

Avi Avital and I Musici

Presented by



SUNDAY

12

JULY
4 P.M.

AMPHITHÉÂTRE
FERNAND-LINDSAY

PROGRAM

- **JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH** (1685-1750)
CONCERTO IN G MINOR, BWV 1056 - 10'
 - **ANTONIO VIVALDI** (1678-1741)
MANDOLIN CONCERTO IN A MINOR, RV 356 - 7'
 - **GIOVANNI PAISIELLO** (1740-1816)
MANDOLIN CONCERTO IN E-FLAT MAJOR - 17'
 - **BÉLA BARTÓK** (1881-1945)
ROMANIAN FOLK DANCES - 6'
 - **SULKHAN TSINTSADZE** (1925-1991)
IN CHASSIDIC MOOD – MOVEMENTS III, IV AND V - 13'
 - **GIL ALDEMA** (1928-2014)
IN CHASSIDIC MOOD – MOUVEMENTS III, IV ET V - 13'
 - **MANUEL DE FALLA** (1876-1946)
SPANISH DANCE (FROM *LA VIDA BREVE*) - 4'
- INTERMISSION – 20'

ARTISTS

Avi Avital, mandolin and conductor
I Musici de Montréal

PROGRAM NOTES

The mandolin is an instrument too long relegated to the margins of the great repertoire. Attested in iconography as early as the fifteenth century, it appears in its first forms at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Often used in the Baroque era in concertos of popular colour and in obligato airs of contemplative fragrance, the mandolin fascinates with good reason. Likely born in the streets of Naples, it has been adopted by many folk traditions, a notable example being the *estudiantina*, which enlivens the nights of the colonial city of Guanajuato, in Mexico, with serenades of old-world charm.

In the voice of the mandolin lies an almost theological centrality: that of a timbre that compels the ear to relearn how to listen, to shed the implicit hierarchies between soloist and ensemble, between “great” and “small” instrument. In this gesture, every concertante form breathes, sustains and refracts, like a sonic material become transparent to itself.

This programme, conceived by the passionate virtuoso Avi Avital, runs through works by Bach, Vivaldi and Paisiello, but also through the more modern projections of Bartók, Tsintsadze, Gil Aldema and Manuel de Falla. In tracing a cartography with no fixed centre, Avi Avital offers a rich and exhilarating journey. Here the Baroque is not a historical style but a persistent energy: that of variation, of ornament as expressive necessity, of the dance underlying all harmonic architecture. In Vivaldi, the mandolin becomes an autonomous character, a voice that refuses to remain decorative and asserts itself as discourse. In Bach, it takes its place within a thinking of structure where each note seems weighed like a metaphysical consequence.

Yet it is perhaps in the so-called “folk” resonances that this programme finds its most organic expression. Bartók, in reconfiguring the Romanian folk dances, does not quote: he extracts, condenses and reconstructs a collective memory become rhythmic abstraction. Tsintsadze, in his Georgian miniatures, extends this idea of a folklore that is not illustrative but transfigured by composition. His music embraces a drama and a lyricism that recall his heartbreaking, nostalgic score for the film *Father of a Soldier* (1964). Here

the mandolin becomes almost the pythonesque of the human adventure: it probes layers of sonic memory without ever fossilizing them.

I Musici de Montréal, in this perspective, acts as a chamber of critical resonance. The ensemble seeks not effacement but the legibility of the expressive tensions between pulse and suspension, lyricism and structure, the clarity of the Baroque line and the frictions of the twentieth century. The result is not a synthesis but an active and ever-fertile coexistence.

It would be tempting to read this programme as a celebration of virtuosity. That would be insufficient. Virtuosity, here, is never display. It is rather the gateway to a broadened listening, to an attention that agrees not to fix itself on a single centre of gravity. Avi Avital does not “play” the mandolin as a rare instrument; he explores its capacity to become a language—that is, a system of thought as much as of sound.

Within the open setting of the Amphithéâtre Fernand-Lindsay, this proposition takes on an added dimension: that of an untamed acoustic, where distances are not losses but extensions. Music circulates there like an atmospheric phenomenon, forever in the act of recomposing itself.

This concert, part of the journey of the 2026 edition of the Festival de Lanaudière, thus recalls an ancient truth rarely formulated with such clarity: tradition is not a repertoire but a circulation. And the mandolin, under Avi Avital’s fingers, becomes one of its most sensitive vehicles, precisely because it refuses all monumentality.

In this dialogue with Avi Avital and I Musici de Montréal, the past is not preserved: it is reactivated, unsettled, recomposed. Perhaps this is where the true dramaturgy of the evening lies—not in the succession of works, but in a conversation never interrupted between the plucked string and the collective pulse, between the virtuoso individual and the orchestral vibration.

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