



# University of North Texas Symphony Orchestra

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David Itkin, Conductor

with

Susan Dubois, viola

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Wednesday, October 4, 2023  
7:30 pm

Winspear Hall  
Murchison Performing Arts Center

# PROGRAM

Bonecos de Olinda (2019) .....Clarice Assad (b. 1978)

Viola Concerto (1929) .....William Walton (1902–1983)  
I. Andante comodo  
II. Vivo, con molto preciso  
III. Allegro moderato

Susan Dubois, viola

--Intermission--

Firebird Suite (1910; rev. 1919) .....Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)  
I. Introduction and the Firebird and its Dance  
II. Variations of the Firebird  
III. Round Dance of the Princesses  
IV. Infernal Dance of King Kastchei  
V. Berceuse  
VI. Finale

**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

***Ninety-first program of the 2023–2024 season  
Photography and videography are prohibited***

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Clarice Assad (b. 1978)** ***Bonecos de Olinda* (2019)**

*Bonecos de Olinda* is a lively romp that embodies the bacchanalian atmosphere of the Carnaval do Brasil. Like the festival of Mardi gras, Brazilian Carnival takes place the days immediately preceding Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Lent is a penitential season, and Carnival marks the upcoming change. After all, the festival's name comes from *carne vale*, Latin for "goodbye, meat," and thus reflects the dietary change that some Catholics make during Lent. Carnival marks this farewell through a rousing celebration.

Using rhythms of the frevo and maracatú, two Afro-Brazilian parading dances, the orchestra depicts a convivial and jovial scene as the parade heads through the town of Olinda in northeast Brazil. The bonecos de Olinda, towering figures from which the piece takes its name, march down the street, accompanied by musicians, dancers, and townspeople in a sea of festal fun. Continuing the medieval Iberian tradition of the Corpus Christi giants, the bonecos are hollow; inside, each figure is animated by a dancer.

The form of this accessible work is ABCA, where C is a percussion break that exploits a vast range of percussion instruments: triangle, whip, tam-tam, drumset, toms, djembe, congas, cymbals, woodblocks, and castanets among many others. The piece juxtaposes up-tempo dance-like sections that evoke the crowded streets with slower passages of sweeping strings that may evoke the lumbering bonecos. It builds to a dazzling climax capped off with irreverent brass, rollicking percussion, and piercing winds.

Clarice Assad is a Brazilian-American composer, vocalist, and pianist whose works span (and blend) jazz, classical, and popular styles. Her 2009 composition *Danças Nativas* was nominated for a Grammy Award, and her podcast, VOXPLOATION, provides a platform for artists to share their experiences and perspectives. Assad has collaborated with numerous orchestras, including the Boston Youth Symphony, for which she composed this piece.

## **William Walton (1902–1983)** ***Viola Concerto* (1929)**

Today a staple of the viola repertory, William Walton's *Viola Concerto* drew the attraction of Paul Hindemith, who played viola for the concerto's premiere in 1929. The first performance had its challenges: Walton had initially struggled to find a violist to play the concerto, and during rehearsals, the orchestra was apparently under-rehearsed. Despite these setbacks, the work was praised. A critic for *The Times* reported that the piece reflected a "real and astonishing advance in the composer's development," and despite reservations from Walton's English elders, the concerto remains a favorite of audiences today (quote in Stephen Lloyd's biography of Walton, p. 93).

# PROGRAM NOTES

The three-movement concerto wears its influences on its sleeve. According to Robert Meikle, the layout of a slow opening movement followed by a scherzo and a moderate third movement is borrowed from Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 1*. The template of the first two movements is a structure that Walton also used in his later violin and cello concerti. The beginning of the first movement—in sonata form—is wistful, with two ample, lyrical themes that exploit the full range of the instrument. Here, Walton particularly relishes dark textures. In the development, the viola provides virtuosic ornamentation above the foundational orchestra, which steadily builds to a climax. It is only here that the tutti orchestra displaces the primacy of the melancholic viola. The condensed recapitulation offers a reflection on the entire movement.

The short second movement, marked *Vivo, con molto preciso*, is a modified scherzo in duple meter. The opening theme is quirky and sprightly and embodies the precision referenced in the tempo marking of the movement. At the start, the viola is only lightly supported by the orchestra, but with each restatement of the theme, the orchestration becomes thicker. Like the first movement, the climax occurs midway through, this time with a dense foundation of rapidly repeating chords in the strings topped with a horn call. As the climax fades, the theme returns in the solo viola. The movement soon ends with a final viola flourish and pizzicato strings. The movement incorporates Baroque compositional techniques, including counterpoint, sequences, and motor rhythm. Such retrospection possibly results from the *retour à Bach* ("return to Bach") craze of 1920s Paris.

The third movement continues some of the Bachian techniques found in the second. Additionally, it is rife with homages to other works and composers, including Hindemith, himself a Bach devotee. This sonata-form movement begins with the principal theme of rising fifths in the solo bassoon before moving to the viola as a kind of fugal response. In the development, Walton presents fragments of various themes, giving them brief fugal treatments that culminate in a mighty contrapuntal climax, complete with a pedal point and thematic augmentation. The texture completely buries the solo viola, which reemerges only after the brass fades away, as if to survey the wreckage after a disaster. As in the first movement, the recapitulation is condensed, offering a reminiscence on the movement and the work. The concerto ends in quiet mystery as the solo viola closes in A Major while the orchestra plays A minor.

## **Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)** ***Firebird Suite* (1910; rev. 1919)**

In January 1909, the ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev sat in the audience of a concert that included *Scherzo fantastique*, a short work by an unknown Russian composer named Igor Stravinsky. Diaghilev was impressed by the young Stravinsky's exoticist sound and sought out a collaboration between Stravinsky and Diaghilev's avant-garde ballet company, the Ballets Russes. Because of Stravinsky's relative obscurity, the company was able to provide him with specific instructions to match their vision: a picturesque Russian work designed to enchant and stun the French public. *The Firebird* was a success and brought instant fame for its composer.

# PROGRAM NOTES

Stravinsky composed the music in response to choreographer Mikhail Fokine's innovative approach to storytelling and dance. Rather than a series of separate scenes, the ballet unfolds continuously. Fokine crafted choreography that corresponds to the traits of each character; monsters jump grotesquely, the Firebird floats en pointe, and the princesses engage in folk dance. Stravinsky translated these ideas into his orchestral score, creating a close connection between sight and sound. Stravinsky's use of Russian folk melodies, modal and octatonic scales, and repetitive themes link him to the earlier Russian composers, including Modest Mussorgsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Because of *The Firebird's* success, Diaghilev and Stravinsky continued to collaborate on other ballets, including the less conventional *Petrushka* and the revolutionary *Rite of Spring*; Diaghilev provided the space for Stravinsky to develop his own style.

Despite these other ventures, Stravinsky repeatedly returned to the ever-popular *Firebird*, arranging three orchestral suites derived from the ballet. The ballet is centered around a prince, Ivan, who takes a feather from the Firebird as a gift for a princess held captive by the menacing magician Kastchei. Kastchei attempts to turn Prince Ivan to stone, but the Firebird intercedes, causing the magician to fall asleep. Prince Ivan then destroys the egg containing Kastchei's soul, freeing all of Kastchei's captives. The 1919 suite is arranged into seven elided movements that represent scenes from the story. In the quiet and brooding Introduction, muted brass and chromatic motion in the basses convey the mysterious magic of Kastchei. Prince Ivan makes his way through the forest. The second section is The Firebird's Dance, characterized by the opening tritone between the violins and violas and the quick flurry of sound that follows. A short series of variations depict the Firebird as it dances in front of Kastchei's castle. The notable third movement depicts a slow, modal *khorovod* (round dance) performed by the princesses held captive by Kastchei. A canonic flute prelude leads into the Russian folk song, performed by a solo oboe and accompanied by a dreamy harp. The tranquility of the dance is interrupted by a startling orchestral hit, signaling the start of Kastchei's Infernal Dance, the well-known fifth movement. The Firebird bewitches Kastchei, sending him into a frenzy. The strange-sounding octatonic theme begins ominously in the low brass and becomes increasingly frenetic, a distant harbinger to *Rite of Spring*. The magician uncontrollably dances himself to exhaustion in a whirl of syncopation that borders on frantic chaos. Kastchei and his minions finally fall asleep; the sixth movement depicts a berceuse (lullaby) over a repeating four-note ostinato. The suite concludes with a remarkable and grand finale built from a folk song first introduced by a horn solo. The theme builds in intensity with each repetition, culminating in a jubilant finish as everyone celebrates their freedom from Kastchei's oppression.—*Chandler Hall under the direction of Bernardo Illari*

# BIOGRAPHIES

Hailed by *The Strad* as “an impressive protagonist proclaiming a magnetic, outgoing personality, a lustrous, vibrant tone, and excellent intonation,” violist **Susan Dubois** is considered one of the leading young artist-teachers of viola today. From New York’s Carnegie Hall to Argentina’s Teatro Colón, Dubois has won the hearts of audiences worldwide with her commanding and persuasive performances.



Chosen as the sole viola winner of Artist International’s 23rd Annual Auditions, Dubois was presented in her solo New York Recital Debut at Carnegie Recital Hall. She also was selected as a prizewinner and recitalist at the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition in the United Kingdom. As a member of the jury, Dubois has judged major competitions such as the Corpus Christi International Competition for Piano and Strings and the Primrose International Viola Competition.

Dubois holds a bachelor of music degree, *magna cum laude*, and master of music degree from the University of Southern California where she studied with Donald McInnes. A former teaching assistant of Karen Tuttle at The Juilliard School, Dubois earned the doctor of musical arts degree and was awarded the William Schuman Prize for outstanding achievement and leadership in music.

Dubois has extensive experience as a recitalist and chamber musician, performing and coaching throughout the United States, South America, Australia, Italy and, most recently, Portugal, South Korea and South Africa. She has appeared at music festivals such as Marlboro and La Jolla with such notable artists as Lynn Harrell, David Soyer, David Finkel, Donald Weilerstein, Menahem Pressler, and Atar Arad.

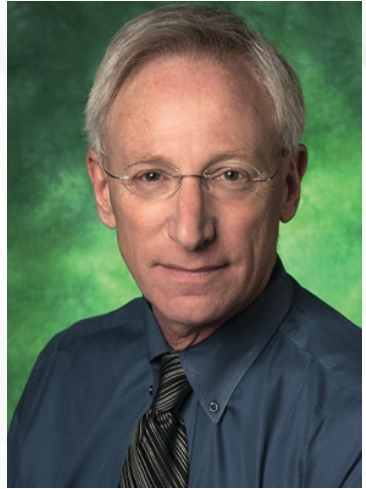
Formerly principal violist of the Dallas Opera Orchestra, Dubois is currently a member of the artist faculty and string-area coordinator at the University of North Texas and serves on the summer faculty of the International Festival Institute at Round Top and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival.



# BIOGRAPHIES

The 2023–2024 season marks **David Itkin's** 19th season as music director and conductor of the Abilene Philharmonic, and his 16th year serving as professor of music and director of orchestral studies at the University of North Texas College of Music.

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.

Following a distinguished 17-year tenure, Maestro Itkin was named conductor laureate of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in July 2010. Previously Mr. Itkin served as music director and conductor of the Las Vegas Philharmonic, artistic director and conductor of the McCall Summerfest in McCall, Idaho, and as music director and conductor of the Lake Forest Symphony (Chicago), Kingsport Symphony, Birmingham Opera Theatre, and Lucius Woods Music Festival (Wisconsin).

His second book, *The Conductor's Craft*, was published in 2021 by GIA Publications, whereupon notable conductors and pedagogues wrote, "a real breakthrough for anyone studying or teaching conducting," "I love this book and will be using it in my studio," and "Bravo to Maestro Itkin." His first book, *Conducting Concerti*, was released in August 2014 to considerable critical acclaim. Leonard Slatkin called *Conducting Concerti* "a valuable textbook for the aspiring Maestro...highly recommended," and Samuel Adler called it "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 any number of Texas all-region Honors Orchestras.

# SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

## Violin I

Hoigum Park †  
André Daniel  
Olivia Dinardis  
Kevork Esmerian  
Keyu Fan  
Qiang (Kevin) Fu  
Ming-Wei Hsieh  
Jui-Chen (Ray) Hsu  
Hyun Jung Kim  
Emma Milian  
Gabriel Parker  
Yelim Seo  
Peng Yi  
Emilia Yoon

## Violin II

Xiachu Song †  
Mia Caliri  
Camryn Cox  
Sardor Djumaev  
Miguel Guillen  
Michael Holtzapple  
Helen Lundy  
DeLane Marsh  
Michelle Martey  
Oscar Morales  
Arsenio Peña  
Thi Tang

## Viola

Brittney Geurink †  
Jianhe Chen  
Anthony Couvillion  
Kelsey Felton  
Cameron Halsell  
Amanda Hamilton  
Jocelyn Kasparek  
RJ McDowell  
Jeremy Mends  
Leonardo Sobral

## Cello

Julia Jiho Choi †  
Eric Rau †  
Tyler Aguiard  
Madeline Dykhousé  
Ethan Gaskin  
Jiapeng Liu  
Xiyun Liu  
Qiaojiannan (Gamma) Ma  
Emily Maher  
Camilo Vasquez  
Hyelin Yoo

## Bass

Zoe Czarnecki †  
Bryan Dawn  
Jacob Hoch  
Kuan-Chieh (Jason) Lo  
Matt Luse  
Han Meng  
Roberto Ramon  
Xuan Xu

## Flute

Taylor Francis #  
Kiana Kawahara  
Hyeyeon Kim  
Alison Parker \*  
Lucy Song +

## Oboe

Kit Hawkins #+  
Hayley Monk  
Hyungju Oh \*

## Clarinet

Anna Ferrari \*  
David Molina #  
Erick Morales +  
Mitchel Sidden

## Bassoon

Keliang Li +  
Aaron Lukenbill  
Samuel Viebrock \*#

## Horn

Justin Beyer  
Daniel Castillon +  
Zachary McKinnon  
Patrick Ring \*#  
Benjamin Ruiz

## Trumpet

David Hall \*+  
McKenna Hill #  
Bradley Swanson  
Abby Ward

## Trombone

Robert Caney  
Benjamin Hahn \*#+  
Patrick Perry

## Tuba

Parker Burkey

## Harp

Maria de Jesus Contreras  
Victoria Gonzalez

## Piano

Chiao-Ju Hung

## Timpani

Jacob Fullinwider

## Percussion

Sophia Lo †  
Luke Gibson  
Aidan Henderson  
Logan Scott

† Concertmaster  
‡ Principal  
‡ Assistant Principal  
\* Principal on Assad  
# Principal on Walton  
+ Principal on Stravinsky