

TD Jazz Concerts

Oscar Peterson's 100th Birthday Celebration

This three-day celebration of the “Maharajah of the Keyboard” featuring concerts, symposia, masterclasses, and more, curated by Kelly Peterson and Mervon Mehta, runs from Thursday, October 23, to Saturday, October 2025.

31 years ago, one year after the stroke that took away the use of his left hand, Oscar Peterson returned to concert performance with a series of four concerts in Europe that July. The following month, on August 7, 1994, he appeared at the Ravinia Festival. That evening proved to be the beginning of an enduring professional relationship with Ravinia's young program director. The following year, and for several years afterward, our daughter Céline and I accompanied Oscar to Ravinia for his concerts there. When the same program director moved to Philadelphia's Kimmel Centre, their second season opened with an Oscar Peterson concert.

The Royal Conservatory's beautiful new Koerner Hall opened two years after Oscar died. I was thrilled when a familiar name was announced as the Executive Director of Performing Arts, because I knew this was wonderful news for music in Toronto. Personally, it was also an opportunity to renew a connection with that young program director from Ravinia, Mervon Mehta.

During Koerner Hall's second season, Mervon consulted with me on a concert series celebrating the varied aspects of Oscar's performing career. One of the most memorable nights of my life was in this very hall 10 years ago, when I was figuring out how to launch *Oscar, With Love* – my first venture into record producing – Mervon said quietly, “I would be happy to produce the concert for you.”

This partnership continued in 2020 with the world premiere of Oscar's *Africa Suite*, another unforgettable evening. So, it is fitting that festivities marking Oscar's centenary be presented here, adding to the party that was started in June with the all-star Canadian celebration produced by Céline at Massey Hall.

Throughout a career that spanned more than 65 years, Oscar toured the world, taking his listeners and audiences on breathtaking and exhilarating musical journeys. He is still the quintessence of piano virtuosity. Oscar was a champion for human rights. He was an advocate for music education and dedicated teacher. He was a prolific composer. This three-part celebration highlights some of those journeys, celebrates Oscar's dedication to excellence, his delight in sharing his knowledge and experience with students, showcases his compositions, and carries on, through the generations, the traditions of the music he loved: jazz.

Among all the marvelous musicians who will play in these performances, I am thrilled to present the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra's Toronto debut in a performance of John Clayton's stunning arrangement of Oscar's *Africa Suite*. Jeff Hamilton was Oscar's drummer from 1990 to 1995 and is a beloved member of our “family.” Equally huge smile-producing: this concert will be hosted by our dear friend, Rosie Abella.

There is so much to say about each of the talented artists you will see and not enough room on the page to say it. I am sure you will be as mesmerized as I will be by their performances and by their dedication to honouring Oscar.

A closing thought: when the world beyond the walls of the concert hall is filled with chaos and loud, divisive voices, we have the sanctuary of music within. Music that unites us, gives us hope, and reminds us that there is beauty in the world. It is my hope that this music lifts you up and brings you joy. That is, after all, what Oscar most embodied: joy.

- Kelly Peterson

TD Jazz Concerts

Oscar Peterson's 100th Birthday (Part III)

Saturday, October 25, 2025 at 8pm

This is the 1,452nd concert in Koerner Hall

"Oscar Solo"

Makoto Ozone, piano

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

Amanda Tosoff, piano

Thompson Egbo Egbo, piano

"Oscar's Songs"

Cécile McLorin Salvant, vocals

Glenn Zaleski, piano

Yasushi Nakamura, bass

Kyle Poole, drums

*Please join us for a postlude performance with the **Patrick Hewan Trio** in the Leslie & Anna Dann Galleria.*

Makoto Ozone

Makoto Ozone is a unique force in both jazz and classical music, blending sound worlds and a host of influences into his performances. He first came to public attention when he gave his solo recital at Carnegie Hall in 1983. Makoto then became the first Japanese artist to sign an exclusive contract with CBS and released his first album, *Ozone*. His stellar career in jazz, which earned him his 2003 Grammy nomination, has brought him regularly to the forefront of the international scene, recording and touring with musicians including Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Paquito D'Rivera, Anna Maria Jopek, Branford Marsalis, and others. In 2004, he formed his big band, No Name Horses, which has toured to Europe, North America, and Asia. In recent years, Makoto has expanded into classical repertoire, alongside his jazz engagements. Having first performed Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1996, he now performs concertos by Mozart, Bernstein, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Rachmaninov with major orchestras. Makoto also composes music, with over 300 pieces to his name, including a symphony, a concerto, and many works for No Name Horses.

Jon Kimura Parker

The charismatic Canadian pianist Jon Kimura Parker is Creative Partner for the Minnesota Orchestra's Summer at Orchestra Hall, Artistic Director of the Honens International Piano Competition, Artistic Advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, and Keyboard Chair at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His exceptional level of experience with concerto repertoire includes performances in Carnegie Hall, Berlin's Philharmonie, London's Royal Festival Hall, Tokyo's Suntory Hall, and the Sydney Opera House. He has performed with Stewart Copeland – the legendary drummer of The Police, his YouTube channel features his *Concerto Chat* videos, and his *Whole Note* series is available on Amazon Prime. His recent Tonebase video on Rachmaninov has over 600K views. He has also collaborated with Bobby McFerrin, Doc Severinsen, and Audra McDonald. Jon Kimura Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing, Marek Jablonski, and Adele Marcus. He is an Officer of The Order of Canada and has received Honorary Doctorates from the University of British Columbia and The Royal Conservatory of Music. He is married to violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann and their daughter Sophie is a visual artist.

Amanda Tosoff

Amanda Tosoff is a B.C.-raised, Toronto-based pianist, composer, and educator. Through her richly varied body of work, Amanda has gained recognition as "an assured, forward-thinking voice" (Greg Buium, *Vancouver Sun*) on the Canadian jazz scene and beyond – not only as a composer and performer, but also as an educator and piano

department lead at Humber College. In Amanda's artistry, one hears a rigorous, deeply felt command of the jazz piano lineage (Oscar Peterson being her first inspiration as a pianist, of course!), as well as an eagerness to seek inspiration from various sources and disciplines. This is most evident on Amanda's Juno Award nominated albums *Earth Voices* and *Words*, where she blends jazz and art-song, as well as draws on poetry with a deep personal and emotional connection. Watch out for Amanda's upcoming recording projects, which will include collaborations with some of Canada's finest artists such as Emilie-Claire Barlow, Allison Au, and the Ostara Project.

Thompson Egbo Egbo

Thompson Egbo-Egbo is a Toronto-based pianist and composer whose music blends jazz, classical, pop, and cinematic influences. He is known for combining technical precision with a strong sense of storytelling. A graduate of Humber College and Berklee College of Music, Thompson has performed across Canada and internationally, including appearances at London's Hackney Empire Theatre, and festivals in the United States and Europe. His original compositions are recognized for their harmonic complexity and emotional depth. They have been featured in collaborative performances with Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre and Toronto Metropolitan University, where music, movement, and narrative come together. His work has also appeared in the Luminato Festival's *Golden Hour* series and is part of the Audio Network sync catalogue. For this performance at the Oscar Peterson Festival, Thompson offers a tribute that reflects influence rather than imitation. He honours Peterson through musical integrity, curiosity, and a shared belief in the power of music to connect and inspire. In both his artistic and community-focused work, Thompson remains committed to building bridges between people, cultures, and ideas through sound.

Cécile McLorin Salvant

Cécile McLorin Salvant is a composer, singer, and visual artist. The late Jessye Norman described Salvant as "a unique voice supported by an intelligence and full-fledged musicality, which light up every note she sings." Salvant has developed a passion for storytelling and finding the connections between vaudeville, blues, folk traditions from around the world, theatre, jazz, and Baroque music. Salvant is an eclectic curator, unearthing rarely recorded, forgotten songs with strong narratives, interesting power dynamics, unexpected twists, and humour. Salvant won the Thelonious Monk competition in 2010. She has received Grammy Awards for Best Jazz Vocal Album for three consecutive albums, *The Window*, *Dreams and Daggers*, and *For One to Love*. In 2020, Salvant received the MacArthur fellowship and the Doris Duke Artist Award. Salvant released her debut Nonesuch records release *Ghost Song* in 2022; the album went on to receive two Grammy nominations. *Mélusine*, an album mostly sung in French, along with Occitan, English, and Haitian Kreyòl, was released in 2023 and was also nominated for two Grammys.

Makoto Ozone made his Royal Conservatory debut on April 23, 2022 and Thompson Egbo Egbo on July 29, 2021. Jon Kimura Parker made his Conservatory debut on November 8, 2009, during Koerner Hall's inaugural concert season, and tonight marks his sixth appearance in Koerner Hall. Amanda Tosoff made her Conservatory debut on December 17, 2017, and tonight is her third Koerner Hall appearance. Cécile McLorin Salvant made her Conservatory debut with Ramsey Lewis on November 16, 2013, and tonight is her fourth appearance in Koerner Hall.