



University of North Texas Symphony Orchestra

David Itkin, conductor

Chloé Kiffer, violin

Horacio Contreras, cello

Wednesday, October 5, 2022
7:30 pm
Winspear Hall
Murchison Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM

Double Concerto in A minor,
Opus 102 (1887).....Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Vivace non troppo

Chloé Kiffer, violin • Horacio Contreras, cello

--Intermission--

Symphony No. 5 in D minor,
Opus 47 (1937).....Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)
I. Moderato - Allegro non troppo
II. Allegretto
III. Largo
IV. Allegro non troppo

*Eighty-first program of the 2022–2023 season
Photography and videography are prohibited*

PROGRAM NOTES

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Double Concerto in A minor, Opus 102 (1887)

Johannes Brahms was one of the great German composers of the nineteenth century. His style emphasized musical unity, exploring fully the potential of individual themes across movements and pieces. He sought such unity, however, while incorporating a broad range of influence. His love of folk, poetry and Roma performing styles is evident in his use of irregular rhythms and rubato, while his experimental side shines through in his complex harmonies. As George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch describe, "Brahms creatively synthesized the practices of three centuries with folk and dance idioms and with the language of mid- and late nineteenth-century art music."

The *Double Concerto* was the last of Brahms' orchestral works, completed shortly after his fourth, and final, symphony. While the concept of a concerto being performed by more than one soloist was not new (the *concerto grosso* of the Baroque period pitted a small "solo group" against the larger orchestra, and the Classical *sinfonia concertante* had two soloists instead of one), the idea was no longer a common one in the age of the nineteenth-century solo virtuoso. Brahms' reasoning for writing a double concerto therefore arose from a unique circumstance. A close friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim, was going through a difficult divorce when it was discovered that Brahms had written a letter in sympathy to Joachim's wife. Their friendship soured, but when a mutual friend, Robert Hausmann, asked Brahms to compose him a cello concerto, Brahms took the opportunity to write a double concerto featuring both the cello and violin. He presented the concept to Joachim as a peace offering, which was accepted, and the work was premiered by Joachim and Hausmann in 1887.

The first movement of a concerto is typically the longest of the three and it is especially true of a work that features not just one soloist, but two. The orchestra begins the *Allegro* with a stern four-measure statement of the main theme. This is interrupted by the cello breaking into the first cadenza, a solo moment that shows off the range of the instrument. The violin follows with its own cadenza, but this one is shorter and the cello returns to create a duet. The two instruments play off of each other and notably show off their combined range through a series of running passages that begin in the highest register of the violin, flowing down to the lowest register of the cello, and back up again. This ends as the cello and violin land together on a sequence of quick chords and the orchestra returns with the main theme, beginning the exposition proper. The soloists introduce the second theme, first in the cello and echoed by the violin, and are now accompanied by the orchestra. The entire movement unfolds as an interplay between the violin and cello (sometimes partners, sometimes friendly competitors) and between the soloists and orchestra.

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The *Andante* is less complex and more songful, working off a simple ABA structure. The main theme is presented by the violin and cello in unison octaves, an expressive melody described by Orrin Howard as “suffused with rhapsodic warmth not untouched by melancholy.” After a series of organ-like chords based on the main theme in the orchestra, the secondary theme appears. This is a winding triplet melody first heard in the violin and then echoed in the cello which is developed into running passages passed between the soloists. The interlude is brief, however, and the first section returns to complete the movement.

The *Vivace non troppo* final movement takes the form of a rondo, in which a main section alternates with passages of new material, eventually reversing back on itself like a palindrome (ABACABA). The main Roma-inspired theme (A) is introduced by the soloists before being echoed in the orchestra, and each subsequent section follows the same pattern. In contrast to the jumpy, main theme, the B section begins with a slower, chordal melody that rises and falls under lush orchestra harmonies. After the brief return of the main (A) section, the middle (C) section appears with a lilting triplet melody stated by both soloists together. This is passed between members of the orchestra before another series of running passages between the soloists brings back the main (A) theme, followed by the lush B section. Finally, the main theme returns for one last iteration, and the concerto ends in a whirl of excitement and pounding, concluding chords.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975) **Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)**

Dmitri Shostakovich was born in St. Petersburg and spent much of his career navigating the precarious cultural politics of the Soviet Union. His compositional output ranged widely, from string quartets and symphonies to operas and even film scores. As a composer who lived through Stalin's regime, he cultivated a musical style that was simultaneously emotive and ambiguous. Nowhere in his music is this more apparent than in his symphonies.

The story of the Fifth Symphony begins three years earlier with Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. This opera, based on a novella by Nikolai Leskov, follows the story of a well-to-do wife who murders her husband in order to be with her lover. For two years the opera experienced success on the stage until Stalin went to see the opera himself in 1936. Mere days later the official Communist party newspaper *Pravda* published an anonymous review of *Lady Macbeth*, denouncing it as “muddle instead of music” and sending Shostakovich into a spiral of uncertainty for his future.

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He feared not just for his career, but for his life. Stalin's regime had already begun the massive purge of thousands of Russians deemed unsympathetic to the state, and being called out publicly, as Shostakovich had been, was a real warning to the composer that he could soon be another victim if he did not appease the regime. At this point Shostakovich was about to premiere his Fourth Symphony, but he immediately canceled the performance understanding that its experimental nature would not be acceptable in the current climate. Instead, he began work on the Fifth, following the stifling rules for music set out by Stalin's government (simple and direct musical language, extended well-shaped melodies, and above all a positive fanfare at the end), and proclaiming it publicly in print as "a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism."

Shostakovich, however, might not have been pushed into line that easily. The Fifth—while outwardly displaying all the appropriate models of Soviet music—still contains enough hints and inventive melodic decisions to be interpreted as secretly subversive. Such readings of Shostakovich-as-dissident proliferated in the United States and western Europe during and after the Cold War. They are ostensibly supported by his memoirs, although the veracity of that book (published posthumously by Shostakovich's collaborator Solomon Volokov) has been questioned due to historical disparities. Other primary sources like letters show Shostakovich in a more patriotic light, although they, too, are likely unreliable given the paranoia and persecution of the Stalinist era. It remains clear, however, that the Fifth Symphony complies strangely with Soviet artistic mandates.

The symphony begins with an emphatic motto immediately presented in the strings developing into a bleak melody that is then passed around the orchestra. At times there are glimmers of Major keys, triumphant fanfares, or cheerful melodies, but each time the positivity is quickly distorted and twisted back into the minor dissonance of the original. The theme builds in intensity before falling away again, and the second thematic section begins. A short-short-long pattern is repeated in the lower strings over a drawn-out, subdued melody in the violins. Again, there are glimmers of hope as the new theme evolves and the orchestra briefly transitions into Major, and again, this is quickly pulled back into the minor, leading to a foreboding grumbling in the low brass. The two themes are recalled until suddenly the low brass take over in a blast of foreboding fanfare, dark and disquieting. The fanfare is taken up by the rest of the orchestra, beginning the development section of the movement in which the themes build in a cacophony of thematic punctuations and frantic intensity, finally breaking out into a heavy-handed march that sounds more forced than jubilant. The march builds into another frenzied sequence, and the development leads into the recapitulation with the return of the opening material, now faster and more agitated. The movement ends with an ever-softening coda in which the main theme hovers in the background while a solo violin and the celeste bring the melody to an almost ethereal close.

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The second movement, the *Allegretto*, follows the typical form of a dance movement with an ABA structure; however, the mood is one of parody instead of courtly presence, turning a waltz into unnerving circus music. It begins with the low strings pounding out the triple meter and a short horn call. Then the main theme, a chirping, off-kilter melody, appears in the woodwinds. The dance is taken up by the rest of the orchestra in full, with interjections in the brass, until settling back and the middle section begins. A solo violin picks out a new lilting melody over harp accompaniment and this time the dance is not as disconcerting as the first. The woodwinds take over after another iteration of the horn call and the melody repeats several times before a bassoon and contra-bassoon duet leads into the return of the first section.

It is said that the third movement brought the audience to tears during the premiere in Leningrad. The *Largo* presents a slow and soothing melody drawn out of the strings in what scholar Michael Mishra described as a "simple, naked outpouring of tragic meditation and lyricism." The woodwinds join midway through the movement adding new colors to the expressive soundscape, and the movement slowly builds to a climax before slowly but steadily dying away into silence.

The *Allegro non troppo* finale is in ternary form, with two outer bombastic sections bookending a calmer middle one. This symphony could not end in melancholy, but only in triumph. Still, the themes he chose allude to other sources that subvert the intentions of the party line, most notably the correlation between the opening theme and Shostakovich's (then unpublished) setting of a Pushkin poem where the first four notes in the brass are the same used to set the words "A barbarian artist." The movement begins with this forceful fanfaric melody in the brass and accelerates in intensity until suddenly breaking into the middle section. Here, a slow march references the opera *Boris Godunov*, in which crowds are forced to praise the Tsar and Shostakovich's audience would have immediately recognized. The march subsides and the lyrical melody that follows is what Michael Tilson Thomas described as a "quiet remembrance of those who are gone." The middle section ends peacefully, and the main theme emerges slowly in the woodwinds out of a low timpani roll. The tempo and intensity build gradually until suddenly the main theme bursts out anew in the brass, this time in a triumphant Major key, swelling to the end under pounding percussion to land on a final Major chord.--Emily Hicks under the direction of Peter Mondelli

BIOGRAPHIES

Cellist **Horacio Contreras** has gained esteem through relevant activity as a performer, pedagogue and researcher. He is a founding member of the Reverón Piano Trio, and a faculty member of the University of North Texas and the Music Institute of Chicago. He is represented alongside the Reverón Piano Trio, by HALAC Artists and Meluk Kultur Management.

Horacio has collaborated for performances as a concert cellist, recitalist, and chamber musician with prestigious artists, festivals, and institutions in the United States, Latin America and Europe. His students have won awards in international and national competitions in the United States and Canada, have made solo recordings, and have performed as soloists internationally. His former students have been appointed in positions in schools of music and orchestras in Europe and Latin America.



His pedagogic materials have been published by Carl Fischer. He is the co-author of the *Sphinx Catalog of Latin-American Cello Works*, an extensive online database with information about works for cello by Latin American composers. He is the founder and artistic director of Strings of Latin America, an initiative that partners with the Sphinx Organization to foster diversity in the field of Western art music.

Horacio's recent projects include a recording of the works for cello and piano by Ricardo Lorenz, the commission and premiere of *Diáspora* for cello and piano by the Schubert Club's composer-in-residence Reinaldo Moya, and the recording of trios by Ponce, Villa-Lobos and Turina with the Reverón Piano Trio. Recent performances took him to the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, Nichols Concert Hall in Evanston, IL, and venues in Colombia and Brazil. Horacio started his cello studies at El Sistema in Venezuela, and made further studies in France and Spain. He holds master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Michigan.

BIOGRAPHIES

Violinist **Chloé Kiffer**, native of France, has received enthusiastic praise by The New York Times for her “pure and beautiful tone” and The Greenwich Sentinel for being “...a star in every sense: performance, exquisite technique and beauty”. Kiffer feels as comfortable performing solo on the international stage as she does in intimate chamber settings.



Performing solo and orchestra engagements across Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, and Asia, Kiffer has appeared at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Beethoven Hall in Bonn, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Hall, Tel Aviv Opera, and Beijing National Center. In October 2015, Kiffer made her Carnegie Hall debut performing Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto in Stern Auditorium. Kiffer has collaborated alongside Philippe Muller, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Timothy Eddy, the Emerson String Quartet and pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine.

Dr. Kiffer is assistant professor of violin at the University of North Texas and is on the violin and viola faculty at the FaceArts Institute of Music in Shanghai. Her students have received high praise for their performances and won prizes at national and international competitions.

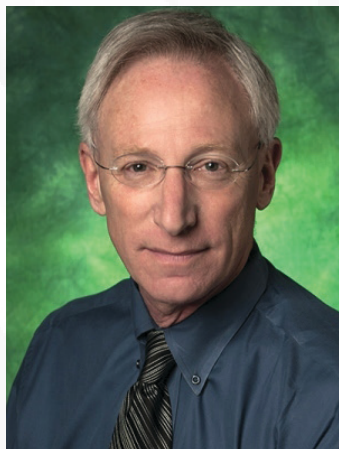
Kiffer is a sought-after guest teacher and faculty member for conservatories and festivals around the world—Heifetz International Music Institute, Miami Music Festival, Beijing International Music Festival and Academy, Chamber Music International in Texas, MusicFest Perugia and MusicAlps (France).

Kiffer is a laureate of the Bleustein-Blanchet Foundation. She graduated from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and earned postgraduate degrees from Manhattan School of Music under Patinka Kopec and Pinchas Zukerman. Kiffer received her doctor of musical arts degree from Stony Brook University. In 2019, she released Ravel Violin Sonatas on the Steinway & Sons label with pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine.

Chloé Kiffer performs on a Samuel Zygmuntowicz violin (Brooklyn, N.Y., 2015).

BIOGRAPHY

The 2022–2023 season marks Maestro **David Itkin**'s 15th 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's *Symphony No. 4*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Puccini's *Turandot* with the UNT Grand Chorus, and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with UNT Opera. This is also his 18th season as Music Director and Conductor of the Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra. During the 2018–2019 season he joined the Abilene Opera Company for Handel's *Messiah* and a fully staged production of *West Side Story*. During the 2019–2020 season he led the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra in February and returned to the Abilene Opera for *Messiah*.



Following a distinguished 17-year tenure, Maestro Itkin was named Conductor Laureate of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in July 2010. Previously he served as Music Director and Conductor of the Las Vegas Philharmonic, Artistic Director and Conductor of the McCall Summerfest (McCall, Idaho), and as Music Director and Conductor of the Lake Forest Symphony (Chicago), Kingsport Symphony (TN), Birmingham Opera Theatre, and Lucius Woods Music Festival (WI). 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.

His book *Conducting Concerti* was released in August 2014 to considerable critical acclaim. Leonard Slatkin called *Conducting Concerti* "a valuable textbook for the aspiring Maestro" and "highly recommended," and Samuel Adler wrote that it is "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 several Texas all-region Honors Orchestras. Also in demand as a speaker and lecturer, Mr. Itkin has been asked to lecture for a wide variety of organizations, including SilverSea cruise lines, two consecutive years as a featured lecturer for the Arkansas Governor's School, the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras, and a keynote address at the National Federation of Music Clubs national conference.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Kevorg Esmeryan,
concertmaster
Karim Ayala Pool
Annie Barnette
Justin Daniels
Kevin Fu
Diana Galimova
Crissanti García-Tamez
Oriana Gonzales
Fedor Malykhin
Mevlan Mecid
Lauren Nelson
Hoigum Park
Yirong Tang
Jiazhi Zhang

Violin II

Sardor Djumaev, principal
Tiffany Chang
Kai Tze Chua
André Daniel
Olivia Dinardis
Christopher Djinov
Keyu Fan
Michael Holtzapple
Helen Lundy
Joseph Reding
Xiachu Song
Ae-lin Youn
Jingwei Zhang

Viola

Brittney Geurink, principal
Leanna Butler
Fang Chen
Jianhe Chen
Amanda Hamilton
Jocelyn Kasparek
Haley Kruse
Isaac Li
RJ McDowell
Grace Remmer
Alice Yoon

Cello

Manuela Barić, principal
Tyler Auillard
Jacob Guidi
Garrett Hayes
Mengmeng Huang
Jasmine Lin
Qiaojiannan Ma
Emily Maher
Peter Morales
Jin Wang

Bass

Ricardo Puche, principal
Joshua Gebhard
Savannah Hilterbrandt
Jacob Hoch
Kuan-Chieh Lo
Han Meng
Roberto Ramon
Cole Rouse

Piccolo

Natalie Zeles

Flute

Lydia Bobell
Taylor Francis +
Kiana Kawahara
Amanda Welch *

Oboe

Suji Chang
Kit Hawkins *
Hyungju Oh +

Clarinet

Julia Klein +
David Molina *
Erick Morales
Hannah Weller

Bassoon

Erica Haas +
Colin Hilliard *

Contrabassoon

Molly Smit

Horn

Nathan Howton
Elijah Kee
Zachary McKinon +
Steven Phan *
John Pickett

Trumpet

Aleyna Ashenfarb
Lane Hensley *
McKenna Hill
Bradley Swanson
Emily Tourgeman +

Trombone

Collin Ewing
Ben Hahn
Tim Wight +

Tuba

Parker Burkey

Timpani

Marcus Avarado

Percussion

Jacob Fullinwider
Wyatt Reed
Adam Surak
Graham Viegut

Harp

Gabi Logan
Zoe O'Shaughnessy

Piano/Celeste

Ishan Wang

*Principal on Brahms
+Principal on Shostakovich

FACULTY AND STAFF

Orchestral Studies

David Itkin, Anshel Brusilow Professor of Orchestral Studies
Clay Couturiaux, Assistant Director of Orchestral Studies
Charles Baldwin, Doctoral Conducting Associate/Librarian/Conducting Class
Gregory McDaniel, Master's Conducting Associate/Operations Manager
Jimin Seo, Doctoral Conducting Associate/Personnel Manager

Instrumental Studies & Keyboard Studies (*Adjunct)

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Julia Bushkova, violin | John Holt, trumpet |
| *Eunice Keem, violin | Caleb Hudson, trumpet |
| Chloé Kiffer, violin | Raquel Samayoa, trumpet |
| Philip Lewis, violin | Stacie Mickens, horn |
| Felix Olschofka, violin | *Natalie Young, horn |
| Susan Dubois, viola | Tony Baker, trombone |
| Daphne Gerling, viola | Natalie Mannix, trombone |
| Horacio Contreras, cello | Steven Menard, trombone |
| Nikola Ružević, cello | David Childs, euphonium |
| Jeffrey Bradetich, double bass | *Matthew Good, tuba |
| Gudrun Raschen, double bass | Don Little, tuba |
| Jaymee Haefner, harp | *Stephen Barnes, drumset |
| Mary Karen Clardy, flute | Quincy Davis, drumset |
| Elizabeth McNutt, flute | Mark Ford, percussion |
| *James Scott, flute | David Hall, percussion |
| Terri Sundberg, flute | Paul Rennick, percussion |
| Jung Choi, oboe | *Sandi Rennick, percussion |
| Daryl Coad, clarinet | *Liudmila Georgievskaya, piano |
| Deb Fabian, clarinet | Steven Harlos, piano |
| Kimberly Cole Luevano, clarinet | Pamela Mia Paul, piano |
| Phillip Paglialonga, clarinet | Elvia Puccinelli, collaborative piano |
| *Gregory Raden, clarinet | Gustavo Romero, piano |
| Darrel Hale, bassoon | Vladimir Viardo, piano |
| Eric Nestler, saxophone | Adam Wodnicki, piano |
| | Jesse Eschbach, organ |

College of Music Administration

John W. Richmond - Dean
Warren H. Henry - Senior Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
Felix Olschofka - Associate Dean, Operations
Emilita Marin - Assistant Dean, Business and Finance
Raymond Rowell - Assistant Dean, Scholarships and External Affairs
Jaymee Haefner - Director, Graduate Studies
Kirsten Soriano Broberg - Director, Undergraduate Studies
Joel D. Wiley - Director, Admissions
Matt Hardman - Director, Communications, Marketing and Public Relations

Upcoming Events

Symphony Orchestra - October 19, November 16
Concert Orchestra - October 26, November 30
Baroque Orchestra - October 7, November 19