The concerto has been a popular form of musical composition for hundreds of years! As music has changed, so has the concerto. *What is a Concerto?* explores the evolution of the concerto through different musical eras and across different instruments. The lessons and activities in this guide provide a brief overview of what you’ll hear in the concert and equip you to listen at your best!

Students can use the activities in this mini-guide to prepare for viewing the DSO’s accompanying “virtual” ECS performance, a compilation of previously recorded pieces curated for educational purposes during the shutdown. The concert will air on Facebook Live and DSO.org and be publicly available after on YouTube and the DSO’s streaming service, DSO Replay.
Virtual Educational Concert Series:
WHAT IS A CONCERTO?

Concert Program

Simone Young, *conductor*
Carlos Miguel Prieto, *conductor*
Andrey Boreyko, *conductor*

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)
Concerto for Two Horns in E-flat Major
III. Rondeau: Allegretto
   Karl Pituch, *horn*
   Johanna Yarbrough, *horn*

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 77
III. Allegro giocoso - Poco più presto
   Christian Tetzlaff, *violin*

Gabriel Prokofiev
(b. 1975)
Saxophone Concerto
IV. Allegro mechanico
   Branford Marsalis, *alto saxophone*
# Detroit Symphony Orchestra

**LEONARD SLATKIN**, Music Director Laureate
Music Directorship endowed by the Kresge Foundation

**JEFF TYZIK**
Principal Pops Conductor

**TERENCE BLANCHARD**
Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Jazz Creative Director Chair

**NEEME JÄRVI**
Music Director Emeritus

## First Violin
- Kimberly Kalyanides
- Kennedy
- **INTERIM CONCERTMASTER**
- Katherine Tuck Chair
- Hail Xin Wu
- **INTERIM ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER**
- Schwartz Shapero Family Chair
- Jennifer Wei Fang
- **ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER**
- Walter C. Gisler/Detroit Edison Foundation Chair
- Marguerite Deslippe*
- Laurie Goldman*
- Rachel Harding Klaus*
- Eun Park Lee*
- Adrienne Rönmark*
- Laura Soto*
- Greg Staples*
- Jiamin Wang*
- Mingzhao Zhou*
- Yoosunin Song—**CONCERTMASTER**

## Second Violin
- Adam Stepnowski
- Acting Principal
- The Devereaux Family Chair
- Will Haapaniemi*
- David and Valerie医科大学 Chair
- Hae Jeong Hei Han*
- David and Valerie医科大学 Chair
- Sheryl Hwangbo*
- Suji Lim*
- Hong-Yi Mo*
- Alexandros Sakarłatlos*
- Drs. Doris Tong and Yeok Soon Chair
- Joseph Striplin*
- Marian Tanaka*
- Jing Zhang*
- Open, **PRINCIPAL**

## Viola
- **PRINCIPAL**
- Eric Nowlin, Principal
- Julie and Ed Levy, Jr. Chair
- James Van Valkenburg
- Assistant Principal
- Caroline Coade
- Glenn Mellow
- Hang Su
- Shanda Lowery-Sachs
- Pat Hoffman
- Han Zheng
- Mike Chen

## Cello
- **PRINCIPAL**
- Wei Yu
- James C. Gordon Chair
- Abraham Fedor
- Assistant Principal
- Dorothy and Herbert Graebner Chair
- Robert Bergman*
- Jeremy Crosner*
- David LeDoux*
- Peter McCaffrey*
- Joanne Danto and Arnold Weingarden Chair
- Haden McKay*
- Una O'Riordan*
- Mary Ann and Robert Gorlin Chair
- Paul Wingert*
- Victor and Gale Girolami Chair
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Kevin Brown, Principal
- Van Deusen Family Chair
- Stephen Molina
- Assistant Principal
- Linton Bodwin
- Stephen Edwards
- Christopher Hamlen
- Nicholas Myers
- **PRINCIPAL**
- Patricia Masre-Fletcher
- Winfred E. Polk Chair

## Flute
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Sharon Sparrow
- Bernard and Eleanor Robertson Chair
- Amanda Blaikie
- Morton and Britgie Harris Chair
- Jeffery Zook
- Open, **PRINCIPAL**
- Women's Association for the DSO Chair

## Piccolo
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Jeffery Zook

## Oboe
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Alexander Kimmonth
- Jack A. and Ariva Robinson Chair
- Sarah Lewis
- Maggie Miller Chair
- Monica Fosnaugh
- Open, **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

## English Horn
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Monica Fosnaugh
- Shari and Craig Morgan Chair

## Clarinet
- **PRINCIPAL**
- Ralph Skiano
- Robert B. Semple Chair
- Jack Walters
- PVC Chemicals Inc./Jim and Ann Nicholson Chair
- Laurence Liberson
- Assistant Principal
- Shannon Orme

## E-Flat Clarinet
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Laurence Liberson

## Bassoon
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Robert Williams, Principal
- Victoria King
- Michael Ke Ma
- Assistant Principal
- Marcus Schoon

## Contrabassoon
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Marcus Schoon

## Horn
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Karl Pituch, Principal
- Johanna Yarbrough
- Scott Strong
- Bryan Kennedy
- David Everson
- Assistant Principal
- Mark Abbott

## Trumpet
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Hunter Eberly, Principal
- Lee and Floy Barthel Chair
- Kevin Good
- Stephen Anderson
- Assistant Principal
- William Lucas
- Michael Gause
- African-American Orchestra Fellow

## Trombone
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Kenneth Thompson, Principal
- David Binder
- Randall Hawes

## Bass Trombone
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Randall Hawes

## Tuba
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Dennis Nulty

## Percussion
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Joseph Becker
- Ruth Roby and Alfred R. Glancy III Chair
- Andréas Pichardo-Rosenthal
- Assistant Principal
- William Cody Knolley Chair
- James Ritchie

## Timpani
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Jeremy Epp
- Richard and Mona Alonzo Chair
- James Ritchie

## Librarians
- Robert Stiles, Principal
- Ethan Allen

## Personnel Managers
- Heather Hart Rochon
- Director of Orchestra Personnel
- Patrick Peterson
- Manager of Orchestra Personnel

## Stage Personnel
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**
- Dennis Rettell
- Ryan DeMarco
- Department Head
- Noel Keesee
- Department Head
- Steven Kemp
- Department Head
- Matthew Pons
- Department Head
- Michael Sarkissian
- Department Head

## Legend
- * These members may voluntarily revolve seating within the section on a regular basis
- — Leave of absence

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![Diagram of Orchestra Seating]

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# IAMDSO
A concerto (pronounced con-cher-to) is a genre of musical composition that features an orchestra and one or more solo instruments. There are two plural forms of “concerto”: “concerti” and “concertos.”

Concerti evolved into their present form around the middle of the 18th Century, during the Classical period of music. Just like the symphony (another popular genre of the Classical era), the concerto is written in multiple movements, with each movement named after its tempo (speed). However, while symphonies often have four movements (following a fast-slow-dance-fast pattern), concerti usually have three movements (following a fast-slow-fast) pattern.

Both the orchestra and the soloist play in every movement. Composers use this soloist/orchestra structure in a variety of ways to develop musical themes. The three main methods are:

Alternation: the soloist and orchestra playing back-and-forth to develop a theme
Competition: the soloist and orchestra “compete” to develop different themes
Combination: the soloist and orchestra play at the same time and develop a theme together

Composers typically use all three of these methods in some way in a concerto. Here is a way to picture how alternation, competition, and combination work:

• Picture two friends playing with a baseball. They start by throwing the ball back and forth in a game of catch. They’re working together, but only one friend at a time is tossing the ball. This is just like alternation in a concerto: the orchestra and soloist “toss” a theme back and forth to each other!

• Then, they grab a second ball and both start pitching to see who can throw better. One friend pitches a fastball and one friend pitches a curveball, which move very differently. This is just like competition in a concerto: the orchestra and soloist are each “pitching” completely different themes and trying to see whose theme is better!
• Finally, the two friends grab a baseball bat. One friend pitches while the other friend swings, and they want to see how far the batter can hit the ball. In order to hit the ball as far as possible, the pitcher must throw well and the batter must swing well. This is like combination in a concerto: the soloist and orchestra work together to develop a theme!

Composers can use these methods to develop themes in symphonies and other compositions as well, but they’re particularly easy to pick out in concerti because of the soloist.

**Reflect:** How do composers develop musical themes in a concerto?

**Make Connections:** Are there any other activities you can think of that use alternation, competition, and combination?

**Note:** Words in **bold** are defined in the Glossary on Page 12!
ACTIVITY 1
Understanding Concerti

Sort the following traits into the Venn Diagram below. Which are only in a symphony, which are only in a concerto, and which are in both?

Below are the titles (taken from each movement’s tempo) for the Haydn and Brahms concerti appearing in the performance. Use context clues and what you’ve learned about concerti to try to match the Italian titles of each movement with their English meanings!

**Concerto for Two Horns in E-flat Major**
Franz Joseph Haydn
I. Allegro maestoso
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto

“Slow, with expression”
“Moderately fast”
“Majestically fast”

**Concerto for Violin and Orchestra**
Johannes Brahms
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Adagio
III. Allegro giocoso - Poco più presto

“Joyfully fast, then a little bit faster”
“Fast, but not too fast”
“Slow, with expression”

Challenge: Gabriel Prokofiev is a present-day composer. Like many modern composers, he doesn’t follow all the typical traits of a concerto and includes four movements instead of three. See if you can match his four movement titles to their English meanings!

**Saxophone Concerto**
Gabriel Prokofiev
I. Largo - Molto pesante (alla hip-hop)
II. Scherzo
III. Largo mesto
IV. Allegro mechanico

“Dance, with a joking quality”
“Slow, with expression”
“Slow and stately, then very heavy (like hip-hop)”
“Slow, with sadness”
Many concerti are very hard to play for the featured soloist. As a result, they are often performed by top-level musicians. A highly skilled musician is called a **virtuoso**.

Several famous composers were also virtuoso performers. Many would compose concerti to explore just how difficult of a piece they could write and still manage to play! Some of the most popular concerti today are a result of virtuoso composers, such as Nicolò Paganini and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

**Make Connections:** Can you think of anyone alive today who you would consider to be a virtuoso in music or another area?

Nicolò Paganini (1782-1840) was a violin virtuoso and one of Europe’s most famous musicians during his lifetime. He also composed extensively for the violin, including in the concerto form. His violin concerti are still famous today for their very high difficulty.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) was a piano virtuoso, composer, and conductor. Rachmaninoff had famously large hands that allowed him to make easy jumps between far-away keys on the piano. He often included such jumps in his piano music!

Below are videos of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra performing Paganini’s Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major and Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody* isn’t a true concerto (it only has one, continuous movement) but it features a piano soloist and orchestra and is based on the theme from Paganini’s Caprice No. 24, a very fast and challenging piece often played by violin virtuosos!

**CHECK IT OUT:**
Nicolò Paganini
Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major
https://bit.ly/3glxj7c

**CHECK IT OUT:**
Sergei Rachmaninoff
*Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
https://bit.ly/3glxj7c

**Reflect:** What did you notice that was similar or different between the two pieces or performances?

**Make Connections:** Did you notice the soloists and orchestra using alternation, competition, or combination to develop their themes?
ACTIVITY 2
Becoming a Virtuoso

You don’t become a virtuoso, a star athlete, or a world famous scientist overnight. Hard work matters much more than talent when it comes to being the best at something. The musicians in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra are all top-level performers, but any of them will tell you that they still practice for several hours every day! Much of that practice isn’t even playing the fun parts of a piece of music; instead, it’s dedicated to working on basic skills like scales and tuning.

Pick an activity you enjoy doing. What sort of steps do you think you would have to take to become a virtuoso at it? The can be steps you could start now or steps you would take much later. Brainstorm them below!

Activity: __________________________

Step 1: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

Step 2: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

Step 3: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

Now pick a person who you think is a virtuoso or expert at something. Do some research on them and write down three things they did (or still do) to become a virtuoso. Are they similar in any way to the steps you brainstormed?

Virtuoso: __________________________

Activity: __________________________

Step 1: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

Step 2: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________

Step 3: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________
Franz Joseph Haydn and Johannes Brahms, two of the three composers whose music you’ll hear in the concert, were very important composers in their lifetimes. Each was one of the key composers of their musical era, when a certain style of musical composition was most common.

Musical eras (also called “musical periods”) aren’t perfectly defined. Often, they overlapped with each other as groups of composers developed certain techniques and trends in their music. Some of these composers whose styles shifted over time are grouped with multiple musical eras.

For example, Ludwig van Beethoven, one of the most famous composers in history, is usually considered part of the late Classical Era as well as part of the early Romantic Era. His music shares many traits with other Classical Era composers, but his innovations also guided the development of early Romantic music.

Franz Joseph Haydn and the Classical Era
Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was one of the most important composers of the Classical Era. Classical Era music is recognizable for its clear, simple forms and strong melodies. It’s easy to hum along to many Classical Era pieces; you probably would recognize a few if you heard them!

Haydn himself was nicknamed the “Father of the Symphony” and the “Father of the String Quartet” for helping develop both genres of composition during his lifetime. Haydn strongly influenced all composers of symphonies and string quartets who followed him.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fast Facts: The Classical Era</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timespan:</strong> The mid-1700s until the early 1800s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preceded by:</strong> Baroque Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Followed by:</strong> Romantic Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Popular composition genres:</strong> symphony, trio, string quartet, sonata, concerto, art song (for vocalist and piano), opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some key composers:</strong> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Joseph Haydn, Antonio Salieri, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Johannes Brahms and the Romantic Era
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was a key composer in the late Romantic Era. Romantic Era music differs from earlier Classical Era music by its added complexity. Romantic Era composers tried to break down the structures of previous musical eras by experimenting with musical forms and the possibilities of melody and harmony.

As a result of all this experimentation, Romantic Era music is very diverse. Romantic composers used a huge variety of techniques and structures, so music by one Romantic composer might sound completely different from music by another! Instead of technique, Romantic music is tied together by how it expresses emotions and ideas.

Romantic composers drew on many new sources of inspiration, including emotions, nationalism, nature, mythology, and the supernatural. Romantic music could be either programmatic (music that tells a story) or absolute (pure music without a specific story). Brahms favored absolute music and often used structures in his music that were very similar to composers of the Classical Era. However, the emotions and ideas expressed through his music are strongly Romantic.

Fast Facts:
The Romantic Era

Timespan: The early 1800s until the early 1900s  
Preceded by: Classical Era  
Followed by: Modernist Era  
Popular composition genres: symphony, tone poem, étude, concerto, art song (for vocalist and piano), song cycle, opera, suite  
Some key composers: (early) Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Felix Mendelssohn; (late) Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Antonin Dvořák, Richard Strauss

Reflect: Which listed composers and genres are part of both the Classical and Romantic periods?
ACTIVITY 3
Compare and Contrast

Time to give your ears some exercise! **Give a listen to excerpts of the four pieces below. Then, write down your observations about how they are similar or different.** To help, you may want to research a little bit about each piece or composer to see what inspired them!

**Classical Era**

CHECK IT OUT:
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Symphony No. 41 "Jupiter"
(excerpt)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b65B8TVN05Y

CHECK IT OUT:
Franz Joseph Haydn
Symphony No. 44 "Trauersinfonie,"
Mov. IV Presto
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w97yo2jHv-I&t=1080s

**Romantic Era**

CHECK IT OUT:
Hector Berlioz
Symphonie Fantastique,
Mov. IV Marche au supplice
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b65B8TVN05Y

CHECK IT OUT:
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
1812 Overture
(excerpt)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4MFx1ry6uY

**Question 1**
In what ways are the two Classical Era pieces like each other?

________________________________________________________________________________

**Question 2**
In what ways are the two Romantic Era pieces like each other?

________________________________________________________________________________

**Question 3**
In what ways are the Classical Era pieces similar or different from the Romantic Era pieces?

________________________________________________________________________________

Once you have written down some observations of your own, head to Page 10 to compare your answers with some answers we came up with!
ACTIVITY 3

Possible Answers

Question 1
• Both pieces maintain a strict form and solid tempo.
• The harmonies aren’t very dense, and the melody is easy to pick out.
• The melodies sit mainly in the strings.
• Despite the nicknames “Jupiter” and “Trauer” (mourning), neither composer designated a specific theme to each piece.
• “Jupiter” sounds lighter and happier than “Trauer,” which sounds darker and more intense.
• The orchestra seems slightly bigger in “Trauer” than “Jupiter.”

Question 2
• Both pieces have dense harmonies and complex melodies.
• The melodies shift around the orchestra.
• Both pieces have very clear inspirations that come through in the work (Berlioz’s terrifying dream and Russia’s defense against Napoleon’s military invasion).
• The pieces express clear emotion, though the emotions are different: terror in Symphonie Fantastique and triumph in 1812 Overture.

Question 3
• Both Romantic pieces, especially Berlioz’s, focus more on free melodic development than on form/structure like the Classical pieces.
• The orchestras look very different: the Classical Era composers wrote for much smaller ensembles (especially the percussion section!).
• You can hum along to melodies in both the Classical and Romantic Era pieces, but the Classical pieces are lighter and easier to pick apart melodies from harmonies.

These are only a few examples of similarities or differences you may have noticed. Did you notice anything that isn’t on our list?

Writing Extension:
Relating to Yourself

How did the music from each era make you feel? Was there one era you connected with more than another? In a five-sentence paragraph, explain which era or piece you connected with the most and why.
Terms in order of use

**Concerto:** A concert work for one or more soloists and an orchestra, usually in three movements following a “fast-slow-fast” pattern.

**Symphony:** A concert work for an orchestra, usually in four movements following a “fast-slow-dance-fast” pattern.

**Movement:** A distinct section of a piece of concert music following a specific structure, key, and/or tempo.

**Tempo:** The speed at which music is played. Usually, tempos are written in Italian.

**Musical Theme:** An easily recognizable musical phrase that a listener associates with a specific character, place, or idea.

**Alternation:** A method in a concerto where the soloist(s) and orchestra alternate a theme back and forth.

**Competition:** A method in a concerto where the soloist(s) and orchestra develop separate themes against one another.

**Combination:** A method in a concerto where the soloist(s) and orchestra develop a theme together.

**Virtuoso:** A person who is highly skilled in music or another art form.

**Scale:** A progression of musical notes in a certain musical key or mode. Example: the C Major scale.

**Tuning:** The process a musician uses to make sure the pitches on their instrument are correct.

**Additional terms**

**Melody:** A sequence of musical notes that a listener can identify as a musical idea.

**Harmony:** Musical notes played at the same time to create chords. Harmonies can be pleasant or unpleasant to hear, depending on which notes are used.

**Rhythm:** The pattern of notes in music.