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School of Music

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24
PERFORMANCE
SEASON

M Manhattan
School of Music

MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

Alison Norris, Conductor

Sonya Shin (BM '23), violin

Winner of the 2022–23 Eisenberg–Fried Concerto Competition

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2024 | 7:30 PM
NEIDORFF-KARPATI HALL



**Council on
the Arts**

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We are grateful to the generous donors who made these scholarships possible.

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PROGRAM

ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK III *Fanfare on Amazing Grace*

(BM '65, MM '66, HONDMA '19)

(b. 1941)

Alison Norris, Conductor

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906–1975)

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 77

Nocturne: Moderato

Scherzo: Allegro

Passacaglia: Andante

Burlesque

Sonya Shin (BM '23), violin

Intermission

GUSTAV MAHLER

(1860–1911)

Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor

Trauermarsch (Funeral March)

Stürmisch bewegt

Adagietto

Rondo-Finale

MSM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

Alison Norris, Conductor

VIOLIN 1

Jihyeon Kim,

concertmaster
New York, New York

Grace Chen

Johns Creek, Georgia

Sandra Bouissou

Palo Alto, California

Carlos Martinez

Arroyo
Cabra, Spain

Gayeon Lee

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Tai Po, Hong Kong

Elaine He

Guangzhou, China

Shang-Ting Chang

Pingzhen District, Taiwan

Thierry Neves

Goiania, Brazil

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† GUSTAV MAHLER

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Fanfare on Amazing Grace

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 77

Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor

PROGRAM NOTES

Fanfare on Amazing Grace **Adolphus Hailstork**

Hailstork received his first musical training as a chorister and, after state testing, he received free violin lessons in fourth grade, later switching to piano and organ. He loved to improvise, which led him to composing. His formal composition studies began at Howard University, where he received a Bachelor of Music degree in 1963, followed that summer by studies with Nadia Boulanger in Fontainebleau, France. He earned a second Bachelor's degree in 1965 from Manhattan School of Music, where he also received his Master's degree in 1966. His Master's thesis, *Statement, Variations, and Fugue*, was performed that year by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

During his military service in Germany, Hailstork composed constantly on a piano he had rented and put in the officers' club. Upon his return to the United States he earned his doctorate in 1971 at Michigan State University, where he had also held his first teaching post. He was hired immediately to teach at Youngstown (Ohio) State University, where in 1974 he composed one of his best-known works, *Celebration!*, commissioned by JCPenney in anticipation of the American bicentennial. He taught at Norfolk (Virginia) State College from 1977 until 2000 when he took up his professorship at Old Dominion University (Norfolk), where he is now professor *emeritus*.

Many of Hailstork's works reflect the deep emotional impact of world events, often after a period of years: his *Epitaph* was written eleven years after the 1968 slaying of Martin Luther King, Jr.; his *American Guernica*, which won the Virginia College Band Directors' 1983 national competition, was an anguished response to the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church that killed four young girls; and the origin of his Second Symphony of 1999 was his visit to the dungeons along the coast of Ghana where slaves were held before being shipped to America.

More recently, in 2021, the Harlem Chamber Players premiered Hailstork's *Tulsa* for mezzo-soprano, harp, percussion, and strings, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre, and his requiem cantata in memory of George Floyd, *A Knee on a Neck*, was premiered in 2022 by the National Philharmonic, which also premiered his Fifth Symphony in June 2023. Most recently his large-scale work *JFK: The Last Speech*—a joint commission by the Colorado Music Festival, the Dallas and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestras,

the National Symphony Orchestra, and Amherst College—was premiered at the Colorado Music Festival in July 2023.

Hailstork originally composed his *Fanfare on Amazing Grace* in 2003 for organ, based on the technique of Bach's chorale preludes, which ingeniously weave counterpoint around a sacred hymn tune. Three years later Hailstork arranged the work for the apt scoring of organ and brass quintet, expanding it further in 2011 for the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, which premiered and recorded the piece that year led by JoAnn Falletta. In its most recent version, arranged for band by Master Gunnery Sergeant Don Patterson, the *Fanfare on Amazing Grace* was performed by the United States Marine Band in January 2021 for the inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 77 **Dmitri Shostakovich**

Shostakovich began composing his First Violin Concerto in the summer of 1947 for violinist David Oistrakh, with whom the composer had just performed his Second Piano Trio in May. The two had met in 1935 and developed a friendship several months later while touring Turkey in a delegation of Soviet performing artists. Though Shostakovich completed the Concerto on March 24, 1948, the premiere did not take place until seven years later, in large part because of the severe political blow dealt him that January.

In January 1948, having heard about the condemnation by Zhdanov—the official who dictated cultural policy under Stalin—and the Soviet Union's Central Committee of an opera by Vano Muradeli at the Bolshoy Theater, Shostakovich knew the situation was grave when he was summoned to appear before the Committee. During the lengthy proceedings, six "leading" Soviet composers were censured for precipitating a crisis by composing "formalist" music alien to Soviet art. The Committee's censure resulted in Shostakovich's public admission of his "errors," the blacklisting of his music, and his dismissal from his teaching positions that September.

The Violin Concerto helped to take his mind off the devastating "trial." Shostakovich told his friend Isaak Glikman that he worked on the somber third movement each night after his horrendous sessions with Zhdanov. In March 1948 the composer played the Concerto through to his students, who loved it, but he wisely put off any premiere, recognizing that the work would be considered "formalist." The Concerto was still very much on his mind, however, and in 1952, when he got his first tape recorder, he made a version of the accompaniment for two pianos, eight hands, which he persuaded Oistrakh to record for him.

Finally, when Stalin died in 1953 and Shostakovich could consider bringing out his suppressed works, his mind went immediately to the Violin Concerto, but it seems Oistrakh did not feel ready to play it “effortlessly” until 1955 when he wrote to a friend: “I have come to feel only now that it is a marvelous work; I have fallen in love with it with all my soul.” The premiere on October 29, 1955, with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yevgeniy Mravinsky, met with a wildly enthusiastic response. Oistrakh became the Concerto’s great champion, not only with ensuing performances, but in an article of appreciation that chastised the Union of Composers for ignoring the Concerto.

One of few four-movement concertos, the Violin Concerto might almost be said to contain a fifth movement in the extended cadenza that links the third movement to the fourth. (A similar cadenza in Shostakovich’s First Cello Concerto does indeed constitute a separate movement.) The four-movement plan—slow, fast, slow, fast—alternates the two predominant sides of Shostakovich’s artistic personality, which commentator Kurt Oppens aptly called the “Thinker” and the “Dancer.”

Shostakovich labeled the first movement “Nocturne” in recognition of its dark, rhapsodic qualities. A magical moment comes halfway through when the violin’s muted, high line is colored by harp harmonics and the bell-like tones of the celesta. The music peaks in an intense passage with the violinist playing in double stops, but the whole fades into nocturnal calm with reminders of the ethereal sounds.

The Scherzo dances raucously, providing the greatest imaginable contrast to the ruminations of the first movement. The middle section emanates even more energy, and the return to the opening material escalates the wildness. This is the first movement in which Shostakovich used the motivic shape that soon became his signature: DSCHE (reflecting his name in German nomenclature: D–E–flat–C–B–natural). Though Shostakovich uses this motive transposed throughout, its significance for the future cannot be underestimated—he returned to it famously in his Tenth Symphony, Eighth String Quartet, and Fifteenth Symphony.

Shostakovich cast the weighty third movement in the Baroque form of a passacaglia (a series of variations over a repeating bass line), a form he reserved for his most serious movements in keeping with its tradition as a lament. Later he pointed out to composer Mikhail Myerovich exactly the moment in the score of this movement when Zhdanov’s scathing published attack appeared, notable in that the criticism failed to interrupt Shostakovich’s creative flow. Said Myerovich, “The violin played [sixteenth-notes] before and after it. There was no change evident in the music.”

Unlike most passacaglia composers, Shostakovich begins not with an unadorned bass line, but with the first variation, replete with horn fanfares. The violin does not enter until the third variation, and it is not until the sixth that the passacaglia theme becomes prominent (horns, tuba, low strings, timpani). The theme appears in fortissimo octaves in the solo violin in Variation 7, and in Variation 9 the violin imitates the horn fanfares of the beginning.

The immense cadenza grows out of the dissolution of the passacaglia, its brilliant writing based on music that has gone before. In response to Oistrakh's request for a moment to wipe his brow after the cadenza, Shostakovich provided an orchestral opening for his vigorous finale. The "Dancer" of this movement outdoes himself with the liveliest possible gestures, in which the passacaglia theme returns unexpectedly. The movement closes in an amazing blaze of nonstop motion.

Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor **Gustav Mahler**

Because of his duties as director of the Vienna Opera, Mahler did most of his composing in the summer months. He began his Fifth Symphony in 1901 at his summer place on the edge of Lake Wörth in Maiernigg, where he composed in a studio in the forest far removed from the main house. That summer he probably laid the overall plan for the Symphony and wrote the Scherzo and possibly the first two movements.

Whereas his first four symphonies had reflected his immersion in folk poetry (often pseudo-folk poetry) and song-writing, the Fifth takes a new direction, focusing more on music in the abstract—fueled in part by his studies of Bach's counterpoint. Mahler could never completely divorce himself from his folk-inspired tendencies, however, and certain musical quotations, reminiscences, and extramusical ideas still crept into the Fifth.

In the summer of 1902 Mahler returned to his summer home with his beautiful and pregnant new wife, née Alma Schindler, who was also a musician and composer. Her own composing urges were soon stemmed by her famous husband; she sorrowfully made the decision to support and assist him rather than lose him. Her assistance in this case included copying the music and advising him to make certain cuts in the orchestration, particularly the percussion parts so that more of his carefully created polyphony was audible.

On August 24, two days before leaving for Vienna, Mahler announced to his friends that the Symphony was completed, and the following day led Alma to the

studio where he played it through for her on the piano. He continued to work on the score throughout the year, again thinking he was finished in the fall of 1903. Still dissatisfied, however, he made further revisions after a private run-through with the Vienna Philharmonic and again after the premiere, which he conducted in Cologne on October 18, 1904. He continued to revise the Symphony even to the year he died.

Mahler typically wrestled extensively with overall structural matters such as number and order of movements. Though he had originally talked to his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner about a four-movement symphony, the Fifth in its final form became five movements, grouped into three parts. Part I contains the first and second movements, which share motivic material; the monumental Scherzo stands alone as the middle section; and the fourth and fifth movements form the third section, again on account of their thematic connections. In regard to the tonality of the Symphony as a whole, Mahler preferred not to name one, as it might be misunderstood (though we give a common listing here). The Symphony's carefully considered tonal scheme "narrates" an overall move from C-sharp minor to D major (C-sharp could be considered a leading tone to D).

The opening funeral march contains no romanticized notion of death as in the Fourth Symphony. It was perhaps influenced in some way by Mahler's own brush with death in February 1901 from an intestinal hemorrhage. The trumpet fanfare is one of the last few reminders of Mahler's childhood when calls from barracks and marching bands filled his ears. This fanfare returns at important junctures in the movement. The second theme, played by the violins, bears some relationship to two of Mahler's songs from the same period: the first of the *Kindertotenlieder* (*Songs on the Death of Children*) and "Der Tamboursg'ssell" of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which deals with a drummer boy about to be executed. The movement contains two "trios," one a kind of hysterical outpouring and the second rising to a climax marked "*Klagend*" (lamenting) before the movement disintegrates, as if all its energy had been sapped.

The A minor second movement, which Mahler considered the Symphony's true first movement (with the Trauermarsch as an introduction of sorts), unfolds in sonata form. After a stormy beginning the "second" theme labeled "*Bedeutend langsamer*" (distinctly slower) quotes the second "trio" from the march almost literally. The development builds to fevered anguish, while the recapitulation summons a certain optimism toward the end with a brass "chorale," only to be submerged in hushed scattered fragments. Mahler requested that a long pause be observed before the start of the highly contrasting Scherzo.

Part II consists of Mahler's longest scherzo, one in which his typical sardonic features are held at bay, and which first establishes D major, the key in which the Symphony will end. In a highly sophisticated manner it incorporates elements of the *ländler* (Austrian folk dance in 3/4, precursor of the waltz) in its main theme and more leisurely waltz elements in the two trios. One of the most striking features, perhaps, is the "obligato" part for the first horn, beginning with the opening subject and continuing throughout in a soloistic manner.

The celebrated Adagietto in F major opens Part III, its lyric strains intoned by strings and harp. The expressive weight of this peaceful interlude has given rise to frequent independent performances. Yet in context it serves as an introduction to the Rondo-Finale due to its motivic connections—twice the Adagietto's main theme is heard in the Finale but at a faster tempo. The dreamy world of the Adagietto is that of one of Mahler's Rückert songs, "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" (*I Am Lost to the World*), to which it bears a certain thematic relationship.

The Rondo-Finale begins with a brief introduction given to the winds. The bassoon quotes one of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs, "Lob des hohen Verstandes" (*In Praise of High Intellect*) of 1896, in which a donkey judges the cuckoo a better singer than the nightingale. Mahler's use of it here may reflect the irony of using "learned" contrapuntal devices in an exuberant final movement, or perhaps may refer to the critics, who, like the donkey, were likely to misjudge his Symphony. The Rondo unfolds in a complex display of Mahler's contrapuntal techniques and the aforementioned transformations of the Adagietto material. The crown of this movement, and indeed the Symphony, is the return of the chorale that had tried to assert itself in the second movement.

Success eluded Mahler at the Cologne premiere of the Fifth Symphony. After the first rehearsal of the Scherzo on October 16, 1904, Mahler wrote to Alma:

The Scherzo is the very devil of a movement. I see it is in for a peck of troubles! Conductors for the next fifty years will take it too fast and make nonsense of it, and the public—Oh, heavens, what are they to make of this chaos, of which new worlds are forever being begotten, only to crumble in ruin the next moment? What are they to say to this primeval music, this foaming, roaring, raging sea of sound, to these dancing stars, to these breathtaking iridescent and flashing breakers? ... Oh that I might give my Symphony its first performance fifty years after my death!

His words were right on the mark: it was approximately fifty years after the premiere of his Fifth, particularly with the Mahler centennial year of 1960, that his music began to receive its due on an international scale.

—Program notes ©Jane Vial Jaffe

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

George Manahan (BM '73, MM '76), Conductor

George Manahan is in his 13th season as Director of Orchestral Activities at Manhattan School of Music, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the American Composers Orchestra. He served as Music Director of the New York City Opera for 14 seasons and was hailed for his leadership of the orchestra. He was also Music Director of the Richmond Symphony (VA) for 12 seasons. Recipient of Columbia University's Ditson Conductor's Award, Mr. Manahan was also honored by the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) for his "career-long advocacy for American composers and the music of our time." His Carnegie Hall performance of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was hailed by audiences and critics alike. "The fervent and sensitive performance that Mr. Manahan presided over made the best case for this opera that I have ever encountered," said the *New York Times*.

Mr. Manahan's guest appearances include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Atlanta, San Francisco, Hollywood Bowl, and New Jersey, where he served as acting Music Director for four seasons. He has been a regular guest with the Curtis Institute and the Aspen Music Festival and has appeared with the opera companies of Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Santa Fe, Paris, Sydney, Bologna, St. Louis, the Bergen Festival (Norway), and the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico). His many appearances on television include productions of *La bohème*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Tosca* on PBS. The Live from Lincoln Center telecast of New York City Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, under his direction, won a 2007 Emmy Award.

George Manahan's wide-ranging recording activities include the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Tebillim* for ECM; recordings of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, which was nominated for a Grammy; Joe Jackson's *Will Power*; and Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. He has conducted numerous world premieres, including Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, David Lang's *Modern Painters*, Hans Werner Henze's *The English Cat*, Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, and Terence Blanchard's *Champion*.

He received his formal musical training at Manhattan School of Music, studying conducting with Anton Coppola and George Schick, and was appointed to the faculty of the school upon his graduation, at which time the Juilliard School awarded him a fellowship as Assistant Conductor with the American Opera Center. Mr. Manahan was chosen as the Exxon Arts Endowment Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony the same year he made his opera debut with the Santa Fe Opera, conducting the American premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's *Von Heute auf Morgen*.

Alison Norris, Conductor

Alison Norris is a current orchestral conducting student in the Professional Studies program at Manhattan School of Music, where they study under Maestro George Manahan. Alison serves as cover conductor for the MSM Symphony Orchestra, working alongside conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Daniela Candillari, Matthias Pintscher, and David Chan.

Before moving to New York, Alison served as cover conductor and score reader for several concert series with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, including the Madison Ballet's production of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* and WCO's Concerts on the Square. During their Master's program at University of Wisconsin–Madison, Alison was formally awarded a full scholarship and two TA positions: conductor for the All-University Strings Orchestras program and assistant conductor for the UW Symphony Orchestra. Alison also helped to rebuild the UWSMPH Medical Sciences Orchestra as co-conductor after the ensemble was disbanded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alison got their start in conducting in 2018 when they founded a wind ensemble as an undergraduate engineering student. Following their orchestral conducting debut with the Valparaiso University Symphony Orchestra, Alison was awarded an assistantship with the school upon graduation. Since then, Alison has conducted across China—from Beijing to Xi'an and Guangzhou—premiering to Chinese audiences Sky Macklay's *All About Alice* and the rediscovered Joseph Joachim violin concerto, *Hungarian Fantasy*, with violin soloist and esteemed musicologist Dr. Katharina Uhde.

Sonya Shin (BM '23), violin

Renowned for her "big tone and attractive sound," Korean-Canadian violinist Sonya Shin is a solo performer and chamber musician who has performed with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Chamber Orchestra, and collaborated with the Edmonton Recital Society. Shin received top prizes at the Canadian Music and Shean International Competitions and has participated in festivals worldwide, including Morningside Music Bridge, Casalmaggiore International Music Festival, National Arts Centre-Young Artists Program, Aspen Music Festival, Heifetz International Music Institute, and Keshet Eilon.

Shin received her Bachelor's degree at Manhattan School of Music and is currently pursuing her Master's degree at MSM under the guidance of Mark Steinberg. Former mentors and influences include Nicholas Mann, Patinka Kopec, Shmuel Ashkanasi, Ilya Kaler, and Robert Uchida.

Beyond performances, Shin enjoys teaching privately, and has mentored aspiring musicians by volunteering as an orchestral coach and private teacher at YONA, an after-school program for underprivileged students.

Shin's musical path is sustained by generous scholarships and awards from the Korean Canadian Foundation, Alexandra M. Munn, O'Neill Foundation, Ranald & Vera Shean, Selma W. Berkman Fund, and Winspear Fund.

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