

# Concert Program

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# NEC Philharmonia

Hugh Wolff, conductor

*Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras*

with

Joshua Brown '26 AD, violin

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall



## PROGRAM

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**Georg Frideric Händel**  
(1685–1759)

**Concerto Grosso in A Minor, op. 6 no. 4**  
**HWV 322**

Larghetto affettuoso – Allegro  
Allegro  
Largo e piano  
Allegro

*concertino soloists:*

Mitsuru Yonezaki, Kitty Amaral, violin  
Ania Custodio Folch, cello

**Béla Bartók**  
(1881–1945)

***Music for String Instruments, Percussion,  
and Celesta***

Andante tranquillo  
Allegro  
Adagio  
Allegro molto

*Intermission*

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
(1770–1827)

**Violin Concerto in D, op. 61**

Allegro ma non troppo  
Larghetto  
Rondo: Allegro

Joshua Brown '26 AD, violin

The two works on the first half of this evening's concert create drama and expression through the use of physical space. Georg Frideric Händel's Concerto Grosso, op. 6 no. 4 employs a central *concertino* group of solo string players alternating with a larger *ripieno* group behind them. Béla Bartók's *Music for String Instruments, Percussion and Celesta* places two string orchestras on opposite sides of the stage. In both cases, the listener experiences the music spatially and the composer exploits this for dramatic and musical purposes.

In all, **Händel** wrote eighteen *concerti grossi*: six of op. 3 and twelve of op. 6. Alternating two slow and two fast movements, op. 6, no. 4 from 1739 is a fine example of Händel's skills as a contrapuntalist, colorist, and melodist with a keen ear for the expression found in the resolution of dissonant appoggiaturas and the drama of *concertino/ripieno* interplay.

In 1934, Swiss conductor and music impresario Paul Sacher married Maja Stehlin, the widow of Emanuel Hoffman. Stehlin had inherited a fortune from her first husband's business, the pharmaceutical giant Hoffman-La Roche. Connoisseurs and collectors, Sacher and Stehlin supported the arts community generously in Basel, Switzerland where the company was based. Sacher had founded the Basel Chamber Orchestra in 1926; now he had the resources to commission well-known composers in honor of the ensemble's upcoming tenth anniversary. Among the composers chosen were Igor Stravinsky and **Béla Bartók**. The latter contributed his *Music for String Instruments, Percussion and Celesta*, completed in 1936 and premiered the following January. Besides its elaborate stage set-up, the work's most unusual aspect is its scoring. The "string instruments" of the title include the two antiphonal string orchestras plus piano and harp. Among the percussion, timpani and xylophone have prominent roles. The celesta is neither a string nor a percussion instrument, hence its separate listing in the work's title. Generally Bartók uses it in a group with the piano and harp. The celesta player is even required to leave the celesta and join the pianist for some four-hand playing.

The four movement slow-fast-slow-fast form (identical to Händel's) and the opening fugue acknowledge the Baroque *concerto grosso*. But the musical language is rich with the chromaticism of the early 20th century and the folk music that Bartók spent a lifetime gathering from his native Hungary and its neighbors. Another source of inspiration for Bartók was the Fibonacci series and the Golden Mean, upon which much of the music's architecture is based. The Greeks considered the Golden Mean a proportion of ideal balance and beauty. It comes from the ratio of successive Fibonacci numbers. These numbers are derived by starting with 1 and 1 and adding the two previous numbers: hence 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, etc. As the numbers increase in size, the ratio of any one to the previous one approaches the irrational number 1.618033... or 1 plus the square root of 5, divided by 2. This is the Golden Mean proportion. Bartók, too, found beauty in this proportion and designed the first movement accordingly. It is a fugue that opens *pianissimo* with violas starting on an A. Gradually other sections enter: those above the violas each enter a perfect fifth

higher: E, then B, then F#, etc. The lower instruments enter a perfect fifth lower: D, G, C, etc. The music builds in intensity until the rising and falling circles of fifths arrive on a climactic unison *fortississimo* E-flat, the note farthest from the opening A. This moment neatly divides the movement into sections of 55 and 33 measures, closely corresponding to Fibonacci numbers and the Golden Mean. Bartók then reverses the composition: each fugal entrance (now in inversion) returns back around the circle of fifths to a single unison A, as the music makes a long, slow *diminuendo* to *pianississimo*. It is a masterpiece of concise construction, with rigorous counterpoint and a powerful melancholic affect.

The second movement is a folk dance based sonata with a twist: the recapitulation transforms all the material of the exposition from 2/4 to 3/8, polka to waltz, as it were. The third movement nocturne has a favorite form of Bartók's – the arch, a rondo with the shape A-B-C-B-A. The opening xylophone solo explicitly acknowledges the Fibonacci series: the repeated notes are 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, 2, 1 per beat. A mournful dotted figure from violas sets the mood, high violins and celesta form the contrasting B section, and the central C section is a dramatic *crescendo* to repeated 5/4 outbursts. As the form suggests, these ideas return in reverse order. Between each section, as a kind of musical punctuation, Bartók excerpts fragments of the first movements' fugue subject.

The fugue subject makes one more appearance in the work at the climax of the Finale. This movement begins with an almost jazzy syncopated folk tune. After numerous episodes and a frenzied *crescendo/accelerando*, Bartók returns to the opening fugue with two striking differences. What was *pianissimo misterioso* is now an ecstatic *forte espressivo*, and what was chromatic is now diatonic. In this way, Bartók merges the many stylistic elements of the work into a unified whole and reveals his own multiple musical identities: modernist, ethnomusicologist, master of orchestration, counterpoint and architecture, always in search of deep emotional expression.

—Hugh Wolff, December 2025

Violinist **Joshua Brown** has been praised by audiences and critics worldwide for his "richness of sound, elegance of reading...commitment of every moment at the service of the work..." (*La Libre*). Winner of a 2025 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Joshua gained international attention after winning the 2nd Prize and both Audience Awards at the 2024 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. Other international competition successes include the 1st Prize at the inaugural 2023 Global Music Education International Violin Competition in Beijing, China, as well as the 1st Prize and Audience Award at the 2019 International Violin Competition of Leopold Mozart in Augsburg, Germany.

Joshua was first recognized for his debut performance with the Cleveland Orchestra, of which *ClevelandClassical* wrote, "Brilliantly played and expertly paced, Brown's performance checked into every emotional corner... Brown was spell-binding throughout his entire time on stage." Joshua has gone on to perform regularly with orchestras around the world, including the Munich Radio Orchestra, MDR Sinfonieorchester, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Civic Orchestra,

East Coast Chamber Orchestra, Belgian National Orchestra, and Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, among others, continually garnering praise from critics.

A passionate recitalist and chamber musician, Joshua has also appeared regularly in series such as Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series, Festival Musiq3 in Brussels, the Tchaikovsky Festival in Moscow, the ProMusica series in Mexico, the Matinée Musicale series in Cincinnati, the Jupiter Chamber Players series in New York City, and the North Shore Chamber Music Festival in Chicago.

Joshua is currently pursuing his Artist Diploma at the New England Conservatory of Music studying under Donald Weilerstein. He is grateful to be playing an outstanding Nicolo Amati violin from Cremona, circa 1635-1640, on extended loan through the generosity of the Mary B. Galvin Foundation and the efforts of the Stradivari Society, a division of Bein & Fushi, Inc.



**NEC Philharmonia**  
Hugh Wolff, conductor

*First Violin*

Mitsuru Yonezaki  
Jooha Choi  
Anatol Toth  
June Chung  
Arayana Carr-Mal  
Tzu-Ting Chen  
Yeji Lim  
Kuan Hao Yen  
Pei Wu Derek Chen  
Daniel Dastoor  
Joseph Zamoyta  
Tzu-Ya Huang

*Second Violin*

Haram Kim  
Kitty Amaral  
Aidan Daniels  
Yeji Hwang  
William Kinney  
Amelia Cannavo  
Hojung Kwon  
Lena Hwang  
Inés Issel Burzynska  
Isabella Sun

*Bartók only*

Youngran Moon  
Eleanor Markey  
Isabel Chen  
Lingyu Dong  
Yirou Ronnie Zhang  
Kristy Chen  
Youngji Choi

*Principal players*

+ Händel  
\* Bartók  
‡ Beethoven

*Viola*

Wednesday Hsu  
Finn Cruitt  
Inácia Afonso  
Nina Dawallu  
JeongJae Lee  
Jeonghwan Yoon  
Eunjoo Hong  
Jiashu Yin

*Bartók only*

Yu-Heng Wang  
Charlie Picone

*Cello*

Ania Custodio Folch  
Ethan Murphy  
Abigail Leong  
Yein Sim  
Zachary Keum  
ZiJue Wang

*Bartók only*

Lexine Feng  
Eric Schindler  
Eurim Kim  
Hyeonmin Lee

*Bass*

Avery Cardoza  
Luisa Brown-Hernandez  
Alyssa Burkhalter  
Cailin Singleton

*Bartók only*

I Hsuan Liu  
Brian Choy

*Flute*

Haylie Wu

*Oboe*

MacKenzie Kim  
Yuhsi Chang

*Clarinet*

Zoe Schramm  
Frank Tao

*Bassoon*

Owen Schigiel  
Nathan Muz

*French horn*

Chih-Yu Ashley Chiang  
Noah Hawryluck

*Trumpet*

Jake Hepler  
Sarah Flynn

*Timpani*

Jackson Kowalczyk ‡  
Patrick Sorah \*

*Percussion*

Raina Liao  
Brandon Topolski  
Jackson Kowalczyk

*Harp*

Subin Lee

*Keyboard*

Sepehr Davalloukhongar,  
harpichord  
Sean Hong, piano  
Tiffany Lin, celesta, piano

*Orchestra Department*  
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*Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras*

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*Special thanks to*  
Zenas Hsu, Noriko Futagami, Guy Fishman, 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**

Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood Director of Orchestras Hugh Wolff is joined by Associate Director of Orchestras David Loebel, Chamber Orchestra founder Donald Palma, Head of Orchestral Conducting Stefan Asbury, and a rich array of guest conductors and coaches for dozens of FREE orchestral concerts in NEC's Jordan Hall this year.

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### **NEC Lab Orchestra**

Smetana *"The Moldau"* from *Ma Vlast*; Beethoven *Leonore Overture No. 3*, op. 72b;  
Dvořák *Symphony No. 8 in G Major*, op. 88

Clancy Ellis '26 GD, Joseph Bozich '27 GD and Leonard Bopp '27 GD conductors  
*Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall*

### **Other Upcoming Concerts at NEC**

*all programs subject to change*

**Sonata Class Recital**, Vivian Hornik Weilerstein, faculty

*Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., Williams Hall*

### **NEC Conductors' Choir**

Works by Chatman, Gilkyson, Hazzard, Parry, Poulenc, Trumbore, and Victoria  
conducted by Estel Haejin Park, Noah Scecina-White, and Louis Shriber,  
all '27 MM students of Erica J. Washburn

*Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall*

**Faculty Recital: Paula Robison, flute with Paavali Jumppanen, piano**

*"An Hour of Bach and Mozart"*

*Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., Williams Hall*

**Borromeo String Quartet Beethoven Seminar Recital**

*Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall*



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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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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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who remain committed to  
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and who make it possible for our  
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This list reflects  
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*\*Indicates membership in the Tourjée Society. Named after NEC's founder, Eben Tourjée, the Tourjée Society recognizes those who have made a planned gift to NEC. Learn more by contacting Aaron McGarry, Planned Giving Officer, at [aaron.mcgarry@necmusic.edu](mailto:aaron.mcgarry@necmusic.edu) or 617-585-1356.*



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