

IOWA

School of Music



**UI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
CONCERTO WINNERS + RESPIGHI**

Kenny Lee, Director of Orchestral Studies

Wednesday, April 1, 2026, 7:30 p.m.
Concert Hall, Voxman Music Building

MENU

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PROGRAM

CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA IN A MINOR, OP. 16

(1868, REV. 1907)

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

I. Allegro molto moderato

Helen Mao, *piano*

Matthew Clarke, *conductor*

CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA NO. 2 IN D MINOR, OP. 40 (1837)

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

II. Adagio molto sostenuto

III. Presto scherzando

Guoyi Fan, *piano*

Yifei (Joey) Sun, *conductor*



INTERMISSION

CONCERTO FOR VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA, OP. POSTHUMOUS (1949)

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

Completed by Tibor Serly (1901-1978)

I. Moderato

II. Adagio religioso

III. Allegro vivace

Oliver Bostian, *viola*
Kenny Lee, *conductor*

PINES OF ROME (1924)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

I. The Pines of the Villa Borghese

II. Pines Near a Catacomb

III. The Pines of the Janiculum

IV. The Pines of the Appian Way

Kenny Lee, *conductor*



UNIVERSITY OF IOWA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FLUTE

Chaosupei Gao #

Eric Luminais *

Ana Clark ‡

Jair Lopez ^

Caleb Estrada-Valentín

OBOE

Heather Huckleberry #‡°

Jillian Kelly *^

Henry Golay

ENGLISH HORN

Henry Golay #

CLARINET

Mary Kotrba ^

Luke Gage *#‡

Megan Bolduc

Tony Wang



BASS CLARINET

Tony Wang #

BASSOON

Noah Droessler #

Kian Hyatt ‡

Hale Halvorson

Adam Cramer-Benjamin ‡

Erik López *^

CONTRABASSOON

Adam Cramer-Benjamin

HORN

Jacob White #

Moosa Hamad *‡

Matthew Freund ^

Alex Lester

Charlie Muehlberger

TRUMPET

Anna Kelly #

Ryan Banks ‡

Josh Levy *^

Nacho Perez



TROMBONE

Omar Elmusa ^{*}^†#

Kaleb Sutcliffe

BASS TROMBONE

Brady Gell

TUBA

Jillian Arnold

TIMPANI

Drew Hansen #

Elena Brisch †

Ava Chopskie ^{*}^

PERCUSSION

Elena Brisch

Ava Chopskie

Evan Tanner

Miles Bohlman

Drew Hansen

Shaun Everson



HARP

Melanie Landsittel

PIANO

Danyun Zhao ^

CELESTA

Tracy Qian

ORGAN

Tracy Qian

OFFSTAGE BRASS

Natalie Roth

Laura Carrico

Ashley Muhs

Derek Phillips

Andrew Deaver

Hannah Rees

VIOLIN I

Renee Santos #

Elizabeth Romanyuk

Theresa Rukavina



Hugo Kaut *[^]‡
Luis Enrique Infante Hernandez
Anna Ahrens
Emilia Baltrukonis
Luke Cuasay
Preston Trinh
Isabella Gaspero
Michelle Chan
Sophia Jin

VIOLIN II

Jessica Baker *[^]‡#
Andrea Allen
Ian Udell
Will Turnis
HaoYang Xu
Connor Buchanan
Clara Kalas
Erin Guilfoyle
Chris Martin-Trainor

VIOLA

Ingrid Popp *[^]‡#
Mason Munnik
Will Sturms
Biyanca Dokter
Kylie Little



CELLO

Katie Forbush #

Chris Mendez

Elizabeth Kerr

Haziel Santos *^‡

Celia Phillips

Olivia Palen

Lucas Ralston

Will Hand

Dayne Olson

Jade Diouri

Memphis Howell

BASS

Ryan Bell *^‡#

Xavier Vongphakdy

Eamon Reed

Ella Gerber

Addison Lueken

Miles Peterson

Emily Greiner

Harper Robbins

Cormac Wilson

* = principal on Grieg

^ = principal on Mendelssohn

‡ = principal on Bartók

= principal on Respighi

° = guest artist



PROGRAM NOTES

CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA IN A MINOR, OP. 16 (1868, REV. 1907)

Edvard Grieg composed only one concerto in his lifetime. The concerto was composed in 1868, and Grieg worked with pianist Edmund Neupert, primarily on the shape of the piano part. The concerto was first performed in 1869 with Neupert as the soloist, and the concerto quickly gained popularity. Grieg continued to revise the score until his passing in 1907. Revisions mostly were in the orchestration, and the 1907 version is the most performed and most popular. The first movement begins with a timpani roll that leads into a dramatic piano flourish. Woodwinds then lead the primary theme, followed by the piano. The lyrical secondary theme is in conversation with the piano and the oboe. The development starts with an outburst from the orchestra. The two themes develop throughout the movement, and the movement ends dramatically with a series of chords from the piano and orchestra. -Matthew Clarke



CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA NO. 2 IN D MINOR, OP. 40 (1837)

Composed for the Birmingham Music Festival, Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor was premiered there on September 21, 1837, with the composer as soloist. The work took him more effort than usual, though the finished piece sounds remarkably clear and direct.

The concerto's three connected movements open with a driven, impassioned Allegro appassionato. The central Adagio molto sostenuto provides a quieter, more inward contrast, and the Finale: Presto scherzando brings the work to a lighter close, arriving in D major rather than the darker D minor of the opening. Though less frequently heard than the First Piano Concerto, it balances virtuosity with the lyrical ease and elegance that mark Mendelssohn at his best. -Joey Sun

CONCERTO FOR VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA, OP. POSTHUMOUS (1949)

Bartók's Viola Concerto belongs to the final chapter of his career. Commissioned by



William Primrose in 1945, it was left in draft at the composer's death and later prepared for performance by Tibor Serly from the surviving sketches. Primrose gave the premiere on December 2, 1949, with Antal Doráti and the Minneapolis Symphony.

In its familiar three-movement form, the concerto makes full use of the viola's darker, more somber character, something Bartók himself noted in correspondence with Primrose. The opening movement balances strength and tension with passages of inward lyricism. A brief middle movement offers quieter contrast, and the finale moves toward a sharper, more dance-like energy. It has since become one of the central works of the viola repertoire. -Joey Sun

PINES OF ROME (1924)

Premiered in Rome in 1924, Pines of Rome is the second work in Respighi's famous "Roman trilogy," which also includes Fountains of Rome and Roman Festivals. Moving from his hometown of Bologna to Rome in 1913, Respighi was inspired by the beauty of the city, particularly loving its "marvelous fountains" and "umbrella-like pines that appear in every part of the horizon."

Each of the four movements depicts a



unique setting beginning with “The Pines of the Villa Borghese,” where Respighi sketches children playing beneath the trees in the Roman park, Villa Borghese. The music is lively and playful, full of trills and bright orchestral colors that evoke excitement and energy. The second movement, “Pines Near a Catacomb,” shifts dramatically in mood as Respighi depicts the solemn atmosphere of the ancient burial tunnels beneath Rome. Low brass and organ-like sonorities suggest a distant hymn rising from the depths, creating a sense of reverence and mystery.

In “The Pines of the Janiculum,” Respighi portrays a peaceful nighttime scene on Janiculum Hill, one of the best locations in Rome for a scenic view of central Rome. Featuring a prominent clarinet solo, the music here is lyrical and delicate. The movement is known for the nightingale song that Respighi requested to be played on a phonograph. Respighi calls for the gramophone record, “Il canto dell’Usignolo,” to be played, which was the first ever commercial recording of a live bird, released in Germany in 1910. The final movement, “The Pines of the Appian Way,” portrays pine trees along the historic military road as an army advances at dawn. Respighi



utilizes the organ, brass, and percussion to create the feeling of the ground trembling beneath the army. The music gradually grows in power, culminating in a triumphant procession, evoking the grandeur of ancient Rome.
-Theresa Rukavina



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HELEN MAO

Freshman Helen Mao developed her strong passion for piano at the age of four with Pam Sibbel, Larisa Kanevski, and Dr. Mei-Hsuan Huang. Helen currently studies with Dr. Ksenia Nosikova at the University of Iowa. This year, Helen was the UI Symphony Band pianist, and will also perform Grieg's Piano Concerto with the UI Symphony Orchestra as a winner of the UI Concerto Competition. She is also the winner of the Terrace Hill Senior Division Piano Competition, semifinalist of the 2025 Dubois Piano Competition & Festival, threetime IMTA State winner, three-time MTNA State winner, and Victor Borge Legacy winner. Helen is also a Young Artist who performed with the Central Iowa Symphony and the Fort Dodge Symphony. Significant performances include Carnegie Hall and at the Museum of Danish America. Helen enjoys playing tennis, writing, and percussion, where she performed in the All-State Band (2023) and Orchestra (2024). She loves to perform piano and percussion for her community within ensembles, jazz bands, gigs, and parades. Helen is thankful



for the unconditional support of her family, friends, and teachers. She is currently an Honors student majoring in piano performance and pre-med, and is a member of Iowa's Presidential Scholars Program.

MATTHEW CLARKE

Matthew James Clarke is an aspiring and emerging conductor currently residing in the United States. He currently studies with Dr. Kenny Lee as a DMA student at the University of Iowa, where he serves as a teaching assistant with the University of Iowa Symphony Orchestra and Campus Symphony. He also serves as an assistant conductor with the Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra in Appleton, Wisconsin; a position he has held beginning in August of 2023. He has also participated as a conducting fellow in the Sonfonietta Memphis Conducting Academy in 2023. He served as one of the conducting fellows at the 2023 Lutheran Summer Music Academy and Festival, a post he has also held in the summer of 2021. During the festival, he served as an assistant conductor for the orchestral program, which includes managing the Festival Orchestra and working with students and fellows to grow musically and



in faith, as well as learning from faculty and other fellows. He earned his master's degree in orchestral conducting from Illinois State University in May of 2022, where he served as a graduate assistant for the orchestra department. While learning as a student, he also helped lead the orchestras in rehearsals and performances, including the symphony orchestra and the opera programs offered. His undergraduate degree is in music education, and he completed the degree from Concordia College in May of 2020. Matthew began studying music when he was 9, starting with the cello, where he continued with the instrument, performing in orchestral programs throughout high school and college. He also has learned the organ, piano, and double bass. He has participated in conducting masterclasses with Dr. Matthias Elmer (Switzerland/USA), Maurizio Colasanti (Italy), Phaedra Giannelou (Greece), Dr. Kevin Sütterlin (Germany/USA), and Prof. Christoph Rehli (Switzerland).

GUOYI FAN

Guoyi Fan, a native of Chongqing, China, is currently a DMA student in piano performance at the University of Iowa School of



Music under the tutelage of Dr. Réne Lecuona. She served as a Teaching Assistant during the 2023-2024 academic year and was a Simms Fellow for the 2024-2025 academic year. Guoyi is a winner of the 2025-2026 University of Iowa Symphony Orchestra Concerto/Aria Competition. Her performances have taken her to the United States, Germany, Australia, Hong Kong, and China. She has been actively involved in solo and chamber music performances, including solo recitals and chamber music seasons in New York City, and has appeared as a harpsichordist in 100 Years of German Harpsichord Music in NYC. Guoyi completed both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with the late Professor Phillip Kawin and Dr. Joanne Polk.

YIFEI (JOEY) SUN

Born in China, Yifei(Joey)Sun is a passionate and emerging orchestral conductor. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Iowa, where she also serves as a teaching assistant. Previously, she earned a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Minnesota Duluth.



She held a teaching assistant position while leading numerous performances, including collaborations with the Opera Studio and the University Orchestra. Her conducting journey began with a Bachelor of Music degree from the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou, China. Yifei is the winner of the 35th International Conductors Workshop and Competition. In the 2023 International Competition of the Youth of the Ancient Strings, she secured second place in the Instrumental Conductor category. She has studied under esteemed conductors, including Professor Tongyi Cao, Professor Wei Gao, Professor Rudy Perrault, and Dr. Kenny Lee. Their mentorship has been instrumental in shaping her craft, allowing her to continually refine her skills and captivate audiences worldwide with her artistry.

OLIVER BOSTIAN

Iowa City native Oliver Bostian is a fifth-year undergraduate violist and violinist. The proud son of two excellent musicians, his musical education probably started in the home. Formally, it started with piano lessons at the Preucil School of Music, where he later added violin and viola. Oliver attended Iowa City High School, where he served as concertmaster



of the orchestra. He was also concertmaster of the 2019 Iowa All-State Orchestra, and of the Preucil School String Orchestra while they toured Germany and the Czech Republic. During his time at Iowa, Oliver has served both as concertmaster and principal violist of the University of Iowa Symphony Orchestra. Heavily involved with the Chamber Music Residency Program, Oliver is a member of the Seamark Quartet. His principle instructors at Iowa include Scott Conklin (violin), Christine Rutledge-Russell (viola), and Elizabeth Oakes (chamber music). Oliver also teaches privately, is a conductor and chamber music coach at the Preucil School, and performs frequently with Red Cedar Chamber Music. In his free time he enjoys strategy games, ultimate frisbee, and hanging out with his cat, Leo.

KENNY LEE

Kenny Lee has established himself as an outstanding artist and leader both on the podium and as a cellist. Praised for his “lyricism, drive, tenderness, and passion” (The Times Argus), he has performed as a conductor, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Recent conducting engagements include appearances with



the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Czech Chamber Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony, and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras. An active chamber musician, Lee has collaborated with members of the Berlin Philharmonic and the Juilliard, Cleveland, and Borromeo quartets. As co-founder and artistic director of the Flatirons Chamber Music Festival in Boulder, Colorado, he continues to champion innovative programming. Cello performance highlights include solo and concerto appearances in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, and Eastman Kodak Hall. He recently performed concerti by Dvorak, Haydn, Elgar, and Gulda. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, where he received the Celentano Award for Excellence in Chamber Music, and earned both his MM and DMA with honors from the New England Conservatory. He is currently Assistant Professor and Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Iowa.



UPCOMING EVENTS

For the most current listing of concerts, recitals, and other School of Music events, visit the events calendar.

EVENTS CALENDAR 