



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

# University of North Texas College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Wednesday, April 16, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.  
Margot and Bill Winspear Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

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## Concert Orchestra

Clay Couturiaux, conductor  
Dina Nesterenko, violin

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Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47 (1905) ..... Jean Sibelius  
I. Allegro moderato (1865–1957)

II. Adagio di molto

III. Allegro, ma non tanto

Dina Nesterenko, violin

-INTERMISSION-

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36 (1878) ..... Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
I. Andante sostenuto - Moderato con anima (1840–1893)

II. Andantino in modo di Canzona

III. Scherzo. Pizzicato ostinato. Allegro

IV. Finale. Allegro con fuoco

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*Program five hundred seventy-eight of the 2024–2025 season  
Photography and videography are prohibited*

## Program Notes

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

### Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) | Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47 (1905)

Jean Sibelius's *Violin Concerto* stands as a bridge between the grand Romantic violin tradition and the modernist impulses of the 20th century. Often counted among the great concertos of Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky, it remains the only concerto of the new century to hold a permanent place in this "Big Five" canon. Sibelius's work is distinguished by its formidable technical demands, emotional depth, and formal innovation. The solo part, as many violinists have noted, is demanding; the piece tests not only the fingers but also the soul.

The first movement opens in subdued fashion: muted strings oscillate in an icy shimmer before the soloist enters with the first theme, *dolce and espressivo*. Though the work follows sonata form, Sibelius reinvents its contours. There is no traditional orchestral introduction; instead, the soloist enters immediately, collaborating with the orchestra in shaping the musical form. This integrated approach replaces the classical model of alternating roles with something more fluid and intertwined.

Most notably, Sibelius wrote two virtuosic solo cadenzas (in lieu of just one), and he situates them in unconventional places within the first movement. The first, shorter cadenza appears not at the end of the movement but within the middle of the exposition. The second cadenza—beginning at the end of the exposition and lasting through most of the central development section—propels the movement into uncharted territory as Sibelius repurposes the cadenza from a mere showpiece to a structural pillar. The violin momentarily takes over the entire structure, developing material with polyphonic writing, modulations, and thematic fragmentation.

The second movement opens with a long, lyrical melody in the violin. The movement showcases moderate expressive contrast through an ABA form. The initial theme unfolds in expansive lines, later echoed by the orchestra. Midway through, the orchestra brings in a contrasting passage, of greater dramatic weight, with more movement, yet it too functions as part of the overall arc, not a break from it. The violin reenters to defuse tension and soon the brasses quietly bring back the opening theme and its dreamy mood, while the violin plays figural decoration. These passages balance and extend the opening material; the violin regains the melody near the end, rounding off the form. While the movement has often been described in emotive terms, its effect is grounded in orchestration and pacing more than in sentimentality.

The finale, the *Allegro, ma non tanto* is structured as a tightly woven sonata form in the style of a galloping folk dance and unfolds with unique rhythmic energy. The bittersweet, major-minor theme underscores the music's emotional dualities. The technical challenges for the soloist are formidable: the finale calls for rapid arpeggios that span the fingerboard, double and triple stops, and scales in thirds that demand both precision and stamina. Every passage calls for clarity and rhythmic control; yet, this is no mere bravura display. Each virtuosic gesture serves the movement's driving force, building its tightly coiled momentum toward a rousing finish. The movement concludes with the violin ascending in a final upward sweep that lands on a high D, answered by powerful, widely spaced chords in the orchestra. Rather than dissolving into silence, the piece concludes with the sound of triumph.

## Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) | Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36 (1878)

Tchaikovsky's fourth symphony is one of his most structurally compelling and thematically unified works. Composed in 1877, it captures the composer's deep preoccupation with musical architecture and expressive contrast. The symphony is shaped by recurring motifs, tightly knit forms, and sophisticated instrumental writing.

The symphony opens with a fanfare, first delivered by the brass in unison. Often interpreted as a symbol of fate—because of Tchaikovsky's own description—this powerful gesture reappears throughout the work as a kind of musical agent, sometimes intrusive, sometimes transformed. Yet rather than pinning it to a single programmatic meaning, the composer's words notwithstanding, it seems more productive to hear it as a structural anchor: a sonic figure that asserts itself at moments of disruption or revelation.

The first movement unfolds with true dramatic breadth. Following the initial fanfare, a waltz-like theme appears. Its melody and surroundings are not shaped into a smooth continuum but are instead presented as a succession of contrasting sections, each with its own motive and mood. This approach to sonata form is one of Tchaikovsky's innovations: rather than leading the listener through a single line of development, he offers an episodic structure in which each section holds expressive weight.

The secondary theme arrives with a shift in tempo and tone (*Moderato assai*, quasi *andante*), carrying a reflective, lyrical quality, followed by yet another warm closing theme that establishes a momentary sense of repose in B major. These contrasting materials are not simply steppingstones toward a climax—they are fully formed musical ideas that hold their own.

The development section is marked by the return of the brass fanfare, interrupting the mood and propelling the movement forward. Tchaikovsky elaborates the earlier waltz-like theme with urgency, combining it with the fanfare to create one of his most exhilarating orchestral climaxes, hallmarked by his distinctive brass writing. Rather than a conventional recapitulation, a compressed return of the primary theme marks the climax of the development, and the recapitulation proceeds regularly from the secondary theme on. A new, lengthy woodwind melody emerges at the heart of the coda to round off the form with one final transformation of the movement's motivic material.

The second movement shifts in mood but not in complexity. A plaintive oboe melody opens the movement, marked by long-breathed lyricism and orchestration that showcases Tchaikovsky's command of melodic construction. The theme, set in the Bb minor, is later passed to the cellos, expanding its expressive reach. A brief episode in a warm major mode serves as a gentle continuation rather than stark contrast, before a broader and more agitated central section (*più mosso*) introduces new energy. This passage subtly recalls rhythmic and melodic elements from the first movement, creating continuity across the symphony. As the mood settles, the return of the opening theme, now in the bassoon, leads back to the movement's introspective conclusion.

Tchaikovsky's command of orchestral variety is on full display in the third movement. The strings play exclusively *pizzicato*, weaving delicate textures that contrast sharply with the sustained lyricism of the previous movement. The structure follows a large-scale ABA form: the A sections feature the plucked strings alone; the B section introduces folk-like woodwind themes and a bold brass march. These two contrasting ideas overlap and interlock in quick succession before the A section quietly returns, dissolving the scherzo into silence, a moment of poised anticipation before the finale erupts.

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The final movement stands among Tchaikovsky's most original symphonic achievements. Opening with blazing string figuration and emphatic percussion, the movement launches into a three-theme exposition. The first theme bursts forth with vigorous energy; the second, a Russian folk song, "The Little Birch Tree," provides a melodic anchor; the third takes the form of a robust march. The middle section presents a series of variations on the folk tune, providing a moment of clarity and warmth. Just as the celebratory mood threatens to take hold completely, the opening fanfare returns, interrupting the festivities and reasserting its ominous role. But rather than succumbing to it, the music transforms the interruption into the engine for the finale's triumphant push. The final section builds with unrelenting drive, foregrounding the march theme and reintroducing brass and percussion in full force. The symphony ends in a blaze of orchestral color, an emphatic affirmation of form, motion, and musical vitality.

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## Biographies

**Clay Couturiaux** is the assistant director of Orchestral Studies at the University of North Texas where he currently teaches orchestral conducting and is conductor of the UNT Concert Orchestra. The 2024–25 season marks Couturiaux's thirteenth season as music director and conductor of the Richardson Symphony Orchestra. Following a distinguished 16-year tenure, he was named conductor laureate of the Monroe Symphony Orchestra in May 2020. He has also served on the faculty of the UNT International Summer Music Institute since 2015.

Maestro Couturiaux has accumulated over two decades of experience conducting professional symphony orchestras and teaching at the university level. His career has taken him across the United States, Europe, and Asia including concerts with the Vietnam National Symphony Orchestra, Ho Chi Minh City Symphony Orchestra, Milano Classica Orchestra da Camera, and National Taiwan Normal University Symphony Orchestra. Other professional conducting engagements include performances with the Abilene Philharmonic, Arkansas Symphony, Austin Symphony, Metropolitan Classical Ballet, East Texas Symphony Orchestra, Texas Chamber Orchestra, and Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra.

Further highlights include conducting the University of North Texas Symphony Orchestra in concert for an audience of 37,000 at Cowboys Stadium in a major collaboration with the North Texas XLV Super Bowl Host Committee, NFL Films, and Tim McGraw. He has also recorded with the UNT Chamber Orchestra on the Crystal Records label. In addition to his professional schedule, Maestro Couturiaux regularly serves as a guest conductor/clinician, including concerts with several Texas All-Region Honors Orchestras.

In March 2013 the Northeast Louisiana Arts Council named Maestro Couturiaux the recipient of the Edmund Williamson Artist of the Year Award. The award is presented to an artist who the selection committee feels has made the most significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of life for Northeast Louisiana.

Dr. Couturiaux began his musical studies at the age of eight in violoncello and piano. He holds degrees in both conducting and violoncello performance from the University of North Texas. In addition, he developed his conducting skills at the world-renowned Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians in Maine and at the National Arts Centre Conductors Programme in Ottawa, Canada. The long list of distinguished conductors with whom Couturiaux studied includes Anshel Brusilow, Jorma Panula, Michael Jinbo, Hugh Wolff, Neal Giffelman, Carl Topilow, and Harold Farberman.

A Russian-born, US based violinist, **Dina Nesterenko** established herself early in her career as a winner of national and international competitions and as a frequent soloist with orchestras throughout the Russian Federation. After being a semi-finalist and the youngest participant in the Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow, she was invited to audition for the renowned Curtis Institute of Music. Following her studies there, she was accepted to Juilliard School on a full scholarship for both undergraduate and graduate studies. She was fortunate enough to have been accepted into Robert Mann's studio, a legend who changed her musical world by inspiring limitless creativity in her. Specifically, he prompted Dina to write her own cadenzas to every concerto that requires them, which has become one of her artistic passions and specialties. During her Juilliard School period, she made numerous solo and chamber music appearances at the Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall. She was also a Marlboro Chamber Music festival participant for three consecutive summers, where she had the privilege to perform with the greatest musicians of our time. Following her Juilliard graduate studies, Dina Nesterenko pursued her doctoral studies at Stony Brook University under the guidance of Philip Setzer of the Emerson String Quartet and Soovin Kim.

Currently, Dina lives in Dallas, Texas, and teaches the violin at the University of North Texas as an adjunct professor. She has discovered, over the past several years, a passion for creating virtuosic solo violin arrangements of symphonic, piano, choral, and organ works, as well as improvising in every style ranging from early Baroque to Rock, Blues, and Country. This creativity is deeply imprinted in her interpretations and performances of the standard repertoire. She is regularly invited to perform her solo violin arrangements at concerts and to give presentations at universities throughout the United States and Germany. Her original works include the arrangements of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, "Moonlight" Sonata, Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusic," Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," the Rock songs "The Show Must Go On" by Queen and "Hotel California" by the Eagles, Rodrigo's guitar concerto 2nd movement, Paganini Caprice No. 24, and her original composition of "Barbie Girl Chaconne in Baroque Style," based on a 1997 single by Aqua. She captures the entire score of all instruments in her polyphonic solo arrangements. Her public performances of the original works are received with great enthusiasm and praise by the audience and colleagues alike, and she is currently in the process of recording her entire solo album. In addition, she recently won an international competition and a concert management, which has booked her for solo appearances with the Philippines Philharmonic Orchestra, Paducah Symphony Orchestra, Butler Philharmonic and more (all in 2026/27 concert seasons).

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## Concert Orchestra Personnel

### Violin 1

Polly Klein †  
Rowan Ingraham  
Sophie Thiessen  
Phoebe (Pei-Hsuan) Tang  
Ethan Dunn  
Jiwon Lee  
Monica Limberg  
Mitchelle Cabrera  
Oscar Mata  
Travis Pota-Birkhoff  
Braeden Boyles  
Alexis de Leon  
Isaiah Vargas  
Yuma Okada

### Violin 2

Pablo Cerdas †  
Marlon Barrios  
Julia Oh  
Juliana Jones  
Evan Collazos  
Charlotte Reid  
Seth Castellano  
Janicesta Browne  
Sofia Vega  
Valeria Tuesta  
Lancelot Clark  
Dylan Garcia  
Zakkary Diserens  
Evan Moses Wesly  
Ellie McNally

### Viola

John Sharp †  
Samuel Yi  
Anthony Brooks  
Kseniya Klyukina  
Camryn Bourne  
Audrey Lewis  
Aidan Shannon  
Angel de Hoyos  
Breanna Norton  
Nya Coleman

### Cello

Claire Cabral †  
Elise Abbott  
Noah Sendir  
Jonathan Scoggins  
Maya Huber  
Zhimai Ma  
Dawn Mansfield  
Griffin Jones  
Gilbert DeWitte  
Nila Senthikumar  
Ethen (Akira) Lim  
RJ Lux  
Mateo Jones  
Dylan Branam  
Olivia Jenkins

### Bass

Joe Ferris †  
Emma Willis  
Andrew Lakly  
Zachary Seymour  
Lilian Holder  
Camryn Lafargue  
Aiyana Armstrong  
Sara Nell Chase  
Alain Mpinda  
Lalo Flores

### Flute

Josh Diaz \*  
Hui Lam Mak #  
Shane Salinas  
Michael Salm  
Meige Yang

### Oboe

Taylor Darnell \*  
Benjamin Yoder #

### Clarinet

Riley Mazziotta  
Meaghan O'Connor  
Anthony Piñeiro \*  
Stoney Shelton #  
Allyson Verret

### Bassoon

Anthony Coito #  
Landon Murr \*  
Fiona Theriault

### Horn

Jackson Dillard  
Caleb Harold  
Eva Gomez \*#  
Trampus Marek  
Samantha Sheats

### Trumpet

Zach Dyess  
Elaina Garza  
Ryn Jenkins \*  
Michael McWhorter #

### Trombone

Britton Fugazzi †  
Jayeon Lee

### Bass Trombone

Jaden Bullock

### Tuba

Jiwoong Hyun

### Timpani

Jack Spelman

### Percussion

Rune Hale  
Paul Martini  
Randy Vrana

‡ Concertmaster

† Principal

\* Principal on Sibelius

# Principal on Tchaikovsky