COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Lecture Recital | Thursday, November 13, 2025 | 8:00 p.m. | Recital Hall

Ya-Chen Lee, cello

Anastasia Markina, piano

Western Musical Structure and Eastern Music Elements in Chen Mao-Shuen's *Cello Concerto*

Konzert für Violoncello und Orchestra
(Concerto for Cello and Orchestra) (2012) ..... Mao-Shuen Chen (1936–2023)

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Allegro Vivace

Program two hundred twenty-five of the 2025–2026 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Composer **Chen Mao-Shuen** was born in 1936 into a musical family in Beigang Township, Yunlin County, Taiwan. His father was a highly respected gentleman in his community and also a famous musician to the locals. With a love of Western classical music and the guidance of their parents, the children of the Chen family were all skilled at playing at least one instrument. The abundant influence of traditional Taiwanese music also later inspired Chen Mao-Shuen's musical journey. The combination of Western and Eastern cultures became one of the distinctive features of Chen's composition style.

At the age of eight, Chen's mother began teaching him to play the piano. During his teenage years, he also studied music theory and harmony. In 1955, Chen was accepted to the music department at National Taiwan Normal University where he majored in piano and studied harmony as well as counterpoint. Chen started studying music analysis and composition with Hsu Chang-Hui (a well-known Taiwanese composer and music educator) in 1960.

After graduating from NTNU in 1961, Chen continued writing music while teaching. Chen started to explore composing in different genres, including but not limited to the symphony, concerto, chamber music, songs, and music for piano. In 1970, he went to Vienna for further studies in composition. After returning to Taiwan, Chen started teaching at his alma mater in 1975.

Chen Mao-Shuen continuously cultivated the music world of Taiwan for half a century and accumulated music compositions high in both quantity and quality. Remarkably, Chen never forgot his cultural traditions while creating music with Western music techniques. The idea of preserving one's culture was very important to him. In Chen's musical works, we see the best example of integrating Eastern and Western cultures.

Chen's ***Cello Concerto*** was written and completed in 2012 with the premiere on March 26 of the same year. Professor Chen TingHui conducted the Aletheia University Orchestra with Christine Hu as the soloist at the National Concert Hall in Taipei.

The structure of this concerto follows the style of the traditional Western classical concerto form of three movements. The cadenza at the end of the third movement serves as a conclusion of all themes throughout the whole concerto.

The first movement, in Sonata Allegro form begins with a four-measure introduction followed by the first theme of the exposition played by woodwinds and strings in the orchestra. According to the composer, the inspiration for the four-note (A-D-A-C) theme came from local ritual parade music that he heard during childhood which was usually played with the traditional Chinese instrument *suona.* Chen then added some rhythmic embellishments with ornamentations based on these four notes to make the theme livelier.

The second movement is a ternary form, starting in a slow tempo that moves to a faster tempo in the middle section, and then returning to a slow tempo to conclude the movement. The opening section may be imagined as a moment of inner preparation before the start of a temple ceremony—a time to center the heart and worship with calmness.

The third movement is a rondo form with the time signatures switching between 5/8 and 6/8. One of its themes is derived from a folk tune that the composer remembered children casually humming in playgrounds, though the exact song can no longer be identified.

The concerto's cadenza appears after the third movement, rather than in the first movement as in most classical concertos. It incorporates thematic fragments from all three movements, thus bringing the entire work to a cohesive conclusion. There are two versions of the cadenza: one written by the composer, and another by the composer's brother, who happens to be a cellist. Both versions feature various virtuosic sections that require different techniques from the soloist and provide a conclusion to the concerto.