

Candlelit performance of

Butterfly Lovers

Violin Concerto

Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 4 in F minor

McANINCH ARTS CENTER
Apr 12-13, 2025



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After your visit, please stay connected with us by joining us on Facebook (AtTheMAC) or subscribing to our e-newsletter to find out about added shows, events, and special offers (www.AtTheMAC.org). We challenge you to try something new at the MAC and expand your cultural palate. Come see the New Philharmonic Orchestra or a Buffalo Theatre Ensemble play. Or join us this summer for the Hokusai exhibit. We are grateful for your presence here and we want to ensure that your visit is enjoyable. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask any of the staff and we will do our best to accommodate you.

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It has been a great honour to serve as your music director for the past 20 seasons.

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KERK MUSERAA

Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor

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Ravel Piano Concerto, Winston Choi, piano & Mahler Symphony No. 1

Sat, Oct 5, 7:30p I Sun, Oct 6, 3p

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New Year's Eve Concert

Sun, Dec 31, 1:30, 5 & 8:30p Richard Ollarsaba, bass-baritone

The Elixir of Love by Gaetano Donizetti

Sat, Jan 25, 7:30p I Sun, Jan 26, 3p

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 and **Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto** Sat, Apr 12, 7:30p I Sun, Apr 13, 3p Yang Liu, violin

For tickets and information, call (630) 942-4000 or visit AtTheMAC.org

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New Philharmonic Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor 48th Season 2024-2025

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor and Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto

Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor

Yang Liu, violin

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



Media Support provided by



Sat, Apr 12, 2025, 7:30p Sun, Apr 13, 2025, 3p Belushi Performance Hall

Kirk Muspratt Music Director and Conductor

Yang Liu, violin

The Butterfly Lov	vers Violin Concerto		en Gang an o. 1935)	d He Zhanhao (b. 1933)
I.	Adagio cantabile		,	, ,
II.	Allegro			
III.	Adagio assai doloro	oso		
IV.	Pesante–Piu mosso			
V.	Lagrimoso			
VI.	Presto resoluto			
VII.	Adagio cantabile			
	Yang	g Liu , violin		
Performed in lov	igma Variations, op. ing memory of Maes ic founding conducto	tro Harold Bauer,		. Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
	INTE	RMISSION		
• .	lo Competition Winner 4 Gigue"			J.S. Bach
	, op. 36			
Symphony No. 4	, υρ. 30		. Pyoti ilyic	(1840-1893)
I.	Andante sostenuto			
II.	Andantino in modo	di canzona		
III.	Scherzo: Pizzicato o	ostinato		
IV.	Finale: Allegro con	fuoco		



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a toda madre





The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto is one of the most famous Chinese works of orchestral music. It is an adaptation of an ancient legend, the Butterfly Lovers, and is written for Western-style orchestra and solo violin.

This concerto is written using the traditional 5-note technique pentatonic scale. The piece draws inspiration from Yue Opera for its melodies, chord structures, and patterns, and attempts to imitate the playing techniques of Chinese musical instruments, including the Erhu and Pipa. These elements give the piece a distinctive Chinese sound, although scholars note the concerto still uses Western tonal harmonies and borrows from the Western sonata form.

History

The concerto was written in 1959 by two Chinese composers, He Zhanhao born 1933 and Chen Gang born 1935 while they were students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. While Gang was known as a top composer at the conservatory, he had previously worked for a Yue Opera troupe and was familiar with the opera style's conventions. The composition project began as the result of an activity in 1958 at the conservatory, where students were tasked with learning traditional Chinese works in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

He Zhanhao is more widely credited for the composition of the concerto. However, his main contribution was the famous opening theme, while most of the development was written by Chen Gang. This was revealed in an interview by China Central Television with several artists contributed in the creation and popularity of this work in China and worldwide.

The premiere of the Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto took place at the Shanghai Music and Dance Festival on May 27, 1959, featuring 18-year-old violinist Yu Lina, as part of the celebration of the tenth anniversary year of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Chen and Yu recount that the inaugural performance enjoyed uproarious applause, which continued even after the composers and performers concluded their performance.

The concerto was banned during the <u>Cultural Revolution</u>, as fellow composers and political figures associated the <u>folktale</u> with anti-Communist themes that exalted the bourgeoisie, further promoting counter-revolutionary messages such as individual liberation and the supremacy of love.

In 1978, the piece resurfaced at the Shanghai Spring festival, thereby signaling a larger revival of the piece in China and beyond. The concerto received widespread acclaim and several gold records throughout the 1980s. Today, the concerto is widely referred to as "our symphony" in China, as the piece blends Western orchestra form with Chinese folklore, musical tradition, and national pride.

The piece was first recorded in 1959 with Yu as soloist and the Symphony Orchestra of Shanghai Music Conservatory conducted by Fan Chengwu and later by Shen Rong in 1961 with the same orchestra and conductor. The latter recording was re-released in 1977 by China Record Company. A recording of the work with Gil Shaham as the violin soloist that is conducted by Lan Shui leading the Singapore Symphony Orchestra is heard often on radio stations such as WSMR (FM), Sarasota Manatee Classical.

Story and musical elements



Monument to Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai near the Tombe di Giulietta in Verona, Italy

The concerto is in one movement but is broken into seven distinct sections. Each tells a different part of the story of the <u>Butterfly Lovers</u>. Some of the melodies come from the <u>Chinese Opera</u> of the same name or from traditional Chinese folk songs. The solo violin of the concerto is symbolic of Zhu Yingtai, the story's protagonist, and the cello part is symbolic of Liang Shanbo, her lover.

I. Adagio Cantabile

The concerto begins with two-fifths in D by the harp, after which a solo flute opens with a flowery melody, setting the scene of the story. A solo oboe enters with the strings in G major, after which the solo violinist enters and begins a simple melody. This melody comes from a Chinese folk song of the Yellow River (Huanghe) and tells the story of Zhu Yingtai's childhood. The solo violin is accompanied by a harp and other elements of the orchestra. On the road to Hangzhou for her studies, Zhu (disguised as a man) meets Liang for the first time; a cello solo intertwines with the violin, bringing a new, but still melodious theme and modulating to D major. As the cello exits, the orchestral tutti plays the same melody of the solo violin, with occasional violin entrances in between. As the first buds of love begin to blossom, a short violin cadenza using mostly the G-pentatonic scale expresses Zhu's joy of her and Liang's oath of fraternity.

II. Allegro

The orchestra begins the next section in E major, the violin entering with a fast and jovial melody, representing Zhu and Liang's busy three years of school. Many examples of violin technique are represented, namely spiccato, fast playing over a wide range of notes, and even arpeggios, in a standard display of difficulty for a violin concerto.

III. Adagio assai doloroso

As the end of their schooling draws near, Liang and Zhu grow sad as they realize that their time together is nearly over. Zhu invites Liang to visit her family and to court her sister. He doesn't know that Zhu is really inviting him to marry her. Liang promises to see Zhu again, but Liang waits before doing so.

IV. Pesante – Piu mosso – Duramente

When Zhu returns home, she finds that her father has promised her to the son of a rich family. The solo violin struggles against the forces of the orchestra, representing her protests against her father.

V. Lagrimoso

When Liang arrives, he sees Zhu and realizes that she is a woman, and they fall in love. The solo violin and cello solo play an emotional duet, one of the most famous and powerful sections of the work.

VI. Presto resoluto

The love duet between the two is replaced by anger as Liang learns that in his absence, Zhu has been betrothed to another. The solo violin launches into a brilliant and difficult passage, supported by chords from the orchestra, but eventually returns to the original melody representing love, accompanied again by the cello solo. Liang becomes sick and dies as the duet draws to a close. Another virtuosic section for the solo and orchestra combines both the slow melodies and the fast energetic passages introduced before. The section ends with the suicide of Zhu as the solo violin ends with an abrupt high note.

VII. Adagio cantabile

The lovers' parts are united by a final section, with the solo violin and the orchestra redeveloping the opening theme to build to a triumphant climax. The concerto ends bittersweetly with a final melodic phrase from the solo violin, concluding mysteriously on a high D from the strings. In the legend, Liang's grave opens and Zhu throws herself into the chasm; the ending portraying the lovers' transformation into butterflies, never to be separated again.

Program notes courtesy of Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia





Violinist Yang Liu is enjoying his life in music-making on stages across the continents. He tours in North America, South America, and Asia with world-leading orchestras. Liu also travels with his wife Olivia as duo Yang and Olivia in concert tours across the United States and Asia, sharing their love, joy and faith through music. An avid advocate of

cultural diversity, equality, and inclusion via classical music, he is a founder of Yang and Olivia Foundation and Momento Virtuosi, a chamber ensemble of diverse ethnicity and instrumentation.

Liu is the prize winner of the Twelfth International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, first prize winner of the American Prize in String Performance in 2023, the 2022 Medici International Competition, the 2021 International Artists Award Competition, and China's fifth National Competition. He made his North American debut in 2002 with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performing Paganini's First Violin Concerto. This success was followed by touring engagements with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Spano; Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra; Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra; the Odense Symphony Orchestra, Denmark; and São Paulo Symphony, Brazil. In the greater Chicago area, he has performed with Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra, Lake Forest Symphony Orchestra, Highland Park Strings, North Park Symphony Orchestra, and Oak Park Symphony Orchestra. He also completed a five-city tour in China performing the Butterfly Concerto with Qingdao Symphony Orchestra, as part of the China-US cultural exchange initiated by Secretary of State of the US John Kerry, and chairman of the cultural department of China Mr. Luo. Throughout his career, he has performed in more than 40 countries.

Liu was honored to be featured in a documentary called "String of Heart—Yang Liu" highlighting Liu's artistic life. This production was aired on CCTV (China Central Television) throughout China, together with his autobiographical book "Performing in Love" which was published in the spring of 2014. In 2017, Liu performed on China's most prestigious special New Year TV program in Qingdao, which reached tens of million of viewers. Liu was also a featured performer in Starling's Emmy Award-winning educational video, Classical Quest. His debut recording, "Song of Nostalgia," was released to critical acclaim. This recording, along with many of his live performances, is frequently heard on National Public Radio in the USA.

Liu resides in Chicago with his wife Olivia and two happy boys, he frequently performs and teaches in the Great Wall Music Academy led by

his former teacher Kurt Sassmannshaus, the Aspen music festival, the Ravinia Festival, the Chicago classical music radio WFMT, and SESC international music festival of Brazil, and he gives master classes in major universities and music conservatories.

Liu studied with Lin, Yaoji in Beijing, China, then moved to the US in 1998 to study with Kurt Sassmannshaus and Dorothy Delay.

Liu plays a Guarneri made in 1741 on a generous loan from the Stradivari Society and the Bein & Fushi Rare Violi.



Kirk Muspratt (Music Director and Conductor) recently received the Conductor of the Year award from the Illinois Council of Orchestras. He was also named "Chicagoan of the Year" in classical music by John von Rhein and the staff of the *Chicago Tribune*. In honoring Muspratt, von Rhein said, "Ask the delighted adults and kids who this year flocked to his concerts in west suburban Glen Ellyn

with the New Philharmonic Orchestra ... They will tell you he made concert going an interactive experience that was both enlightening and — are you ready? — fun."

Recognized as one of the outstanding figures in the new generation of conductors, Muspratt has garnered international critical acclaim as a "born opera conductor" (*Rheinische Post*), "a knowledgeable musician who delivers superbly controlled, gorgeously shaped readings" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*), and "friend to local music" (*Midwest Beat Magazine*). The Los Angeles Times declared, "Watch him!"

This season marks the 20th anniversary of Muspratt being both Music Director of New Philharmonic and Artistic Director/Music Director of DuPage Opera Theatre (now New Philharmonic Opera). In his last fifteen years, productions featured *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Il Barbiere di Seviglia*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *La Boheme*, *Faust*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *The Beggars Opera*, *Elixir of Love*, *Turandot*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Cosi fan Tutte*, *The Mikado*, *La Traviata*, and *Die Fledermaus*.

In 2017 and 2009, New Philharmonic was awarded Professional Orchestra of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

In his first months at New Philharmonic, Muspratt instituted a Side-by-Side program for local high school students. Five years ago, Muspratt initiated a

popular Solo Competition for Children that results in a child performing at every New Philharmonic concert. In order to involve the community to the maximum, Muspratt has created "Just Ask Kirk™" cards for audience members' questions and a "Kirkature™" cartoon to help advocate the credo: "Classical music is for everyone."

Muspratt begins his 23rd acclaimed season as Music Director of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra (NISO). In 2006, with NISO, he initiated the South Shore Summer Music Festival.

From 1991 through 1996, Muspratt served as resident conductor to Lorin Maazel at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Prior to that, he was appointed as associate conductor to Joseph Silverstein at the Utah Symphony Orchestra (1990-1992). From 1987 through 1990, Muspratt served as assistant conductor to Leonard Slatkin at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra as well as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. He was music director of the Alberta Ballet from 1997 through 1999. At the New York Philharmonic, Muspratt has served as a cover conductor. During the 2018 and 2019 season Muspratt served as a guest conductor at the Joffrey Ballet.

In addition to his work in Pittsburgh, Utah and St. Louis, Muspratt has guest conducted the orchestras of Los Angeles, Montreal, London, Korean Broadcast Symphony, Detroit, Rochester, National Arts Center, Vancouver, Knoxville, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Victoria, Thunder Bay, New Orleans, Stamford, Binghamton, Lafayette, South Bend, Puchon, Annapolis, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and Baltimore Chamber Symphony. Summer debuts have included the Tanglewood, Chautauqua and Sewanee Music Festivals and the Banff Center for Performing Arts.

In Europe, Muspratt was assistant conductor in the opera houses of Monchengladbach/Krefeld, Germany, from 1985 to 1987. His American opera-conducting debut came with the Utah Opera in 1991. He returned there to premiere Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. Maestro Muspratt has conducted *Die Fledermaus* for the Calgary Opera, *Faust* and *Merry Widow* for the Utah Opera, *Of Mice and Men* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Arizona Opera, all to stunning critical acclaim. In addition, he debuted at the Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Opera Festival in Virginia. He returned to Arizona Opera to conduct their production of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, to the Utah Opera for their new production of *Faust* and *Amahl and the*

Night Visitors at Opera Illinois.

In 1983 and 1984, Muspratt was invited to be a scholarship student at the Chautauqua Institute and in 1986 was selected as a conducting fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. A year later, he was invited into the Conducting Program at the Tanglewood Festival. In 1988, he was chosen to be one of three conducting fellows for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute at the Hollywood Bowl.

As a teacher, Muspratt has taught at the Conductors' Institute of the University of South Carolina, the Conductors' Guild National Workshops, Association of Canadian Orchestras National Conference in Toronto, the Conductors' Studio at Illinois State University and at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. During the summer, he has often taught a graduate conducting class at VanderCook College of Music and for the last three summers has been teaching at the Northwestern University Summer Opera Seminar. In 2019, he taught graduate conducting master classes at Illinois State University and judged the concerto competition at Northwestern University.

Having always enjoyed working with young people, he has conducted the Pennsylvania Regional Orchestra and the Pennsylvania All-State Orchestra and most recently the IMEA District 9 orchestra. Muspratt has conducted the Boston University Tanglewood Orchestra at the Tanglewood Festival.

Muspratt has been the recipient of numerous awards, among them grants from the Canada Council and the Presser Foundation. In 1983 and again in 1984, he was winner of the Strauss Conducting Prize while a conducting student at the Vienna Conservatory. During his tenure in Utah, he received the first Utah Up 'n Comers Award ever given to a classical musician. This honor was awarded to Muspratt for his work and involvement in the Utah Arts Community. In 1987, he was named winner of the prestigious Exxon/Affiliate Artists Award.

He began his studies as a pianist in New York with Harold Zabrack and continued his studies at Temple University with Adele Marcus and Alexander Fiorillo. After completing graduate studies, Muspratt was accepted into the conducting program at the Konservatorium in Vienna, Austria.

Muspratt is a native of Crows Nest Pass, Alberta, Canada. He became an American citizen in the summer of 2010.

In 2016, he was honored to become a Paul Harris Fellow, an award named for the Rotary International Founder, Paul Harris.



Benjamin Nadel is a classically trained conductor, pianist, and violinist based in the Chicago area. From 2016-2024 he was the Associate Conductor and Orchestra Librarian for the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra. He has held those same two positions at the New Philharmonic since 2016. In addition, he has been the Orchestra Director at North Central College since 2017 and the Northwest Indiana Symphony Youth Orchestra since

2022. Fall of 2024 marks his first season as Music Director for the Youth Symphony of DuPage.

From 2011 – 2015 Nadel spent his summers with the Midwest Institute of Opera, as the assistant conductor to Maestro Joshua Greene of the Metropolitan Opera. While there, he conducted productions of *Don Giovanni, Così fan tutte*, and *Carmen* in addition to assisting and coaching productions of *Die Zauberflöte* and *La Cenerentola*.

Nadel began his conducting studies with Dr. Glenn Block at Illinois State University while completing his undergraduate degree in Music Education. He then went on to receive his MA in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Iowa with Dr. William LaRue Jones. He has participated in several summer music festivals, including a program with Cincinnati Conservatory as a part of the summer music festival in Spoleto, Italy.

Aside from his work as a professional conductor, Nadel has a strong connection and personal interest to music education. He believes that one of the most important aspects of being an artist is to pass along that experience and knowledge to the next generation of musicians. To that end, Nadel has worked with several high school ensembles in the Chicago area, including New Trier, Metea Valley, Glenbard West, Glenbard South, and Stevenson High School. His work has included side by side concerts with New Philharmonic. He has also led conducting workshops for the Opus Chamber Music camp, North Central College, and Illinois State University.

Nadel is a current member of the International Conductor's Guild (ICG), Major Orchestra Librarians Association (MOLA), and the Illinois Council of Orchestras (ICO).



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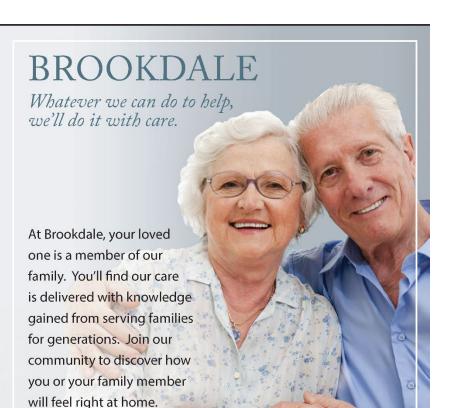
- Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the theater and are prohibited by our contracts with the artists.
- Smoking is not permitted in the theater or on campus.
- For your comfort and security, all backpacks and large bags must be checked.
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- If you notice a spill in the theater, please notify an usher.

- McAninch Arts Center volunteers are people who assist the house staff in areas of ticket taking, ushering and general management during performances. To get involved, call (630) 942-3705.
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