

Concert Program

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NEC Philharmonia

Hugh Wolff, conductor

Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras

with

Jinyoung Kweon, piano

Winner, 2025-2026 Piano Concerto Competition

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Grażyna Bacewicz
(1909–1969)

Overture (1943)

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906–1975)

Concerto for Piano No. 1 in C Minor, op. 35

Allegretto – Allegro vivace

Lento

Moderato

Allegro con brio – Presto

Jinyoung Kweon, piano

Winner, 2025-2026 Piano Concerto Competition

Sebastián Haros, trumpet

Intermission

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891–1953)

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, op. 100

Andante

Allegro marcato

Adagio

Allegro giocoso

The three works on this evening's program were written in a twelve-year span by Slavic composers caught up in the twentieth century's most turbulent period. Each composer experienced both great success and hardship. Their music shares an accessible language rooted in tonal harmony, brilliant orchestration, and propulsive rhythm. The fundamentally optimistic nature of these pieces belies the difficulties surrounding their creation and is a testament to the inextinguishable creative powers of the composers.

Grażyna Bacewicz was born in Łódź in 1909 to Polish and Lithuanian parents. An accomplished violinist and composer, she studied at the Warsaw Conservatory and with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. In the 1930s, she was concertmaster of the Polish National Radio Orchestra. Her *Overture* was written in 1943. Its fundamentally exuberant character betrays no hint of the dire conditions in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Perhaps the opening timpani motif—three short notes and a long one, repeated many times thereafter—was a subtle message to listeners: the universally recognized Morse code “V” for victory. Following the brutally suppressed Warsaw Uprising, Bacewicz fled to Łódź. Not surprisingly the *Overture* was not performed until 1945, after the war ended.

Dmitri Shostakovich was just eleven years old when the Russian Revolution and civil war convulsed his homeland. A prodigy composer and pianist, his career took off with the success of his First Symphony, written at age of nineteen to fulfill his Leningrad Conservatory degree requirements. His *Concerto No. 1 for Piano, op. 35* was written eight years later, before he ran afoul of the Soviet authorities. In this period, he enthusiastically embraced jazz and vernacular influences, using them within rigorous structures. The cheeky wit of the concerto was intentional—he wrote, “I want to defend the right of laughter to appear in what is called ‘serious music.’ When listeners laugh at a concert of my music, I am not the least shocked—I am pleased.” Scored for piano, strings and trumpet, it loosely follows the three-movement model of classical concerti. The first movement is moody then manic, the second dreamy then violent, with muted trumpet evoking a late-night, smoky jazz bar. Before the finale, Shostakovich inserts a short extra movement, more of an introduction than a separate movement, with the character of a free improvisation. It is as if Shostakovich is looking for an idea that will stick: a little Bach-style counterpoint from the pianist, a stern and dramatic orchestral response, then a hint of Chopin—all tossed aside when the pianist launches into a wild Allegro con brio. Here the wished-for laughter is front of mind. The madcap antics remind us that the young Shostakovich earned money playing piano for silent films, and he was very good at it.

During the German invasion of Russia and sieges of Moscow and Leningrad, many Soviet artists were evacuated 150 miles northeast to the Composers' House, an idyllic artist colony near Ivanovo. There Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Kabalevsky, Miaskovsky, Khachaturian and others worked in relative safety. In the summer of 1944, with the tide of the war turning and a palpable feeling of impending Russian victory, **Sergei**

Prokofiev returned to the symphonic form after a fourteen-year hiatus. His *Fifth Symphony* steps back from the avant-garde edginess of the Second, Third and Fourth Symphonies. A prodigiously gifted melodist, Prokofiev treats us to one glorious long melody after another, giving an overall impression of effusive lyricism. But irony and sarcasm are always just beneath the surface, creating a tension between optimism and pessimism that shapes the emotional landscape of the work. The serenity of the opening melody contrasts with the brutality of the first movement's coda, where tam-tam and cymbal ignite the brass into a final chorale of triumph laced with real anger. The motoric scherzo that follows highlights Prokofiev's wit and brilliant orchestration, but again veers from comic to bitter as the movement careens to an abrupt ending. The lyric slow movement is filled with yearning and dark outbursts and the finale's cheerful, unrestrained optimism turns nasty—like machines gone berserk—just before the symphony's final brilliant flourish.

Prokofiev himself conducted the premiere in Moscow in January 1945. Cannon fire was audible in the hall, celebrating the Russian army crossing the Vistula River on their way to Berlin. The symphony was an immediate and enormous success. Sadly, Prokofiev suffered a fall shortly after and never fully recovered. Serge Koussevitsky conducted the American premiere with the Boston Symphony that November. His personal score to the work, with his own markings in red and blue pencil, now resides in the Boston Public Library and can be viewed online and in person.

— Hugh Wolff

Jinyoung Kweon, a native of Seoul, South Korea, is currently studying with Wha Kyung Byun at the New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts. She gained international recognition after winning first prize at the 2022 Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition, which led to her debut as a soloist with the BSO at Boston's Symphony Hall. In 2021, she was the winner of the Minnesota International e-Piano Junior Competition.

An active soloist, Jinyoung has performed at major concert venues around the world, including Jordan Hall, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Yamaha Ginza Hall in Tokyo, Stadthalle Ettlingen in Germany, Seoul Arts Center's Recital Hall, etc. She has appeared in numerous concerts and recitals internationally, such as First Monday at Jordan Hall, Yamaha Rising Pianists Concert, Parish Center for the Arts Piano Series, Kumho Prodigy Concert Solo Recital, and Kumho Here & Now 20th Anniversary Concert, among others. Jinyoung made her orchestral debut at the age of ten with the Mostly Philharmonic Orchestra.

In addition to these accomplishments, she has received further recognition from competitions including the 2025 Bösendorfer Piano Competition and the 2018 Ettlingen International Piano Competition. Jinyoung has also been invited to participate in prestigious music festivals around the world, such as the Oxford Piano Festival, Morningside Music Bridge, and the Kirishima International Music Festival.

Sebastián Haros, trumpet, is from Arlington, Texas. He began his formal studies at the Interlochen Arts Academy at age 16 and has since performed internationally in Berlin, Vienna, Hamburg, and Prague. This past summer, he toured Mexico as principal trumpet for performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 6* and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. A third-year undergraduate student at New England Conservatory, Sebastián studies with Benjamin Wright.

NEC Philharmonia

Hugh Wolff, conductor

First Violin

David Carreon
Pei Wu Derek Chen
Céline Bethoux
Yen-Hsiang Darwin Chang
Daniel Dastoor
Theresa Katz
Abby Reed
Seungwon Park
Tzu-Ting Chen
Joseph Zamoyta
Joanna Peters
Ryan Tully
Chiung-Han Tsai
Yoonseo Lee

Second Violin

Ashley Tsai
Yeji Lim
Isabella Sun
Mitsuru Yonezaki
Aidan Daniels
Ian Cheung
Yirou Ronnie Zhang
Anatol Toth
June Chung
Kristy Chen
Lena Hwang
Audrey Weizer

Principal players

+ Bacewicz
* Shostakovich
‡ Prokofiev

Viola

Inácia Afonso
Nina Dawallu
Harry Graham
Haobo Bi
Pharida Tangtongchit
Daisy Swanson
Wednesday Hsu
Adam Newman
JeongJae Lee
Jessi Kaufman
John Turner
Daeun Hong

Cello

Grace Kim
Chih-Yi Joy Chu
Phoebe Chen
Austin Topper
Michelle Jung
Gaeun Yoo
Jungyeong Kim
Alexander Shier
Amelia Allen
Shoshanah Israilevich

Bass

Cailin Singleton
I Hsuan Liu
Alyssa Burkhalter
Lawrence Hall
Nicolette Kindred

Flute

Shengyu Cui
Emma Krause ‡
Yufei Wu +

Piccolo

Subee Kim ‡
Haylie Wu +

Oboe

Yuhsi Chang ‡
Caroline Wu +
Timothy Zhang

English horn

Kearsen Erwin

Clarinet

Xunan Chen +
Colin Merkovsky ‡
Robert Ray

E-flat Clarinet

Ethan Morad

Bass Clarinet

Max Reed
Bassoon
Daniel Arakaki
Nathan Muz ‡
Andrew Salaru
Jialu Wang +

Contrabassoon

Zilong Huang

French horn
Elijah Barclift ‡
Huimin Mandy Liu
Mauricio Martinez +
Connor Wood

Trumpet
Maxwell DeForest ‡
Sarah Flynn
Sebastián Haros *
Jake Hepler
Rui Wang +

Trombone
Alvin Ho
Allie Claire Ledbetter +
Drew Robertson ‡

Bass Trombone
Jason Sato

Tuba
Jeffrey Davison ‡
Hayden Silvester +

Timpani
Dillon Akerman ‡
Christian Bartholomew +

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Christian Bartholomew ‡
Jackson Kowalczyk
Raina Liao +
Patrick Sorah

Harp
Jingtong Zhang

Keyboard
Andrew Li, piano

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Special thanks to

Jason Horowitz, Noriko Futagami, Mickey Katz, and Anthony D'Amico
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.

Symphonic Music at New England Conservatory

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Mozart *Symphony No. 31, "Paris"*; Debussy *Nocturnes*; Boulanger *Psaume 129*;
Poulenc *Gloria* - Rena Maduro, soprano
Wednesday, November 5, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Chamber Orchestra, Donald Palma, artistic director
Stravinsky *Apollon musagète*; Dvořák *Serenade in E Major, op. 22*
Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

NEC Baroque Orchestra, Guy Fishman, director
Monday, November 17, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., Brown Hall

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Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

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Welcome to NEC!

I am thrilled to welcome you to New England Conservatory's 2025–26 concert season — a celebration of the power that music has to inspire and connect us to one another.

Whether you are seated in one of our concert halls or watching online, we hope the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists uplift you.

Above all, we thank you for supporting our students as they cultivate their artistry and contribute to the world through music.

Andrea Kalyn
President

A large orchestra is performing in a grand, ornate hall. The conductor, wearing a bright yellow jacket, stands in the center of the stage, facing the orchestra. The musicians are seated in rows, playing various instruments including violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. The hall has a high ceiling with decorative moldings and is lit with warm, golden light. The audience is visible in the foreground, seated in rows of chairs.

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A woman in a graduation gown and a headpiece made of many thin sticks with stars at the ends, has her arms raised in a celebratory gesture. She is wearing a dark gown over a sequined dress. The background is a blurred image of a building with large windows.

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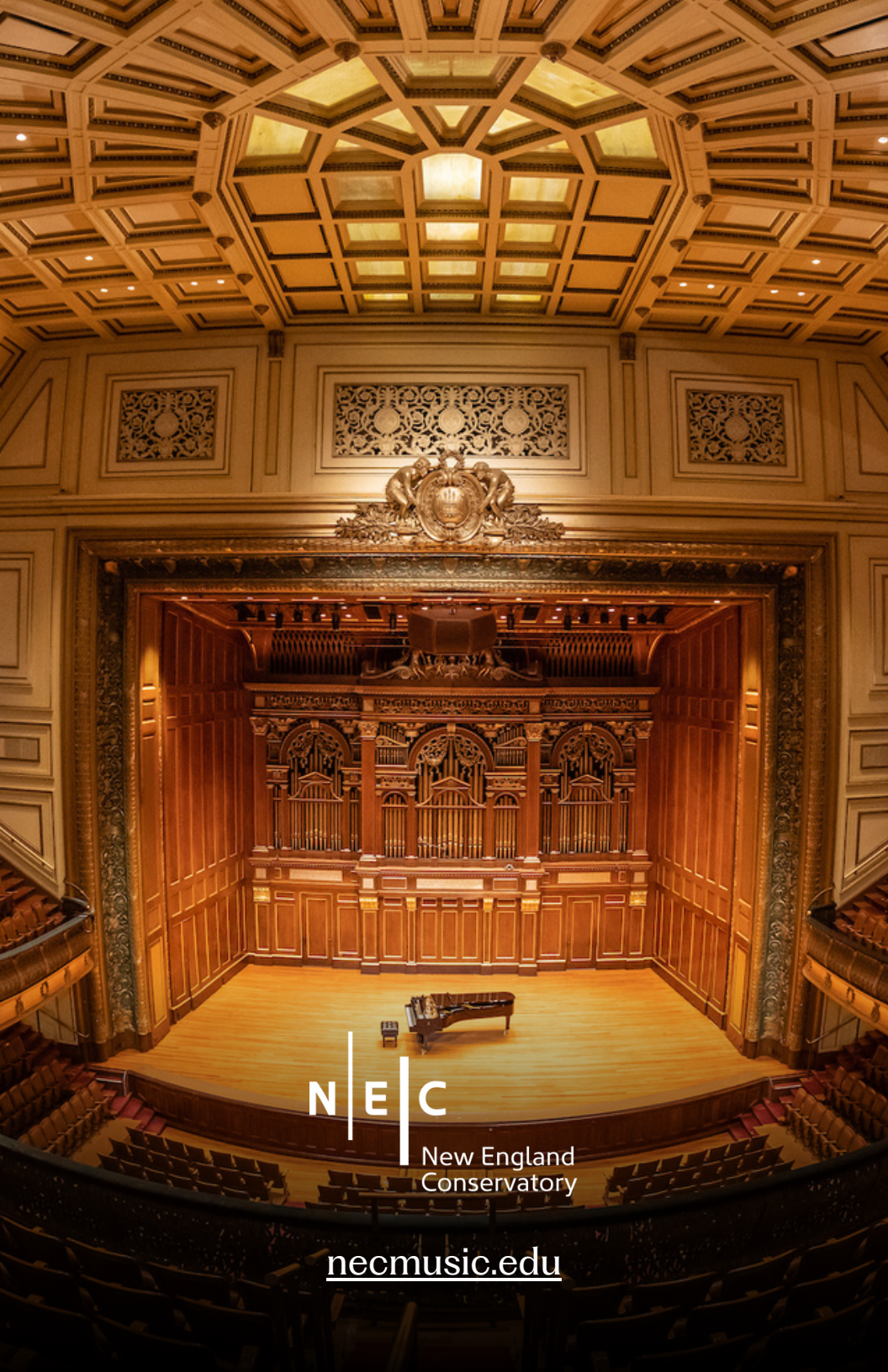
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