com/torontosymphony)

ON-STAGE  
Roy Thomson Hall  
60 Simcoe St

MAILING ADDRESS  
212 King Street West, 6th Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 1K5