



School of Music
University of Missouri

2024-2025 Series | Large Ensemble

University Philharmonic Orchestra

Dr. John McKeever, conductor
Julie Rosenfeld, soloist

February 14, 2025 | 7:00pm
Missouri Theatre

Program

An der schönen blauen Donau, Op. 314 Johann Strauss II
(1825-1899)

Violinkonzert Alban Berg
(1885-1935)

I. Andante - Allegretto

II. Allegro - Adagio

Julie Rosenfeld, violin

Intermission

Variationen über ein Thema von Joseph Haydn, Op. 56a Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Chorale St. Antoni - Andante

Var. I – Poco più animato

Var. II – Più vivace

Var. III – Con moto

Var. IV – Andante con moto

Var. V – Vivace

Var. VI – Vivace

Var. VII – Grazioso

Var. VIII – Presto non troppo

Finale – Andante

University Philharmonic Orchestra Personnel

Flutes

John Goodson
Haley Parks
Kyrsten Wehner

Oboes

Sophia Fasone
Sadie Middleton

Clarinets

Meghan Brown
Sophie Browning
Samantha Decker
Jane Guillot-Beinke

Bassoons

Ashley Cypher
Luke Frith
Noah Lucas

Saxophone

Warren Lane

Horns

Emily Aponte
Alexis Doebelin
Sydney Hendrickson
Cameron Kelly
Sean Roche

Trumpets

Jesse Hamilton
Brandon Sconce
Bryce Taylor

Trombones

Andrew Busch
Jackson Denney
Tyler Martindale

Tuba

Christopher Gentilia

Percussion

Luke Haymon
Tanner Prewitt
Ajay Tosh
Camihle Williams

Harp

Sadie Rinck

Violins

Maya Anand
Kip Atteberry
Nevaeh Bouska
Nathan Bronstein
Bria Carradine
Angelina Casey
Alexandre Negrão *
Lydia Davis
Mary Draxler
Sophia Edwards
Breanne Garstang
Thomas Goff
Sofia Heredia
Matthew Kim
Wendy Kleintank +
Drew Lubiewski
Brandon Merchant
Hadley Miller
Ethan Nguyen
Abigail Richmond
Thomas Robert
Ethan Sanders
Lucia Smith
Kyle Stawiarski
Sydney Studer
Simon Whitty

Violas

Ella Frank
Parker Krudop
Kara Lawson
Elaina Maurer *
Ash Merenbloom
Josephine O
Rebecca Winters

Cellos

Sydney Bolden
Marcus Fitch
Sophie Hof
Sara Lawson
Mason Murphy *
Jillian Orendain
Henry Rao
Rebecca Robuck
Preston Smith
Dean Wibe

Basses

Kelsey Atteberry
Samuel Caldwell *
Sydney Hoynacki
Lucas Reaume
Trey Rolfes

+ - Concertmaster

* - Principal String

Names are listed in alphabetical order, seatings for the winds and percussion rotate on each piece

Biographies

Violinist **Julie Rosenfeld** is “a force of nature”, according to *American Record Guide* in its review of her CD *New Music for Violin and Piano*. For 32 years she was the First Violinist of the Colorado String Quartet, playing more than 1200 concerts in over 20 countries. Winners in 1983 of both the First Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, the Quartet’s extensive discography includes the complete Quartets of Beethoven as well as works by Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Astor Piazzolla, as well as distinguished contemporary composers. The group held residencies at Bard, Oberlin, Swarthmore and Amherst Colleges, and taught Master Classes at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Cincinnati College Conservatory, Eastman School of Music and at Yale University, among others. They founded and co-directed the Soundfest Institute and Festival of String Quartets in Falmouth, Massachusetts for 22 years.

In the Fall of 2014, Ms. Rosenfeld joined the faculty of the University of Missouri School of Music and became a member of the resident Esterhazy String Quartet. From 2009 until 2013, Ms. Rosenfeld was Assistant Professor of Violin In-Residence at the University of Connecticut and from 2000 to 2009 was a Visiting Professor of Music at Bard College. She has also taught at the European Mozart Academy in Poland, and in Master Classes throughout the United States and Canada.

Ms. Rosenfeld has served as a member of the jury for the Astral Foundation, the Juilliard School, the Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation, and the Concert Artists Guild, as well as at the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Fischhoff, Plowman and Coleman Chamber Music Competitions. She has performed at the Marlboro, Santa Fe, Newport, and La Jolla Chamber Music Festivals, and has taught and performed at the Atlantic Music Festival at Colby College in Maine. She has appeared as a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and collaborated with André Previn on the West Coast premiere of his Violin Sonata and on two CDs of French chamber music for BMG Classics. Ms. Rosenfeld’s most recent recording with her MU colleague Peter Miyamoto is the Albany CD titled *New Music for Violin and Piano*, which received a 2019 GRAMMY Award nomination in the category “Producer of the Year” for Judith Sherman and rave reviews in *Fanfare Magazine*, *Performing Arts Review* and *American Records Guide*.

A native of Los Angeles, Rosenfeld attended the Curtis Institute of Music, then received

her Bachelor of Music from the University of Southern California and her Master of Music from Yale University, studying under such eminent teachers as Szymon Goldberg, Robert Mann, Nathan Milstein, Jascha Brodsky, Raphael Hillyer, Yukiko Kamei, and Israel Baker.

Ms. Rosenfeld plays a violin crafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini around 1750, and uses bows made in the early 19th Century by Dominique Peccatte and Nicolas Maire.

John McKeever is the Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. In 2022/23 Dr. McKeever was the Assistant Conductor for the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Dr. McKeever also worked as the Assistant Conductor for Piedmont Opera, where he conducted their 2023 production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Dr. McKeever earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Colorado Boulder, graduating in 2021. As a graduate teaching assistant, he served as the director of the CU Boulder Campus Orchestra. He also served as an Assistant and Cover Conductor for the Boulder Philharmonic.

Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Dr. McKeever began his studies on the piano. While continuing on the piano, he switched his focus to the double bass in elementary school. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Double Bass Performance at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studied with Paul Sharpe. While a student at UNCSA, Dr. McKeever developed an interest in conducting and began to work as an assistant conductor for the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute, Piedmont Opera, and several UNCSA musicals. Dr. McKeever continued his studies at UNCSA, earning a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting in 2015.

From 2012-2018, Dr. McKeever served as the Assistant Conductor for Piedmont Opera in Winston-Salem, NC. In 2018 he made his conducting debut with the company in Piedmont Opera's production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In 2016, Dr. McKeever shadowed the American Ballet Theatre's spring season at the Metropolitan Opera at the invitation of the company's principal conductor, Charles Barker. Dr. McKeever's teachers include James Allbritten, David Amado, Charles Barker, Michael Jinbo, Christopher James Lees, Gary Lewis, Jonathan Schiffman, and Kevin Stites.

For more information, please visit johnmckeeperconductor.com.

Program Notes

An der schönen blauen Donau, Op. 314 (1867)

Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

On the Beautiful Blue Danube, or the *Blue Danube Waltz*, is one of Johann Strauss II's most recognizable pieces. The work was originally a choral work with ten verses by the poet Joseph Weyl that were a rather sarcastic commentary on Austria's recent military defeats at the hands of the Germans. This text was later replaced with more sentimental lyrics about the Danube River and Austria through which it flows. In 1867, Strauss reworked the piece into the orchestral version heard today for the Paris World's Fair. This version was tremendously received and quickly became one of Strauss' most popular works with some critics calling it a musical success to rival Austria's military failures.

Johann Strauss II is commonly known as the "Waltz King," having written over 150 waltzes as a part of the almost 500 dance pieces from his compositional output. Trained as a violinist, Strauss founded his own dance band in 1844 and after his father's death in 1849, he combined his band with his father's orchestra and began to tour. While leading his band, Strauss stayed active as a composer. In 1870, he handed leadership of the band over to his brothers to focus on composition and conducting engagements. Strauss' music was heard in dance halls and homes across Europe and the United States throughout the second half of the 19th century as the quintessential popular music of the time.

The *Blue Danube Waltz* is a classic example of the waltz in the standard five-part form. The piece begins with an introduction that seems to come from a distance, hinting in the horns and cellos at the music to come. There are five separate waltzes within the work, each with its own unique character. The woodwinds, violins, and cellos find themselves frequently in the spotlight, but there are moments throughout the piece where the entire orchestra shines brilliantly. The work concludes with a long coda that reprises material from earlier in the piece before sending the dancers whirling off into the night.

Several years after the premiere of the *Blue Danube Waltz*, Strauss' wife encountered Johannes Brahms and asked him to sign her fan. Brahms, who had been friends with Strauss for many years, wrote out the first few bars of the *Blue Danube* on her fan followed by the text "Leider nicht von Johannes Brahms." This translates to "Alas – not written by Johannes Brahms."

Alban Berg, a member of the Second Viennese School, was working on his opera *Lulu* when two events happened that ultimately led to the creation of his *Violin Concerto*. Firstly, he was approached by the Russian-born American violinist Louis Krasner (1903-1995) with a commission for just such a work. Berg was at first reluctant to accept this commission, but Krasner was able to talk him into it in part by reminding him of all the other great composers who had written violin concertos, Beethoven and Brahms among them, but mostly by suggesting to Berg that he was the composer who was capable of demonstrating the lyric and expressive potential of twelve-tone music and to be able to free it from the idea that it was “all brain, no heart.” The twelve-tone compositional style was developed by Arnold Schoenberg, with whom Berg studied composition, and it is certainly true that Berg’s approach to this compositional style is much more lyric than that of his teacher.

The second event that led to the creation of the *Violin Concerto* was the death of Alma Mahler’s daughter, Manon Gropius, at the age of 18 on April 22, 1935. Berg had long been a friend of the Mahler’s, and he was devastated by Manon’s death. He began to envision the concerto as a Requiem for Manon. The title page bears two inscriptions, first “Für Louis Krasner” and second “Dem Andenken eines Engels” (“to the memory of an angel”). Regrettably, the piece would also come to serve as a Requiem for his own life. Berg completed the *Violin Concerto* on August 12, 1935. He died shortly thereafter on December 24, 1935. This would be the last piece that Berg completed. Louis Krasner gave the premiere of the work on April 19, 1936, in Barcelona at an International Society for Contemporary Music festival.

The *Violin Concerto* is written in two movements, each divided into two parts. The first movement begins softly and gently with arpeggios in the harp and clarinets answered by the open strings of the violin. From this foundational point for the violin, the movement gains momentum and a sense of direction. This opening acts as a kind of prelude for the second half of the first movement, a joking and wistful Allegretto that features music that Berg himself describes as “Viennese” and “rustic” in the score. He also quotes a Carinthian folk song towards the end of the first movement, passing the melody around between the horn, solo violin, and trumpets.

The second movement begins with an intensity of dissonance that Berg had avoided up until this point in the piece. A sharp and intense dotted rhythm is heard throughout the opening of this movement, its rigidity contrasted with the cadenza-like feel that the solo

violin is instructed to play with. Eventually the violin wins out and a true cadenza breaks up the intensity of the orchestra before the full force of the ensemble is employed to reach a musical climax. But this climax is not the end of the movement, it instead fades away into the second half of the movement, a theme and variations on a Bach chorale. The chorale is heard first in the solo violin, with some orchestral accompaniment, and then in Bach's original harmonization in a quartet of clarinets.

The chorale that Berg uses in this piece comes from Bach's Cantata No. 60, *O Eternity, Thou Word of Thunder*, and it is entitled "It is enough." Not only does the opening melodic line of the Bach chorale line up directly with the last four notes of the compositional row that Berg is using in this piece, but the sentiment of the chorale, "it is enough," is perfectly aligned with the emotional sentiment of the piece. The full text of the chorale is quoted below.

*It is enough!
Lord, if it please you,
Unyoke me now at last!
My Jesus comes:
Now good night, o world!
I travel to my heavenly home,
I travel surely and in peace,
My great distress remains below.
It is enough! It is enough!*

As the variations on this chorale fade away, we hear faint recollections of music from the first movement. The Carinthian folk song is recalled, now even slower and farther away. As the piece comes to its close, we hear in the horns one final statement of "it is enough" followed by the violins playing their open strings, closing the piece exactly as it opened.

Variationen über ein Thema von Joseph Haydn, Op. 56a (1873) Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

The first thing to know about Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn* is that Haydn did not actually write the theme. We do not know who wrote the theme, perhaps it was Haydn's student Ignaz Pleyel, but we know it was not Haydn. The original theme used in this piece comes from a woodwind octet and it bore the title *Chorale St. Antoni*. Here another question arises. Was this a known chorale or just an invented tune by this unknown composer? Musicologists have not been able to answer that question either. In

reality, it matters very little. What does matter is that Brahms knew of this work and in 1873 he decided to sit down and write a set of orchestral variations based on it. This is historically important because according to Jonathan Kramer this is “apparently the first set of independent (not part of a larger work) variations ever composed by anyone for orchestra.” Since Brahms completed this piece, many other great composers have gone on to write outstanding sets of variations for the orchestra.

Brahms begins this piece with a straightforward presentation of the theme. He honors its origins as a woodwind octet in his orchestration, having the winds lead with the way with support from pizzicato cellos and basses. It is interesting to note that the first half of this theme is made up of two five-bar phrases as opposed to the more common four-bar structure. As Brahms’ variations unfold, he plays around with where he does, and perhaps more interestingly, where he does not honor that five-bar structure.

Brahms is truly a master of the theme and variation as a form. He takes it to new levels of complexity from his predecessors in the classical era, using this “older” structure as a way to explore his romantic tendencies as a composer in contrast to the more radical composers of the romantic era who were seeking out new musical forms entirely. As each variation progresses and the music becomes more and more complex, it can at times be difficult to hear how the variations relate back to the original theme, but connections are always there with outlines or harmonic underpinnings of the original theme ever-present. Brahms’ writing for the orchestra in this piece is rich and wonderful, offering opportunities for the whole ensemble to shine. This culminates in the finale of the piece where Brahms begins with a passacaglia using the five-bar opening of the main theme as the repeating bassline which is repeated for 85 measures before the orchestra finally bursts out into a full-throated restatement of the original theme that leads to the joyous conclusion of the piece.