

# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Delyana Lazarova, conductor  
 Natsuki Kumagai, violin

Friday, July 19, 2024, 8PM  
 Saturday, July 20, 2024, 7PM | Orchestra Hall

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 CA. 7'

Joseph Bologne,  
 Chevalier de Saint-Georges Violin Concerto in A major, Opus 5, No. 2 CA. 22'  
 Allegro moderato  
 Largo  
 Rondeau  
*Natsuki Kumagai, violin*

I N T E R M I S S I O N CA. 20'

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Opus 60 CA. 32'  
 Adagio – Allegro vivace  
 Adagio  
 Allegro vivace  
 Allegro ma non troppo

Profiles of Delyana Lazarova and Natsuki Kumagai appear on page 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.



## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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

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

### Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527

**PREMIERED:** October 29, 1787  
(complete opera)

The overture to the opera *Don Giovanni* was composed in a single night. Mozart was something of a procrastinator, and since the music was always in his head anyhow, he often postponed putting the notes on paper until the last moment. Early on the morning of the final dress rehearsal preceding the premiere on October 29, 1787, the copyists were at his door to retrieve what he had written during the night so that the parts would be ready for the players.

In January of that year Mozart had first visited Prague, where he found the tunes of his opera *The Marriage of Figaro* hummed and whistled wherever he went. The astute manager of the Italian opera company in Prague was quick to commission a new opera from him, and when Mozart returned to Vienna, he put Lorenzo da Ponte to work on a libretto dealing with the legend of Don Juan, whose amorous conquests were far outnumbered by the works ultimately written about him.

The first performance was scheduled for October 14, but as with other Mozart operas, the deadline was not met. The illness of one of the singers further postponed the premiere that had been reset for October 24—when Mozart still had not composed the overture. Five days later, however, the curtain finally rose on Mozart’s remarkable *drama giocosa*—a blend of comedy and tragedy in which, as the subtitle warns us, the libertine is punished. The traditional Don Giovanni (there were at least two others on the opera stage in 1787 before Mozart introduced his) meets his just reward. It remained for the Romantics, notably Lord Byron, to transform the cruel but dashing figure into something of a cult hero, celebrated near the end of the 19th century in Richard Strauss’ seductive tone poem *Don Juan*.

### A FELLOW COMPOSER’S TRIBUTE

One of the many composers who have paid tribute to Mozart is the Frenchman Charles Gounod (1818-1893), who published a long monograph on *Don Giovanni* that appeared in an English translation in 1895. In the preface, Gounod announced that his goal was “to make known and record the impressions and emotions of a musician who has loved

it unswervingly and admired it unreservedly.” He begins in relatively calm tones, an expert guide to the seven minutes of great music at hand:

“From the beginning of the overture, Mozart is completely in the spirit of the drama, of which it is an epitome. The first chords, so powerful and solemn with their syncopated rhythm, establish at once the majestic and formidable authority of divine justice, the avenger of crime. After the first four bars (which are rendered yet more terrible by the silence which completes the second and the fourth) there commences a harmonic progression, the sinister character of which freezes one with terror, as would the appearance of a spectre. We shall find this same passage recur in the last scene of the drama, when, in response to supper, the statue of the Commandant arrives at the house of the assassin...

“Everything in this tremendous introduction breathes terror and inspires awe: the persistent and unfathomable rhythm of the strings, the sepulchral timbre of the wind instruments, wherein the intervals of an octave from bar to bar resemble the steps of a stone giant, the minister of Death; the syncopations of the first violins, which, starting at the eleventh bar, probe the innermost recesses of this dark conscience; the figure of the second violins, which entwines like an immense reptile around the culprit, whose stubborn resistance struggles blindly and insultingly to the end; the scales, those affrighting scales, ascending and descending, which manifest themselves like the billows of a tempestuous sea; the menace suspended over the head of the criminal by the solemnity of this impressive opening; everything, in fact, in this prodigious page is of the highest tragical inspiration—the force of terror could go no further.”

The remainder of Gounod’s descriptive digest of the overture journeys into even purpler prose and torrents of exclamation points—so to put in simpler terms: a *Molto allegro* breaks out in D major, as vigorous as Don himself, who leaps impetuously into boudoirs with thought neither to heaven nor to the inclinations of the ladies themselves. The strong syncopation of the main theme imparts a feverish eagerness to his quests as the movement proper hits full stride, like a symphonic first movement in miniature. In the opera, Mozart innovatively linked the overture to the comic first scene without a break for applause. For the purpose of concert performances, other composers and arrangers, including Johann André, Jr., and Ferruccio Busoni have provided a suitably cadencing ending to the overture. Today’s performance, however, uses a so-called “urtext” version attributed to Mozart himself.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.



**JOSEPH BOLOGNE,  
CHEVALIER DE  
SAINT-GEORGES**

**B:** December 25, 1745  
Baillif, Guadeloupe

**D:** June 9, 1799  
Paris, France

**Violin Concerto in A major,  
Opus 5, No. 2**

**PUBLISHED:** ca. 1775

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, led one of the most remarkable lives of any 18th-century composer, but until recently he has been under-represented in the programming of most major orchestras. In his lifetime he achieved great success not only as a virtuoso violinist, composer and conductor, but also as a champion fencer, and his status in these spheres garnered him considerable societal popularity in Paris and abroad. In 2022, his epic life and legacy were brought to wide audiences through the heavily dramatized biographical film *Chevalier*, starring Kelvin Harrison Jr. in the title role.

### FROM GUADELOUPE TO PARIS

Saint-Georges was born Joseph Bologne on Christmas Day, 1745, to Georges Saint-Georges, a wealthy French plantation owner, and Nanon, a 16-year-old from Senegal who was enslaved in the service of Georges' wife. Joseph spent the first few years of his life in his birthplace, on the Caribbean island of Baillif, Basse-Terre, in the Guadeloupe archipelago. At the age of 7, Joseph was moved to Paris in order to receive an aristocratic education. At 13, he was enrolled at L'académie royal polytechnique des armes et de l'équitation. His superlative athletic ability quickly allowed him to become one of the academy's top students, and later one of France's best swordsmen, winning high-profile duels against Europe's best. Upon his graduation, he was named a member of the Gendarmes de la Garde du Roi, or the King's guard, which earned him the title Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

In contrast to Saint-Georges' well-documented rise to fame as an outstanding fencer, little is known about the musical training he received. But the caliber at which Saint-Georges wrote and performed his works makes it impossible not to assume that he would have started his violin studies while he was still a young child. Jean-Marie Leclair and Antonio Lolli, violinists who both wrote works dedicated to Saint-Georges, are rumored to have been his violin teachers. François Gossec, a lifelong friend and mentor, is rumored to have given lessons to the young composer.

Saint-Georges stunned the Parisian public in 1769 in his debut as the concertmaster of Gossec's Concert des Amateurs. In 1772, he premiered his first two concertos with

the same ensemble to glowing praise. A year later, Gossec left the Concert des Amateurs in Saint-Georges' capable hands. For eight years, he led that ensemble with the same disciplined approach that catapulted him to stardom in the ring, turning the orchestra into one of the best in Europe. He repeated that success with the Concert de la Loge Olympique, formed after the Concert des Amateurs folded. It was with this orchestra that he premiered Haydn's six *Paris Symphonies* in 1785.

The remainder of Saint-Georges' life was swept up amid the French Revolution. Though he originally commanded a battalion of all-Black soldiers during the war, his association with nobility landed him a place in prison for over a year. Upon his release, he failed to reenter musical life to the level of his previous success, as every facet of French society had been upended by the Revolution. He died in 1799.

### A SUNNY CONCERTO

The violin concerto on today's program—one of 14 composed by Saint-Georges—was written in the mid-1770s and published by Bailleux sometime around 1775. Saint-Georges would have also given the premiere around this time while he was leader of the Concert des Amateurs. Structurally it follows the traditional fast-slow-fast order of movements for a concerto of this time.

**ALLEGRO MODERATO.** The first movement is bright and sunny, with the lengthy orchestral opening cycling through many themes. This music is gracefully proportioned and designed to charm. Eventually, the soloist enters on a long, sustained note before quickly toppling into nimble passagework that requires a high level of skill to pull off effortlessly. The movement continues with the soloist alternating flashy, fast passages (a French foreshadowing of Niccolò Paganini) with more melodic ideas, always thoughtfully in dialogue with the orchestra. If one listens carefully, it may even be possible to hear how the violin dances about the orchestra with a lightness that evokes the footwork of a master swordsman.

**LARGO.** The middle movement is gentle, songful, glowing and brilliant. There is an ephemeral glimpse of minor key melancholy that only briefly darkens the gentle sonic horizon, before the soloist offers a plaintive cadenza.

**RONDEAU.** An ebullient theme is presented many times and interspersed with several contrasting episodes that further display Saint-Georges' immense command of the violin's technical and expressive qualities. The concerto ends with another brief cadenza and one last presentation of the opening idea.

**Instrumentation:** solo violin and string orchestra

PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL DIVINO.



**LUDWIG  
VAN BEETHOVEN**

**B:** December 16, 1770  
Bonn, Germany

**D:** March 25, 1827  
Vienna, Austria

**Symphony No. 4 in B-flat  
major, Opus 60**

**PREMIERED:** March 1807  
(private premiere); April 1808  
(public premiere)

In September 1806, Ludwig van Beethoven accompanied his patron Prince Karl Lichnowsky on a visit to the castle of another nobleman, Count Franz von Oppersdorff. The count was a musical enthusiast almost without equal: he maintained a private orchestra and would hire new staff for the castle only if they played an instrument and could also play in his orchestra. The trip paid musical dividends for Beethoven, as the count commissioned him to write a new symphony.

**REMOVED FROM THE FURIES**

The Fourth Symphony has inevitably been overshadowed by the titanic symphonies on either side of it. Although the Fourth does seem at first a relaxation, far removed from the furies that drive the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphony, we need to be careful not to underestimate this music.

**ADAGIO–ALLEGRO VIVACE.** The symphony’s originality is evident from its first instant: the key signature says B-flat major, but the symphony opens instead in B-flat minor. This introduction keeps us in a tonal fog, but those mists blow away at the *Allegro vivace*. Huge chords lash out, and when the main theme leaps out brightly, we recognize it as a sped-up version of the slow introduction.

**ADAGIO.** Violins sing the main theme, marked *cantabile*. Hector Berlioz spoke effusively of the *Adagio*: “The being who wrote such a marvel of inspiration as this movement was not a man. Such must be the song of the Archangel Michael.”

**ALLEGRO VIVACE.** The third movement is a scherzo in all but name: its outer sections are full of rough edges and blistering energy, and its witty trio is built on a rustic woodwind tune spiced with saucy interjections from the violins.

**ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO.** The finale goes like a rocket from its first instant. This movement may be in sonata form, but it feels like perpetual-motion on a pulse of racing 16th-notes that hardly ever lets up.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

**CODA**

The Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, first performed **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Overture to *Don Giovanni*** on November 1, 1940, at Northrop Memorial Auditorium, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting. Although the ensemble performed the overture frequently during the remainder of the 1900s, including on multiple tours, it has not appeared on an Orchestra program since 2004. The Orchestra has presented the complete opera *Don Giovanni* on one occasion—as the grand finale of the 1996 Sommerfest, under the baton of David Zinman.

These concerts mark the first time the Orchestra has performed the entirety of **Chevalier de Saint-Georges’ A-major Violin Concerto**, although the work’s third movement was featured at a series of Young People’s and Family Concerts at Orchestra Hall in October 2019. On that occasion, First Associate Concertmaster Susie Park was the soloist and Music Director Osmo Vänskä conducted. Under Vänskä’s direction, the Orchestra presented two major works by Saint-Georges in the first half of 2021, a period when concerts were performed for broadcast and livestream only due to the pandemic: the Symphony No. 1 and the Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 3, No. 1, with Karen Gomyo as soloist in the latter work.

The Orchestra added **Ludwig van Beethoven’s Fourth Symphony** to its repertoire as part of the ensemble’s first foray into a new decade: a concert on January 7, 1910, at the Minneapolis Auditorium, with founding Music Director Emil Oberhoffer on the conductor’s podium. That same concert featured Teresa Carreño—a Venezuelan pianist, soprano, composer and conductor—in her second and final appearance with the ensemble, as soloist in a piano concerto by Edward MacDowell.



**SARAH HICKS,**  
CONDUCTOR

Sarah Hicks, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall, has led a broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006, and has earned wide acclaim as a guest conductor in the U.S. and abroad. Her notable projects here have included co-creating the Inside the Classics series and Sam & Sarah series with Orchestra violist Sam Bergman and leading new productions with collaborators such as Nur-D, Dessa, Cloud Cult, The New Standards, PaviElle French, Kevin Kling, Peter Rothstein, Robert Elhai and The Moving Company. A specialist in film music and the film-in-concert genre, Hicks premiered Pixar in Concert and Disney and Pixar's *Coco* in Concert; her live concert recording of *A Celebration of the Music from Coco* at the Hollywood Bowl can be seen on Disney+ and her work on *The Little Mermaid Live!* was broadcast on ABC. In the Minnesota Orchestra's 2024-25 season she will lead U.S. Bank Movies & Music performances of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, *Hocus Pocus*, *Back to the Future* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, as well as tributes to film composer John Williams and the Beatles, among other performances. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**NATSUKI KUMAGAI,**  
VIOLIN

Natsuki Kumagai joined the Minnesota Orchestra's second violin section in 2017 and won a position in the first violin section in 2019. With her performances this summer of a violin concerto by Chevalier de Saint-Georges, she makes her concerto solo debut with the Orchestra. Born and raised in Chicago, she has served in numerous concertmaster positions at orchestras including the New World Symphony, New York String Orchestra Seminar and Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, where she was awarded the Jules C. Reiner Violin Prize. She was also a member of the Verbier Festival Orchestra. She is an active chamber musician, winning prizes at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, Saint Paul Chamber Music Competition and Society of American Musicians Competition. She was a member of the New Fromm Players, the quartet in residence for contemporary music at the Tanglewood Institute, performing world and U.S. premieres of works by renowned composers Marc Neikrug and Joseph Phibbs. Kumagai attended the New England Conservatory in Boston, where she studied with Boston Symphony Orchestra's concertmaster Malcolm Lowe. She received her master's degree at the Juilliard School, studying with Ida Kavafian. Her previous teachers include Almita and Roland Vamos and Marko Dreher at the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy program. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**DELYANA LAZAROVA,**  
CONDUCTOR

As a conductor, Delyana Lazarova thinks of herself as a musician among musicians. Collaboration, openness and sensitivity to the specific sound and character of every orchestra are the foundation of her work. In the 2023-24 season, she debuted at the Enescu Festival Bucharest, opened the season of the Tiroler Sinfonieorchester Innsbruck, and made her debut with the Orchestre National de Bordeaux, BBC Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, Dresdner Philharmonie and Deutsches Sinfonieorchester Berlin. She celebrated the New Year with Sinfonieorchester Basel and brought the Bulgarian composer Pancho Vladigerov's Violin Concerto to the Elbphilharmonie with the Hamburger Camerata. She also made her debut with the Oregon Symphony, led the Sofia Philharmonic and Bulgarian National Radio Symphony, and continued her close relationship with the Hallé Orchestra. Born in Bulgaria, Lazarova won the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition, then served as assistant conductor at the Hallé Orchestra and music director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra from 2020 to 2023. She also assisted Cristian Măcelaru at the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln and the Orchestre National de France. In 2020 she won the prestigious James Conlon Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival. More: [delyanalazarova.com](http://delyanalazarova.com) or [kdschmid.de](http://kdschmid.de).