



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MEMPHIS**

**Rudi E. Scheidt**  
School of Music

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

*PRESENTS*

**“TCHAIKOVSKY’S FOURTH”**

Daniel Brier, Director of Orchestral Studies

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OCTOBER 2, 2025 | 7:00 PM

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SCHEIDT FAMILY PERFORMANCE ARTS CENTER  
*PLOUGH HALL*

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music  
Jacob Allen, Interim Director  
College of Communication and Fine Arts  
Debra Burns, Dean

# PROGRAM

**Slavonic Dance, Op. 72, No. 2 in E Minor**

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

*Daniel Brier, Conductor*

**Ballade in A Minor, Op. 33**

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

*Fabian Schneider, Conductor*

## INTERMISSION

**Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 36**

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

***I. Andante sostenuto - Moderato con anima***

***II. Andantino in modo di canzone***

***III. Scherzo. Pizzicato ostinato***

***IV. Finale. Allegro con fuoco***

*Daniel Brier, Conductor*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Slavonic Dance, Op. 72, No. 2 in E Minor**

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

During the 1870s, a young Czech composer, Antonín Dvořák, found himself on the margins of the Central European musical establishment. Living in Prague, he had few opportunities to advance his career. To support himself, he applied for annual government grants administered by a committee in Vienna—winning three times. Among the committee members was the eminent composer Johannes Brahms, who recognized Dvořák's talent and took him under his wing. Through Brahms, Dvořák's music came to the attention of the influential music publisher Fritz Simrock.

Eager to replicate the commercial success of Brahms's Hungarian Dances, Simrock commissioned Dvořák to compose a set of dances for the popular piano four-hands market. Dvořák obliged, producing eight Slavonic Dances (Op. 46), whose success catapulted him to international fame.

In 1885, Simrock sought to repeat that triumph by requesting another set of dances. Initially, Dvořák declined, writing, "Excuse me, please, I am not in the mood for merry music like this." Simrock, however, persisted, and Dvořák eventually relented, producing a second set published as Op. 72.

Rather than arranging pre-existing folk melodies, Dvořák composed original tunes that so convincingly evoke traditional styles that they could easily be mistaken for authentic songs passed down through generations. As biographer David Hurwitz notes, the composer rejected Simrock's initial suggestion of the title Czech Dances, "preferring instead to cast a wider net and include representative dance forms from all over Eastern Europe. The result of this catholicity not only highlights his desire not to be limited by national labels, it reflects his deliberate intention from the very outset of his professional career to achieve success on an international scale."

The Slavonic Dance No. 2 in E Minor is a Ukrainian dumka. Dvořák opens with a deeply reflective main theme, tinged with sadness. A brighter, more cheerful secondary theme appears, yet the overall mood remains bittersweet. The two ideas alternate throughout, until the music seems to dissolve at the end. Like the other dances in this set, this work showcases some of Dvořák's most sophisticated orchestration and tuneful writing.

*Daniel Brier*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Ballade in A minor, Op. 33**

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor is best known for his triptych of cantatas based on "The Song of Hiawatha" which was extremely well received on both sides of the Atlantic. The Ballade in A minor was written less than a year before the first Hiawatha work, and the warm reception it received at its premiere brought new attention to the 23 year old composer. Born in London in 1875 to a father from Sierra Leone and a white British mother, the young Coleridge-Taylor studied violin and was accepted at the age of 15 into the Royal College of Music. He soon switched to composition and while he bore the brunt of the racist attitudes of his time, Coleridge-Taylor did have the good fortune to have a stalwart champion in his composition professor, Charles Villiers Stanford, who both encouraged and challenged his pupil. Coleridge-Taylor's talent also attracted the attention of Edward Elgar. When organist and director of the Three Choirs Festival, Herbert Brewer, asked Elgar to write a short work for the 1898 festival, he declined and instead wrote to Brewer, "I am sorry I am too busy to do so. I wish, wish, wish you would ask Coleridge-Taylor to do it. He still wants recognition, and he is far and away the cleverest fellow going amongst the young men." Brewer approached Coleridge-Taylor and the Ballade in A minor for orchestra was premiered at the Three Choirs Festival on September 12th.

The Ballade shows the young composer's precocious confidence. The work opens with brilliant trilling and features two themes in 6/8 meter, the first sprightly and mercurial, the second introduced by horns, winds and the cellos. The frequent cross rhythms and folk-like melodies as well as the colorful orchestration evoke Bohemian spirit. A new theme introduced by muted strings is songful and warm, and it builds to glowing heights in the full orchestra. The first and second themes return, developed and presented in new keys, and the brief, tumultuous coda ends on a blazing A minor chord.

*Fabian Schneider*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 36

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

By 1877, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky had achieved great popular and critical fame. He was often regarded as the foremost Russian composer of his generation. Yet despite such outward success, his inner life was marked by turmoil and upheaval. Two fateful relationships that year brought his public triumphs into direct conflict with his private struggles.

The first was with Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy socialite and devoted patron of the arts. In 1876 she wrote to Tchaikovsky requesting a commission, and in February 1877 she followed with a more personal letter: "I should like very much to tell you at length of my fancies and thoughts about you, but I fear to take up your time, of which you have so little to spare. Let me say only that my feeling for you is a thing of the spirit and very dear to me." Tchaikovsky responded, and soon von Meck was providing him with a generous monthly allowance that freed him from financial worries and allowed him to pursue his artistic ambitions. There was only one stipulation: the two would never meet in person. This unusual partnership proved long-lasting and fruitful.

The second relationship of 1877 was neither long-lasting nor fruitful. Despite what he himself described as "thirty-seven years with an innate aversion to marriage"—and what we now recognize as his repressed homosexuality—Tchaikovsky abruptly proposed to and married Antonina Milyukova within days of meeting her. The marriage was a disaster. He found her lack of musical knowledge stifling, and his physical aversion to her unbearable. Within three months, the union had collapsed. His only refuge during this time was his work on Eugene Onegin and the Fourth Symphony.

These two relationships are inextricably linked with the Fourth Symphony. Tchaikovsky began the work shortly after his correspondence with von Meck commenced and completed it in the wake of his failed marriage. He dedicated the symphony to von Meck, writing that it contained "an echo of your most intimate thoughts and emotions." The symphony is Tchaikovsky's explicit wrestling with fate itself. Premiered on February 10, 1878, it received mixed initial reactions, but has since become one of the most beloved works in the orchestral repertoire.

The first movement opens with a dramatic fanfare led by the French Horns. Tchaikovsky described this music as "fate: that fateful force which prevents the impulse to happiness from attaining its goal, which jealously ensures that peace and happiness shall not be complete and unclouded." This fate motif recurs throughout the movement and returns again in the finale. The lilting main theme that follows recalls a waltz, but each time it emerges, the fate motif interrupts, forcefully reasserting itself.

The *Andantino* begins with a plaintive oboe solo. Of this moment, Tchaikovsky wrote to von Meck: "You feel nostalgic for the past, yet no compulsion to start life over again. Life has wearied you; it is pleasant to pause and weigh things up."

The *Scherzo* that follows is light and balletic. The strings play pizzicato (plucked rather than bowed), providing relief from the intensity of the opening movement and the melancholy of the second. In the middle section, a rustic peasant dance bursts forth before the balletic character returns.

The *Finale* erupts in a jubilant folk celebration. Its principal theme is based on the Russian folk tune *The Little Birch Tree*. Tchaikovsky's message is that if you cannot find joy within yourself, you can seek it in the joy of others. Yet even here, the fate motif suddenly reappears, reminding us that fate is never far away. As he wrote to von Meck: "If within yourself you find no reasons for joy, then look at others. Go among the people. See how they can enjoy themselves, surrendering themselves wholeheartedly to joyful feelings... Hardly have you managed to forget yourself and to be carried away by the spectacle of the joys of others than irrepressible fate again appears and reminds you of yourself."

# ROSTER

## Violin 1

Ana Sofia Ramirez, Co-Concertmaster  
Cecelia Erbe, Co-Concertmaster  
Sebastian Gaviria  
Gabby Gregory  
Langston Suggs  
Sarah Enoch

## Violin 2

John Jesuyemi, Principal  
Lina Lumumba  
Hailey Smith  
Autumn Colley  
Khalid Lopez

## Viola

Dario Oliveria Santos, Principal  
Andrew McGuire  
Mario Henrique Rasoto Batista  
Jonathan Bagoyado  
Rex (Danica) Brown

## Violoncello

Ina Torres O’Ryan, Principal  
Miriam Henderson  
Matthew Griener  
Ruby Thurman  
Ella Bondar  
Julian Severs  
Asamoah Oppong

## Double Bass

Gesiye Okoya, Principal  
Egypt Burton  
Jonathan Hodges  
Ebony Gipson

## Flute

Nicole Rodriguez, Co-Principal  
Catie Balsamo, Co-Principal  
Ellie Poppas

## Oboe

Jesus Salazar, Principal  
Simon Dickerson

## Clarinet

Evgenii Mikheev, Principal  
Joseph Burgos

## Bassoon

Lora Yopp, Principal  
Mollie Coates  
Caiden Ross

## French Horn

Brittany Cooper, Principal  
Juan Garay, Assistant  
Kelsey Pegues  
Nicholas Cacolyris  
Rhys Roberts

## Trumpet

Christian Chiasson, Principal  
Fausto Mejia

## Trombone

Dylan Mashburn, Co-Principal  
Evan Green, Co-Principal

## Bass Trombone

Cal Elrod

## Tuba

Ryan Winans

## Timpani

Colton Renfrow

## Percussion

Allison Kiefer  
Daniel Padron  
Christopher Palmer