

Hopkins Center for the Arts

at Dartmouth

presents

Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra

Filippo Ciabatti, conductor

with

Kimberly Tan '22, violin

Saturday, May 14, 7:30 pm

Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College • 2022

*Generously supported by the Roesch Family Fund in Support of Instrumental Ensembles and Friends of the
Symphony Orchestra*

Program

Approximate duration: 120 minutes including intermission

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Allegro moderato
Adagio di molto
Allegro, ma non tanto

Kimberly Tan '22, violin

Intermission

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Adagio—Allegro non troppo
Allegro con grazia
Allegro molto vivace
Finale: Adagio lamentoso

Program Notes

Jean Sibelius

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

Jean Sibelius was born on December 8, 1865, in Hämeenlinna, Finland (then Russian Empire), and died on September 20, 1957, in Järvenpää, Finland. Sibelius wrote his Violin Concerto in 1904 with a dedication to German violinist Willy Burmester, making substantial revisions the following year. The Helsinki Philharmonic premiered the original version on February 8, 1904, with Victor Nováček as soloist. The revised version premiered in October of 1905, with Richard Strauss conducting the Berlin Court Orchestra and Karel Halíř on the violin. To accompany the solo violin, the score calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings.

Sibelius' Violin Concerto stands out from the rest of the violin repertoire, striking a rare balance between breathtaking spectacle and compositional ingenuity. Yet for its composer, this mighty musical edifice was built on a foundation of shattered ambitions and

unfulfilled dreams. For most of his young life, it was the “dearest wish” and “overriding ambition” of Finland’s best-loved composer to become a virtuoso on the violin, as he divulged in his diary. But taking up the instrument late into adolescence, limited by provincial Finnish teaching and hampered by his own difficult temperament, he seemed destined for mediocrity. An unsuccessful Vienna Philharmonic audition in 1891 was the last straw: Arriving home in tears, he (quite literally) cast the violin aside and sat down at the keyboard, pen in hand, to accept his apparent fate. Thirteen years later, Sibelius revealed the only concerto he would ever publish: an ode to the astonishing flexibility of that instrument, informed perhaps by the ache of unrealized aspiration. Among the most technically demanding pieces in the canon, it proved too difficult for the first three violinists hired for its premiere. It seems Sibelius wrote his concerto for the imaginary violinist of his youthful dreams, for the virtuoso he never became.

Shimmering strings cast a diffuse glow upon the bleak territory of the opening *Allegro moderato*. Delicate but

bitter, the first notes of the solo violin introduce the primary material of the movement and establish the texture of the concerto as a whole. The relationship Sibelius establishes between soloist and accompaniment is peculiar. This is no Mozart, no Beethoven; there is no playful repartee between violin and orchestra. Nor is this Brahms; you will find only occasional conversations between sections of the orchestra. Rather, Sibelius gives the violin the role of a solitary protagonist traversing a desolate landscape. Tinted with the dark, reedy hues of clarinets and bassoons, the accompaniment is most often atmospheric. In rare moments of rest for the intrepid soloist, though, we glimpse the rich dynamic and harmonic capacities of the Sibelian orchestra.

Structurally, the concerto's most surprising maneuver comes near the midpoint of the first movement: in place of the traditional development section, the violin protagonist embarks on an extended cadenza. An episode of remarkable virtuosity, its double-stopped canonic passages hark back to Bach's unaccompanied partitas—as if by magic, two independent melodic voices are conjured from an instrument with only four strings. Nor is thematic development confined to this cadenza; rather, in Sibelian fashion, the melodic materials are continuously reinvented from the very first page.

Though the subsequent *Adagio di molto* proceeds with more familiarity than the structurally imaginative *Allegro*, it remains one of the most moving passages Sibelius ever wrote. After a gentle introduction from pairs of clarinets and oboes, the violin enters with a broad, sonorous melody comforted by the warmth of horns and bassoons. This is a deeply touching song, fortified by the rich timbres of the violin's lowest strings. "Evidently a polonaise for polar bears," quipped critic Donald Tovey of the third movement's triumphant frolic, and indeed the image is hard to relinquish, though the tempo here is rather brisker than that of the Polish dance. With a boisterous orchestral ostinato, grounded by timpani, the violin finally reveals its playful side, one moment flitting about above the ruckus, the next, joining in on the noisy revelry. The piece whirls to the finish with syncopated spunk.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born on May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk (Vyatka Governorate, Russian Empire), and died in St. Petersburg on November 6, 1893. He wrote his Sixth Symphony in 1893, dedicating it to his favorite nephew, Vladimir Davydov. The work premiered on October 28 of that year in St. Petersburg with Tchaikovsky conducting. The score calls for three flutes (third also piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, two trombones and tuba; timpani, cymbals, bass drum and tam-tam; and strings.

On the night of November 1, 1893, upon returning with his brother Modest from their usual St. Petersburg restaurant, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky fell ill, exhibiting the first symptoms of what would soon reveal itself as a severe cholera infection. Tchaikovsky had a habit of drinking unboiled water, and despite knowing of the epidemic sweeping the city, he had stubbornly taken a glass at the restaurant. Only four days earlier had he conducted the premiere of his Sixth Symphony; less than five days later he was dead. Due to the untimeliness of this tragedy (coming at the height of Tchaikovsky's creative successes), the rumor mill did not hesitate to begin its muddied churn, and hardly has it slowed ever since. A substantial body of legend and conspiracy theory, little of it convincing, has accumulated over the 13 intervening decades: as the various yarn-spinners would have it, Tchaikovsky was poisoned, or he took his own life to end the agony of unrequited love, or he was ordered to commit suicide by the Tsar or by a "court of honor" of former classmates to suppress public scandal over a homosexual affair with some young aristocrat or other. Recent scholarship has deflated the credibility of most such rumors, as mounting evidence points to Tchaikovsky's relatively guilt-free acceptance of his own sexuality as well as a culture of general tolerance towards love between men in court circles of late 19th-century Russia.

Inevitably, the Sixth Symphony was dragged into this messy mythos, with legions of interpreters divining hidden confessional messages in the music (the

Program Notes *continued*

symphony-as-suicide-note hypothesis being the most popular of these). True, Tchaikovsky hinted at the existence of a secret program for the symphony in conversation with his nephew (the symphony's dedicatee, with whom Tchaikovsky was obsessively infatuated), and critics have persuasively linked musical motifs in the first movement with verbal rhythms from the Orthodox funeral service. Still, there is no evidence that Tchaikovsky's covert program was autobiographical, let alone suicidal. In the end, the Sixth is, by Tchaikovsky's own assessment, his greatest achievement, and while it may forever inspire speculation, this music truly speaks for itself.

A somber bassoon, low in its range, begins the *Adagio* introduction of the first movement, the gravity of its song underscored by its dark, woody accompanists among the double basses, violas, clarinets and oboes. After this music fades, the violas offer the first statement of the primary *Allegro non troppo* theme, essentially a sped-up, unsettled version of the bassoon's lament. Rhythmic motifs from the final bars of the violins soon spiral off into somewhat lighter episodes of their own, but urgent brass fanfares stoke the ensemble into a *tutti* frenzy. A yearning question is left to hang midair, but after a breath, the violins and cellos provide a splendid response in the D-major *Andante* theme, among the most enduring and compelling of all of Tchaikovsky's melodies. Especially poignant is its soaring 12/8 restatement, richly accompanied by the whole orchestra. After a diminuendo, a solo clarinet offers the sweetest of echoes, increasingly distant (beginning *ppp* and fading to *ppppp*). The final four notes of the passage, marked *pppppp*, are barely audible, especially if played (as they often are) on the dynamically-flexible bass clarinet rather than the dictated bassoon.

The listener whose ears are strained for these faint whispers is rewarded with one of classical music's cruelest jump-scars. All the materials of the first theme group endure furious development; above this frenzy, the trumpets cackle a callous, dissonant parody of the climax of the passionate *Andante* melody. After a sudden tumble, the atmosphere shifts abruptly into a noble brass chorale, which, by way of an ambivalent march, eventually leads to the movement's

recapitulation. Dramatically changed from its first appearance, the primary theme returns as a thunderous *tutti* cataclysm, growing ever louder and direr, until after a yearning, suspenseful foreword from the strings, the forceful climax of the whole symphony arrives. Anguished strings wail a descending scale in antiphony with reaching gestures from the trombones and tuba, to be played "as loud as possible" from the beginning, yet somehow growing even louder in their miserable descent to the passage's earth-shattering nadir. A recap of the *Andante* theme, though disquieted by an ascending chromatic figure in the accompaniment, provides comfort nevertheless. The coda, wistful but composed, is a solemn valediction from the brass.

In typical Tchaikovsky fashion, the middle movements are simpler, though no less sincere. The *Allegro con grazia* presents a quintuple-meter waltz in the cellos, elegant in spite of its lopsidedness, interrupted in the middle by some darker material. In the *Allegro molto vivace* which follows, especially notable is the unlikely choice of solo trombone to echo the piccolo's playful sparkle in the transition between themes, as is the expansion of the B theme from a cheery walking tune in the clarinets (in its first statement) into an exultant *tutti* victory march in the final pages.

From the first notes, the finale is striking for its pathos and its slow tempo. Through an effective trick of orchestration, this opening *Adagio lamentoso* theme is especially painful: neither section of violins plays the whole melody; rather, they trade off on every note (think handbell choir, but doleful). The *Andante* B theme, a little faster, is thoroughly valedictory. Just like the opening movement, the reprise of the primary material here is interrupted by descending brass and an anguished *tutti*. A soft word from the gong allows one last trombone-tuba chorale to bloom, and this one is the quietest and most prayerful of them all. In the coda, the *Andante* farewell theme gradually disintegrates as the dark timbres from the symphony's introduction reclaim their position. One by one, the violas, bassoons, cellos, and double basses dissolve into silence.

About the Artists

A native of Florence, Italy, **Filippo Ciabatti** is the Music Director of the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra, the Dartmouth Opera Lab and the Interim Music Director of the Dartmouth's Choral Ensembles. He is also the Artistic Director of the Upper Valley Baroque professional choral and instrumental ensembles. He is the recipient of the 2020 American Prize in Conducting (college/university division).

He has appeared as a guest conductor with opera companies and orchestras including Opera North (New Hampshire), Lyric Theatre at Illinois, Aurora Festival Orchestra (Stockholm, Sweden), Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Toscana dei Conservatori (Italy), ICM Orchestra and the Universidad Central Orchestra (Bogota, Colombia). He served as assistant conductor for the Portland Symphony Orchestra (Maine) and as chorus master and vocal coach for the Middlebury Opera (Vermont). In 2020, he also conducted a project with the Martha Graham Dance Company.

Artists with whom he has collaborated include the concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra David Kim, American opera star Nathan Gunn, pianist Sally Pinkas, flutist Luciano Tristaino, mandolinist Carlo Aonzo and cellist Gabriel Cabezas. A passionate advocate for contemporary music and collaborations between musical genres, he has premiered a secular oratorio composed by the renowned jazz composer Taylor Ho Bynum and commissioned a cello concerto by the composer Noah Luna, aired during the NPR show *From The Top*. In 2018, he led the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra in an Italian tour in collaboration with the Orchestra Toscana dei Conservatori in prominent venues and festivals, including the Puccini Days in Lucca.

During the summer of 2018, he was invited to be a Conducting Fellow at the Aurora Music Festival in Stockholm, under the direction of Jukka-Pekka Saraste. During the festival, he conducted Hannah Kendall's 2017 composition, *The Spark Catchers*, in a concert that also featured legendary cellist Mischa Maisky in the Konserthus Stockholm.

As a pianist and vocal coach, Mr. Ciabatti is on the faculty of Camerata de' Bardi, the Young Artists

Program of Teatro Grattacielo in New York City, and of the summer opera programs "Opera Viva!" in Verona (Italy) and "Scuola Italia per Giovani Cantanti Lirici" in Sant'Angelo in Vado (Italy). He has played for masterclasses of Renée Fleming, Nathan Gunn, Isabel Leonard, William Matteuzzi, and Donald George. In Italy, he worked as vocal coach for the Cherubini Conservatory, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and Florence Opera Academy.

Mr. Ciabatti holds degrees in piano, choral conducting and orchestral conducting from Italy and the United States.

Kimberly Tan '22 began studying violin at age 4. She played in various orchestras throughout her childhood, studying under Duan Yu-Ling, Gillian Graham, and Netanel Draiblate. At Dartmouth, Kimberly is double majoring in Engineering Sciences and Philosophy modified with Asian Societies, Cultures, and Languages (ASCL). She has played in the DSO since freshman year and has served as concertmaster multiple terms since junior year. The grand prize winner of this year's Culley Concerto Competition, she plays on a violin made in 2007 by Lukas Wronski. When not practicing, philosophizing, or doing problem sets, Kimberly is actively participating in her faith communities, researching, and running with friends. She is a 2022 Yenching Academy Scholar and will be pursuing a Master's in China Studies at Peking University next year, with a concentration in Philosophy and Religion.

She would like to extend her thanks to the following people: her violin teacher Omar Chen Guey, conductor Filippo Ciabatti, and all the members of the DSO who made this concert possible; her family, friends, and professors who generously support and encourage her through it all; and her God who gives her inspiration to play.

Anaïse Boucher-Browning '22 is a geography major from Boise, Idaho. Playing viola in the DSO has been a wonderful source of musical expression and friendship throughout her time at Dartmouth. Anaïse also studied piano with Sally Pinkas, performed in chamber music ensembles, and worked as a senior house manager at Hopkins Center events. In June 2020, Anaïse

About the Artists *continued*

coordinated and performed in a Black Lives Matter Concert in Boise to raise funds for racial justice organizations, receiving grant funding from the Robert Dance '77 Fund at the Hopkins Center.

John Cho '22 is a Government and Quantitative Social Sciences major from Austin, Texas. He has been a violinist with the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra for the past four years. Cho has appreciated the opportunity to continue his musical education at Dartmouth, also taking private lessons, playing in a myriad of chamber music groups, and going on tour with the DSO in Tuscany after the Fall of 2018. After graduating, he will be a pre-doctoral fellow in political science at Yale University.

Jehan Diaz '22 is grateful for the balance of musicianship, friendship and mentorship that the DSO has provided her over the last four years. Her journey with the DSO began her freshman fall playing Mahler's Fifth Symphony, an experience that marked the beginning of many special memories made with the orchestra. Since freshman spring, she has been a manager of the DSO and played in several chamber groups. Outside of DSO, she is completing a double major in engineering sciences and music and remains active in the Dartmouth Mountaineering Club, German Club and the Society of Women Engineers. After graduation, she is looking forward to being back at Dartmouth as a full-time Thayer student pursuing her electrical engineering BE and Masters, as well as visiting the Hop ever so often to continue making music.

Owen Eskandari '22 has been playing the cello since he was five, when he learned that a cellist, unlike many other instruments, always plays sitting down. He has been a member of the DSO since his freshman fall. From Mahler to Beethoven to Sibelius, he's immensely grateful for the opportunity to play celebrated masterpieces with such a high-caliber ensemble. Beyond the music itself, he's incredibly thankful for the community DSO fosters, whether it be on a hike, at a cabin overnight, or during chamber. He is a physics major who hails from outside Chicago, and is excited to be back in the midwest pursuing a PhD in physics starting this fall. He hopes to never put down the cello.

Katie Hoover '22 is a history and music double major from Los Angeles. She has played viola in the DSO since her freshman fall and is so grateful for the community and musical opportunities that the group has brought her. In addition to the DSO, Katie has been involved in the Dartmouth Outing Club, in sorority leadership and in judicial affairs for the College. Katie is incredibly appreciative of the friends, family and mentors who have supported and continue to support her endeavors in music.

Anna Kolln '22 is from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She is double majoring in chemistry and German studies. In addition to her musical pursuits at Dartmouth, she has participated in the Dartmouth Dance Ensemble, German club, and chemistry research. She has participated in the DSO since her freshman year. Her favorite memories of DSO include touring in Tuscany, Italy and playing at the Met. After graduation, she will be working as a materials engineer in Boston.

Sophia Chang Stauffer '22 is an anthropology major from Chicago, Illinois. She has played in the DSO and in various chamber ensembles since freshman year and is also currently the conductor of the Dartmouth Chamber Orchestra. Outside of music, she studies the evolutionary origins of human rhythm entrainment and its relationship to language. She is also involved with the Hop Events Staff and the Academic Skills Center. After graduation, she is lucky to be able to continue playing in the DSO for two years as a community member while she works in a CRISPR biology lab at Dartmouth.

Hanlin Wang '21 G from Fremont, California is getting his MS in CS and Digital Arts, working on projects in computer graphics. He was previously an undergrad at Dartmouth as well and studied film. He has been a loyal DSO member since freshman fall, aside from a one-term affair with the Coast Jazz Ensemble. He is grateful for the community and enjoyment that the orchestra has provided during his time here, and plans to keep music a constant part of his life. After Dartmouth he hopes to move back west and work in animation or visual effects.

Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra

Filippo Ciabatti, director
Kimberly Tan '22, violin soloist

Violin I

Hanlin Wang '21 G, concertmaster
John Cho '22
Jessica Jiang '25
Teddy Glover '25
Helena Seo '25
Joy Miao '22
Kimberly Tan '22
Kathy Andrew
David Horak
Anya Zhdan
Ira Morris
Omar Chen Guey F

Violin II

Sophia Chang Stauffer '22
Matthew Kim '25
Ida Claude '22
Anna Kolln '22
Jessie Wang '23
Wanxin Hu '25
Jackson Spurling '23
Marcia Cassidy F
Melanie Dexter
Greg Diehl

Viola

Anaïse Boucher-Browning '22
Elaine Chi '25
Jehan Diaz '22
Hannah Chipman '25
Katie Hoover '22
Leslie Sonder F
Katrina Smith
Ana Ruesink

Cello

Hannah Kim '23
Jack Ryan '23
Woojin Chung '23
Ethan Hodess '25
Owen Eskandari '22
Aidan Lee '25
Perri Morris
Javier Caballero
Kevin Crudder
Bill Rounds

Double Bass

David Vargas Estrella '23
Paul Horak TH '94
Luke Baker
Eliot Porter
Nicholas Browne

Flute

Laura del Sol Jiménez
Zuoliang Liu
Hillary Goldblatt (+ piccolo)

Oboe

Michelle Farah
Jason Smoller

Clarinet

Maria Wagner
Peter Bianca

Bassoon

Janet Polk F
Lucy Langenberg '22

Horn

Michael Lombardi
Patrick Kennelly F
Joy Worland
Adam Schommer

Trumpet

Russell Devuyst
Ryan Noe

Trombone

Michael Tybursky
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