



University of North Texas  
College of Music

Ensemble Recital | Wednesday, October 2, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.  
Margot and Bill Winspear Performance Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

**UNT Symphony Orchestra**  
**David Itkin, conductor**  
**Xie Liang, alto saxophone**

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, op. 120 ..... Robert Schumann  
(1851) (1810-1856)

- I. Ziemlich langsam – Lebhaft
- II. Romanze: Ziemlich langsam
- III. Scherzo: Lebhaft
- IV. Langsam – Lebhaft

- INTERMISSION -

Colors of the Sky .....Guo Yuan  
(2024)

- I. Dawn Red
- II. Sky Blue
- III. Sunset Orange

Xie Liang, *alto saxophone*

*Rhapsodie Espagnole* ..... Maurice Ravel  
(1908) (1875-1937)

- I. Prélude à la nuit
- II. Malagueña
- III. Habanera
- IV. Feria

Program sixty-five of the 2024–2025 season  
Photography and videography are prohibited

# UNT Symphony Orchestra

## Personnel

### Violin 1

Emma Millian †  
Kejin Chen  
Olivia Corporon  
Kevork Esmeryan  
Kevin (Qiang) Fu  
Lucas Furtado  
Ming-Wei Hsieh  
Ray (Jui-Chen) Hsu  
Hyun Jung Kim  
Gabriel Parker  
Arsenio Peña  
Anna Seo  
Xiachu Song  
Hongrui Wang

### Violin 2

Alfiia Mansurova †  
Mia Caliri  
Ella Curb  
Olivia Dinardis  
Miguel Guillén  
Delane Marsh  
Michelle Martey  
Oscar Morales  
Chloe Svadlenka  
Thi Tang  
Eleanor (Szu Yun) Wang  
Peng Yi  
Emilia Yoon

### Viola

Kelsey Felton †  
Shanya Chynwat  
Anthony Couvillion  
Margot Elder  
Qianqian Fu  
Cameron Halsell  
Leonardo Sobral

### Cello

Julia Jiho Choi †  
Tyler Aguillard  
Iris (Chao) Fang  
Maddy Dykhouse  
Minching Lin  
Jiapeng Liu  
Xiyang Liu  
Ethan Nelsen  
Eric Rau  
Camilo Vasquez

### Bass

Zoe Czarnecki †  
Ruben Borges  
Joe Ferris  
Wyatt Gaugler  
Joseph La Marca  
Jason (Kuan-Chieh) Lo  
Ricardo Puche  
Xuan Xu

### Flute

Mary Chamoun  
Allyson Kreider #  
James (Chen-Yu) Lee \*  
Alison Parker +

### Oboe

Alexander Kang #+  
Hayley Monk \*  
Daniel Moreira

### Clarinet

Andrew Rutten  
Lucas Shroyer #  
Ayuna Sumi +  
Brandon Von \*

### Celesta

Zihao Zhou

### Bassoon

Keliang Li  
Emily O'Donnell +  
James Smelley  
Sam Viebrock \*#

### French Horn

Justin Beyer +  
Daniel Castillon  
Isaac Fowler  
Becca Geitzenauer \*#  
Patrick Ring

### Trumpet

Georgia Hageman #  
David Hall +  
Lexy Kilgore \*  
Joseph Williams

### Trombone

Benjamin Hahn †  
Thomas Spencer

### Bass Trombone

Aaron Anderton-Coss

### Tuba

Parker Burkey

### Timpani

Raina Liao

### Percussion

Ryan Blankenship  
Aidan Henderson  
Ryan Hurford  
Jack Spelman  
Adam Surak  
Caleb Yurasek

### Harp

Victoria Gonzalez  
Zoë Winn

† Concertmaster

‡ Principal

\* Principal on Schumann

# Principal on Guo

+ Principal on Ravel

## Program Notes

### **Robert Schumann (1810–1856)**

#### **Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120 (1851)**

Schumann's Fourth Symphony is full of passionate and interconnected music. A product of the desire to rework some of his own music in the early 1850s, this piece is imbued with the ever-growing Romantic fascinations with intense emotions in music. Schumann's revisions also brought forth the concept of an organic whole, another nineteenth-century interest in integration and cohesion. Played without interruption, the four movements share musical motives that join them together in an organic unfolding of musical ideas. For the sound itself, Schumann draws on musical elements and techniques from the symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827).

The first movement is cast in a loose sonata form, opening with an introduction characterized by Schumann's typically thick orchestration, in which instruments join together in pairs or trios as they enter. After a tight exposition, the development breaks with tradition, introducing two new themes: a snappier march in the woodwinds contrasted with a smooth melody in the clarinets and violins. Schumann transforms these themes by cycling through different keys in a lengthy, seemingly unending development. A series of flourishes extending from the lowest strings to the highest woodwinds leads into a flurry of activity. Surprisingly, Schumann skips the recapitulation entirely; instead, the flowing melody from the development returns in an orchestral tutti in D major at the end, concluding with a series of forceful chords.

The second movement, a tender *Romanze* in ternary form (ABA), immediately follows the first. A solo oboe enters, doubled with a cello and underscored by the rest of the orchestra, as music from the first movement's introduction returns. A single meandering violin sounds an arabesque over the lyrical theme of the second section, played by the strings, while wind instruments accompany. A repetition of the violin solo precedes an abridged return of the first section, this time with the melody further doubled in the oboe, bassoon and cello. This theme and the soft chords that accompany it draw the movement to a peaceful close.

Bursting in on the heels of this subdued ending is the third movement. Two distinctive sections present themselves: the forceful, passionate scherzo and the gentler, winding trio, that alternate with each other following Beethoven's characteristic five-part, ABABA model (with a twist). In the scherzo, violins carry a resolute melody under woodwind chords. The textures of the previous arabesque return here for the trio section. The wandering violin becomes more chromatic as it progresses, but ultimately does little to disturb the overall calmer, quieter character of the trio. Returning with a punch, the scherzo ignites with fervor and percussive accents over its hurried melody. It is followed by the trio again, restyled into soft, undulating chords.

Beethoven's model leads us to expect a final repetition of the Scherzo, but it never materializes. The chords lead directly into the final movement, a sonata form with most of the expected sections, which complements the previous movements and provides overall closure. After a minor-mode introduction, the main theme here brings back the march from the first movement, reworking the material in major mode. A lone violin interrupts the emphatic tutti notes to begin the transition to the secondary region. The tuneful secondary theme builds up anticipation towards the final climax of the exposition, with grand chords. These quickly dissipate into hurried rhythms in the development, which chiefly consists of an extended fugato on the main theme. The recapitulation, which typically revisits the music of the exposition, jumps past the opening theme, directly to the transition. After the reprise of the second theme, violins gain speed amidst swells of sound, arriving at emphatic, lingering chords punctuated by rests—a clear Beethovenian gesture. The coda ends the movement in a whirlwind of rapid melodies and rush of activity that culminates in the grand final chord; all business that the previous movements left unfinished is now satisfactorily resolved.

—Cecilia Presa (supervised by Dr. Bernardo Illari, with additional help from Dr. Brian Anderson)

## **Guo Yuan**

### **Colors of the Sky (2024)**

"Colors of the Sky" is a musical journey in three sections: "Dawn Red," "Sky Blue," and "Sunset Orange." The piece explores the interplay of melodic lines, creating three distinct interpretations of a linear pentatonic soundscape. Each section evokes a unique color and emotional atmosphere, representing the passage of time from dawn to dusk across the same vast sky.

I. Dawn Red – As the sun rises in the east, the sky ignites in a brilliant red. Stretching for thousands of miles, the heavens are filled with rolling clouds, capturing the awe of a new day.

II. Sky Blue – After a storm, the afternoon sky reveals a calm and crystal-clear blue. The clouds drift lightly, the breeze is gentle, and the world feels refreshed and open after the rain.

III. Sunset Orange – As the day fades, the setting sun casts an orange glow across the sky. The afterglow slowly vanishes beyond the horizon, while the sound of evening drums fills the air, offering a final glance towards the snow-capped mountains.

—Yuan Guo

Guo Yuan received a Doctor of Composition from Tokyo University of the Arts and is currently a professor at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music. He has composed solo pieces, chamber music, traditional Chinese instrumental music, symphonic music, and more. He has received prizes domestically and internationally including the following: "Best Orchestration" prize in the "Chinese Music Without Bounds" 2017 International Composition Competition held by Hongkong Chinese Orchestra; finalist in the 2nd Krzysztof Penderecki International Composers' Competition 2014, Poland; merit prize in the 11th and 15th Tokyo International Competitions for Chamber Music Composition, Japan; honorable mention in the "Witold Lutosławski Award 2004" International Composers' Competition, Poland. His works have been selected for many musical festivals such as ISCM World New Music Days 2013 held in Slovakia and Vienna, ISCM World New Music Days 2017 held in Vancouver, Canada and ISCM World New Music Days 2020 held in New Zealand.

### **Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)**

#### ***Rapsodie espagnole* (1908)**

Colorful evocations of Ravel's fascination with Spanish musical styles take shape in his *Rapsodie espagnole*. Ravel's preoccupation with Spanish music transcended contemporary French composers' interest in Spanish genres; his was deeply personal and stemmed from his mother's Basque heritage. In 1908, the same year that he finished his opera *L'heure espagnole*, Ravel began working on the *Rapsodie*, which was his first major orchestral work, introducing to the world his ever-sophisticated, ever-subtle sense of orchestration.

The piece opens with an unsettling *Prélude à la nuit*, or "night prelude." Introduced here is a descending four-note ostinato in the strings that reappears throughout the other movements. This motive persists throughout this section, fading out at some points but never leaving for long, obsessively underlining the enigmatic character of the piece. Dissonant chords materialize over the repetitive pattern, varying slightly in volume but never rising above a mezzo forte, reflecting the deep mystery of night. From these chords, a melody rises out of the texture, leading to a climactic (although still subdued) moment. Two cadenzas, one for clarinets and the other for bassoons, interrupt the ostinato-based music with flashes of different orchestral colors. In between the cadenzas, the ostinato appears in the celesta, using its bell-like timbre to further imbue the movement with a sense of wonder and anticipation.

The shortest of the four movements, the *Malagueña*, shares its name and triple meter with the Spanish dance that served as its inspiration. A malagueña usually alternates between solo melody and instrumental accompaniment, here translated into sections of instrumental melodies and thicker, non-melodic textures. The movement begins innocuously enough, with a lively ostinato in the cellos over which other instruments sound short

melodic ideas. A meandering, chromatic wave of notes passes through the woodwinds, reaching a climactic high note before waning. The percussion and brass enter with a theme as the music takes up clearer Spanish sounds and rhythms, balanced with another smooth melody in the strings. The fiery bursts of percussion and brass give way to an ornamented English horn solo near the end, followed by an abbreviated return of the prelude's four-note ostinato and earlier dance music before fading into silence. One expects a string of colorful dances from a rhapsody; Ravel's *Rapsodie*, however, embeds his folk evocations into the introspective and mysterious opening prelude, turning the whole set into night music.

The *Habanera* is Ravel's first exercise in the genre; it is based on an unpublished 1890s piece for two pianos. The long notes and splashes of orchestral color of its opening permeate much of the music. More active and syncopated rhythms enter, but these are usually underscored by at least one instrument holding onto a note or playing a gentler legato line. Like much of the *Rapsodie espagnole*, this movement evokes the melody, rhythm, and character of its popular namesake through dreamy music.

The gleeful, tumultuous *Feria* ("fair") calls to mind the hustle and bustle of a festival where dances, chatter, and music engulf the senses. The two outer sections of this large-scale ternary form are based on the Spanish folk *jota*, a lively, uplifting dance in fast triple meter. A spirited motive in the piccolos hints at this right from the beginning. The strings' busied movements below the other instruments slowly build up the dance. The little melodies and flourishes from the woodwinds and brass join together in the first orchestral *tutti*. Almost as soon as this jubilant moment rises, it grows quiet. An English horn solo, similar to the *Malagueña* in style, launches a series of long themes that bring forth another escalation of sound. The four-note pattern appears again before another burst of energy and volume, capturing a Spanish flavor with its rhythms and timbre and reminding us that the mystery of the night continues to be around us. A final flurry of *jota* activity draws the piece to an exuberant close.

—Cecilia Presa (supervised by Dr. Bernardo Illari, with additional help from Dr. Brian Anderson)

## Biographies

### David Itkin

The 2024–2025 season marks David Itkin's 20th season as music director and conductor of the Abilene Philharmonic, and his 17th year serving as professor of music and director of orchestral studies at the University of North Texas College of Music.

During past seasons Maestro Itkin's career has taken him to 45 U.S. states and 15 countries in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, including concerts and recordings with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Slovenska Filharmonija, San Diego Symphony, and Seoul Philharmonic. Other guest conducting appearances include concerts with the Colorado Philharmonic, Annapolis Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony, Illinois Symphony, Delaware Symphony, New Hampshire Symphony, Cheyenne Symphony, and the Indianapolis, Baltimore, and Reno chamber orchestras. During the Summer of 2006 Maestro Itkin appeared once again with the Slovenska Filharmonija in Ljubljana, Slovenia, conducting the opening concert of the 14th World Saxophone Congress.

Following a distinguished 17-year tenure, Maestro Itkin was named conductor laureate of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in July 2010. Previously Mr. Itkin served as music director and conductor of the Las Vegas Philharmonic, artistic director and conductor of the McCall Summerfest in McCall, Idaho, and as music director and conductor of the Lake Forest Symphony (Chicago), Kingsport Symphony, Birmingham Opera Theatre, and Lucius Woods Music Festival (Wisconsin).

His second book, *The Conductor's Craft*, was published in 2021 by GIA Publications, whereupon notable conductors and pedagogues wrote, "a real breakthrough for anyone studying or teaching conducting," "I love this book and will be using it in my studio," and "Bravo to Maestro Itkin." His first book, *Conducting Concerti*, was released in August 2014 to considerable critical acclaim. Leonard Slatkin called *Conducting Concerti* "a valuable textbook for the aspiring Maestro...highly recommended," and Samuel Adler called it "an invaluable addition to the world of conducting textbooks."

Mr. Itkin's first film score (*Sugar Creek*) was recorded in 2006 by the Arkansas Symphony for the film's 2007 release. His most recent major work, *Exodus*, an oratorio, was premiered in April 2005 in Little Rock, with William Shatner narrating. *Exodus* was released worldwide on CD in 2007. In May 2009 Maestro Itkin was awarded both an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Lyon College and the Above the Barre award by Ballet Arkansas. In addition to his professional schedule, Maestro Itkin regularly serves as a guest conductor/clinician, including concerts with the Arkansas All-State Orchestra, Southern California High School Honors Orchestra, Maine All-State Orchestra,

Las Vegas Senior Honors Orchestra, and any number of Texas all-region Honors Orchestras.

---

### **Xie Liang**

As a Société Générale scholar, Xie Liang has graduated from the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris* (CNSMDP), France (which is honored as the world best-known institution for classical saxophone), and learned from outstanding professors such as Li Manlong from Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Claude Delangle from CNSMDP and Nicolas Prost from Conservatory of Saint Maur in France.

After his graduation and the bachelor's degree from Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing with the distinction in 2008, in September of the same year, Xie Liang arrived in Paris, to start his study abroad in France. In 2011, he was admitted to Conservatory of Paris, becoming the first Chinese in the history of the Conservatory to enter the major of classical saxophone. And he has got his master degree in 2013. During his study abroad in France, he obtained both the DEM and DSEM diplomas also.

In April 2010, he attended the famous International Saxophone Competition in Nantes, France, standing out from competitors to win the first place, and becoming the first Chinese for the honor since the foundation of this international competition.

As a Chinese saxophonist, he has been active in music stages of Asia and Europe. He has been invited to hold the saxophone solo recital, chamber music concerts and master classes at home and abroad. For instance, there are Theater of Chatelet, The *Cité internationale des arts* in Paris, Balzac Theater, French Douai National Academy Of Music, Singapore Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing Concert Hall, Shanghai Oriental Art Center, Shanghai Concert Hall, Hangzhou Grand Theater among others.

Now he is Saxophone Professor at Academy of Fine Arts at the Shandong Agriculture University.