



Festival  
Classica



# MICHEL LEGRAND'S GREAT CLASSICS

Symphonique



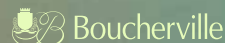
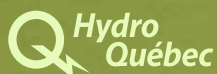
16th edition

6 June 2026 – 7:30 p.m.

Cocathédrale Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue

Longueuil

In collaboration with



# Michel Legrand's Great Classics Symphonique

## Program

(100 mins with intermission)

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### Yentl

*Papa, Can You Hear Me*

### Donkey Skin

Générique

*Amour, amour*

*Conseils de la fée des lilas*

*Fugue du prince*

*Chanson du prince*

*Recette pour un cake d'amour*

*Rêves secrets d'un prince et d'une  
princesse*

### Various

*The Windmills of Your Mind*

### The Umbrellas of Cherbourg

Générique

*Nous aurons des enfants*

*Ma petite fille, tu es folle...*

*J'avais tellement peur de ne pas te trouver...*

### Yentl

*A Piece of Sky*

### Intermission

### The Go-Between

*The Go-Between*

Themes and variations 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10

### Les Mariés de l'an II

*Les Mariés de l'an II*

### The Young Girls of Rochefort

*Marins, amis, amants ou maris*

*Chanson de Maxence*

*Chanson d'un jour d'été*

*Chanson de Simon*

*Delphine à Lancien (Mais que sais-tu de  
moi...)*

*Chanson d'Andy*

*Chanson des jumelles*

## Artists

Magali Simard-Galdès, soprano

Anna-Sophie Neher, soprano

Emmanuel Hasler, tenor

## Jazz ensemble

Lorraine Desmarais, piano

Éric Lagacé, double bass

Paul Brochu, drums

## Orchestre du festival Classica

General director: Marie-Anne Rozankovic

Conductor: Benjamin Levy

# About

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The Nouvel Opéra Métropolitain throws open the doors of the Cœthédrale de Longueuil for a glorious evening that's sure to captivate all audiences. Jazz aficionados, film buffs, and opera lovers alike are invited to rediscover the melodic genius of one of France's most soulful jazz artists, Michel Legrand. Enduring songs from *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *The Young Girls of Rochefort*, *Yentl*, and *Donkey Skin* take on a new dimension in lush orchestral arrangements that highlight the interplay between lyric voices and jazz rhythms.

Directed by Benjamin Levy, music director of the Cannes National Orchestra, the prestigious ensemble based in the city renowned for its iconic film festival, this exceptional collaboration unites the Orchestre du Festival Classica, three of the city's finest operatic voices, and Montreal jazz luminaries Lorraine Desmarais (piano), Paul Brochu (drums), and Éric Lagacé (double bass). From the wistful atmosphere of the port of Cherbourg to the exuberance of the *Young Girls*, the NOM presents a bold reimagining of timeless melodies, infused with swing and heart. A spectacular jazz-opera experience you won't forget!

# A word from Benjamin Lévy

Conductor

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Michel Legrand is a direct descendant of a long tradition of French opera whose roots go back to Rameau and Gluck via Debussy and Ravel. In Legrand, this very tradition strives for a perfect match—one might almost say an “emulsion”—between lyrics and music. But Legrand’s unique gift is his ability to marry this tradition sublimely with the nostalgia of song, and with the light and joy of jazz, of which he was a flamboyant performer. His collaboration with Jacques Demy reminds us how essential director-composer duos are to the success of a film (Hitchcock-Herrmann/Fellini-Rota/Spielberg-Williams).

*The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* is a cinematographic lyric tragedy with a harrowing plot, *The Young Girls of Rochefort*, a quirky, affectionate tribute to American musicals, and *Donkey Skin*, a fairytale—innocent, but sombre and cruel. Set against these masterpieces are the enigmatic score for Joseph Losey’s *The Go-Between* and the Oscar-winning soundtracks of *Yentl* and *The Thomas Crown Affair (The Windmills of Your Mind)*, guaranteeing you an evening of music rich in images, colours, and magical songs!

# Program notes

Benjamin Goron, musicologist

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On a rainy railway platform in Cherbourg two lovers part, not knowing whether they will meet again. In a sunny square in Rochefort two sisters dream of love and adventure... A few words are enough to summon images from films for which Michel Legrand wrote unforgettable scores. A composer with a prodigious melodic gift, a virtuoso jazz pianist, and a highly skilled orchestrator, Legrand created a language unique to him, blending cinema, song, and sophisticated music. His musical universe, luminous and melancholy, accompanied some of the finest stories on the big screen.

Born into a family of musicians in Paris in 1932, Michel Legrand grew up quickly in a rich world of sound. His father, a composer and conductor, gave him his love of music, while his mother encouraged him to follow a classical education. At barely ten years of age, he entered the Paris Conservatory, where he studied under the great teacher Nadia Boulanger. The mastery of writing and orchestration he developed there marked his entire career. Early on, he acquired a passion for jazz, discovered the greats of the American scene, and developed a brilliant, inventive piano style. In the 1950s, he emerged as a conductor and arranger, working with many singers. His album *I Love Paris* was an international hit and opened the door to a worldwide career.

A decisive turning point was his meeting with director Jacques Demy. Together they developed a new form of dialogue between music and cinema: films in which music did not merely accompany the picture but became a central part of the story. With *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and *The Young Girls of Rochefort*, Legrand invented a hybrid form, somewhere between opera, musicals, and *cinéma d'auteur*. He subsequently worked with many international directors and earned several Oscars for his Hollywood film music. From *Yentl* to *The Thomas Crown Affair*, his scores showed an outstanding melodic gift and a rare ability to translate on-screen emotion. Legrand's music doesn't merely provide an illustration for the story, it brings out its poetry and depth.

The works featured in this program cover some of the most emblematic films scored by Michel Legrand, revealing the full diversity of his creative gift. His most celebrated work remains *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, which came out in 1964. This Jacques Demy film tells the story of Geneviève and Guy, two young lovers separated by the Algerian War. Its distinguishing feature is a unique device: all the dialogue is sung. Legrand's music spreads a continuous flow of melody in which themes return and change as the story unfolds. Among them, the celebrated main theme conveys both the sweetness of burgeoning love and the melancholy of separation.

Three years later, Demy and Legrand revisited this musical universe in *The Young Girls of Rochefort*. The film's tone was brighter and livelier. Twins Delphine and Solange dream of leaving the little port city in search of love and artistic success. The score, influenced by American musicals, overflows with lively rhythms and sparkling orchestral colours. The tunes run through the movie almost weightlessly, borne aloft by shimmering orchestration at the crossroads of symphonic music and jazz.

In *Donkey Skin* (1970), Legrand explores a completely different register: fairytale. In this adaptation of the story by Charles Perrault, the music accompanies the metamorphoses and enchantments of the plot. The songs mix humour, poetry, and fantasy, as in the famous "Recette du cake d'amour," in which the music turns a cookery scene into a moment of magic.

*Yentl*, a 1983 film directed by and starring Barbra Streisand, gave Legrand one of his most moving scores. The story follows a young Jewish woman from Eastern Europe who disguises herself as a man in order to study sacred texts. The music plays a central role, with the songs expressing the character's thoughts and doubts. The lyrical, nostalgic melodies convey the heroin's quest for identity and freedom. In *The Go-Between* (1971), Legrand's instrumental music lends an elegiac dimension to the story of impossible love in the England of 1900. The main theme, of great simplicity, evokes memory and passing time.

Some of Legrand's songs composed for the cinema later took on a life of their own. One such was "The Windmills of Your Mind" ("*Les Moulins de mon cœur*") written for *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968). The tumbling, hypnotic melody evokes the constant circular flow of thoughts and memories. The song won an Oscar for the best original song and became a standard, recorded by countless artists. Lastly, *Les Mariés de l'an II* (1971), a historical adventure film directed Jean-Paul Rappeneau, reveals another facet of the composer: music full of verve and panache, accompanying the twists and turns of the story with a quasi-symphonic energy.

Brought together in this concert, these famous pieces take on a new dimension. The orchestral arrangements and the meeting between lyrical voices and jazz rhythms embody the spirit of Michel Legrand: an art of melody that crosses the boundaries between genres and sets up a dialogue between cinema, song, and concert hall. The composer's music lives on and reinvents itself, carried by tunes that everyone recognizes immediately.

# Artists

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**Magali  
Simard-Galdès**  
Soprano



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**Anna-Sophie  
Neher**  
Soprano



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**Emmanuel Hasler**  
Tenor



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**Lorraine  
Desmarais**  
Piano



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**Éric Lagacé**  
Double bass



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**Paul Brochu**  
Drums



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**Benjamin Levy**  
Conductor



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**Marie-Anne  
Rozankovic**  
General director



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## Orchestre du Festival Classica

### First violins

Johanne Morin, concertmaster  
Oleg Larshin, associate concertmaster  
Marie-Anne Rozankovic  
Olga Semionova  
Anastasia Virlan  
Zoé Dumais  
Brigitte Dajczer

### Second violins

Amélie Benoit-Bastien, principal  
Veronica Ungureanu, associate  
Elsa Barozzi  
Catherine Beaudry  
Fiona Marchetto  
Maya Hilke-Stolle

### Violas

Julie Dupras, principal  
Vincent Delorme, associate  
Jean René  
Valérie Arsenault  
Sarah-Eve Vigneault

### Cellos

Loredana Zanca, principal  
Aidan Fleet, associate  
Danijela Kos  
Florence Geneau

### Double basses

Emilou Johnson, principal  
Gabrielle Martin, associate

### Flutes

Jocelyne Roy, principal  
Myriam Genest-Denis

### Oboes

Lindsay Roberts, principal  
Dylan Pinette

### Clarinets

Victor Alibert, principal  
Julien Deguire

### Bassoons

Mariana Olaiz-Ochoa, principal  
My-Lan Vu

### Horns

Mathilde Lepage, principal  
Guillaume d'Aragon  
Noah Larocque  
Melissa Provost-Ross

## **Trumpets**

Nicolas Gagnon, principal, piccolo

Thierry Champs

Daniella Carbert, improvised solos

## **Trombones**

Yori Lang, principal

Nicolas Blanchette

Matthieu Bourget, bass trombone, principal

## **Tuba**

Maxime Lepage

## **Timpani**

David Therrien-Brongo

## **Percussion**

Léo Guiollot, principal

Catherine Cherrier, associate

## **Harp**

Antoine Malette-Chénier, principal

## **Keyboard, synthesizer**

Karl A. Rozankovic

# Festival Classica team

General and Artistic Director: **Marc Boucher**

Associate Director: **Julie Valois**

Director of Communications and Social Media Manager: **Catherine Loiselle**

Administrative Director and Box Office Manager: **Nathalie Houde**

Production Director, Indoor Performances: **Gabriel Vasiliu**

Production Director, Lyric Operation Productions (NOM): **Isabeau Proulx Lemire**

Production Director, Outdoor Concerts: **Dominique Arcand**

Content Coordinator, Website and Programs: **Marie-Christine Lance**

Contracts Manager and Volunteer Coordinator: **Martine Bergeron**

Box Office Assistant: **Carmelle Gauvin**

16th edition

22 May to June 14 2026

[festivalclassica.com](http://festivalclassica.com)

# CONCERTS THAT HIT THE RIGHT NOTE!

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In collaboration with

