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 **SNEAK PEEK  
ORCHESTRA**

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PRESENTS

**Dreams of Flying**



February 4th, 2012, 7:30 pm  
St. Gabriel's Passionist Parish

Dear patrons,

We are delighted to present our latest adventure in symphonic music-making with you, *Dreams of Flying*. Named after our fellow member Rob Teehan's masterful, Juno-nominated composition, which we are proud to feature, this program is dedicated to the art of the symphonic journey; the power of orchestral music to transport us to places we have never visited and leave us breathless. Witness the world premiere of Kevin Lau's cello concerto, *Foundation*, which places renowned cellist Rachel Mercer in the shoes of a heroine navigating a perilous, mythologically-inspired voyage. We close with Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*, a monument of the symphonic legacy and an inspiration to all music-lovers.

The Sneak Peek Orchestra is excited to share this concert with you in its remarkable new venue, St. Gabriel's Passionist Parish, which has graciously donated its space for our activities. We are also fortunate to welcome our new orchestra sponsor, Rolf Reininghaus. A long-time supporter of the orchestra, his generous efforts have made "Dreams of Flying" a reality.

This is a concert about dreams; flights of fancy, the soaring afterimages of an artist's vivid imagination, and of course, the dream within all of us to fulfill our greatest potential. May our dreams live on!



**Kevin Lau**  
Composer in Residence  
Artistic Director



**Victor Cheng**  
Conductor  
Artistic Director

*The Sneak Peek Orchestra is a student-run ensemble passionately dedicated to presenting the classical genre of music in ways that are new, exciting, and accessible. By championing the works of young Canadian composers and emerging solo artists, the orchestra aims to offer a 'sneak peek' into a new generation of musicians, all deeply committed to celebrating one of our oldest music traditions: the symphony hall.*

Please visit our new website, [www.sneakpeekorchestra.com](http://www.sneakpeekorchestra.com), for information on concerts, tickets, and ways of supporting our orchestra. We can also be found on **facebook**, **twitter** (@SneakPeekOrch), and **YouTube** (user: SneakPeekOrch).



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## Programme

The Sneak Peek Orchestra  
Conducted by Victor Cheng

"Dreams of Flying"

Dreams of Flying

Rob Teehan

Foundation (WORLD PREMIERE)  
for cello and orchestra

Kevin Lau

- I. Light
- II. Water
- III. Illusion

Rachel Mercer, cello

( *Intermission* )

Symphony No. 7

Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Poco sostenuto – Vivace
- II. Allegretto
- III. Presto
- IV. Allegro con brio



# The Works



**Rob Teehan**

## **DREAMS OF FLYING (2009)**

As an alumnus of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, I was deeply honoured to be given the opportunity to write for the orchestra, which I remember as a place where dreams are affirmed, realized and exceeded in one short and unforgettable summer. Being a musician at this stage of life – skilled, enthusiastic, and on the cusp of something thrilling and unknown – is a bit like being a young bird about to leave the nest. I remember dreaming that I could fly as a child, and spending many waking hours wishing the dream would come true; as an adult, my career in music has provided much of the same spirit of freedom and adventure that I remember from those dreams. I dedicate this work to all young musicians who are pursuing their dreams and reaching new heights.

*Dreams of Flying*, a nine-minute orchestral tone poem, tells a literal story: A dreamer is startled to find himself high above the ground and gifted with the power of flight. Ecstatic, he swoops through clouds and flocks of birds, soaring over mountains, lakes, fields, cities, forests and oceans from a great height, gathering speed and energy. Then, as the music melts into a relaxed groove, he settles in at a lower altitude where landmarks are more familiar, the air is warmer, and he is joined by birds – or maybe other dreamers – who fly alongside. Then the sky turns red, and the dreamer realizes he is flying directly into a brilliant sunrise. As the sun comes up, he awakens; the dream begins to fade from memory, portrayed by fragments of the music trailing away into silence. (*written by Rob Teehan*)

**Kevin Lau**

## **FOUNDATION (2011)**

I have been fascinated by stories—by storytelling in general—ever since I was a child. Myth is the distillation of those stories that we have—collectively, over centuries upon centuries—deemed as essential to our being, and are thus a magnificent window into the human condition. In my cello concerto, *Foundation*, I have sought to explore one of the core precepts of myth through music: the traveler who encounters something unexpected (unknown, chaotic) which upsets the balance of her world,

and how she chooses to act in the face of this challenge. The concerto is divided into three movements:

### *I. Light*

Light represents the world of order, knowledge, and stability. A lush, cello melody unfurls over a bed of strings, spirited and carefree, but a shadow soon falls upon this idyll, and in an attempt to fight back the unknown, the music gradually adopts a more mechanical and aggressive demeanour.

### *II. Water*

The music depicts a descent into darkness and chaos in all of its mythic grandeur. Mysterious, not-quite-defined textures lend the orchestral background a somewhat sinister, 'living' quality. After an extended submersion, the music resurfaces unexpectedly transformed and luminous.

### *III. Illusion*

This outwardly heroic, warrior-like movement undermined by currents of chaos and skepticism that threaten the very fabric of the world—illusion. The virtuosity of the solo part suggests a field of intense action; despite the movement's brief, lyrical episode, the soloist ultimately chooses a darker path.

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

## **SYMPHONY NO. 7 (1813)**

Straddling the midway point between the fate-obsessed *Fifth Symphony* and the all-embracing *Ninth*, Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* is predominantly a symphony of joy, though the carefree spirit which pervades the outer movements belies an underlying sense of mature reflection and acceptance not present in the composer's earlier works. The symphony transcends the origins of the dances which it so lovingly appropriates; the result is one of Beethoven's most endearingly humanistic works.

The first movement opens with a lengthy, majestic introduction, which, after a suspenseful series of false starts, segues into the galloping *Vivace*. The full-blooded version of the theme withheld till the last possible moment, so that when it finally arrives, its vigour is truly felt. The second movement *Allegretto* was popular in its time, and has remained so ever since (it was used recently, and memorably, during the climax of *The King's Speech*). In it, Beethoven takes the simplest of musical building blocks and amasses them into a hymn (also part dance, part

funeral) of nearly overpowering depth: sorrow, heroism, and above all dignity become one. The third movement *Scherzo* is a rapid-fire loose cannon, relying on witty exchanges and dramatic surprises for its charming effect. Finally, the fourth movement is a rollicking (and slightly zany) romp that manages to build an astonishing amount of momentum before its rousing finish.

## The Bios



### RACHEL MERCER (cellist)

[www.rachelmercercellist.com](http://www.rachelmercercellist.com)

Described as a “pure chamber musician” (Globe and Mail) creating “moments of pure magic” (Toronto Star), Canadian cellist Rachel Mercer has demonstrated her love for sharing music through performance since she was three years old. Winner of the 2009 Canada Council Musical Instrument Bank Competition, Rachel was awarded the use of the 1696 Bonjour Stradivarius cello, until August 2012. As the grand prize winner of the 2001 Vriendenkrans Competition in Amsterdam, Rachel made her European debut in the Concertgebouw and has performed as a soloist across Canada, in Europe, the United States, Balkans and Israel. She has made appearances with the Toronto Symphony, National Arts Centre, Durban, and Banff Festival orchestras, and her performances have been broadcast in Canada, Israel and Europe. A member of the award-winning Aviv String Quartet from 2002-2010, Rachel toured regularly on five continents. The quartet released cds on Naxos and Dalia Classics and celebrated its 10th anniversary with a complete Shostakovich cycle at the 2007 Verbier Festival. She currently records for Israeli indie label EnT-T. Her debut disc “Room” of solo cello pieces, was released in April 2008.

Currently based in Toronto, Rachel is Artistic Director of the “5 at the First” chamber series in Hamilton. She is also the principal cellist for Via Salzburg, a chamber music series led by Mayumi Seiler, and member of piano quartet Ensemble Made in Canada, winners of CBC Galaxie Rising Stars Award, and named among “80 women to watch” in the 80th anniversary edition of Chatelaine magazine in May 2008. Rachel also appears in recital with pianist Angela Park as the Mercer-Park duo. Their debut disc of Barber, Shostakovich and Lau was released in July 2011.

Rachel is teaching at the University of Toronto while Shauna Rolston is on sabbatical (January to May 2012) and has given masterclasses at schools, conservatories and universities across North America, South Africa and in Israel.

### ROB TEEHAN (composer)

[www.robteehan.com](http://www.robteehan.com)

Rob Teehan (b. 1982) is a tuba and sousaphone player, composer, arranger and singer based in Toronto. His concert music is performed across Canada and the United States, and in 2010 he became, at 27, the youngest composer ever nominated for a JUNO award in the category “Classical Composition of the Year”.

Rob is Composer-in-Residence with Sinfonia Toronto (2011-12) and the Church of the Redeemer (since 2009), a position he also held with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (2009). Other performances of Rob’s concert music in the 2011-2012 season include the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, Sinfonia Toronto, and the Kitchener/Waterloo Grand Philharmonic Choir. He has written original music and arrangements on commission for Sinfonia Toronto, the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Hannaford Street Silver Band, the Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra, the Calgary Stampede Showband, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (who recorded his Juno-nominated work “Dreams of Flying” in 2009), the Canadian Composers’ Orchestra, the Silver Birch String Quartet, and many others including several choirs in the Toronto area.

As a performer Rob is in high demand as a sousaphone player (the marching band version of the tuba), and performs regularly with the soul/rock singer Saidah Baba Talibah, the Heavyweights Brass Band, the Boxcar Boys, the Lemon Bucket Orkestra, and many others. Rob is also a professional choral tenor who has held paid positions with a number of renowned choirs including the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. He has written over two dozen choral works and won several awards, including first prizes in the Grace Church on the Hill St. Cecilia Choral Composition Competition (2009), the Young New Yorker’s Chorus Young Composer’s Competition (2008), and the Vancouver Chamber Choir Young Composer’s Competition (2005).

After graduating from the University of Toronto in 2005, Rob went on to study classical tuba performance with Daniel Perantoni at Indiana University, also completing a secondary specialization in composition and earning his Master of Music degree in 2007. Rob taught undergraduate tuba and euphonium at the University of Windsor from 2007 to 2009, and maintains a small private studio out of his home in Toronto.

#### **KEVIN LAU (composer)**

[www.kevinlaumusic.com](http://www.kevinlaumusic.com)

Kevin Lau is active as a composer of contemporary music. He has had music commissioned and performed by numerous ensembles including the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de la Francophonie, the Cecilia String Quartet, the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Toronto Philharmonia, the Toronto Concert Orchestra, Orchestra Toronto, Via Salzburg, Trio sTREga, the Hannaford Street Silver Band, and the Esprit Orchestra. He collaborates regularly with renowned performing artists such as Conrad Chow (violin) and Rachel Mercer (cello). His orchestral composition Fountain of Dreams was selected as the winner of both the 2005 Mississauga Young Composers' Competition and the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra Composer's Competition in 2008/09. In 2010, he was awarded the Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music for his composition Starsail.

Kevin has written music for over a dozen films, including the feature documentary UFOs: A Secret History, which aired on the History Channel in 2008. During the same year, he co-wrote (with Canadian composer Ronald Royer) the full-length orchestral score to Gooby, a Canadian children's feature film starring Eugene Levy and Robbie Coltrane. His composition Joy (for violin and strings) will be released on the Cambria label featuring violinist Conrad Chow and composers Ronald Royer and the Hollywood film composer Bruce Broughton.

In 2007 Kevin co-founded the Sneak Peek Orchestra with conductor Victor Cheng. Composed primarily of young and emerging professionals from Toronto, the orchestra has premiered four of his works, including his Violin Concerto (with soloist Alexa Wilks) and, most recently, The Water of Life, which was performed at the George Weston Recital Hall (with violinist Conrad Chow) as part of the international charity Free the Children. Kevin lives in Toronto and recently received his doctorate degree in music composition from the University of Toronto under the

supervision of Christos Hatzis. He was appointed composer-in-residence for the Mississauga Symphony in 2010, and will be serving as composer-in-residence for the Banff National Arts Centre during the summer of 2012.

#### **VICTOR CHENG (conductor)**

Pianist, organist, and conductor has established himself as a multi-faceted musician. Inspired by Ivars Taurins, he decided to pursue orchestral conducting in 2007 and along with composer Kevin Lau, founded Sneak Peek Orchestra, an endeavor to showcase young talent and premiere works by Canadian composers. Since then, SPO has performed at the Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts and the Chinese Cultural Centre, and has had the honour of performing with artists such as Shauna Rolston, Molly Johnson, Lucia Cesaroni, and Conrad Chow. In 2010, Victor was the only Canadian Conducting Fellow in the NAC Conductor's Program where he had the opportunity to work with Orchestre de la Francophonie Canadienne and the National Arts Centre Orchestra under the tutelage of Kenneth Kiesler and Pinchas Zukerman.

Victor's passion in conducting stemmed from piano lessons with conductor/composer An-Lun Huang as well as his experience as a choir boy at St. Michael's Choir School, where he specialized in voice, piano and organ. Currently Victor is the assistant conductor of Vocal Horizons Chamber Choir and a member of the Toronto Philharmonia Chorus. He is also the Musical Director and Principal Organist of Our Lady of Annunciation Church. Recently, Victor was appointed organist of St. Mark's Catholic Church in Stouffville. In addition, Victor has played for several churches including St. Rose of Lima, St. Luke's, St. Gabriel's, St. Bonaventure's, St. Patrick's, and St. Elizabeth Seton.

Victor graduated from University of Toronto with a B.Mus in Jazz Piano Performance. He studied with Gary Williamson, Dave Restivo, performed with jazz icons Dave Young and Terry Clarke, and has had the opportunity to work with Lee Konitz and Renee Rosnes. In 2006, Victor was invited to perform in Kenny Barron's clinic at the National Arts Centre. As a freelance conductor and pianist, Victor is in popular demand for recording sessions, recitals and concerts, having worked with Toronto Philharmonia, UofT Symphony Orchestra, UofT Wind Symphony, Ton Beau String Quartet, Bach Children's Chorus, Windmill Theatre, Vocal Horizons Chamber Choir, George Gao, John Engelkes, among others.

# The Orchestra

## Violin I

Sharon Lee, *concertmaster*  
Jane Yang, *assistant concertmaster*  
Colin Repas  
Meghan Ruel  
John Young  
Julija Zibrat  
Lucy Zhang

## Violin II

Joyce Kim, *principal*  
Kathleen Bloom  
Howard Fong  
James Hayes  
Mark Mckie  
Carina Sandejas  
Frederique Tanguay-Gagnon

## Viola

Brenna McLane, *principal*  
Stephanie Miletic  
Daniela Gassi  
Andrea Poon  
Peter Ing  
Emma Vachon-Twenev

## Cello

Samuel Bisson, *principal*  
Andrew Ascenzo  
Alex Fu  
Evan Lambertson  
Judith Manger

## Double Bass

David Gustilov, *principal*  
Natalie Kemerer  
William Kwan

## Flute

Tim Crouch, *principal*  
Stephanie Pesant

## Piccolo

Katherine Watson

## Oboe

Tess Menet, *principal*  
Lissa Mangano

## English horn

Lissa Mangano

## Clarinet

Mara Plotkin, *principal*  
Katie Norman

## Bassoon

Brett Freithaler, *principal*  
Kevin Harris

## Horn

Curtis Vander-Hyden, *principal*  
Amanda Bolger  
Beth Curley  
James Tizzard

## Trumpet

Lynn Peterson, *principal*  
Miranda Canonico  
Alastair Chaplin

## Trombone

Nathan O'Neil, *principal*  
Isabelle Lavoie  
Mike Wade

## Tuba

Kory Major

## Harp

Angela Schwarzkopf

## Piano

Wesley Shen

## Timpani

John Brownell

## Percussion

Michelle Hwu, *principal*  
John Brownell  
Michelle Colton  
Justin Han  
Etienne Levesque

# The Sponsors

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Tammy Mok

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Julie Liu  
Thomas Liu

# Acknowledgement

In addition to the dedication of our musicians and the support of our sponsors, we would like to thank our support team and our volunteers. An event of these proportions would simply not have been possible without the tireless efforts of these individuals.

## Design

Colourphill Design

## Audio-Visual Recording

John Gray  
Alison Gray

## Front of House

Chris Cheng  
Vincent Cheng  
Hazel Hetimier  
Albert Lam  
Alice Wong

## Programme Notes

Kevin Lau

## Food & Drinks

Samuel Bisson  
Margaret Lam  
Lynn Peterson

## Photography

Arash Behravan

# Executives

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(kevinlaumusic.com)

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