

Minnesota Orchestra
 Matthew Halls, conductor
 Alban Gerhardt, cello

Friday, January 13, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
 Saturday, January 14, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Adolphus Hailstork	<i>Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed (In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.)</i>	ca. 10'
Robert Schumann	Concerto in A minor for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 129 Nicht zu schnell Langsam Sehr lebhaft <i>Alban Gerhardt, cello</i>	ca. 26'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Felix Mendelssohn	Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 56, <i>Scottish</i> Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato Vivace non troppo Adagio Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai	ca. 43'

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.



Matthew Halls, conductor

British conductor Matthew Halls, who in September 2022 was named chief conductor designate of Finland's Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, is welcomed this week for his debut with the Minnesota Orchestra. This season he also debuts with the Orchestre de chambre de Paris and continues his longstanding partnerships with the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Houston Symphony and Indianapolis Symphony. He is a frequent guest conductor of orchestras around the world, including the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, Iceland Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony and Wiener Symphoniker. In addition, he led the U.S. premiere of James MacMillan's Fourth Symphony

with the Pittsburgh Symphony. He also has extensive experience conducting choirs and opera companies to great critical acclaim, with his operatic credits ranging from Handel's *Ariodante* to Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. His discography includes Bach's harpsichord concertos conducted from the keyboard, Bach's *Easter* and *Ascension* oratorios, and the premiere recording of Handel's *Parnasso in Festa*, which garnered the Stanley Sadie Handel Prize. More: askonasholt.com.



Alban Gerhardt, cello

German cellist Alban Gerhardt enjoys a dynamic career as a leading soloist and chamber musician. Since his 1991 debut with the Berlin Philharmonic, he has performed with many of the

world's leading orchestras, including European ensembles such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Zürich Tonhalle Orchestra and Orchestre National de France, as well as all the British and German radio orchestras, and American ensembles including the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra. He last appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra in November 2019 in the U.S. premiere of Brett Dean's Cello Concerto, which he had earlier premiered with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Among the many other new works he has championed is Julian Anderson's Cello Concerto, which he premiered in February 2020 with the Orchestre National de France. His acclaimed discography includes two recent albums for Hyperion Records: the complete Bach solo suites and Shostakovich's Cello Concertos, the latter of which was awarded the International Classical Music Award in 2021. More: harrisonparrott.com, albangerhardt.com.

one-minute note

Hailstork: *Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed (In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.)*

Eleven years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Adolphus Hailstork memorialized him in a work that speaks to the tragedy of Dr. King's death and the world's response to it through complicated harmonies and layers of musical symbolism. The conclusion is an urgent call, symbolic of Dr. King's life's work—a call for us to answer today.

Schumann: Cello Concerto

Distinctive for the sheer beauty of its content, this concerto represents Schumann's lyricism at its best. Three movements flow without pause as the music's mood changes from the sweeping passions of the opening to the brightness of the finale.

Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 3, *Scottish*

"I am going to Scotland, with a rake for folksongs, an ear for the lovely fragrant countryside, and a heart for the bare legs of the natives," wrote Mendelssohn shortly after his 21st birthday. The ruins of Holyrood Castle, which he explored on his first day in Edinburgh, inspired a new symphony. There is nothing concretely Scottish in the score; the nickname was derived from references in Mendelssohn's correspondence.



Adolphus Hailstork

Born: April 17, 1941,
Rochester, New York

Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed (In memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr. 1929-1968)

Premiered: January 17, 1980

In 1968, Adolphus Hailstork was only 26 years old and just beginning his musical career when he, with the rest of the world, witnessed the aftermath of the assassination of a great man, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—who himself was just 39 when he became the victim of that fatal, heinous, racist hate crime. The bullets that took his great life still echo today in a country where guns are being sold with ever-fiercer intensity and paranoia. In 1979, 11 years after Dr. King’s assassination, Hailstork composed the quietly powerful *Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed*, subtitled *In memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)*. In subtle ways, this work crystalizes Dr. King’s message as well as certain bittersweet aspects of his short-yet-significant life.

homages through music

Throughout Dr. Hailstork’s illustrious career, his music has commented on various socio-political situations and paid homage to some of history’s most important people. His opera *Rise for Freedom* concerns the Underground Railroad, and his monumental *Set Me On a Rock* for chorus and orchestra illuminates the tragic destruction of Hurricane Katrina. His career is very much active in 2023, and just last year saw the premiere of his choral-orchestral piece *A Knee on the Neck*, composed in memory of George Floyd. Hailstork also set text by Dr. King in his 1992 song cycle *Songs of Love and Justice*. A graduate of Michigan State University, the Manhattan School of Music, the American Institute at Fontainebleau and Howard University, he studied composition with H. Owen Reed, Mark Fax and Nadia Boulanger. He is currently a professor of music and composer in residence at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

layers of symbolism

Three elements come to the fore when listeners first encounter *Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed*: a minimal darkness, dense and complex harmonies, and a gripping conclusion. The darkness directly corresponds to the tragedy of Dr. King’s death and what the world underwent in the years immediately following that tragedy. The complicated harmonies mirror the social uprisings

that plagued the world after 1968, as well as the slew of assassinations of great leaders fighting for social equality that ensued. The conclusion is an urgent call, symbolic of Dr. King’s life’s work—a call that has yet to be answered.

Further musical examination elucidates Hailstork’s mastery of musical symbolism, and this mastery firmly belongs to the foundation of this powerful symphonic tribute. *Epitaph* begins with a harmony that could have been a recognizable E-minor chord. Yet Hailstork adds one note that disrupts any possible familiarity. Further still, if Hailstork had added this note in a higher register, then the resulting chord may have referenced harmonies easily found in popular Black musical genres—jazz, spirituals, rock, blues, gospel, R&B and more. In Hailstork’s hands, however, this disruptive pitch is at the lowest position of the opening chord, turning the introductory musical moment into a foreshadowing or an acknowledgment of a life disrupted.

In the melody that follows, the distances between many of the notes, known as musical intervals, fall into categories of special importance: minor thirds, tritones and perfect fourths. Many Negro Spirituals use a set of notes that form the minor five-note pentatonic scale. If notes one and two are played together, a minor third interval sounds; if notes one and three are played together, a perfect fourth interval sounds. In the context of the classical tradition, the tritone is an interval that is problematic and must be handled in a very specific way. In traditional Black musical forms, the upper note of the tritone is a note that is referred to as “blue”—yet it is the note that arguably contains the most amount of emotional tension within the context of Black musical expression. Creating a melody that highlights these intervals within a classical context is solidly an acknowledgement of Black tradition and its role in not only Dr. King’s life but also in the life of the composer. It is truly a musical statement of solidarity, as well as a point of connection between the 38-year-old Hailstork and the great Dr. King, who died at 39.

The final symbol in *Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed* is one that was true in 1979 and is still true today. Daniel Kidane’s monumental vocal and symphonic work *Dream Song* (2018), which sets excerpts from Dr. King’s *I Have a Dream* speech, also contains this unfortunate reality pill. Although *Epitaph* begins by hinting at an E-minor harmony, the journey of the music sinks just a little lower, down to E-flat minor, and screams this chord with urgency in the final moments. This harmonic sinking is representative of where we are as humanity today. One of Dr. King’s favorite songs was *We Shall Overcome*, whose bittersweet text gives hope but does not give certainty. The way history has unfolded after Dr. King’s death indicates that Dr. King’s message has sunk rather than risen. We have not yet overcome, but maybe we shall. Someday.



up to us

Epitaph for a Man who Dreamed was premiered in January 1980 by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under conductor William Henry Curry. The first word in its title comes from the Greek *epi* (upon) and *taphos* (tomb). Upon Dr. King's tombstone are the final words from his August 1963 *I Have a Dream* speech: "Free at last, free at last! Thank God almighty I'm free at last." Dr. King's death freed him from the troubles of this world, as the famous spiritual *Soon Ah Will Be Done* also recalls. It is up to us, those who are living today and who will be present in the future, to turn Dr. King's dream into a reality.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 sets of chimes offstage, harp and strings

Program note by **Anthony R. Green**.



Robert Schumann
Born: June 8, 1810,
 Zwickau, Germany
Died: July 29, 1856,
 Bonn, Germany

Concerto in A minor for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 129
Premiered: June 9, 1860

September 1, 1850, was the date the Schumanns—Robert, Clara and six children—moved to Düsseldorf after six unhappy years in Dresden. Actually, Dresden was a lively musical center, not least because of Wagner's presence there until 1849, but the Schumanns found it personally and artistically stultifying.

the Schumanns in Düsseldorf

Düsseldorf, where Robert was to become municipal music director, had a reputation as a conductor-eating town, but he badly wanted an orchestra of his own, and he was willing to give Düsseldorf a try. He arrived at his new Rhineland home in high spirits, and the Düsseldorfers did everything they could to make their new music director feel welcome, unleashing an exhausting round of speeches, serenades, celebratory concerts, banquets and balls.

But contentment was brief. Clara worried about social standards, especially "the breezy, unconstrained conduct of the women, who at times surely transgress the barriers of femininity and decency....

Marital life is more in the easy-going French style." (All she could do about the women was to avoid them.) Both Robert and Clara were distressed by the noisiness of their first apartment, although a Rhine excursion at the end of the month and a move to quieter quarters helped.

Through all this turmoil, Robert's creative energies were not to be suppressed: in just 15 October days he composed his Cello Concerto, and in what remained of 1850 and in 1851 he wrote the *Rhenish* Symphony, revised his D-minor Symphony into what he considered its definitive form (Symphony No. 4), and wrote two violin sonatas, the *Märchenbilder* for viola and piano, two substantial cantatas and several overtures on literary themes. The day he finished the Cello Concerto he conducted the first of his ten subscription concerts. Clara was his soloist in Felix Mendelssohn's G-minor Piano Concerto, and, except that Robert was miffed because she got more attention than he did, it went well.

Nonetheless, it soon became inescapably clear that Robert was unequal to his new position, and in October 1852 he was asked to resign. The matter was smoothed over temporarily, but a year later he had conducted his last concert in Düsseldorf. Always subject to depression, he threw himself into the Rhine on February 27, 1854. This suicide attempt was not his first. He was rescued and committed into Dr. Richarz's hospital at Endenich, where he died two and a half years later.

a "wholly ravishing" concerto

Schumann's Cello Concerto planted the seeds for the revival of a genre that had gone dormant for decades. No major composer had contributed a cello concerto of importance to the Western classical music repertoire since composer-cellist Luigi Boccherini's beautiful examples of the 1780s.

Clara Schumann was delighted by the Cello Concerto. "It pleases me very much and seems to me to be written in true violoncello style," she noted in her diary on November 16, 1850. The following October she wrote: "I have played Robert's Violoncello Concerto through again, thus giving myself a truly musical and happy hour. The romantic quality, the vivacity, the freshness and humor, also the highly interesting interweaving of violoncello and orchestra are indeed wholly ravishing, and what euphony and deep feeling one finds in all the melodic passages!" Robert, on the other hand, seems to have had reservations: he canceled plans for a performance in the spring of 1852 and he did not send it to Breitkopf & Härtel, his Leipzig publisher, until 1854. In fact, the first performance was posthumous, given by Ludwig Ebert at the Leipzig Conservatory on June 9, 1860, at a concert in honor of what would have been the composer's 50th birthday.

the music: passion, lyricism and a swift finale

In the Cello Concerto, each movement is linked to the next, and the middle one, even while it blooms in gloriously expressive song, has something of the character of a bridge or an intermezzo.

nicht zu schnell (not too fast). Like his Piano Concerto, Schumann's Cello Concerto has no opening tutti—a standard concerto's extended introduction for the orchestra without the soloist—but only a brief but striking gesture that introduces the soloist right away: the three rising chords for woodwinds, each accented by pizzicato strings. Quiet though it is, it suggests the opening of a theater curtain, and the performer who stands revealed is an inspired singer who gives us an expansive and constantly developing melody. Here is Schumann at his most personal, his most poignantly vulnerable. Only when this lyric utterance is done does the orchestra ground the music with a vigorous and impassioned paragraph. Clearly, though, Schumann means this to be the cellist's day, and the soloist returns with another lyric and exploring song, one of great range and full of wide intervals. A brilliant passage in triplets ends the exposition. The development is a kind of contest between virtuoso display and lyricism, and the chugging triplets are constantly interrupted—almost rebuked, it seems—by reappearances of parts of the opening melody in ever more distant and mysterious keys.

langsam (slow). After the recapitulation, the opening wind chords return, now heard from a deeply strange harmonic perspective. This time, the cello responds not with its first melody, but with a brief transition that gently sets the music down in F major. The slow movement has begun, and Schumann gives us a new melody, one full of melancholy downward curves. Like a chorus of sympathetic mourners, woodwinds echo the ends of the phrases. The accompaniment is notable, for along with neutral pizzicato chords we hear a soft countermelody played by another solo cello.

sehr lebhaft (very lively). After the urgent recitative that forms the bridge into the finale, Schumann gives us a more swift-moving music than any we have yet heard in the piece. Unfortunately, it is likely to sound not brilliant but just damnably difficult. Schumann relies much on sequences, and it takes a special mix of planning and spontaneity to bring out the energy in this music. (The 1953 Prades Festival recording by Pablo Casals and Eugene Ormandy shows wonderfully what can be done.) The drooping two-note phrases from the slow movement are often heard in the background.

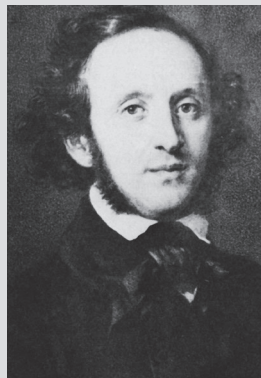
Schumann moves into the coda by way of an accompanied cadenza (an inspiration to Elgar and perhaps also to Schoenberg and Walton in their violin concertos). Many famous cellists, among them Casals, Piatigorsky and Starker, all of whom should have known better, have struck out 32 measures of

Schumann's music at this point and substituted grandly rhetorical unaccompanied cadenzas of their own.

But Schumann was right: in the last moments of this finale, which is so difficult to move purposefully forward, it is important not to bring everything to a halt but to keep the momentum going, as Schumann does with his in-tempo cadenza. When he emerges from this episode, one of the concerto's most original and effective, Schumann shifts metric gears, going from 2/4 into a still peppier 6/8, a device Brahms found worth imitating, and often.

Instrumentation: solo cello with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program note excerpted from the late Michael Steinberg's The Concerto: A Listener's Guide (Oxford University Press, 1998), used with permission.



Felix Mendelssohn

Born: February 3, 1809,
Hamburg, Germany

Died: November 4, 1847,
Leipzig, Germany

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Opus 56, Scottish

Premiered: March 3, 1842

felix Mendelssohn made his first visit to England in 1829 at the age of 20, and after a successful stay in London, he set off with his friend Karly Klingemann on a walking tour of Scotland that would lead him to compose two pieces. The first was the *Fingal's Cave* Overture, inspired by a stormy trip to the misty Hebrides Islands, but the creation of the Scottish Symphony proved more complex. Mendelssohn claimed to have had the original idea for this music during a visit to the ruined Holyrood Chapel in Edinburgh: "In the evening twilight we went today to the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved....The chapel close to it is now roofless, grass and ivy grow there, and at that broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. I believe I today found in that old chapel the beginning of my 'Scottish' Symphony."

a misnamed symphony?

Mendelssohn may have been precise about the inspiration for this music, but he was in no hurry to write it—not until 13 years after his trip to Scotland did he finish this symphony. Although

Mendelssohn referred to the music as his *Scottish* Symphony, no one is sure what this nickname means. The music tells no tale, and it quotes no Scottish tunes. In fact, Mendelssohn loathed folk music, once stating: “No national music for me! Now I am in Wales and, dear me, a harper sits in the hall of every reputed inn, incessantly playing so-called national melodies; that is to say, the most infamous, vulgar, out-of-tune trash, with a hurdygurdy going on at the same time. It’s maddening, and has given me a toothache already.”

If one did not know that it carried the nickname *Scottish*, there would be little in Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 3 to suggest anything distinctively Scottish. Amusingly, Mendelssohn’s friend Robert Schumann once wrote a review of the score under the impression he was writing about Mendelssohn’s *Italian* Symphony. So convinced was he of the Italian-ness of the music that he singled out for praise its “beautiful Italian pictures, so beautiful as to compensate a hearer who had never been to Italy.”

a unifying “chapel theme”

andante con moto–allegro un poco agitato. The four movements of this symphony, played without pause, are unified around the somber opening melody—the theme inspired by the visit to Holyrood Chapel—which appears in quite different forms throughout. Played by winds and divided violas, it opens the slow introduction; when the music leaps ahead at the *Allegro un poco agitato*, the violins’ main theme is simply a variation of the slow introduction. The first movement alternates a nervous quality with moments of silky calm, and all of these moods are built from that same material. A tempestuous climax trails off into quiet, and Mendelssohn brings back part of the introduction as a bridge to the second movement.

vivace non troppo; adagio. Mendelssohn was famous for his scherzos, and the second movement of this symphony, marked *Vivace non troppo*, is one of his finest. Throughout, there is a sense of rustling motion—the music’s boundless energy keeps it pushing forward at every instant. Solo clarinet has the swirling first theme, and some have identified this tune’s extra final accent as the “Scottish snap.” The scherzo rushes to its quiet close and proceeds directly into an *Adagio* that the late Michael Steinberg notes “alternates a sentiment-drenched melody with stern episodes of march character.”

allegro vivacissimo–allegro maestoso assai. Out of the quiet conclusion of the third movement, the finale explodes. Marked *Allegro vivacissimo*, this movement is full of fire and excitement, beginning with the violins’ dancing, dotted opening idea. Along the way Mendelssohn incorporates a second theme, derived once again from the symphony’s introduction, and here Mendelssohn

springs a surprise: back comes the simple melody that opened the symphony, but now it has acquired an unexpected nobility. That once-simple melody gathers its strength and drives the symphony to its energetic conclusion.

Many regard the *Scottish* Symphony as Mendelssohn’s finest orchestral work, but no one can explain that nickname satisfactorily. Rather than searching for the sound of gathering clans or hearing bits of Scottish folk tunes, it may be simplest to regard this as a work inspired by one specific Scottish impression, which then evolved ingeniously into an entire symphony.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program notes by Eric Bromberger.