



University of North Texas Concert Orchestra

Clay Couturiaux, conductor

with

Gustavo Romero, piano

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

7:30 pm

Winspear Hall

Murchison Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM

Night on Bald Mountain (1867).....Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881)
arr. 1886 Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in
E-flat Major, S. 124 (1855).....Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
I. Allegro maestoso
II. Quasi adagio -
III. Allegretto vivace - Allegro animato -
IV. Allegro marziale animato

Gustavo Romero, piano

--Intermission--

Eclogue for Piano and Strings,
Opus 10 (1929).....Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

Gustavo Romero, piano

Capriccio Italien, Opus 45 (1880).....Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

***Fifty-ninth program of the 2022–2023 season
Photography and videography are prohibited***

PROGRAM NOTES

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881)/arr. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) **Night on Bald Mountain**

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881) contributed to the growth of a distinct Russian musical style during the nineteenth century. His path to music composition was somewhat unconventional in that he did not study to become a musician or composer during his childhood or young adulthood. Instead, he attended the Cadet School of the Guards and was commissioned as an officer in the Russian Imperial Guard when he graduated in 1856. He did take piano lessons throughout childhood and sang in the Cadet School choir, but did not acquire harmony or compositional training until meeting Mily Balakirev through coworkers who shared his love of music. Balakirev took Mussorgsky under his wing, along with Alexander Borodin, César Cui, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, coaching them in compositional technique. Now known as “The Five,” these composers created a distinct national style of Russian classical music.

Night on Bald Mountain went through various changes before the creation of the version that is typically performed today. Mussorgsky worked on the material over the course of his lifetime, but never had it published. The piece was largely inspired by Nikolay Gogol's short story “St. John's Eve” involving treasure, witches, and the devil, resulting in a largely programmatic piece depicting a sinister night on a mountain with “spirits of darkness.” The original material started as incidental music to a play entitled *Ved'ma* (The Witch) by Baron Georgy Mengden in 1860. The piece was not performed, however, and Mussorgsky ended up recycling the music, revising it heavily, for an opera-ballet, *Mlada*, in 1872. This was also never produced, and again Mussorgsky revised the music, changing the ending, in the hopes of using it in his comic opera *Sorochintsi' Fair* in 1880. Despite all the revisions the piece went through, the general character of the music remained the same. Mussorgsky described the overall piece as having four major parts: “[1] an underground noise of inhuman voices. Appearance of the Spirits of Darkness followed by an appearance of Satan and [2] his adoration. [3] A Black Mass. [4] Joyful dancing of the Witches' Sabbath.”

After Mussorgsky's death in 1881, several of his fellow composers took up the task of editing his unpublished and incomplete works for publication. Rimsky-Korsakov took the reins with *Night on Bald Mountain*, transforming the version connected to *Sorochintsi' Fair* into the orchestral tone poem most often performed today.

The piece begins with a flurry of violins, pounding low strings, and shrill woodwinds swelling rapidly in a fury of chaos. The rush of strings is overtaken by a loud, intense brass fanfare—one more of sinister intentions than heraldic. This opening is quickly repeated, leading into harsh blocky chords by the orchestra until the frantic main theme is introduced in the woodwinds and strings. The hectic nature of this theme is gradually cooled to a relatively moderate pace and passed briefly among the woodwinds in a less harsh tone, before building back to its original pace. This is interrupted by another brass fanfare just as strident as

PROGRAM NOTES

the first and another flurry of running strings and woodwinds before the entire orchestra—Mussorgsky's "noise of inhuman voices"—comes to a sudden, jarring stop. From the silence a race of eighth notes begins the secondary theme in the bassoons and clarinets, quickly taken up by various sections of the orchestra as it grows in intensity to another brass fanfare, this one unexpectedly in a bright, Major key. The fanfare leads us into a new section of relative calm in which the violins take up a soft cantering version of the secondary theme with the upper woodwinds. This gradually builds in speed and intensity, taking on sinister undertones, until the main theme returns in the high brass and woodwinds with an undercurrent of thumping low strings. The chaos continues to build, with the themes and fanfares winding together and fighting for dominance until it all culminates in the return of the opening material.

The chaos of the two themes is repeated, but this time as the bright, Major brass fanfare is fading away we hear the tolling of bells, and a true calmness takes over. The violins play a variation of the second theme, this time slower and subdued, gradually settling down to end in a succession of rolling chords in the harp; the intensity of Mussorgsky's night now giving way to the dawning of the new day. Sweetly lyrical solos, first in the clarinet and then in the flute, are softly intoned before the soothing rolls of the harp and the quiet chords of the orchestra come to a soft and restful end.

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, S. 124 (1855)

Franz Liszt (1811–1886) was one of the leaders of the nineteenth-century Romantic musical world, known for his imaginative compositions, his technical musical skill, and his wild showmanship on the stage. His father, Adam Liszt, was a clerk and amateur musician working on the Esterházy estates in western Hungary. He recognized his son's talent at an early age and devoted much of his life to providing Franz with the best musical education and promoting his talent. Quickly emerging as a child prodigy on the piano, Franz spent three years touring and performing from 1824–1827, when he was only 13 years old. These tours included trips to England where he gave concerts in London and Manchester, also performing at Windsor Castle for King George IV on more than one occasion. However, after his father died while they were on holiday in Boulogne in 1827 Franz, now 16 years old, took up the responsibility of supporting his mother by becoming a teacher to the children of the French aristocracy.

PROGRAM NOTES

Liszt's return to the public concert stage was cemented by his so-called "piano duel" with Sigismond Thalberg in 1837, followed in 1838, by multiple benefit concerts in Vienna to raise funds for his Hungarian homeland that had been devastated by flooding. Thereafter he continued to tour Europe performing at least 1000 concerts from 1839–1847 alone, establishing "a virtuoso career unmatched in the history of performance," according to the Liszt scholar, Alan Walker. During this time, he also created the model for solo recitals (he was the first to call them such) that is still followed today, such as performing entire programs from memory and turning the piano at a right angle to the stage so the sound could reflect off the lid and across the auditorium. He was also known for his technical and expressive abilities, pushing the boundaries of what was possible on the keyboard. As Clara Wieck (later, Clara Schumann), Liszt's contemporary and fellow pianist-composer described, "He can be compared to no other player ... he arouses fright and astonishment. He is an original ... he is absorbed by the piano."

Typically, a concerto will only have three movements: a fast opening, a slow middle, and a fast finale. Liszt's concerto, however, breaks with the tradition to insert a fourth movement, following a fast-slow-moderate-fast formula similar to a symphony. The first movement, the *Allegro maestoso*, begins with a brief back-and-forth between the orchestra (immediately introducing the main theme) and piano, before the piano takes off on its own in a short cadenza. This cadenza is interrupted several times: first by a trumpet fanfare, and then by the orchestra. After a long, high trill followed by a cascade of arpeggios, the piano transitions out of the cadenza and into the movement proper in a duet with the clarinet. The entire movement takes on the feel of a fantasia—in which Liszt meanders with the themes on the piano in a manner that sounds improvisatory instead of formulaic—resulting in a blend of seemingly-extemporaneous outbreaks on the piano coupled with the grounding return of the original version of the theme in the orchestra. The movement ends quietly, with a final hint of the theme in the timpani as the piano runs briskly into its upper register in soft resolution.

The second movement, *Quasi Adagio*, builds out of the quiet with a slow and expressive theme in the low strings that is immediately repeated in the first violins. Following this brief introduction, the piano develops the theme over rolling arpeggios, bringing it through a variety of tonal areas before settling to a brief stop. The orchestra returns with lush iterations of the theme interspersed by responses in the piano leading to another brief cadenza. The movement ends with a series of winding solos passed between the flute, clarinet, oboe, and cello underneath an extended trill on the piano.

PROGRAM NOTES

The third movement begins immediately, coming directly out of the previous with a ringing of the triangle. While it is titled *Allegretto vivace*, the mood of this movement can more readily be ascertained by the piano's instruction of "capriccioso scherzando," or rather, "in a capricious and playful manner." The triangle rings merrily throughout while the piano whimsically plays a series of falling runs, hopping through a disjointed melody accented with brief punctuations from the orchestra. This theme is put through multiple variations, building in intensity until it climaxes with the full orchestra in a foreboding minor form and a furor of octaves and arpeggios in the piano. We get a short relaxation of the intensity before it builds again and the movement ends, not with a sense of finality but rather as a series of alternations between the orchestra and piano, building tension that leads directly into—and does not resolve until—the start of the fourth movement.

The finale, *Allegro marziale animato*, begins with a jovial spirit. The piano falls in a rush of sixteenth notes and the march-like theme begins. The festival mood is broken quickly, however, with a darkening fanfare in the low brass, woodwinds, and strings. The piano interrupts with its own pounding succession of chords, transitioning into the second theme, a chipper and staccato version of the winding solo melody from the end of the second movement. The theme moves to other members of the orchestra while the piano undertakes an elaborate accompaniment of runs, arpeggios, and falling octave leaps. Eventually the piano breaks out from under the orchestra in a display of rapidly repeated notes and a brief return of the first theme. This is repeated in the orchestra and builds with renewed intensity, but the climax is stalled as the flurry of piano and orchestra slows and softens instead of pushing forward. A stairstep falling melody begins in the violins, overlaid by repeated broken chords twittering from the piano. Still, the interlude does not last long, quickly building back the lost intensity, escalating in strength and numbers until the entire orchestra and piano come together in a final fanfare of chords.

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

Eclogue for Piano and Strings, Opus 10 (1929)

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956) was the fifth and final child of a London shipbroker. He grew up receiving a private education that included musical studies with Ernest Farrar and Edward Bairstow. After tragedy struck Finzi multiple times in short succession—his father's death when he was eight, then Farrar's death fighting in World War I followed by that of Finzi's three older brothers—Finzi became increasingly introspective and drawn to isolation. He preferred the solitude of the countryside, moving first to Painswick, then to Aldbourne after his marriage to Joyce Black, and finally in 1937 to an area in Ashmansworth on the Hampshire hills where he built a house, amassed a library, and planted an orchard of apple trees.

PROGRAM NOTES

Unlike many other composers, Finzi was not a particularly avid pianist, preferring to use the amateur group that he founded in 1940, the Newbury String Players, as his “instrument.” In addition to composing, Finzi worked as a lecturer, an external examiner for St Andrews University, an adjudicator, and a county adviser, working tirelessly until he passed away from leukemia (exacerbated by either shingles or chickenpox) in 1956.

Finzi's *Eclogue for Piano and Strings* was originally intended to be the middle of a three-movement piano concerto begun in 1927. However, Finzi only made sketches of the outer movements before abandoning the idea and revising the *Eclogue* twice—first in the 1940s and again in 1952—as its own work. Still, the piece was never published, or titled, during Finzi's lifetime. After his death in 1956, composer Howard Ferguson prepared the unfinished manuscript for performance and the piece was premiered in 1957. The title was agreed upon between friends and family prior to publication: the word “eclogue” refers to a poem in the classical style, usually on a pastoral topic and often written as a dialogue between pastoral subjects such as shepherds.

This reference provides us with much needed clues for navigating the ambiguous structure of the piece. His wife described the work's form as “ABA leading to a climax and a middle section leading back to A & B played together followed by a coda” while a contemporary reviewer simply wrote that the piece “unfolds in a Bachian manner.” However, leaning on the title for guidance, we can at least consider the piece broadly as a dialogue between the piano and strings.

The piece begins with solo piano introducing the primary theme, a winding and peaceful lullaby-like melody. The strings respond by starting the melody anew but only complete the first phrase before the piano returns. The ensemble comes together, building to a *forte* and driving straight into the secondary theme. This one is begun in the strings and is similar to the first in tone, keeping with the lullaby atmosphere. The entire ensemble swells and contracts until it dies back down and the piano returns with the primary theme. This time it evolves and grows, building to a *fortissimo* of full strings and piano before dying away until only the piano is left and a new section is initiated. Here the piece shifts from the steady nature of 4/4 time to the buoyant 12/8 with a lilting feel. This begins in the piano with a slowly rising melody and sighs in the strings. The interlude quickens, but ends shortly with a series of trills by the piano and the strings' shift back to the 4/4 time. The return of the first section comes in reverse: the secondary theme appears first in the piano and the primary theme follows in the strings. Finally, the piece slows to an end, dying away to a single *pianissimo* chord on the piano.

PROGRAM NOTES

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) *Capriccio Italien*, Opus 45 (1880)

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was one of several Russian musicians who cultivated a blend of domestic influences with a broader range of western European classical genres. By uniting western European symphonic ideals with his own Russian and personal stylings, he succeeded in composing masterful works in a wide range of genres. As described by scholar Roland John Wiley, “he united the symphonic thought of Beethoven and Schumann with the work of Glinka, and transformed Liszt’s and Berlioz’s achievements in depictive-programmatic music into matters of Shakespearian elevation and psychological import.”

Capriccio Italien is an orchestral work in the fantasy style, meaning that rather than following a strict formulaic structure, the piece is intended to sound improvisatory. Themes in fantasias typically sound as if they are growing organically via the whims of the performer at the time, giving the listener a more whimsical or extemporaneous experience overall. This particular piece was inspired by some of the Italian folk music Tchaikovsky found in collections or heard in the streets while on a trip to Rome in 1880.

The opening fanfare is based on a bugle call used every day at a nearby barracks during Tchaikovsky’s stay. This is followed by the first theme, a lush melody in the strings punctuated by triplet chords beating militaristically in the winds. The theme is traded to the woodwinds and gradually built up until the opening fanfare returns, louder than before. This resolves, and the theme reappears in the clarinet and bassoon. The next section begins a new lilting theme playfully passed around in the upper woodwinds, then the brass, and finally the full orchestra. The ensemble swells to a *fortissimo* and the theme culminates in a string of triplet chords that morph into the underlying rhythm of the following section, a fast-paced *allegro moderato*. This begins with a transitory passage of echoing calls passed around the orchestra, falling into a lively folk-dance led first by the strings and accompanied by the tambourine.

As the dance slows, we hear the return of the opening: the marching triplets, the lush theme in the strings, and the brass fanfares. Instead of transitioning to the secondary lilting theme, however, the orchestra first speeds into a presto tarantella dance (a traditional folk music style in 6/8 characterized by its rapid and leaping melodies). The dance is wild and frantic, but gradually runs out of steam and gives over to the secondary theme—now presented as a grand courtly dance in triplet meter. This builds to the coda, where the tarantella dance returns quietly in the clarinet but grows to engulf the entire ensemble. The finale is a hectic race of running scales and pounding chords, culminating in a final emphatic chord by the full orchestra.--*Jessica Stearns under the direction of Peter Mondelli*

BIOGRAPHIES

Gustavo Romero joined the piano faculty of the University of North Texas College of Music in fall of 2002 after five years serving on the faculty of the University of Illinois, and nine years on the faculty of the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, North Carolina.

His formal training was earned at The Juilliard School, graduating with a bachelor of music in 1988, and a master of music in 1997. In 1989, Romero was the winner of the prestigious Clara Haskill International Piano Competition in Switzerland. Other major awards include the Avery Fisher Career Grant, Musical America Young Artist of 1988, Austin, TX "Key to the City Award," and Maurice Braun Award of the San Diego Historical Society.



Since 1999, Romero has performed numerous complete recital cycles at the Neurosciences Institute in La Jolla, California, including Chopin: The Complete Published Solo Piano Works; Bach: The Leipzig Keyboard Works; and Beethoven: The Complete Piano Sonatas. He has played with Radio France Orchestra, Philharmonica Hungarica, and Liège Philharmonic, and performed concerts in Paris, Zurich, Milan, and Berlin, among other cities. He has appeared at major festivals, including New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Montpellier Festival in France. In addition, he recently performed recitals at both the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and at Alice Tully Hall in New York. Romero has also conducted master classes nationwide, as well as in Europe and South Africa.

His discography includes four Koch International CDs: A REM CD featuring Isaac Albéniz's *Change d'Espagne*; a recording of Claude Debussy's *Images I et II*; and Domenico Scarlatti's *Keyboard Sonatas*.

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 2022–23 season marks Couturiaux's eleventh 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 Summer Strings 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 Gittleman, Carl Topilow, and Harold Farberman.

CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Yida Hu, concertmaster
Gabriel Parker
Pei Jhen Huang
Lucas Furtado
Ella Curb
Oscar Morales
Alyssa Hall
Luca Nardelli
Michelle Martey
Julia Oh
Joshua Shapiro
Chloe Svadlenka
Polly Klein

Violin II

Yonsoo Park, principal
Miguel Guillen
Pablo Cerdas
DeLane Marsh
Thi Tang
Mia Caliri
Mitchelle Cabrera
Jonathan Ramos
Sveva Clay
Sofia Vega
Emil De Veyra
Seth Castellano
Camryn Cox
Ellie McNally

Viola

Shanya Chynwat, principal
Jeremy Mendis
Kelsey Felton
Anthony Couvillion
Rachel Liu
Sarah Shultz
Elizabeth Olson
Caroline Skeels
Ke'Juan Thompson
Cameron Halsell
Andrea San Luis

Cello

Eric Rau, principal
Hyelin Yoo
Ethan Nelsen
Camilo Vasquez
Deohanz Buenafe
Jaya Waugh
Yi Lok Choi#
Olivia Graber#
Nicolas Clark#
Nathan Davis#
Noah Norried°
Rachael Levine°
Ethan Gaskin°
Ashton Gonzales°
Celia Bowen°

Bass

Bryan Dawn, principal
Matthew Luse
Ruben Rodriguez Borges
Cathrine Willis
Brittany Hart
Aiyana Armstrong
Zoe Harris
Garrett Hicks

Flute

Alana Bronson*, piccolo
Di Cao^+
Jiaqi Li, piccolo
Shane Salinas

Oboe

Madison Church
Abigail Espinosa^*+
Connor Rury, English horn

Clarinet

Anna Ferrari*+
Abby Isley
Charlotte MacDonald^
Kyle Norberg

Bassoon

Georgia Clement+
Aaron Lukenbill^*
Donovan Neal

Horn

Sam Himes^+
Sarah Ismail*
Nicole Keller
Benjamin Ruiz
Rebecca Yang

Trumpet

Justin Henke
Jacqueline Hritzo
Tyler Sarver^*
Bradley Swanson+

Trombone

Tyler Coffman^*+
Kyle Roberts

Bass Trombone

Kyle Husby

Tuba

Ji-Woong Hyun

Harp

Gabi Logan^
Zoe O'Shaughnessy+

Timpani

Hayden Rackley

Percussion

Jason Ballard
Ryan Blankenship
Alex Coronado
Ryan Minniear
Caleb Price

#Mussorgsky & Liszt only
° Finzi & Tchaikovsky only
^ Principal on Mussorgsky
* Principal on Liszt
+ Principal on Tchaikovsky

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, Doctoral Conducting Associate/Operations Manager
Jimin Seo, Doctoral Conducting Associate/Personnel Manager

Instrumental Studies & Keyboard Studies (*Adjunct; **Visiting Professor)

Julia Bushkova, violin	John Holt, trumpet
*Eunice Keem, violin	Caleb Hudson, trumpet
Chloé Kiffer, violin	Raquel Rodriguez 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 5, October 19, November 16
Concert Orchestra - October 26, November 30
Baroque Orchestra - October 7, November 19