

Conductor - James Wu, Yunfei Xie  
Soloist - Zachary Costello

Toronto Saxophone Collective

Christopher Jones  
Jeffrey Leung  
Justin Massey  
Chantelle Tom-Ying  
Robert Hess  
Nicole Carson  
Kannan Bloor  
Harrison Argatoff  
Benjamin Liu  
Charlotte Chau  
Seamus Hayden  
Min Gu Kang  
Yunfei Xie  
Blake Smith

*"...is a virtuoso and visionary saxophonist,  
internationally recognized for his ability to engage  
audiences in dialogue with  
contemporary classical music."  
-JLV Sound on Zachary Costello*



 @torontosaxophonecollective  
@zcostello20 @jameswumusic

# Toronto Saxophone Collective



WITH ZACHARY COSTELLO

APRIL 25TH, 2026 | 7:30PM

Rosedale United Church  
159 Roxborough Dr. M4W 1X7

## exhibition

noun, ɛksə'brɪʃən  
Showing or presentation of work.

exhibits:

Leonard Bernstein  
Overture to Candide

Jennifer Higdon  
Short Stories

Astor Piazzolla  
Primavera Portena

Camile Saint- Saëns  
Introduction and Rondo  
Capriccioso

Modest Mussorgsky  
Pictures at an Exhibition

 TORONTO  
SAXOPHONE  
COLLECTIVE

## PROGRAMME

Overture to Candide

Leonard Bernstein

arr. Blake Smith

Saxophone Quartet

I, IV

Philip Glass

Primavera Portena

Astor Piazzolla

arr. Keiichi Kurokawa

Saint-Saens - Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso

Camille Saint-Saëns

arr. Blake Smith

Soloist: Zachary Costello

## INTERMISSION

Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. M. Ravel)

Modest Mussorgsky

arr. Blake Smith

## Overture to Candide (1956)

Leonard Bernstein's Overture to Candide is a five-minute sprint. When he adapted Voltaire's famous 1759 satire, a story about a hopelessly optimistic guy surviving an endless string of ridiculous, catastrophic disasters, Bernstein wrote a curtain-raiser that is pure, chaotic joy. It doesn't waste a single second, launching straight into a massive fanfare before flying through the show's catchiest tunes at breakneck speed.

In this arrangement by Blake Smith (on the bass saxophone), the upper voices execute the complex technical acrobatics with woodwind-like agility, while the full ensemble provides the bold, resonant power necessary for the climactic theatrical fanfares.

## Saxophone Quartet (1995)

Composed in 1995, this concerto was commissioned by the renowned Raschèr Saxophone Quartet. Glass originally scored the work for the quartet and a full orchestra; however, the chamber version—which strips away the orchestral accompaniment to focus entirely on the four saxophones—highlights the intricate, polyphonic dialogue between the instruments, transforming the work into an intense display of ensemble precision.

The piece embodies the mature "Glassian" aesthetic of the 1990s, characterized by a more lyrical, transparent sound world than his earlier, repetitive works. While it retains the hallmark rhythmic drive and additive processes of his minimalism, the concerto balances this energy with a melodic expressivity that allows each member of the quartet to function as both a soloist and a vital component of a unified, larger texture.

## Primavera Portena (1965)

"Primavera Porteña" ("Spring in Buenos Aires") is one of the central works in Astor Piazzolla's celebrated Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas ("The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires"), a set of four pieces written between 1965 and 1970. Rather than depicting the pastoral, predictable unfolding of nature, Piazzolla's seasons capture the energy, volatility, and emotional intensity of urban life in Buenos Aires.

Piazzolla revolutionized the traditional tango by creating nuevo tango, a style that blends classical techniques, jazz harmonies, and the rhythmic language of Argentine dance. "Primavera Porteña" exemplifies this synthesis: it shifts fluidly between lyrical, almost nostalgic melodies and sharply accented, rhythmically charged passages. Syncopation, sudden contrasts, and improvisatory gestures give the music a sense of spontaneity, even within tightly structured writing.

## Introduction et Rondo Capriccioso (1864)

Composed in 1863 for the Spanish violin virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate, Introduction et Rondo capriccioso is one of Saint-Saëns's most celebrated concert works. Blending elegance with fiery virtuosity, the piece reflects both the refinement of the French Romantic tradition and a fascination with Spanish musical color.

The opening Introduction unfolds with a sense of restrained lyricism, as the soloist weaves an expressive, almost improvisatory line over a subdued accompaniment. Gradually, the music builds in intensity before launching into the Rondo capriccioso, where a lively, dance-like theme drives the work forward. Marked by quicksilver passagework, sparkling articulation, and rhythmic vitality, the rondo showcases the soloist's technical command while maintaining a sense of charm and spontaneity.

Featuring saxophonist Zachary Costello, this performance highlights the work's balance of expressive lyricism and virtuosic flair, bringing new color and immediacy to a beloved staple of the repertoire.

## Pictures at an Exhibition (1874)

Modest Mussorgsky penned Pictures at an Exhibition as a memorial tribute to his close friend, the artist and architect Viktor Hartmann, who died suddenly at the age of 39. Devastated by the loss, Mussorgsky attended a posthumous exhibition of Hartmann's sketches, stage designs, and architectural models. Inspired, he composed this sweeping suite to musically illustrate a stroll through that very gallery.

Originally composed as a tour de force for solo piano, Pictures was never orchestrated by Mussorgsky himself, a casualty of his notoriously poor time management. This left a brilliant blank canvas, giving future composers and arrangers the opportunity to interpret the vivid colors and textures he might have had in his mind. Notably, many of the attacca markings (directives to transition between movements without pause) were omitted from popular orchestral arrangements, such as the famous version by Maurice Ravel. The result is a performance that honors the unbroken pacing and intimacy of Mussorgsky's original gallery tour, while still delivering the immense, symphonic power of a full orchestra.