

## Minnesota Orchestra

Michael Francis, conductor

Johannes Moser, cello

Thursday, March 16, 2023, 11 am | Orchestra Hall

Friday, March 17, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

<b>Ludwig van Beethoven/</b> ed. Rainer Cadenbach	<i>Grosse Fuge</i> in B-flat major, Opus 133	ca. 17'
<b>Dmitri Shostakovich</b>	Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat major for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 107 Allegretto Moderato Cadenza Allegro con moto [The final three movements are played without pause.] <i>Johannes Moser, cello</i>	ca. 28'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
<b>Jessie Montgomery</b>	<i>Strum</i>	ca. 7'
<b>Wolfgang Amadè Mozart</b>	Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551, <i>Jupiter</i> Adagio - Allegro molto Largo Molto vivace Allegro con fuoco	ca. 37'

## pre-concert

Pre-concert Performance by Duo Avila

Thursday, March 16, 10:15 am, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer

Friday, March 17, 7:15 pm, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer

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.





**Michael Francis**, conductor

British conductor Michael Francis has quickly established himself internationally as one of today's leading conductors. Appointed music director of the Florida Orchestra in 2014, he is now in the eighth season of a contract that has been extended through the 2024-25 season. He has also served as music director of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego since 2014 and is in his fourth season as chief conductor of Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. This week's concerts mark the second time Francis has collaborated with the Minnesota Orchestra and a cello soloist; in his 2018 debut here, he led Daniel Müller-Schott in Schumann's Cello Concerto. This season he also returns to the Cincinnati Symphony, Toronto

Symphony and London Philharmonia. Highlights of previous seasons include engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic and NHK Symphony, among many other top ensembles around the world. Francis is passionate about sharing the hidden truths in music with audiences worldwide through his acclaimed podium talks. His discography will soon expand with a cycle of Mahler's symphonies and overtures recorded with the Staatsphilharmonie. More: [arabella-arts.com](http://arabella-arts.com), [michaelfrancisconductor.com](http://michaelfrancisconductor.com).



**Johannes Moser**, cello

Acclaimed as one of his generation's finest virtuoso cellists, German-Canadian

Johannes Moser has performed with the world's leading orchestras such as the Berlin, New York and Los Angeles philharmonics, the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, the London and Chicago symphonies, the BBC Philharmonic at the Proms and Tokyo's NHK Symphony. His Minnesota Orchestra debut came in March 2019, when he performed Lutosławski's Cello Concerto. Highlights of his current season include a tour with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields; engagements with the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Orchestre National d'Ile de France, Atlanta Symphony, Nashville Symphony Orchestra and numerous other orchestras; and a tour with his chamber trio partners: pianist Andrei Korobeinikov and violinist Vadim Gluzman. His discography has been recognized with prestigious honors such as the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik and the Diapason d'Or. Recently he has been heavily involved in commissioning works by composers Jelena Firsowa, Johannes Kalitzke, Andrew Norman, Thomas Agerfeld Olesen, Ellen Reid and Julia Wolfe. A committed educator, he holds a professorship at the Cologne Hochschule fuer Musik und Tanz. More: [askonasholt.com](http://askonasholt.com), [johannes-moser.com](http://johannes-moser.com).

### one-minute notes

#### Beethoven/Cadenbach: *Grosse Fuge*

Heard here in a string-orchestra expansion of the original string quartet version, Beethoven's *Great Fugue* is full of surprises and contradictions, with dissonant counterpoint, complex rhythms and unexpected silences giving way to powerful moments of clarity.

#### Shostakovich: *Cello Concerto No. 1*

A thread of darkness runs through this concerto, which begins with nervous energy underscored by rumbling contrabassoon. The *Moderato* draws on a plaintive Jewish folk tune; a lengthy cadenza leads to a ferocious *Allegro*.

#### Montgomery: *Strum*

Originally conceived for string quintet, this contemporary work for string orchestra, according to the composer, draws on "American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement" and "has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration."

#### Mozart: *Symphony No. 41, Jupiter*

Mozart wrote his last symphony when he was destitute, yet it is a work of Olympian grandeur, with lyrical and martial themes, turbulent and gentle subjects—and a spectacular contrapuntal finale.



## Ludwig van Beethoven

**Born:** December 15, 1770,  
Bonn, Germany

**Died:** March 26, 1827,  
Vienna, Austria

### ***Grosse Fuge* (Great Fugue) in B-flat major, Opus 133, arranged for String Orchestra by Rainer Cadenbach**

**Premiered:** March 21, 1826  
(original string quartet version)

After completing his Ninth Symphony early in 1824, Ludwig van Beethoven devoted the rest of his life to composing string quartets. He had been exploring ways of breaking away from the standard three- and four-movement design for sonatas and quartets, and his Quartet in B-flat, Opus 130, is a most adventurous such piece. It is in six movements, the first, expansive one being followed by four shorter, exceedingly diverse character pieces. The sequence is then capped by an uncompromisingly difficult, dissonant fugal finale that accounts for more than a third of the length of the entire quartet—and that finale has found fame as a standalone work called *Grosse Fuge* (Great Fugue) and given the Opus number 133.

Some early listeners had been excited, exalted by the fugue; more were bewildered. Some professionals called it incomprehensible. Beethoven himself seems to have had some doubts, for he was eventually talked into writing, late in 1826, a new finale for his Opus 130 quartet in his most amiable, noncontroversial vein. What Beethoven doubted about the fugue—or at least what he was persuaded to question—was its appropriateness as a finale. It was published as a separate work for string quartet (Opus 133), and Beethoven himself wrote an arrangement for piano four-hands, a setting both illuminating and exceedingly difficult (Opus 134).

### Beethoven's greatest fugue

The title pages of each of these versions describe them as “Great Fugue, in part free, in part worked.” The beginning, which Beethoven calls *Overtura*, is as “free” as can be: here is music of extreme disjunction, its gestures separated by unmeasured silences, and in its 30 measures changing tempo twice and character more often than that. Beethoven hurls scraps of material about, all related to what has been heard earlier in the quartet, and it is up to the rest of the piece to demonstrate the coherence of what is presented here in so violently dissociated a manner. After five beginnings, the fugue proper, the “worked” part, gets under way. It is a double fugue, the theme of the *Overtura*

played by the violas, the first violins adding a leaping figure of ungainly and totally captivating energy. Beethoven develops this music in a series of variations of growing rhythmic and textural complexity, unrelieved in ferocious energy, bold without limits in harmony. There is a softer interlude, from which leaps forth a new movement, quicker than anything we have heard so far. The disjunctions and the violence of the leaps also surpass anything we have encountered up to this point, with interruptions and reappearances of earlier passages, both sometimes so startling that we might think we are dealing with a copyist's error. The interference of the free with the worked is fierce and outrageous. The resolution is surprising and touching, a mixture of the exalted and the humorous that only Beethoven could have invented.

### versions for string orchestra

Hans von Bülow seems to have been the first conductor to have a full string orchestra play the work; that was in the early 1880s, when it had the reputation of being a mad extravagance, impossible to execute and hardly ever attempted by quartets. To make a string orchestra version means primarily to make decisions about when the basses should double the cellos an octave below. Felix Weingartner, the first to publish such an edition, did a good job on the whole, but he filled the score with sentimentalizing changes of tempo and dynamics. The version used in these performances was prepared by German musicologist Rainer Cadenbach, who lived from 1944 to 2008.

**Instrumentation:** string orchestra

*Excerpted from a program note by the late Michael Steinberg, used with permission. Steinberg is among the many who have prepared their own string orchestra version of Grosse Fuge; the Minnesota Orchestra performed that version most recently in July 2022.*



### Dmitri Shostakovich

**Born:** September 25, 1906,  
St. Petersburg, Russia

**Died:** August 9, 1975,  
Moscow, Russia

### Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 107

**Premiered:** October 4, 1959

**m**stislav Rostropovich was just 16 years old when, already a brilliant cellist, he became friends with Dmitri Shostakovich, his composition teacher at the Moscow Conservatory. Some 15 years later the composer wrote a concerto for his former student. Rostropovich premiered the Cello Concerto No. 1, dedicated to him and conceived with his phenomenal abilities in mind, on October 4, 1959, with Yevgeny Mravinsky conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic. (The premiere came two years to the date after the Soviet Union's surprising leap to space supremacy with the launch of the Sputnik satellite.) Since then it has become one of the most frequently performed and recorded of all cello concertos.

The work has an unusual structure: Shostakovich intended to write a concerto in the standard three movements, but completed a total of four, the last three of which are played without pause. Another striking feature is its exceptionally lean scoring, for the orchestra consists of a string section with only 11 additional instruments. One, a horn, repeats and develops themes so prominently that at times it rivals the solo cello in importance.

#### the music: saucy, wistful, athletic

**allegretto.** Shostakovich described the opening *Allegretto* as “a scherzo-like march,” and in another original touch he dispenses altogether with the usual orchestral exposition: the solo cello itself opens the concerto with the four-note figure that will form the melodic basis of the first movement. The cello also announces the firm and driving second subject, and in the course of the active development the solo horn repeats both these ideas. This saucy, slightly sardonic movement comes to a sudden close on its opening theme.

**moderato.** The mood changes completely with the second movement, *Moderato*. Muted strings introduce the wistful main idea, quickly repeated by the solo horn. The cello, though, enters with different material, its simple tune singing, almost innocent. The development grows gnarled and complex, but the horn leads

to a haunting conclusion: Shostakovich has the cello play the final pages entirely in artificial harmonics and accompanies it with the softly ringing sound of the celesta.

**cadenza.** On this lean and icy sound the movement flows directly into the third movement, the lengthy *Cadenza* that develops themes from the second movement and makes virtuoso demands on the cellist—who at times must bow with the right hand and simultaneously pluck double-stopped pizzicatos with the left.

**allegro con moto.** There is something almost grotesque about the skirling woodwind tune that opens the athletic finale, *Allegro con moto*. As it proceeds, the opening theme of the first movement begins to emerge from the busy texture. Pushed on by prominent horn calls, the concerto rushes to its close on the theme with which it began.

**Instrumentation:** solo cello with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), horn, timpani, celesta and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



### Jessie Montgomery

**Born:** December 8, 1981,  
New York City

### Strum

**Premiered:** April 2006 (original string quintet version)

**h**ailed by *The New York Times* for her “often personal yet widely resonant music—forged in Manhattan, a mirror turned on the whole country,” and praised by the *Chicago Tribune* for her “refreshing and recognizable voice,” Jessie Montgomery and her music are enjoying well-deserved attention from ensembles, musicians, critics and audiences around the world. Montgomery’s innovative approach combines classical language with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, spoken language and social-historical concerns.

#### a leading classical figure

Over the past few years, Montgomery has been commissioned by a number of prominent ensembles and institutions, including the New York Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Saint

Paul Chamber Orchestra and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; the Grammy Award-winning Catalyst String Quartet; the Sphinx Virtuosi; and the Grant Park Music Festival, among others. She has received several prestigious awards, including the ASCAP Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Award, and her name was mentioned twice from the stage at the 2023 Grammy Awards in early February when the New York Youth Symphony's recording of works by Montgomery, Valerie Coleman and Florence Price won the award for Best Orchestral Performance—marking the first time a youth orchestra has ever won the award.

Since 1999, Montgomery has been affiliated with the Sphinx Organization, which supports young Black and Latinx string players, and has served as composer in residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the Organization's flagship professional touring ensemble. Last year that group performed the premiere of her cello concerto *Divided* at Carnegie Hall with Thomas Mesa as soloist. In 2019, the New York Philharmonic selected Montgomery as one of the featured composers for its Project 19, which marked the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, prohibiting laws that denied the right to vote on the basis of sex. In May 2021, she began a three-year appointment as the Mead Composer in Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which is commissioning three works from her, the first of which, *Hymn for Everyone*, premiered last April. An accomplished violinist, Montgomery also maintains an active career as a performer.

Montgomery's busy slate of current and upcoming projects include a work for orchestra and violin for premiere by Joshua Bell, a quartet for percussion, a solo work for cellist Alisa Weilerstein's FRAGMENTS project, and works for some of the nation's leading orchestras, including those of Baltimore, Buffalo, Dallas, Detroit, New Jersey, New York and Seattle. She also continues to maintain several major artistic residence and teaching positions: she is currently artist in residence at the Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music, composer in residence at Bard College, and professor of violin and composition at The New School in New York City.

### "from a place of whimsy"

*Strum* is an early work, written when Montgomery was 25, is her most frequently performed composition to date, and was the title track of her 2016 debut album on the Azica label, *Strum: Music for Strings*. The Minnesota Orchestra's string section has performed it once already in an October 2020 performance that, due to pandemic restrictions, was performed for broadcast and livestreaming only without a live audience in the auditorium. This week, listeners can finally enjoy the work in person.

A New York native, Montgomery began composing at age 11, but didn't begin to explore composition seriously as a career path until her mid-20s; prior to *Strum*, Montgomery thought of herself primarily as a violinist. "*Strum* was the first piece I wrote on commission for Community MusicWorks and the Providence String Quartet," Montgomery recalled in an interview. "They asked me to write this piece for a concert that included the Schubert Cello Quintet. *Strum* emerged naturally; I didn't have a purpose in mind, but I started with that pizzicato riff that goes all the way through, which I came up with during a rehearsal of Dvořák's *American* Quartet...when you are in rehearsal, you're not supposed to be fiddling around with your instrument, but I happened to be fiddling around and I thought, 'That's kind of cool!' *Strum* was meant to be something fun; I think it's important to approach writing from a place of whimsy and not really knowing what's going to come, and to find an expression of release. *Strum* was like that because I really didn't know what I was doing and it took me a long time to write—six months."

The wide-open sound of *Strum* evokes both joy and possibility. In her own program notes, Montgomery wrote, "*Strum* is the culminating result of several versions of a string quintet I wrote in 2006. It was originally written for the Providence String Quartet [in Rhode Island] and guests of Community MusicWorks Players, then arranged for string quartet in 2008 with several small revisions. In 2012 the piece underwent its final revisions with a rewrite of both the introduction and the ending for the Catalyst Quartet in a performance celebrating the 15th annual Sphinx Competition." The original string quintet version received its premiere in April 2006; this week's Minnesota Orchestra concerts feature the string orchestra version that dates from 2012.

Describing the work, Montgomery continues: "Originally conceived for the formation of a cello quintet, the voicing is often spread wide over the ensemble, giving the music an expansive quality of sound. Within *Strum* I utilized texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a texture motive and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration."

**Instrumentation:** string orchestra

Program note by **Elizabeth Schwartz** © 2023.







## Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

**Born:** January 27, 1756,  
Salzburg, Austria

**Died:** December 5, 1791,  
Vienna, Austria

**Symphony No. 41 in  
C major, K. 551, Jupiter**  
Composed: 1788

The summer of 1788 was an exceptionally difficult time for Mozart, and what must have been particularly dismaying for the composer was the suddenness of his fall from grace. Two years earlier, at the premiere of *The Marriage of Figaro*, he had been at the summit of the musical world. But an indifferent reception to *Don Giovanni* and evolving musical fashions in Vienna changed this. Mozart's audience nearly disappeared: he was unable to mount new concerts or sell music by subscription.

He found his financial condition straitened, and he began to borrow heavily. The composer moved his family to a smaller apartment in a suburb of Vienna, where there was at least the consolation of a garden and lower rent, but he remained despondent about his situation.

### an Olympian symphony

Through that bleak summer, Mozart worked with incredible speed. He finished the Symphony No. 39 on June 26, the Symphony No. 40 on July 25, and a bare 16 days later the Symphony No. 41. The question remains: why did Mozart write these works? He usually wrote music when performances were planned, but there is no record of any subscription concerts during this period. Evidence suggests that he heard the Symphony No. 40 at a concert in April 1791, but at the time of his death eight months later he had likely not heard a note of the Symphony No. 39 or the Symphony No. 41.

The Symphony in C major was his last, though there is no reason to believe that he knew when writing it that it would be his final symphony. The nickname "Jupiter," which was in use by the early 19th century, was not Mozart's. But in this instance, the inauthentic nickname makes sense: if ever there were Olympian music, this is it.

**allegro vivace.** The first movement is music of genuine grandeur, built on a wealth of thematic material, and we feel that breadth from the first instant, when the opening theme divides into two

quite distinct phrases. The first phrase is an almost stern motto of repeated triplets, but the second is lyric and graceful, and the fusion of these two elements within the same theme suggests by itself the emotional scope of the opening movement. The array of material in this movement ranges from an almost military power to an elegant lyricism. One theme is derived from an aria Mozart had written a few months earlier, which dominates in the brief development and is later brought back in a minor key. The movement's martial spirit prevails at its stirring close.

**andante cantabile.** Mozart stipulates *cantabile* for the second movement, which sounds as if it too might be an aria from an opera. Muted first violins introduce both themes of this sonata-form movement. The opening seems at first all silky lyricism, but Mozart jolts this peace with unexpected attacks. The second subject is turbulent: over quiet triplet accompaniment, the violin line rises and falls in a series of intensely chromatic phrases.

**allegretto.** The third movement is in minuet-and-trio form, brisk music whose fluid lines are spiced by attacks from brass and timpani. The trio section is dominated by the solo oboe, though near its end strings break into a gentle little waltz that suddenly stops in mid-air.

**molto allegro.** The finale is not simply one of Mozart's finest movements: it is one of the most astonishing pieces of music ever written. It begins with a four-note phrase heard immediately in the first violins, yet this figure is hardly new: Mozart had used it in his *Missa Brevis* in F major of 1774, his String Quartet in G major of 1782, and elsewhere. In fact, he had subtly prepared us for the finale by slipping this opening phrase into the trio section of the third movement. The finale is not a fugue, but a sonata-form movement that puts that opening four-note phrase and other material through extensive fugal treatment, giving this week's performances fitting bookends—both Beethoven and Mozart pushing tools of the fugue to their furthest limits.

However dazzling Mozart's treatment of his material is in the development section, nothing can prepare the listener for the coda. Horns sound the opening motto, and in some of the most brilliant polyphonic writing to be found anywhere, Mozart pulls all his themes together in magnificent five-part counterpoint—as the symphony hurtles to its close in a blaze of brass and timpani.

**Instrumentation:** flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns,  
2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program notes by **Eric Bromberger**.