



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

TCU String Orchestra

Dr. Germán Gutiérrez, Music Director and Conductor

April 13th, 2025

7:00pm

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

Program

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor

Death and the Maiden

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

Pizzicato - Polka

Johann Strauss II / Josef Strauss
(1825 – 1899) / (1827 – 1870)

Stephanie Morera, Conductor
DMA Graduate Student

A Parade of Tangos

Alejandro Drago, Arranger

Commissioned by TCU Symphony Orchestra

Premiere

Dr. Germán Augusto Gutiérrez

Dr. Germán Augusto Gutiérrez has served as the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Studies at Texas Christian University (TCU) since 1996. His career as a guest conductor spans almost three decades with performances on six continents. Since 2000, Dr. Gutiérrez has also served as Music Director of the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra (FWYO), elevating the ensemble to new artistic heights and expanding its international reach.

Notable engagements include the Lebanon National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra in New Zealand, a performance of Carmina Burana with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra at the Smetana Hall in Prague and a CD recording and televised performance of tango music with the Binelli-Ferman Duo and City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. Further guest appearances in Spain, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Mainland China are testament to his global versatility and artistic reach.

For twelve consecutive years Germán Augusto Gutiérrez served as the guest conductor for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Hispanic Festival where he built a reputation for championing Latin American music and fostering cultural inclusion.

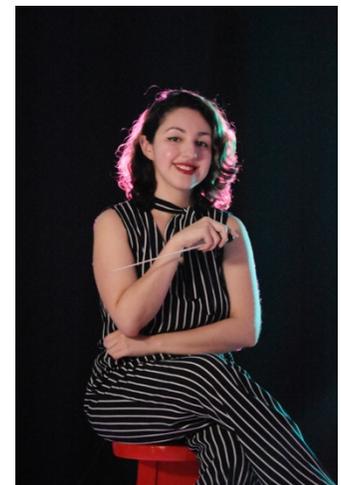
His academic and artistic achievements at TCU have garnered numerous accolades and include the Dean's Teaching Award and the Dean's Award for Research and Creative Activity. In 2024 the TCU Symphony Orchestra earned national recognition as the American Prize's Best College/University Orchestra of 2024.

His academic excellence has been recognized with numerous honors, including induction into the Illinois State University Hall of Fame and an invitation to deliver the 2018 Commencement Address. At TCU, his accolades include the Dean's Teaching Award, Dean's Award for Research and Creative Activity, and the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Research and Creative Activity.

Stephanie Morera Cordoba

Stephanie Morera is a Costa Rican conductor whose work spans orchestral performance, education, and artistic collaboration across international settings. From 2023 to 2025, she served as Assistant Conductor of the Georgia Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta, and conducted the Georgia State University Campus Orchestra while completing her graduate studies. She has also worked with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Education Department through its early childhood outreach initiatives and coached chamber ensembles within youth orchestra programs.

Morera holds a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from Georgia State University (2025), where she studied with Dr. Tamara Dworetz. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting at Texas Christian University and serves as Assistant Conductor of the Fort Worth Youth Symphony Orchestra. Her professional development includes masterclasses with distinguished conductors such as Carl St. Clair, Giancarlo Guerrero, Gary Lewis, Farkhad Khudiyev, Ankush Kumar Bahl, and Alejandro



Gutiérrez, and participation in the 2025 CODA Conference Masterclass and the *Girls Who Conduct + Atlanta Symphony Orchestra* Conducting Masterclass.

Morera continues to build a multifaceted career as a conductor and educator, recognized for her expressive leadership and commitment to musical excellence.

Program Notes

Franz Schubert –*Death and the Maiden*

Franz Schubert's much-too-short life was filled with music from beginning to end. Instructed in the basics of music by both his father and his older brother Ignaz, Schubert played piano, violin, and organ, and also sang from the time he was very young. In 1808 he earned a scholarship to sing in the Imperial Court's chapel choir. He then became a schoolmaster in the same school where his father taught – a position Schubert found tedious – and he left to pursue music full-time in 1818.

By the 1820s Schubert was making some money from his compositions and was also part of a close-knit circle of artists and students who gathered regularly for "Schubertiaden." However, starting in 1823, Schubert suffered from a number of hardships, most difficult of which was the illness (likely syphilis) that struck the young composer at the end of 1822. Despite this, Schubert's music never stopped, and in fact progressed greatly as he grew sicker.

Schubert hadn't written string quartets since his teens but began writing them again in the 1820s. Perhaps, as music historian Homer Ulrich suggests, the genre offered him a medium to marry his lyricism and dramatic intensions in a form that allowed "extreme color contrasts." String Quartet No. 14, "Death and the Maiden," is one of the pillars of the chamber music repertoire. Writing in 1824, Schubert did what many great composers do: he borrowed from himself. The quartet is titled for the second movement's theme, taken from the song "Der Tod und das Mädchen," written seven years earlier. The theme runs all the way through the quartet.

The first movement, an Allegro, sets the stage with typical major-minor instability and explosive outbursts. After a somber, chorale-like beginning to the Andante con moto, variations appear, using the "Death and the Maiden" accompaniment to dramatic effect. In the third movement, a Scherzo, the quartet is split into a high and low call-and-response, while a heavy dotted rhythmic figure dominates. The Trio that interrupts the movement is a breath of warm air that blows in and then dissipates as the Scherzo's dark waltz returns.

The finale is a raging rondo that keeps the dotted rhythm from the Scherzo movement as it turns around and around in a traditional dance form called the tarantella. Schubert's brilliant lyricism stands out even in the frantic movement – there are brief moments of respite within the fray where we hear longing sighs and reflective thoughts. The tarantella was traditionally thought to be a dance to ward off madness and death and at this late point in the composer's life he was certainly grappling with these big themes – death, spirituality, inner struggle. The finale ends after breakneck runs and two short chords. The "Death and the Maiden" Quartet was first played in 1826 in a private home and wasn't published until 1831, three years after Schubert's death.

- Jessie Rothwell

Strauss – *Pizzicato Polka*

Composed for his brother, Josef Strauss, in 1869, Johann Strauss II's *Pizzicato Polka* was published in 1870. Originally intended for his brother to use in concerts throughout his tour of Imperial Russia, *Pizzicato Polka* became a crowd-pleaser for Strauss himself, with many of his European concerts including it on the programme. As the title suggests, *Pizzicato Polka* is written for plucked strings and also a glockenspiel. Today, the piece is most often heard at New Year Galas, along with other famous works by the Strauss dynasty such as *The Blue Danube*, *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka* and *Radetzky March*.

Strauss works in four different melodies into *Pizzicato Polka*. The opening melody is hesitant before settling into the cheeky melody. Strauss uses contrary motion between the upper and lower strings to create big gaps between the plucks so that you can easily hear all of the voices in the mix. During the second and third melodies, the glockenspiel emerges and creates a comedic sparkle over the strings. The piercing tone of the glockenspiel is very noticable and adds a fun element to the music.

Once all four melodies have been played, the opening motif is heard once more as the music heads into the coda section. The interplay between the strings is intricate and playful, with Strauss also playing with dramatic dynamic changes. To close the piece, the strings finally unite for an exciting descending pattern before ending back in the home key. A playful favourite at concerts, *Pizzicato Polka* mixes music and comedy to create an accessible piece for all.

- *Alex Burns*

A Parade of Tangos

A Parade of Tangos is a medley for string orchestra that brings together some of the most beloved and recognizable works of the tango repertoire. Conceived as a musical procession, each piece enters like a new float in an imaginary parade, revealing a different facet of the Río de la Plata tradition.

The journey begins with *Taquito Militar* (“Little Military Heel Tap”) by Mariano Mores. The title refers to the sharp clicking of heels in the Argentine army — a gesture performed in acknowledgment of rank before a superior officer. Despite its martial reference, the piece unfolds as a lively milonga-style tango, brimming with rhythmic vitality and theatrical flair. It gained wide popularity through Argentine cinema, where its spirited character made it instantly memorable.

From there we move to *Por una cabeza* by Carlos Gardel. The title — “By a Head” — evokes the narrow margin of victory in horse racing, and the lyrics draw a parallel between wagering at the track and the emotional risks of love. The tango achieved renewed international fame through its appearance in *Scent of a Woman*, in the iconic scene in which Al Pacino dances the tango, introducing the music to new generations of audiences.

No parade of tangos would be complete without *La Cumparsita* (“The Little Carnival Parade”) by Gerardo Matos Rodríguez — arguably one of the most recognizable tangos in the history of the genre. Composed in Uruguay but embraced throughout the Río de la Plata region and beyond, it stands as an unofficial anthem of tango. It is followed by *El Choclo* (“The Corn Cob”) by Ángel Villoldo, another foundational classic, later popularized in the United States under the title *Kisses of Fire*.

The medley concludes with *Tanguera*, another celebrated creation by Mariano Mores. Dramatic and expansive, it combines sweeping lyrical lines with an insistent tango groove and culminates in its brilliant fast-note

variation. The work also reached new audiences through its striking appearance in *Moulin Rouge!*, where it was fused with “Roxanne” in a bold cinematic reinterpretation.

As arranged here for string orchestra, *A Parade of Tangos* highlights the rhythmic bite, lyricism, and theatrical spirit of tango — a genre equally at home in the dance hall, the concert stage, and the silver screen.

- Alejandro Drago

TCU String Orchestra

Violin I

Danielle Barbosa*	<i>São Paulo, Brazil</i>
Alejandro Sánchez+	<i>Colombia</i>
June Kim	<i>South Korea</i>
Arnaldo Figueroa	<i>Venezuela</i>
Dustin Cunningham	<i>Houston, TX</i>
Eva Renaudat	<i>Colombia</i>
Liz Valentina Muñoz Morales	<i>Colombia</i>
Victoria Phan	<i>Fort Worth, TX</i>
Eden Agabs	<i>NJ</i>

Violin II

Angelene Ku	<i>Norman, OK</i>
Oriana González	<i>Venezuela</i>
Muyan Xin	<i>China</i>
Laura Pollack	<i>Edmond, OK</i>
Emma Swank	<i>Tulsa, OK</i>
Chase Morrison	<i>Argyle, TX</i>
Amalia Torrealba Adames	<i>Houston, TX</i>
Gabriela Cruz	<i>Dallas TX</i>
Kate Johnson	<i>Long Beach, CA</i>

Viola

Kaylan Walker	<i>Tomball, TX</i>
Abby Douglas	<i>Granbury, TX</i>
Joey Tullis	<i>Fort Worth, TX</i>
Naiomy Jimenez Alba	<i>Puerto Rico</i>
Sarah Fuentes	<i>Mansfield, TX</i>
Lina Gomez	<i>Colombia</i>
Juan Duran Chang	<i>Venezuela</i>

Cello

Jacob MacDonald	<i>Nova Scotia, Canada</i>
Giuliano Bucheli	<i>San Antonio, TX</i>
Grady O’Gara	<i>San Ramon, CA</i>
Daniela Herrera Garcia	<i>Colombia</i>
Caio De Godoy Sousa	<i>Brazil</i>
Nancy Olivares	<i>Mexico</i>
Kurt Kowar	<i>CO</i>
Jason Vierra	<i>Ewa Beach, Hawaii</i>
Arnav Agarwal	<i>Plano, TX</i>
Bentley Altman	<i>Anchorage, Alaska</i>

Double Bass

James Tsang	<i>Naples, FL</i>
Kaleb Comstock	<i>San Antonio, TX</i>
Arturo Zamora	<i>San Antonio, TX</i>
Sixto Elizondo V.	<i>San Antonio, TX</i>
Graysen Malek	<i>McKinney, TX</i>
David Gutierrez	<i>Mesquite, TX</i>
Preston Quintero	<i>McKinney, TX</i>
Quinn Judge	<i>Saint Louis, MO</i>

*Concertmaster for *The Death and the Maiden*
+Concertmaster for *Pizzicato Polka* and *A Parade of Tangos*