



# University of North Texas Concert Orchestra

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Clay Couturiaux, conductor

with

Chloé Kiffer, violin

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Wednesday, October 18, 2023  
7:30 pm  
Winspear Hall  
Murchison Performing Arts Center



# PROGRAM

Concerto in G minor for Violin and  
Orchestra, Opus 80 (1912) .....Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)  
I. Allegro maestoso  
II. Andante semplice - Andantino  
III. Allegro molto - Moderato

Chloé Kiffer, violin

--Intermission--

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, "From  
the New World," Opus 95 (1893).....Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)  
I. Adagio - Allegro molto  
II. Largo  
III. Scherzo (Molto vivace - Poco sostenuto)  
IV. Finale (Allegro con fuoco)

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***One hundred sixty-fifth program of the 2023–2024 season  
Photography and videography are prohibited***

# PROGRAM NOTES

Nations are what they sing—or so suggested the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who located the “spirit of the nation” within folk life, as projected in folk songs. Herder’s notions today seem slippery and elusive but, in the nineteenth century, they were widely adopted. This program exemplifies the ways in which two composers grappled with the relationship between Herderian ideas and their own compositional voices. Both Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Antonín Dvořák located Americana not in Appalachian ballads, Puritan psalms, or patriotic marches but in supposed Black and Indigenous melodies. The relationship between hegemonic U.S. culture and those forcibly brought under its governance is fraught. In some ways, these pieces wrestle with this discomfort; in other ways, they obscure it.

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)**

**Concerto in G minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 80 (1912)**

Paradoxically, Herder’s ideas both emboldened and restricted the Black British composer Samuel-Coleridge Taylor. While he was often pressured by others to incorporate Black melodies into his music, he also used them as a form of visibility; Coleridge-Taylor was interested in composing music that could serve as a form of Black dignity. His approach to composition embodied the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, who argued that Black achievement would force racist whites to confront their prejudice. After the success of his cantata *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* (1898), Coleridge-Taylor became an increasingly visible presence in the musical culture of the United States. Coleridge-Taylor amassed immense renown during his career through both his prolific compositions and his work as a conductor. His inspiring legacy is a testament to the power of activism through music.

As requested, Coleridge-Taylor’s first version of the concerto included themes based on Black melodies. Upon reflection, he felt encumbered by this preexisting material and opted to revise the concerto with newly composed themes, saving only the opening cyclical theme. The updated concerto, dedicated to violinist Maude Powell, premiered in Connecticut in 1912, the same year as Coleridge-Taylor’s death from pneumonia at age 37.

The lyrical concerto begins with a stately primary theme in G minor played by the orchestra; while the cyclical melody itself is simple, the harmony is complex and distinguished. When the violin enters, it plays the same theme, embellished with trademarks of violin virtuosity: fast scales, double stops, and rhythmic diminution. Throughout the exposition, the orchestra interjects several times with short announcements of additional themes, lending the movement an air of spontaneity. The start of the development sounds more like a return to home rather than something new: the primary theme is loudly stated in C Major by the complete orchestra. The retransition to the recapitulation sees feats of virtuosity as the violinist quickly navigates double stops rising across the range of the instrument over an orchestral pedal. The primary theme is largely as it was

# PROGRAM NOTES

in the exposition but is followed by an extensive violin cadenza replacing the secondary theme group. The orchestra returns subtly and without much fanfare as the violin continues to revel in its virtuosity, culminating in a fast coda.

The orchestral homophonic texture so characteristic of the first movement also continues at the start of the second—a slow and lyrical movement in B-flat Major which seems to stand outside the passage of time. A series of modulations begin to press the tempo along, breaking the spell of timelessness without hindering the lyricism of the solo instrument. The memorable secondary theme in G Major, first presented by the orchestra and subsequently by the violin, is stately and grand, like that of the primary theme from the opening of the work. In the final section of the movement, the two themes coexist before the opening theme returns for the last time, the violin lifted into the sonic stratosphere.

The final movement, marked *Allegro molto*, begins with a bouncy and nimble theme in G Major. The orchestra takes the reins on the secondary theme before a cadenza-like passage moves the piece toward the development. The orchestra and violin duel before collaborating again. Increasingly insistent rhythms and virtuosity raise the tension before the triumphant recapitulation. The opening theme returns yet again, as do others. Ultimately, a climactic coda rounds off the work.

## **Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)**

### ***Symphony No. 9 in E minor, "From the New World," Opus 95 (1893)***

Like Coleridge-Taylor, the Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák was intensely concerned with the music of a nation other than his own: the United States. When the director of the National Conservatory in New York, Jeannette Thurber, brought Dvořák to the city, she did so with the hope that he would create a distinctly national sound for the United States as he had helped to do for Bohemia. Higher pay was not enough to content him and, in the summer of 1893, he travelled to Spillville, Iowa to live with the Czech-speaking diasporic community there. It was amongst these Bohemian immigrants that he forged his most well-known effort at a national sound for the United States: his Ninth Symphony, entitled "From the New World."

During his time in the United States, Dvořák concluded that Black and Indigenous melodies held the answer to the formation of a national school of composition in the country. In a May 1893 interview for the *New York Herald*, Dvořák spoke:

I am now satisfied...that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called the [African-American] melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States... These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are American.

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Dvořák's extraction and reinterpretation of these melodies is a complicated aspect of his legacy. As post-Civil war backlash curtailed Black freedom again in many places, and vigilante justice was taking an increasingly large, increasingly infamous toll among People of Color, it was radical for Dvořák to recognize Black music as quintessentially of the U. S. On the other hand, in a separate 1893 interview, he suggested that he could reproduce the "spirit" of Black and Indigenous culture, a perspective that today seems naïve and appropriates those communities' voices. The symphony incorporates no spirituals or real indigenous melodies. Instead, Dvořák sought to evoke those melodic styles through his own original themes—a Bohemian interpretation of a Black and Indigenous sound.

The symphony is marked by its unity and its modernity, both tonally and thematically. Themes introduced in the first movement return throughout the work, often in conversation with other melodies; chromatic, dissonant passages abound everywhere. Additionally, the symphony centers around E minor, the key of the first, third, and fourth movements. The first movement opens with a slow adagio which segues into the first theme through quiet, yet tense, string tremolos. The memorable primary theme, first stated proudly in the horns, is built from E minor and C major triads; it is a simple gesture consisting of two arpeggiated chords. With the simplicity of the theme, Dvořák emphasizes folk associations. The first climax comes early, with the primary theme in the trombones and horns, fierce string tremolos, and punctuating trumpets. The orchestra whirls the listener to a rustic transitional theme in G minor, first played by the flute and oboe. The orchestra fragments the melody, passing it around before the solo flute plays the secondary theme supported by a subtle orchestration, a melody reminiscent of the spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." The development features vast ranges of intensity, readily moving between sections of grounded simplicity and rousing climax. This section sees the fragmentation and modulation of the main themes from the exposition, often in solo instruments like the horn, flute, and trumpet. The retransition is seamless, and the movement concludes with a thrilling coda. Gently rocking strings underpin a restful final statement of the secondary theme in the flute, with brass then entering on a bold restatement of the primary theme.

The second movement, marked *Largo*, begins with tonally ambiguous chords that migrate the listener to the distant key of D-flat major. From this ambiguity emerges one of the most famous English horn solos in the repertory. This sentimental and melancholy theme lies at the heart of the tension around the context of the piece—Dvořák himself remarked that the movement would serve as the basis for a vocal composition on the story of Hiawatha, while his sons associated the theme with African American melodies. Regardless, the movement does not rely on a typical symphonic form; instead, it is structured in four discrete rhapsodic sections as if for a story. A second, plaintive melody begins in the oboes before moving to the strings. A fast tune appears in the third section suggesting a jolly dance, an illusion that is shattered when the trombones enter with a brash presentation of the main themes of the symphony. The adagio concludes with a serene reprise of the sweet English horn theme. A subsequent restatement in the strings is broken by poignant silence. Winds bring back the opening chords, with the cellos and basses having the final comforting word.

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The scherzo is also inspired by the story of Hiawatha and, this time, it is a dance; in his own words, Dvořák sought to impart “the local color of Indian character to music.” To evoke the dance scene, he used a scherzo, which is typical for symphonic third movements. The opening theme in E minor is little more than a repeated motive, first stated in the flutes and imitated by clarinets and, later, strings. This anxious theme is supported by a simple staccato chord in the strings. The articulation suggests movement while the static harmony suggests simplicity. In contrast, the interlude is lyrical. This melody, in E Major, begins in the flute and oboe and is accompanied by an understated string section. The theme moves to the cellos before the opening scherzo returns. The scherzo dissolves, and the cello plays an unstable version of the primary theme from the first movement. Next comes the trio, which features a simple folksy theme in C Major and includes a ringing triangle. The opening scherzo then returns again before moving to a coda marked by tremolo strings and the return of the primary theme from the first movement. Fragments of the scherzo theme are treated in counterpoint with the “Swing Low” melody. The movement seems to run out of steam before rebounding with a startling final E minor chord.

The final movement, in sonata form, consists of a succession of folk-inspired melodies. The famous primary theme is the first of many of these folk themes; it erupts from the explosive brass section after a tense introduction. A string statement of this E minor theme segues straight into a dance-like transitional theme marked by triplets. The solo clarinet has the secondary theme, a lyrical melody whose gaps are exploited by a distant, rousing cello that suggests a hunting charge. Even the development is a cornucopia of memorable moments, featuring new melodies as well as themes from the first, second, and final movements. The recapitulation begins with the full orchestra at triple forte—a short-lived outburst with the two main themes in close succession. The orchestra returns to a largely understated passage. The extensive second development marks the final climax of the work. Dvořák here synthesizes several of the themes from throughout the piece, this time all in the Major mode for a striking and uplifting finish.--Chandler Hall under the direction of Bernardo Illari



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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).



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**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 2023–24 season marks Couturiaux's twelfth 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

Karim Ayala Pool ‡  
Marlon Barrios  
Alyssa Hall  
Ella Curb  
Luca Nardelli  
Pablo Cerdas  
Kelly Huang  
Jingwei Zhang  
Ethan Dunn  
Oscar Mata  
Chloe Svadlenka  
Isaiah Vargas

## Violin II

Lucas Furtado ‡  
Yida Hu  
Mitchelle Cabrera  
Julia Oh  
Emil De Veyra  
Sofia Vega  
Evan Collazos  
Juliana Jones  
Seth Castellano  
Emma Swank  
Dylan Garcia  
Josue Tachiquin  
Braeden Boyles  
Zakkary Diserens

## Viola

John Sharp ‡  
Shanya Chynwat  
Samuel Yi  
Isaac Seybold  
Rachel Liu  
Ke'Juan Thompson  
Kate Durham  
Caroline Skeels  
Elizabeth Olson  
Angel De Hoyos  
Johnathan Ramos  
Camryn Bourne  
Anthony Brooks

## Cello

Louis Staton ‡  
Jacob Reed  
Ethan Nelsen  
Deohanz Buenafe  
Jaya Waugh  
Noah Sendir  
Claire Cabral  
Maya Huber  
Ashton Gonzalez  
Ethen Lim  
Zhimai Ma  
Jin Wang

## Bass

Joe Ferris ‡  
Savannah Hilterbrandt  
Josue Reyes  
Catherine Willis  
Riley Hale  
Wyatt Gaugler  
Aiyana Armstrong  
Garrett Hicks  
Zach Seymour

## Flute

Di Cao +  
Seungbeom Oh \*  
Carter Reynolds  
Michael Salm

## Oboe

Madeline Lee \*  
Daniel Moreira  
Ava Raymond +

## Clarinet

Riley Mazziotta  
Kyle Norberg \*  
Wesley Wynn  
Allyson Verret +

## Bassoon

Megan Gober \*  
Donovan Neal +  
Artur Kuchurivskiy

## Horn

Andrew Bennett  
Isaac Fowler  
Haley Ginn \*  
Brandon Kofahl  
Sebastian Ruiz +

## Trumpet

Robert Jones  
Henry Lesser  
Jacaleb Shepard \*  
Joseph Williams +

## Trombone

Timothy Wight \*+  
Thomas Spencer  
Aaron Anderton-Coss

## Tuba

Loghan Runnakko

## Timpani

Devin Brown

## Percussion

Caleb Brown  
Brayden Haslam  
Jack Spelman  
Zeke Strawn  
Adam Surak

‡ Concertmaster

‡ Principal

\* Principal on Coleridge-Taylor

+ Principal on Dvořák

# 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  
Patricio Gutierrez, Doctoral Conducting Associate/Operations Manager  
Qiuxian Lu, Doctoral Conducting Associate/Personnel Manager

## Instrumental Studies & Keyboard Studies (\*Adjunct)

Julia Bushkova, violin  
Chloé Kiffer, violin  
Philip Lewis, violin  
\*Dina Nesterenko, violin  
Susan Dubois, viola  
Daphne Gerling, viola  
Horacio Contreras, cello  
Nikola Ružević, cello  
Jeffrey Bradetich, double bass  
Gudrun Raschen, double bass  
Jaymee Haefner, harp  
Mary Karen Clardy, flute  
Elizabeth McNutt, flute  
Terri Sundberg, flute  
\*Amy Taylor, piccolo  
Jung Choi, oboe  
Daryl Coad, clarinet  
Deb Fabian, clarinet  
Kimberly Cole Luevano, clarinet  
Phillip Paglialonga, clarinet  
\*Gregory Raden, clarinet  
Darrel Hale, bassoon  
Eric Nestler, saxophone  
John Holt, trumpet  
Raquel Samayoa, trumpet

\*Kyle Sherman, trumpet  
Katherine McBain, horn  
Stacie Mickens, horn  
Tony Baker, trombone  
Natalie Mannix, trombone  
Steven Menard, trombone  
David Childs, euphonium  
\*Matthew Good, tuba  
Don Little, tuba  
Quincy Davis, drumset  
\*Stockton Helbing, drumset  
\*Steven Pruitt, drumset  
Mark Ford, percussion  
David Hall, percussion  
Paul Rennick, percussion  
\*Sandi Rennick, percussion  
\*Liudmila Georgievskaya, piano  
Steven Harlos, piano  
Pamela Mia Paul, piano  
Elvia Puccinelli, collaborative piano  
Gustavo Romero, piano  
Vladimir Viardo, piano  
Adam Wodnicki, piano  
Jesse Eschbach, organ

## College of Music Administration

John W. Richmond - Dean  
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