



University of North Texas
College of Music

Lecture Recital | Saturday, April 19, 2025 | 5:00 p.m. | Choir Room

Alma Bulibekova, violin
Ran Feng, piano

Discovering The Integration of Kazakh Music Traditions
with European Compositional Style in
Gaziza Zhubanova's Violin Concerto

Violin Concerto (1957) Gaziza Zhubanova
I. Allegro moderato (1927–1993)
II. Andante sostenuto
III. Allegro molto

Program six hundred fifty-seven of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Program Notes

Gaziza Zhubanova's Violin Concerto was composed during her studies at the Moscow Conservatory in 1957, under the tutelage of Yuri Shaporin, a composer of Russian-Ukrainian descent.

The structure of the Violin Concerto follows the classical three-movement form with fast – slow – fast tempos. In terms of character, the work provides a typical example of lyrical-dramatic expression. The first movement is written in sonata form, the second in a ternary ABA form, and the third movement is a dance-like finale in rondo form.

The semantic framework of this concerto is intricately woven through the character of each movement and the thematic material drawn from traditional kuis integrated within the first and second movements. The narrative trajectory of the concerto unfolds as a depiction of Kazakh pastoral life and cultural heritage in the opening movement, evoking an idyllic and rich portrayal of traditional Kazakh society. The second movement introduces a profound philosophical dimension, embodying themes of tragedy and injustice that reflect the deeper struggles and existential reflections within the Kazakh cultural consciousness. Concluding with a vigorous and optimistic finale, the concerto transitions toward a vision of hope and resilience, symbolizing aspirations for a brighter future. This layered narrative not only captures the essence of Kazakh life and history but also aligns with the expressive potential of folk-inspired musical idioms, imbuing the work with both cultural specificity and universal emotional resonance.

Biography

Gaziza Zhubanova (1927–1993) was the most significant Kazakh Soviet female composer of the 20th century. She was one of the most influential figures and innovators in Kazakh art music. Zhubanova's output encompasses a wide range of genres, including ballets, operas, cantatas, concertos, oratorios, symphonies, chamber music, and vocal works.

Born on December 2, 1927, in the Aktobe region of Kazakhstan, Gaziza Zhubanova came from a family deeply rooted in music. Her father, Akhmet Zhubanov, was a renowned musicologist and composer, who inspired her passion for music from an early age. From 1945 to 1949 Zhubanova attended the Gnessin State Musical College (now the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music). This institution is known for its strong emphasis on composition and performance, and it played a key role in shaping her early musical development. In 1949, she continued her studies at the prestigious Moscow Conservatory, where she trained under prominent Soviet composer Yuri Shaporin. Zhubanova's journey as a composer took shape during her years at the Moscow Conservatory (1949–1957). During this period, she composed numerous pieces, demonstrating her hard work and relentless pursuit of progress. Indeed, her time at the conservatory immersed her in a rich artistic environment, which greatly influenced her development. During her conservatory studies she formed lasting friendships with prominent composers such as Rodion Shchedrin, Alfred Schnittke, Sofia Gubaidulina, Edison Denisov, and many others. As contemporaries, they inevitably shaped each other's creative perspectives and artistic growth. She graduated in 1954, having already composed several notable works, and continued her education there as a postgraduate student from 1954 to 1957.

Artistically, she advocated for modernity while preserving national identity, striving to elevate Kazakh music to a globally relevant art form. The peak of her compositional career occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, a period marked by the emergence of new opuses and her constant exploration of fresh harmonies and new compositional language.