

Chapel Hill Philharmonia

7:30 p.m. May 5, 2019

Moeser Auditorium
Hill Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill

Music Director
Donald L. Oehler

Voluptuous Melodies

España Rhapsody For Orchestra

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)

Double Bass Concerto in F sharp minor, Op. 3

Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951)

Allegro

Tim Rinehart, Double Bass

Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466

Wolfgang Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro

Andy Dai, Piano

Intermission

Symphony in C major ("Great"), D. 944

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Andante — Allegro ma non troppo — Più Moto`

Andante con moto

Scherzo. Allegro vivace — Trio

Finale. Allegro vivace

Please join us after the concert for a reception in the rotunda



This program is supported by the
Orange County Arts Commission.

Voluptuous Melodies

At present, what plays the most important part in composition is the use of
rhythmical shock in contrast to voluptuous melody.

— Arthur Honegger

The 20th century composer Arthur Honegger contrasted “**voluptuous melody**” with the growing barbarity he perceived in many post-Romantic works. This curious phrase recurs in writings that trace back in cultural history to ancient China. Yet, how does such a sexually loaded word as “voluptuous” apply to music, that most abstract of art forms? Perhaps it simply refers to a dynamite tune? However, composer/conductor William C. White, in assembling a Top 10 list of “Harmonic Melodists,” posits that “a melody is nothing without a good...harmonic progression.” Conversely, he contends, “...but what’s the use of a good harmony without a beautiful melody to glide upon it, to argue against it, to define it, to sing it?” When the two elements combine just right in a musical passage such as a Tchaikovsky symphonic theme or a Puccini aria, White avers, “it would take a real cold fish not to get a body high.” This evening’s program by the Chapel Hill Philharmonia features four diverse works, each capable of delivering a sensual charge.

Chabrier: España

As a teenager Emmanuel Chabrier migrated from a small French town to Paris. Family pressure led him to take a law degree and, for nineteen years, to fill a civil service job in the Ministry of the Interior. However, he lived for music. He continued study to become an innovative composer and pianist *extraordinaire*, famous for “playing the piano to within an inch of its life, snapping strings, wrecking keyboards as he pounded away with his stubby fingers.” (actor Simon Callow, *The Guardian*, 27 June, 2003) The same vivacious enthusiasm marked Chabrier’s compositions, indeed his embrace of all the arts. He forged friendships not only with leading composers, but also with cutting-edge poets such as Paul Verlaine and painters such as the impressionist Édouard Manet, whose work he championed and collected. Hearing a performance of Richard Wagner’s opera *Tristan und Isolde* in 1880 moved Chabrier so deeply that he quit his cushy government post to pursue music full-time. Charles Lamoureux, an influential Parisian conductor, hired him as chorus master and accompanist and supported his ambitions as a composer.



Chabrier by Édouard Detaille (1873)

Chabrier’s best known work, the showstopper *España*, grew out of an extended family tour around the Iberian Peninsula in the autumn of 1882. The composer was smitten with the folk and dance music of Spain and Andalusia, especially its unparalleled rhythmic variety. Thus inspired, Chabrier wrote to Lamoureux that on returning to Paris he would compose an “extraordinary fantasia” on Spanish airs. He assured the conductor that this work would incite audience members to a fever pitch, driven by its “**voluptuous melodies**” to join in a “supreme kiss.” Chabrier especially wanted to capture the sensuality of flamenco dancing, gushing admiringly to Lamoureux about the dancers’ beautiful black eyes and hair, and remarking on their motions of head, hands, legs and, at the end, the whole body, with ceaseless gyrations of the hips.

España, which Chabrier conceived first as a piano duo but converted to an orchestral “rhapsody,” lived up to the composer’s promise. The structure is simple: a guitar-like introduction followed by six thematic episodes that derive from or imitate Spanish folk music. The work’s best-known theme evokes the jota, a traditional lively courtship dance in triple time in which the couple hold their arms high and click castanets. Premiered under Lamoureux’s baton in November 1883, *España* proved a spectacular

hit with audiences and with critics and composers such as the Spaniard Manuel de Falla, who admired the authentic character of the French composer's jota, and Gustav Mahler, who once declared, somewhat incongruously, to members of the New York Philharmonic that the piece marked "the start of modern music."

Callow delights in *España's* "prancing, crazy, cheeky energy and provocative wit...It charms you with its strumming pizzicatos, gurgling bassoons and caressing strings, only to blast you out of your seat with thundering trombones and horns; it sweeps you up in a blowzy, hot-diggity tarantella that disappears as soon as it arrives, leaving you with delicate, twitching touches of catgut and tambourine before the final brassy assault. This is an ode to joy, but not of a Beethovenian kind: *España* celebrates pure *joie de vivre* [joy of living]." Dick Manning and A. Hoffman caught the explicit overtones of Chabrier's work, setting lyrics to the jota tune in a pop song introduced by Perry Como in 1956: "Oh hot diggity, dog ziggety, boom what you do to me...When you're holding me tight."

Koussevitzky: Double Bass Concerto



**Serge Koussevitzky with
double bass**

American fans of classical music, especially New Englanders, recall Serge Koussevitzky as Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) and a main figure in the development of Tanglewood as the BSO's summer home and education center. Leon Botstein, Music Director of the American Symphony Orchestra and President of Bard College, pays tribute to Koussevitzky as a "legendary and charismatic figure." Botstein cites the conductor's inspirational mentorship of several generations of students at Tanglewood, beginning with Leonard Bernstein, his best-known protégé. Most importantly, Botstein adds, "no one could rival Koussevitzky in his support of new music through the act of commissioning new works," a tradition he began at the BSO and which was sustained posthumously by the Koussevitzky Foundation, which he created in 1942.

Born in Russia to a Jewish family of professional musicians, Koussevitzky was admitted at age fourteen to a conservatory in Moscow and focused on the double bass, the largest string instrument. He became the principal bassist of the Bolshoi Theater orchestra in 1901. He also sought to become one of the rarest (and deepest-voiced) of musical birds, a bass soloist. After a move to Berlin in 1905, Koussevitzky's ambition expanded in another direction. He studied conducting under Arthur Nickisch, the director of both the Berlin Philharmonic and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Koussevitzky made his professional conducting debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1908. He returned to Moscow the next year and founded both his own orchestra and a music publishing firm specializing in the

works of Russia's top composers. In 1920, three years after the Russian Revolution, Koussevitzky again migrated westward. He organized a series of concerts in Paris that showcased leading *avant garde* composers. In 1924 he became conductor of the BSO, his primary position for the next quarter century.

As a double bass soloist Koussevitzky faced a dearth of available repertoire. To fill the gap, he transcribed many works for his instrument such as Wolfgang Mozart's *Bassoon Concerto*. In 1902 he composed an original work, the ***Double Bass Concerto in F sharp minor***, Op. 3, and first performed it in 1905 with the Moscow Philharmonic. Koussevitzky dedicated the concerto to Natalie Ouchkoff, his second wife, whom he married in the same year. Tim Rinehart, co-winner of the Chapel Hill Philharmonia's 2019 Young Artist Concerto Competition, performs the opening section (Allegro) of the piece, which was composed as a single movement but divided into three segments (A-B-A') that roughly correspond to traditional concerto structure.

The Koussevitzky *Double Bass Concerto* is remarkable for its melodic lyricism and the way in which it channels turn-of-the-20th century Romanticism to align with the special timbre of the double bass. Gary Karr, perhaps the greatest soloist on that instrument of the past century, believes that Koussevitzky's Concerto "reflects his search for the yet unrevealed dimension of the double bass." Karr quotes the composer's widow Olga (Natalie's younger cousin, who Koussevitzky married after Natalie died in 1942) on Koussevitzky's musical aspiration: "he likened the inner voice of the sound of the strings to cords of the natural instrument—the human voice. Listening to the great singers of his day, trying to imitate their vocal art, he was not merely

playing on a string instrument, he was singing through the voice of the double bass.” (*Saturday Review*, July 1954) Writers seeking to describe the Concerto’s impact invoke a common theme. In the work’s depth and sonic richness composer Anne Lauber finds “an amazingly honest reflection of a *passion* that speaks directly from the heart.” Musicologist Faubion Bowers notes “a timeless universality in the melodrama of its *passion* and the soaring beauty of its tunes.” Koussevitzky’s **voluptuous melodies** thus elevate his signature composition from a showpiece for his chosen instrument to a universal emotional plane.

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 20

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is commonly portrayed as “the divine mystery, the incomparable freak of nature embodied in an impish and vulgar child, who wrote masterpieces before he was ten but was perpetually misunderstood, who was hounded by neglect to a pauper’s grave.” (composer Jan Swafford, *The Vintage Guide to Classical Music*) This legend may be seductive, “but,” cautions Swafford, “almost none of it is true.” Certainly, Mozart’s precocity brought him fame as a small child. Their father Leopold Mozart exploited Wolfgang and his comparably talented older sister Nannerl, shepherding them on lucrative peregrinations to perform for European royalty. Only after establishing independence from the dual yoke of Leopold and their common employer, Prince-Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg, did Wolfgang escape sniping suggestions that he was a mere “trained monkey.” Dismissed from the Archbishop’s service with a kick in the rear, at age twenty-five Mozart set up shop in Vienna as a freelance musician. Over the next decade, despite periodic financial crises, he matured into a great composer. Swafford points out that with the success of *The Magic Flute*, his final stage project, Mozart “was on the verge, in his mid-thirties, of real prosperity” when a sudden illness took his life.

Mozart obtained much of his income in Vienna through subscription concerts that showcased his virtuosity and new compositions. He produced the **Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor** for just such an “academy,” held on February 11, 1785. Leopold arrived that afternoon for a ten-week visit. He reported to Nannerl: “There was a vast concourse of people of rank... The concert was incomparable; the orchestra was excellent.” Leopold found his son’s new piano concerto “superb.” Others agreed.

The *Piano Concerto No. 20* follows the usual structural conventions of its time: a generally fast opening movement (marked Allegro) in sonata form; a slower middle movement (Romance); and a brilliant finale (Rondo: Allegro assai). This evening our piano soloist, sixteen-year-old Andy Dai, will play the first movement.

Though still bounded by constraints of the Classical era, Mozart’s concerto appeals particularly to those who gravitate to Romantic music. (It also seems consistently to elicit purple prose from program annotators.) The orchestra opens with an agitated murmur of syncopated violins and violas over rumblings in the lower strings, punctuated by, in the words of Janet Bedell (Carnegie Hall), “lightning bolts in a storm-filled black sky... Woodwinds introduce the second theme... anxiously questioning how to escape this terror. Ultimately, the violins close the orchestral exposition with a poignant melody, pleading for mercy.” The piano enters, initially seeming to calm the tempest. However, it “refuses to be woven into the symphonic fabric; throughout the movement it plays in defiant opposition to the orchestra, making full use of its entire range.” (James Keller, San Francisco Symphony) Yet the storm music returns and, in a long cadenza, the piano too becomes embroiled in turbulence. “The tempests eventually recede in a pianissimo [very quiet passage] fascinatingly seasoned with the distant thud of drums and the curiously and hauntingly hollow low tones of the trumpets.” (Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener’s Guide*)

Analysts note the special significance of Mozart’s choice of key for the concerto. He rarely employed D minor, but invariably used it to evoke deep emotions as in the *Requiem*, his unfinished final work. The composer Oliver Messiaen comments, “The first movement of the concerto... is in the same key and the same style as the first scene of [Mozart’s tragic opera] *Don Giovanni*—the same anguish weighs down its themes, the same flashes shine in the night (those of Don Giovanni’s sword against the tombs of the cemetery, those of Donna Anna’s imprecations, even those of the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*).”

The comparison of the concerto to, arguably, Mozart’s two greatest operas is telling. As *New York Times* music critic Anthony Tommasini once noted, Mozart “was a theater man at heart.” While other giants of the Classical era, notably Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven, were first and foremost masters of motivic development based on small building blocks, Mozart naturally gravitated to arias, even in his concerti and other orchestral works.

2019 Chapel Hill Philharmonia Young Artist Concerto Competition Winners



Tim Rinehart is a junior at Chapel Hill High School. Now 16 years-old, he began playing piano at age 5 and double bass at 11. He studies with Leonid Finkelshteyn, Principal Bass of the North Carolina Symphony. In 2017 he performed the Dragonetti Bass Concerto with the Duke Youth Symphony. Currently, he is a semi-finalist in the International Society of Bassists Competition. Tim was principal bass of the North Carolina All-State Honors Orchestra in 2017-2018. In 2018 he played in the All-National Honor Ensembles Symphony Orchestra and the Eastern Music Festival. This summer he will perform in New York and Europe with the National Youth Orchestra. Tim doubles as a jazz bassist, studying improvisation with Jason Foureman and playing in the Triangle Youth Jazz Ensemble. His academic interests include math and science. He is the founding president of his school's Rubik's Cubing Club.



Andy Dai, age 16, is a sophomore at East Chapel Hill High School. He began piano studies at age 5 with Julia Yu and Zena Ilyashov in Missouri. Since moving to North Carolina in 2015, Andy's teachers have included Greg McCallum and Margaret Evan. He currently studies with Teddy Robie. Andy has received awards in numerous competitions including first prizes in the UNC-School of the Arts Classical Competition and the East Carolina University Young Artist Competition, and first prize and lyrical award in the Nakarai/Withers Piano Competition, along with multiple top prizes from the Music Teachers National Association and the Steinway Jr. Competition. In 2016 as a winner of the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition, he performed in the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Andy's extra-musical interests include science, reading, and video games.

It is not surprising that among Mozart's twenty-seven original piano concertos many subsequent performers considered No. 20 the best. Beethoven, who moved to Vienna soon after Mozart's death and established his reputation as a piano virtuoso, performed this concerto frequently. He contributed a powerful cadenza, as Mozart's own had been lost. Andy Dai follows tradition in playing Beethoven's cadenza, which embellishes the work's operatic **voluptuous melodies**.

Schubert: Symphony in C major ("Great")

If Mozart was a theater man, Franz Schubert was the archetypal song man. From adolescence to his death at age 31, Schubert produced over 600 *lieder* (art songs). Encomia such as this from the classical music radio announcer Gregg Whiteside laud the composer's best-known talent: "His unmatched gift for lyricism makes him so approachable, so comprehensible...Franz Schubert was, beyond all question in my mind, the most fertile and original melodist that ever lived." Yet, throughout his brief existence Schubert subsisted in relative obscurity.

A native of Vienna, where his father was a parish schoolmaster, the young Franz won a spot as a boy mezzo-soprano in the select choir of the imperial chapel. This entitled him to a place at the Imperial and Royal City College, among Vienna's best boarding schools. He also played violin in the College's student orchestra and took composition lessons from Antonio Salieri, the Austrian court's music director. Schubert's voice broke at 15, ending his days as a choirboy. By the next year he opted to follow the footsteps of his father and two older brothers into the education profession. Yet, he found time for biweekly lessons with Salieri and composed music at a feverish rate.

Schubert's 18th year marked an extraordinary transition. "In the autumn of 1814, after a promising but unspectacular adolescence, [he] exploded into a burst of creative activity that over the next 15 months was virtually unrivalled in the history of Western music." (Robert Winter, *Grove Music Online*) Schubert produced more than one song every three days. Some of the finest were settings of poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, an icon of German culture. These ranged from Schubert's first masterpiece "Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel," conveying a woman's despair over a lost love, to "The Erl-King," which "bring[s] astonishingly vivid and frantic life to a father, his feverish son and the figure of Death." (Robert Winter) By the end of his teens, Schubert had produced over 300 solo songs, seven string quartets, and five symphonies. However, none of his works had

been performed publicly in Vienna and all remained unpublished. An unprepossessing bespectacled, pudgy figure, standing at most 5 feet-1 inch tall, Schubert also departed from the norm for musical “stars,” like Mozart and Beethoven, in lacking virtuosic skill. He was an indifferent performer of his own ambitious piano sonatas and never composed a concerto.

As he established greater independence in his early 20s, Schubert's songs and piano compositions gained public admiration and significant revenue from publication. He left his father's school and home and assumed a Bohemian existence, sharing lodging with various friends. His intimate circle included more poets and painters than musicians. They reveled in salon evenings known as Schubertiades in which the composer would hold forth from the keyboard. Pianist/author David Dubal notes the significance of these events: “Franz Schubert's songs and small piano pieces, with their lyrical melodies and poignant harmonies, mark him as the first truly sensuously romantic musician.”



Julius Schmid, *Schubertiade*, 1896

While he continued to compose with unprecedented speed, Schubert also displayed a side very different from the “popular, but distorted, perception of...a simple, charmingly wistful figure” who created folk-like melodies intuitively, almost effortlessly. (Christopher Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert*) Contrary to this sentimental view, Schubert was a sophisticated, innovative composer who worked diligently at his craft. At another level, Gibbs observes, “It is intriguing to see how some in his circle felt that Schubert had a ‘dual nature,’ possessed ‘a black-winged demon of sorrow and melancholy,’ was a ‘hedonist’ who indulged in sensual living.” Gibbs contrasts the naïve, engaging “Schwammerl” (little mushroom—the pet name used by his friends) with a deeply spiritual man who, nevertheless, drank heavily and was beset by “profound loneliness, and a craving for intimacy” that led him to indulge in sexual excesses. The dichotomy sheds light on the emotional range of Schubert's music. His dark side became more pronounced after Schubert fell ill in late 1822 with syphilis, Vienna's scourge. Symptoms of the disease waxed and waned over his final six years.

During an episode of relatively robust health in the summer of 1825, Schubert vacationed for six weeks at the scenic towns Gmunden, set by rock cliffs and the swan-inhabited Lake Truan, and Gastein, featuring spas and mountain waterfalls. In these idyllic settings he sketched out the ***Symphony in C major*** (D. 944), conceived a year earlier, his final completed work in the genre. It acquired the nickname “Great” to distinguish it from an earlier symphony in the same key. In 1826 Schubert sent it to Vienna's Society of Music Friends with a dedication, hoping to entice a premiere by the organization's orchestra. However, the symphony's length and challenging parts discouraged the Society from undertaking a performance. Like many of Schubert's instrumental works, it was never played publicly in his lifetime.

In 1838, a decade after Schubert's death, the composer Robert Schumann rescued the Great C major Symphony from obscurity. After paying homage at the graves of Beethoven and Schubert in Vienna, Schumann decided to visit Ferdinand Schubert, knowing him to possess many of his younger brother Franz's unpublished works. Ferdinand brought forth from a polished black chest the autograph manuscript of the symphony. Schumann immediately recognized its unique grandeur: “It transports us into a world where I cannot recall ever having been before.” He transmitted the music to Felix Mendelssohn, Music Director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, who conducted the first performance, albeit with significant cuts, in March 1839. Over time orchestras and audiences came to share Schumann's appreciation of the symphony's “heavenly length, like a novel in four volumes.” Depending on choices of tempi and repeats, the four movements can take up to an hour to perform.

The first movement begins with a spacious melody sung softly by two French horns. To John Reed, this opening is a “primordial hymn...to the glory of the natural world...Nobody who has heard the notes of the traditional alpenhorn echoing round the mountain valleys can doubt where Schubert found the inspiration for ‘the horns of Elfland faintly blowing’ which so magically illumine the first movement.” The introductory section “swells with dam-bursting energy to lead into the first movement proper.”

(Thomas May, Kennedy Center program notes) The symphony's extraordinary rhythmic vigor, now revealed, is reminiscent of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*. Schubert creates myriad variations of his song-like melodies, playing off winds against strings, changing volume, contrasting and overlapping triplet and dotted ($3/4 + 1/4$) rhythms. He brings back a fragment of the introduction in the trombones, used in this symphony as never before, "whose timbre plays a prominent role in the sound picture. That brief idea acquires an ominous power in the transformations of the development, seeding the way for the return of the entire opening horn theme in the coda—one of the symphony's great breakthrough moments which imparts the sense of a journey traveled." (May)

The second movement opens as a march, in A minor, first enunciated by a solo oboe. Donald Tovey finds it a "heart-breaking show of spirit in adversity." However, to Michael Steinberg (*The Symphony: A Listener's Guide*) the passage suggests "the subtly seductive dance of a young Romany woman." A violin theme adds a new lyric element, before a horn call prepares the oboe's return. The march escalates to "culminate in a crisis so shocking that its only possible consequence is dead silence. Then the cellos pick up the musical thread with a song of deep pathos." (Steinberg)

The Scherzo, like that of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, premiered one year before Schubert began this work, expands beyond usual classical models to full sonata form. Again, rhythmic energy and rich variation propel the movement forward. "The A major Trio suddenly opens up an entirely new vista and adds to the sense of expansiveness." (May)

The Finale raises the C major Symphony's rhythmic intensity to a new level. From the beginning fanfare forward, Schubert "spins out...a whirlwind of wild energy." Then, the opening "chapter conclude[s] with a bang and a silence. Four notes played by two horns in unison [calling to mind the work's opening "hymn"] start the motor up again." (Steinberg) The development section, led by two clarinets, opens with a clear allusion to the choral theme of the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth, "The Ode to Joy." As the movement drives to its conclusion, the four notes of the transitional horn call "assume titanic power." Schubert displays "astounding capacity for drastic, shattering climaxes...In the coda, it takes all the exuberant and positive energy that has been built up in the course of the symphony to keep [the] four-note summons, huge and terrible, from blowing the work apart." (Steinberg)

With his Great C major Symphony Schubert unabashedly strives to produce a work of the same grandeur as Beethoven's final symphony. Even in his very first symphony (in D major, D. 82), argues biographer Stephen Jackson (*Franz Schubert: An Essential Guide to His Life and Works*), the young composer already shows potential to create "sheer sound [that] is...inimitably **voluptuous**." His vaunted gift for song goes beyond mere tune spinning. "The melodic line is not self-supporting, but glows through the figures and harmonies with which it is associated, their rhythmic agitations and developing emotional suggestion." These features, posits Jackson, make the Great C major unique: "In all its moods—serene, bucolic, or in the exhilarated *perpetuum mobile* of its finale — this is a symphony brought to life by song; but a song of grander breadth, sonorous power and sustained fervor than could be heard before or since."

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