

Doctoral Recital at Barnett Hall

March, 31th, 2025

7:30 p.m.

YIYANG XUE, CELLO

Closer Still (2025)

Marko Marinic
(b.1995)

World Premiere

Escombros (2025)

Julián Franco
(b.1997)

World Premiere

Xiang 响/想/向 (2025)

Jingchen (Alina) Zhang
(b.1997)

World Premiere

Bloom (1999)

Dorothy Chang
(b.1970)

~ intermission ~

Cello Concerto No. 2, Op. 126

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

I. Largo
II. Allegretto
III. Allegretto

Sasha Luchkov, *piano*
Allan Jr. Perpose, *Percussion*

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctorate of Musical Arts degree with a major in Cello Performance.

*We gratefully acknowledge that we are gathered together for this performance on the
traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people.*



Program Notes

Closer Still (2025) — Marko Marinic

“In the summer of 2024, my wife and I had the pleasure of travelling to Scandinavia for our belated honeymoon. We camped in a fjord, hiked to the North Sea, and visited a ton of museums. At the National Museum in Oslo I was particularly entranced by the gestures of Kandinsky, and became lost in the texture and density of Rothko.

When Yiyang Xue asked me to write a piece for solo cello, and I learned that she had also been in Europe over the summer in the year of 2024, I knew I wanted to write a piece about our parallel experiences. Closer Still is a reaction on the beauty of brushstrokes, geometry, crashing waves and looming mountains.” ---by Marko Marinic

Escombros (2025) — Julián Franco

Escombros means debris, ruins or rubble in Spanish.

“Some rural areas in my country have been left with overgrown ruins after 60 years of still-ongoing violent displacement and bloodthirsty armed conflict. Schools and churches have been demolished, fields of crops transformed into cratered minefields and jungles turned into ad hoc cemeteries. As of 2022, almost 8,000,000 people had been forcibly displaced and over 450,000 had been killed, though estimates indicate the real number of deaths is almost double the confirmed figure.

I wrote this piece for my cello friend Yiyang Xue in 2025. This piece is inspired by the photography of Jesús Abad Colorado and is my small attempt to capture the profound grief and inhuman suffering left by warfare. I have, at times, been asked to write Colombian music; after much reflection, I felt this was appropriate.” --- by Julián Franco

Xiang 响/想/向 (2025) — Jingchen(Alina) Zhang

“This piece is composed for my cellist friend Yiyang Xue. Since we are both Chinese musicians receiving Western music education, I wanted to create a work that reflects our shared cultural and musical experiences. Therefore, inspired by the meditative and resonant qualities of Chinese Guqin music, this solo cello piece starts with tranquility, punctuated by sudden outbursts.

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The title, Xiang, is a homophone for several Mandarin characters: 响 (sound), 想 (think), and 向 (towards). The first, xiang (sound), represents the music itself. The second, xiang(think), reflects the deeper contemplation it invites—for the composer, performer, and audience. The third, xiang (towards), serves as my tribute to Guqin music. Just as xiang carries multiple meanings, I hope this piece serves as a shared artistic space—not only for the composer and performer but for all who listen.” --- by Alina Zhang

Bloom (1999) — Dorothy Chang

"Transformation is a theme common to all three movements in *Bloom*. The first movement, *emerging*, interprets the process as an intense struggle. Structured as a large wedge shape, the movement begins softly and gradually builds in successive waves of increasing and unrelenting tension.

In the second movement, *playful*, this tension gives way to a sense of levity, yet even this scherzo has moments that echo the aggressiveness of the previous movement. In *hushed*, there is, at last, an arrival at a quiet stasis through repetitions of a simple motive that appears with only slight variations."---by Dorothy Chang

Cello Concerto No.2, Op.126 (1966) — Dmitri Shostakovich



In 2025, the commemorative year of the 50th anniversary of the Shostakovich's death Shostakovich dedicated this concerto to one of his best friends --- Mstislav Rostropovich

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The Second Cello Concerto was Shostakovich's last significant composition prior to his first heart attack, which served as his first warning of his own imminent death. The Cello Concerto, which Shostakovich composed in the first few months of 1966, appears to have begun as his Fourteenth Symphony. The Cello Concerto No. 2, composed for and dedicated to cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich, was premiered at a concert in Moscow on September 25th, the day itself. The Cello Concerto No. 2 is dark, probing, and reflective, similar to many of Shostakovich's late compositions.

The concerto mourning with the cello alone, growing in the lowest register of its range. The primary section of the first movement gradually transitions into the most profound of serious statements as the remainder of the orchestra joins in. The subsequent movement is a raging scherzo that is partially inspired by the classic Odessa cabaret song "Bublik, kupite bublik!" ('Bagels, purchase my bagels!'). A private joke between the composer and the cellist, this old song was saucy, cheap, vulgar, and indecent (the young lady singing has more to offer than bread rolls). It dates back to the previous year's New Year's Eve party, when guests played a game of "choose your favorite piece of music." Shostakovich had teased the others by selecting this tune.

The final movement is a magnificent spectacle that start with a shocking accompanied cadenza with tambourine and then transitions into a hysterical death dance. The cello is drowned out by the orchestra at the climax, which shrieks out the bagel song with an almost demonic intensity before the ends. In fact, the work concludes with the same "clock-work" percussion that concluded the 1935 Fourth Symphony and would conclude the 1971 Fifteenth and Final Symphony.

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