Good evening. Welcome to *Musica Nova*. Tonight, we have two professional guest artists, one graduate student in mathematics, three business majors and twelve scientists. Speaking of music-loving scientists, we want to honor Dr. Jay Dowling, who is one of the world’s leading authorities on Music Cognition. He has been a professor of psychology at UTD for the last 48 years. He is retiring this semester, so we are pleased to dedicate our concert to him. Please join me in a round of applause for Dr. Dowling.

Now, the only thing better than starting a concert with a Mozart concerto is starting with *two* Mozart concertos. Our first concerto began its life as a Rondo in C for Violin and Orchestra. Mozart wrote it for an Italian violinist, and rondo form is like a dish of lasagna. First, there is a noodle theme, then some contrasting sauce and ricotta, then more noodles, a layer of Parmesan, more sauce and then more noodles on top. Our French connection is that we are performing it as a Rondo for Flute in D in a transcription by the great French flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal. We touched up a few spots and reworked it for our *Musica Nova* instrumentation, so now we have Austrian recipe for an Italian dish in an elegant French style and served by a Mexican chef.

Our second Mozart concerto is one of the world’s great musical mysteries. All we know for sure is that, as a young man, Mozart spent some time in Paris, and that, while he was there, he wrote home, saying that he had composed a concerto for flute, oboe, bassoon, horn and orchestra. The score was lost, so all we have is what we are going to play. It was found after Mozart’s death, it has Mozart’s name on it, but it’s not in Mozart’s handwriting, and it eliminates the flute and substitutes clarinet.

So, who wrote it? Either Mozart revised the score himself and someone else copied it; so it’s completely by Mozart. Or the whole thing is by some “Joe Blow” and Mozart had nothing to do with it. I think it’s too good not to be by Mozart. Probably, “Joe Blow” found some fragments Mozart’s original and filled in what was missing. Anyway, “Joe” knew what he was doing, and, with Mozart’s material, it’s a wonderful piece. We have our own arrangement that fits the players we have. And, we happen to have a flute, so we were able to put the flute back in, to make it more like Mozart’s original version. There are three movements. In the first movement, you’ll hear the four soloists ganging up on each other in pairs; the oboe and clarinet usually play together vs. the horn and the bassoon. The second movement is a seductive serenade that makes me think of Mozart’s friend, the great lover Casanova, in his best form by candlelight. The finale is a series of incredibly difficult variations, with each soloist trying to outdo the others. And the theme is so delightfully catchy that you will be singing it all through intermission.
Welcome back. The country of Belgium has made at least five contributions to the arts: the painter René Magritte; the poet Maurice Maeterlinck; Adolph Sax, who invented the saxophone; the fictional detective Hercule Poirot (whose theme music in the TV series features the Belgian saxophone) and the composer César Franck. For much of his life, Franck was a humble professor of organ at the Paris Conservatory. If he had died in his middle fifties, hardly anyone would have heard of him. But, in his late fifties, some kind of lightning must have struck, because all of the big, signature masterpieces of his life date from his last eleven years.

What happened? One theory is that he fell in love. He had an Irish composition student named Augusta Holmes. We don’t know what she and Franck actually did together, but, throughout her life, she always referred to Franck as her “true master,” and his music was never quite the same after he met her.

The first piece that Franck wrote “under the influence” of Augusta was this piano quintet, which we are performing in a new arrangement for piano and string orchestra., Franck dedicated it to his composer colleague Saint-Saëns. What Franck didn’t know was that Saint-Saëns was also in love with Augusta and that he had even proposed marriage to her and had been refused. Saint-Saëns had agreed to play the piano part, and they scheduled one rehearsal. Then, Saint-Saëns heard the rumors about what Franck and Augusta were supposedly up to, so he decided not to go to the rehearsal. He just showed up at the performance and sight-read it. Then, when he heard the explicit, passionate music, he assumed the worst.

There’s one theme that I think must have shot him over the edge. The French think that all names that are not French need to be “corrected” into French. So, Mozart is “Mo-ZAR,” Beethoven is “Bee-TOVE,” and, Augusta Holmes becomes “Au-gus-TA Hol-MES.” Now, all the way through this piece, we hear a recurring theme that spells out, “Au-gus-TA, Au-gus-TA, Au-gus-TA Hol-MES.” Here’s what it sounds like, and it comes in all three movements for a total of 18 times. The first movement is a passionate “I love you”; the second is a mournful “Longing for you,” and the third is a galloping “Come away with me” fantasy.

So, after Saint-Saëns finished playing the piece, he saw red. Franck came running up to shake his hand, but Saint-Saëns just threw the music in Franck’s face and stormed off the stage. It was the “scandal” of the season in Paris. Today, we still don’t know for sure what Franck and Augusta were really up to, but, when we listen to it, we can certainly imagine.