

A young woman with a white hair bow, wearing a black strapless dress, is playing a violin. She is in the foreground, slightly to the left. In the background, other musicians are visible, some wearing face masks. The setting is a grand concert hall with wood-paneled walls.

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EXPERIENCE WORLD-CLASS ARTISTRY AT

New England Conservatory

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NEC Symphony

Hugh Wolff, conductor

Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras

with

So Jeong Kim '23 MM, oboe

Winner, NEC Concerto Competition

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Unsuik Chin
(b. 1961)

subito con forza (2020)

Antonino Pasculli
(1882–1971)

*Oboe Concerto on Themes from Donizetti's
'La Favorita'*

Andante – Adagio

Allegretto

Molto largo

Allegro velocissimo

So Jeong Kim '23 MM, oboe

Winner, NEC Concerto Competition

Intermission

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, op. 68

Un poco sostenuto – Allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco allegretto e grazioso

Adagio – Più andante –

Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

Unsus Chin was born in Seoul, studied with György Ligeti in Hamburg, and now lives in Berlin. Winner of the 2004 Grawemeyer Award, she has a keen ear for strikingly original sounds and a wide-ranging emotional palette.

Composed for the celebrations of Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020, Unsus Chin's compact orchestral work *subito con forza* draws inspiration directly from the composer. She writes, "What particularly appeals to me [about Beethoven] are the enormous contrasts: from volcanic eruptions to extreme serenity." Chin embedded references to Beethoven: the Coriolan Overture, Emperor Concerto, and Fifth Symphony all make fleeting appearances. As its title implies, the short work moves abruptly from one mood or style to another, much like jump cuts in a fast-paced film.

Antonio Pasculli was an Italian oboe virtuoso, composer, arranger and conductor. Born in Sicily, he traveled extensively throughout Europe mainly to perform his own virtuoso showpieces. His favored compositional form was a set of variations on a popular operatic work. This tried-and-true technique allows the soloist to show off formidable technique with tunes well known to the public. Many nineteenth century virtuosos did this, notably Liszt with his paraphrases of operas from Mozart to Verdi. Pasculli favored the *bel canto* opera of Donizetti. Their expressive and coloratura vocal lines were ideal for the *cantabile* capabilities of the oboe and its flexibility with fast scales, arpeggios, and roulades. The *Oboe Concerto on Themes from Donizetti's La Favorita* alternates slow and fast variations, including one in minor key, just before the *Allegro velocissimo* coda. A brilliant showcase for any oboist brave enough to take it on, in part due to its difficulty, it is rarely performed.

In a 1933 essay, Arnold Schoenberg wrote, "Form in music serves to bring about comprehensibility through memorability. Evenness, regularity, symmetry, subdivision, repetition, unity, relationship in rhythm and harmony and even logic -- none of these elements produces or even contributes to beauty. But all of them contribute to an organization which makes the presentation of the musical idea intelligible. The language in which musical ideas are expressed in tones parallels the language which expresses feelings or thoughts in words... The aforementioned elements of [music's] organization function like the rhyme, the rhythm, the meter, and the subdivision into strophes, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters in poetry or prose... Progress in music consists in the development of method. Brahms, the classicist, the academician, was a great innovator in the realm of musical language -- in fact, he was a great progressive."

We hardly think of **Johannes Brahms** as a revolutionary. He was the 19th century's throwback -- a brilliant composer more interested in extending and perfecting the methods and structures of the classical era than in the innovations of composers such as Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner (all of whom were at least twenty years older than Brahms). But Schoenberg appreciated Brahms as a composer who created

complex structures built from rigorously organized musical materials, not one seduced by atmosphere, color, or flights of imagination. In this way, Brahms reflects Schoenberg's own rigor in inventing and organizing 12-tone music.

The *First Symphony* is an extraordinary example of Brahms' rigor. He labored long over it – the first sketches dates from 1862; he was forty-three when he finished it in 1876. Contemporary music had already moved far away from Brahms' style: Wagner's complete *Ring* cycle was first performed three months *before* Brahms' symphony. But today Brahms' First Symphony seems more than worth the wait. It begins with one of most intense and anguished utterances in all symphonic music. A powerful chromatic line rises above a throbbing C pedal, followed by quiet falling sixths in the woodwinds. Virtually everything in the movement is derived from these ideas: chromatic lines, the melodic use of the sixth and its inversion, the third (Schoenberg surely approved), and the stubborn persistence of pedal tones denying music that yearns to break free. The serene slow movement opens with a gentle two-bar phrase. Moments later, in another invention Schoenberg admired, it becomes the bass line for a new melody in the oboe. In this movement, the rising chromatic gestures of the first movement take on a more resigned quality. The *scherzo* movement (an invention of Beethoven) is replaced by a gentle dance in two-four time, more in line with the *Rhenish* symphony of Brahms' mentor, Robert Schumann. The *Finale* begins in darkness and gradually makes its way to light, reflecting the direction of the entire symphony. That light first appears a few minutes into the brooding introduction when the air clears and the horn sounds one of the most famous calls ever written. In 1868, Brahms sent Clara Schumann a birthday postcard with this melody given the following words: "Hoch auf'm Berg, tief im Tal, grüß' ich Dich, viel tausendmal!" (High in the mountains, deep in the valley, I greet you thousands of times!) Brahms uses the melody to punctuate the structure of the *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio* that follows – a movement of fervor and passion that carries us breathless to its whirlwind coda.

For Brahms, neurotic about writing a symphony after Beethoven's nine, the gradual public appreciation of this work was gratifying. His close friend Joseph Joachim, writing from England in 1877 after premiering the work there, said the symphony "really gets to people." Surely that is what writing music is all about.

So Jeong Kim is an oboist from South Korea, born in 1995. She commenced her musical journey at Sunhwa Arts School in Seoul, South Korea, where she won the Outstanding Performance Award for achieving the highest score on the performance test among more than 300 students. Her exceptional skills and hard work led her to be awarded various prestigious music competitions, including the Music Association of Korea Competition, the Seoul Music Competition, KUMF (Korea-U.S.A. Music Foundation for Gifted) Music Competition, Nanpa Concours, and Korea Herald Music Competition.

So Jeong Kim continued her education at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea, where she earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Oboe Performance and

received several recognitions, including an excellent performance scholarship for five semesters and the most outstanding freshman award. In South Korea, she received instruction from renowned musicians, including Hyung Sub Kim, Eun Hee Im, Hyung Geun Lee, and Mi Sung Lee.

Currently, So Jeong Kim is pursuing her graduate studies at the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC), under the guidance of John Ferrillo, Principal Oboe of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Anne Gabriele, Second Oboe of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. She has won several distinguished competitions at NEC, including the Concerto Competition (Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, and Harp) and the Honors Ensemble Competition, both in 2022. Her passion for music has also taken her to international events, such as the International Double Reed Society (IDRS) in Granada, Spain, and the Jeju International Wind Ensemble Festival (JIWEF) in Jeju, South Korea. In 2022, she also performed a concerto with Maestro Shin-ik Hahm and his orchestra. Additionally, she was chosen as one of the winners of the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition, which has granted her the opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall in late May 2023.

NEC Symphony
Hugh Wolff, conductor

<i>First Violin</i>	<i>Viola</i>	<i>Bass</i>
Michael Fisher	Nicolette Sullivan-Cozza	Brian Choy
Yirou Zhang	Nathan Emans	Colby Heimburger
Emma Servadio	Harry Graham	Luke Tsuchiya
Sofia Skoldberg	Peter Jablokow	Isabel Atkinson
Darwin Chang	Ru-Yao Van der Ploeg	
Tzu-Ya Huang	Eunha Kwon	<i>Flute</i>
Ryan Tully	Philip Rawlinson	Isabel Evernham *
Gabriella Foster	Jowen Hsu	Honor Hickman ‡
ChiungHan Tsai	Bram Fisher	Subee Kim
Aidan Daniels	Njord Fossnes	Anna Ridenour
Jeremiah Jung		Jou Ying Ting
Tara Hagle	<i>Cello</i>	Nina Tsai §
	Austin Topper	
<i>Second Violin</i>	Max Zhenren Zhao	<i>Oboe</i>
Olga Kaminsky	Asher Kalfus	Yuhsi Chang §
William Kinney	Angela Sun	Robert Diaz ‡
Kearston Gonzales	Sophia Knappe	Corinne Foley *
Abby Reed	Mina Kim	
Sarah Campbell	Phoebe Chen	<i>Clarinet</i>
Maxwell Fairman	Miruna Eyron	Sarah Cho *
Shiyu Wang	Tianao Pan	Xianyi Ji §
Emma Boyd	Zanipolo Lewis	Cole Turkel ‡
Caroline Smoak		

Bassoon

Seth Goldman *

Kangwei Lu

Carson Meritt §

Andrew Salaru ‡

Jialu Wang

Contrabassoon

Seth Goldman

French horn

Mattias Bengtsson *

Huimin Mandy Liu ‡

Graham Lovely

Tess Reagan

Xiaoran Xu §

Trumpet

Justin Park §

Allie Richmond ‡

Cody York *

Trombone

Jaehan Kim

Noah Nichilo

Bass Trombone

Jason Sato

Timpani

Isabella Butler ‡

Mark Larrivee *

Rohan Zakharia §

Percussion

Doyeon Kim

Nga ieng Sabrina Lai §

Eli Reisz *

Piano

Ranfei Wang

Principal players

*Chin

§Pasculli

‡Brahms

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Special thanks to Jason Horowitz, Noriko Futagami, Mickey Katz, Anthony D'Amico and Eli Epstein for their work in preparing the orchestra for this evening's concert.

Hugh Wolff

*Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras;
Chair, Orchestral Conducting*

Hugh Wolff joined the New England Conservatory faculty in 2008 and has conducted a large share of NEC's orchestral concerts every year since then. He has taught graduate students in an elite training program for orchestral conductors since 2009.

Wolff has appeared with all the major American orchestras, including those of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Cleveland. He is much in demand in Europe, where he has conducted the London Symphony, the Philharmonia, the City of Birmingham Symphony, the Orchestre National de France, Czech Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Munich Philharmonic, and the Bavarian and Berlin Radio Orchestras. A regular guest conductor with orchestras in Japan, Korea, Scandinavia, Canada and Australia, he is also a frequent conductor at summer festivals.

Currently Laureate Conductor of the Belgian National Orchestra, Wolff was principal conductor of the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra from 1997 to 2006 and maintains a close relationship with that ensemble. He led it on tours of Europe, Japan, and China, and at the Salzburg Festival. Wolff was principal conductor and then music director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (1988-2000), with which he recorded twenty discs and toured the United States, Europe, and Japan. Performances with the Boston Symphony have included the world premiere of Ned Rorem's *Swords and Ploughshares* in Symphony Hall. Wolff was music director of the New Jersey Symphony (1986-1993) and principal conductor of Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival (1994-1997). He began his professional career in 1979 as associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra under Mstislav Rostropovich.

Wolff's extensive discography includes the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra and music from the baroque to the present. He has recorded or premiered works by John Adams, Stephen Albert, John Corigliano, Brett Dean, Lukas Foss, John Harbison, Aaron Jay Kernis, Edgar Meyer, Rodion Shchedrin, Bright Sheng, Michael Torke, Mark-Anthony Turnage, and Joan Tower and has collaborated on CD with Mstislav Rostropovich, Yo-Yo Ma, Steven Isserlis, Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Dawn Upshaw, Jennifer Larmore, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and jazz guitarist John Scofield. Three times nominated for a Grammy Award, Wolff won the 2001 Cannes Classical Award.

A graduate of Harvard College, Wolff studied piano with George Crumb, Leon Fleisher and Leonard Shure, composition with Leon Kirchner and Olivier Messiaen, and conducting with Charles Bruck. In 1985, Wolff was awarded one of the first Seaver/ National Endowment for the Arts Conducting Prizes.

A gift from the Calderwood Charitable Foundation endowed the Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras chair now occupied by Hugh Wolff. He and his wife, harpist and radio journalist Judith Kogan, have three sons.

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