



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Wednesday, February 5, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.
Margot and Bill Winspear Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

Symphony Orchestra

David Itkin, conductor

Simón Gollo, violin

Invierno Porteño (Winter), from *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas*
(The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) (1965–1970) Astor Piazzolla
(1921–1992)
arr. Leonid Desyatnikov
Simón Gollo, violin

Pictures at an Exhibition (1874/1922) Modest Mussorgsky
(1839–1881)
I. Promenade
II. The Gnomes orch. Maurice Ravel
III. The Old Castle
IV. Tuileries
V. The Cattle
VI. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
VII. "Samuel" Goldenberg and "Schmuyle"
VIII. Limoges. The Market
IX. Catacombs
X. Baba Yaga: The Hut on Hen's Legs
XI. The Great Gate of Kiev

Program two hundred seventy-seven of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Program Notes

Invierno Porteño (Winter), from Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) (1965–1970) by Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) | arr. Leonid Desyatnikov (b. 1955)

Astor Piazzolla stands as one of the most influential composers of the 20th century, reshaping tango into a sophisticated, genre-defying art form. While traditional tango conjures images of dark dance halls and nostalgic melodies, Piazzolla's music brought it into the realm of concert halls, blending the familiar rhythms of Argentina with the complexities of classical music and jazz. His *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (*Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*), a set of four "new tangos" composed independently between 1965 and 1970, embodies this transformation. Rather than simply evoking nature's seasons as Vivaldi did in *The Four Seasons*, Piazzolla's suite also paints vivid portraits of Buenos Aires, capturing its modern urban energy, emotional depth, and restless vitality.

Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Piazzolla spent much of his childhood in New York City. It was there, amidst the melting pot of cultural influences, that he first encountered jazz and classical music. His father gave him a bandoneon, the accordion-like instrument central to tango, and despite Piazzolla's initial resistance, it became his voice. Returning to Buenos Aires in 1936, he honed his skills under tango legend Aníbal Troilo. Yet, Piazzolla quickly grew dissatisfied with traditional tango, feeling it lacked the expressive depth he craved. Encouraged by his mentor—a very young Alberto Ginastera—he pursued formal composition studies.

The turning point in Piazzolla's career came in Paris in the 1950s when he studied with Nadia Boulanger. At first, he presented himself as a classical composer, hiding his tango roots. Boulanger, after hearing him play one of his tangos, encouraged him to embrace his heritage. "This is the real Piazzolla," she told him. Her advice inspired him to develop nuevo tango—a bold synthesis of tango, classical music, and jazz.

Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas reflects Piazzolla's innovation. Each movement portrays not only a season but also the rhythms, tensions, and moods of Buenos Aires itself. *Invierno Porteño* (*Winter*), composed in 1969, exemplifies this. Winters in Buenos Aires are mild, but Piazzolla captures their emotional essence—dark, brooding, and introspective, with moments of warmth breaking through the melancholy. The piece features sharp, syncopated rhythms juxtaposed with lyrical melodies, creating a sense of both isolation and resilience.

Leonid Desyatnikov's later orchestration for solo violin and strings reimagines Piazzolla's intimate quintet as a full-scale suite for string orchestra. Drawing deliberate connections to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Desyatnikov incorporates Baroque contrast and fragments of Vivaldi's music, reversed to reflect the Southern Hemisphere. *Invierno Porteño*, for example, contains echoes of Vivaldi's *Summer*. The violin assumes a virtuosic role, evoking the raw passion of tango, while the string orchestra enriches the textures, amplifying the music's drama and intensity.

This interplay between string concerto and nuevo tango exemplifies Piazzolla's compositional talent. His music captures the contradictions of present-day Buenos Aires: its ceaseless energy, its solitude, its nostalgia. *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* is not merely a tribute to the city; it is a universal expression of human emotion, proving that tango can transcend its roots and speak to audiences worldwide.

—Sarah Addison, doctoral teaching assistant in music history
Brian Anderson, Senior Lecturer of Music History Pedagogy and
Bernardo Illari, Associate Professor of Music History and Musicology Area Coordinator

Pictures at an Exhibition (1874/1922)

by Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881) | orch. Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

In 1874, Modest Mussorgsky composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a tribute to his late friend Viktor Hartmann (1834–1873), an artist and architect whose sudden death left Mussorgsky devastated. Inspired by a memorial exhibition of Hartmann's works, he created a piano suite that serves as both an homage and a deeply personal reflection. Each movement corresponds to a specific artwork, while the recurring "Promenade" theme represents the viewers—Mussorgsky for sure, but also us— imaginarily walking through the gallery and processing our emotions.

Despite its brilliance, the piano version of *Pictures at an Exhibition* went largely unrecognized during Mussorgsky's lifetime. Its popularity surged only after Maurice Ravel orchestrated it in 1922. Ravel's version, commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky, transforms Mussorgsky's stark piano textures into a vivid orchestral palette. His choices, such as the alto saxophone in "The Old Castle" or muted trumpet in "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle," highlight the contrasts between movements while adding depth and color.

The suite is as much about Mussorgsky's reactions to the artworks as it is about the paintings themselves. The "Promenade" ties the movements together, reflecting the viewer's shifting moods as he moves between the grotesque "Gnomus," the whimsical "Ballet of Unhatched Chicks," and the haunting "Catacombs." Mussorgsky's imaginative writing goes beyond visual representation, exploring themes of mortality, strength, and triumph.

The suite's plot unfolds as an emotional journey, beginning with the bold confidence of the "Promenade" and culminating in the majestic "Great Gate of Kiev." The "Promenade" theme evolves throughout the work, mirroring the viewer's changing perspective. "Catacombs" takes on a somber tone, as if Hartmann were exploring the shadowy Parisian tombs by lantern light. The following movement, "Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua" (With the Dead, in a Dead Language), is a ghostly variation of the "Promenade" that projects a contemplative view of mortality .

The final two movements, "The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)" and "The Great Gate of Kiev," bring the journey to a dramatic close. "Baba Yaga" depicts the legendary Russian witch flying through the night, with frantic rhythms and unsettling harmonies creating a sense of chaos. In "The Great Gate of Kiev," Mussorgsky imagines a monumental structure celebrating resilience and creativity. Ravel's orchestration amplifies magnifies the grandeur with tolling bells, soaring brass, and sweeping strings. The "Promenade" reappears in its most triumphant form, symbolizing the triumph of art and memory over loss.

Through *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Mussorgsky transformed grief into a work of universal significance that touches upon life, death, renewal and success. Ravel's orchestration ensures its enduring legacy, enhancing Mussorgsky's vision with vivid colors and emotional depth. The result is a masterpiece of musical storytelling that continues to captivate audiences worldwide.

—Sarah Addison, doctoral teaching assistant in music history

Brian Anderson, Senior Lecturer of Music History Pedagogy and

Bernardo Illari, Associate Professor of Music History and Musicology Area Coordinator

Biographies

The 2024-2025 season marks Maestro **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, where his recent performances have included Mahler Symphony No. 6, the Verdi Requiem, Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Puccini's Turandot, Verdi's Otello, Puccini's Tosca, and Janacek's The Cunning Little Vixen.

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 & Conductor of the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Artistic Director and Conductor of the McCall Summerfest in McCall, Idaho, and as Music Director of the Lake Forest Symphony (Chicago), the Kingsport Symphony, the Birmingham Opera Theatre, and the Lucius Woods Music Festival (Wisconsin).

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, the Transylvania State Philharmonic, the Slovenska Filharmonija, the San Diego Symphony, and the Seoul Philharmonic. Other guest conducting appearances include concerts with the Colorado Philharmonic, the Annapolis Symphony, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Illinois Symphony, the Delaware Symphony, the New Hampshire Symphony, the 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.

His books, *The Conductor's Craft* [2021] and *Conducting Concerti* [2014], have received wide acclaim. Leonard Slatkin "highly recommended" *Conducting Concerti* as "a valuable textbook for the aspiring Maestro," and Samuel Adler wrote of *The Conductor's Craft*, "a real breakthrough aid for anyone studying or teaching conducting at any level." Mr. Itkin's third book, *Right Back Where I Started*, will be published in spring 2025.

Simón Gollo is recognized as a versatile and charismatic musician, enjoying a thriving international career spanning chamber music, teaching, solo performances, and conducting. He is also a recording artist with the global label IBS Classical and is represented by HALAC Artists and Meluk Kultur Management, along with the Reverón Piano Trio.

Simón Gollo has graced countless stages across Europe and the American continent, from Canada to Chile. His extensive career has led him to perform at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall (New York), Cadogan Hall (London), the 92nd Street Y's Kaufmann Concert Hall (New York), the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), Bolívar Hall (London), Teatro Teresa Carreño (Caracas), Auditorio Blas Galindo (Mexico City), Auditorio Manuel de Falla (Granada), and Teatro Mayor (Bogotá), among others.

He has performed for renowned organizations including the BBC Proms Festival, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the Chamber Music Society of Detroit. Gollo has collaborated with international figures such as Alessio Bax, Ricardo Morales, Dmitri Berlinsky, Monique Duphil, Edicson Ruiz, Paul Rosenthal, John Novacek, Alissa Margulis, Jakob Koranyi, Miguel da Silva (Ysaÿe Quartet), Richard Young (Vermeer Quartet), Ori Kam (Jerusalem Quartet), Randolph Kelly, and the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, among many others.

continued on following page

His journey as a chamber musician includes solo performances of Beethoven's Triple Concerto, Brahms' Double Concerto, Bottesini's Double Bass Concerto, and Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante. He has collaborated with prestigious orchestras including the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela, Filarmónica de Bogotá, Orquesta Sinfónica de Salta (Argentina), Central Ohio Symphony (USA), Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio (USA), and Orquesta de Caxias do Sul (Brazil). These collaborations have been conducted under the baton of renowned conductors such as Conrad van Alphen, Theodore Kuchar, and Carlos Izcaray. In 2020, his album "CHAUSSON," recorded alongside pianist John Novacek, received widespread critical acclaim from prestigious magazines such as Scherzo, Melómano, Mundo Clásico, El Diario de Sevilla, and Fanfare. His most recent album, recorded with the Reverón Piano Trio, received the esteemed "Melómano de Oro" award from a leading classical music magazine in 2023.

As an orchestra conductor, Simón Gollo has built a distinguished career directing orchestras such as the Simón Bolívar Chamber Orchestra, and he is set to make his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba. He is regularly invited to conduct various youth and professional orchestras across North and Latin America. In January 2023, Gollo was appointed Artistic Director and Conductor of the Carolina Youth Symphony, an institution with over 60 years of history. Since January 2022, he has also served as the Artistic Director of the New England Music Camp. In 2024, he was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Plano Symphony, working under the mentorship of Maestro Hector Guzman.

Simón Gollo's extraordinary journey as an artistic director began at the age of 20, when he founded Venezuela's premier chamber music festival, the Festival y Academia del Nuevo Mundo, which he led from 2000 to 2012. He then directed the Aruba Music Festival for five editions before taking on the role of Artistic Director at the New England Music Camp at the Snow Pond Center for the Arts in the United States. At these festivals and camps, Simón Gollo had the privilege of hosting illustrious figures such as the Borodin Quartet, Benjamin Zander, Jean-Jacques Kantorow, Jean-Pierre Wallez, the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, Pacho Flores, Gabriela Montero, Edicson Ruiz, Jeffrey Biegel, and many other prominent figures in the international music scene.

Simón Gollo has earned a national reputation as a distinguished violin instructor during his tenure at both New Mexico State University (NMSU) and Furman University from 2015 to 2024. His students have consistently achieved remarkable success, winning concerto competitions, gaining admission to renowned music festivals, and excelling in orchestra auditions nationwide. Now, poised to embark on a new chapter, Simón Gollo ascends to the esteemed position of Associate Professor of Violin at the prestigious University of North Texas, further cementing his legacy as a violin teacher.

Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Violin 1

Ming-Wei Hsieh ‡
Olivia Corporon
Kevork Esmeryan
Kevin (Qiang) Fu
Lucas Furtado
Miguel Guillén-Merino
Ray (Jui-Chen) Hsu
Hyunjung Kim
Alfiia Mansurova
Emma Milian
Arsenio Peña
Anna Seo
Hongrui Wang

Violin 2

Eleanor (Szu Yun)
Wang †
Mia Caliri
Ella Curb
Olivia Dinardis
DeLane Marsh
Michelle Martey
Oscar Morales
Gabriel Parker
Xiachu Song
Chloe Svadlenka
Thi Tang
Emilia Yoon
Peng Yi

Viola

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

Cello

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

Bass

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

Flute

Allyson Kreider
Chen-Yu (James) Lee
Alison Parker *
Carter Reynolds

Oboe

Alexander Kang
Hayley Monk *
Hyungju Oh

Clarinet

Andrew Rutten
Lucas Shroyer
Ayuna Sumi *
Brandon Von

Bassoon

Keliang Li
Emily O'Donnell
Sam Viebrock *

Alto Saxophone

Jiawei Liang
French Horn
Justin Beyer
Daniel G. Castillon III
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

Euphonium

Kaho Mills

Tuba

Parker Burkey

Timpani

Raina Liao

Percussion

Ryan Blankenship
Brayden Haslam
Ryan Hurford
Paul Martini
Jack Spelman
Caleb Yurasek

Harp

Victoria Gonzalez
Zoë Winn

Celesta

Zihao Zhou

‡ Concertmaster

† Principal

* Principal on

Mussorgsky