

NORTH CAROLINA SYMPHONY

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North Carolina Symphony's 2019/20 Season Celebrates the Extraordinary Tenure of Music Director Grant Llewellyn

Star-Studded Season Includes Returns by Renée Fleming, Stephen Hough, and James Ehnes; Appearances by Audience-Favorite Guest Conductors Karina Canellakis and Rune Bergmann; Continued Commitment to Women Composers, Including a New Work by Caroline Shaw; and Ambitious Programs Confirming Artistic Excellence

RALEIGH, N.C. – **The North Carolina Symphony's 2019/20 season will be a star-studded celebration of the extraordinary tenure of Grant Llewellyn**, whose 16th season will be his final as NCS Music Director; Llewellyn becomes Music Director Laureate in 2020/21.

The 2019/20 season culminates Llewellyn's defining accomplishments during his many years with the Symphony. Since 2004, he has developed NCS into the outstanding orchestra it is today, while embracing the Symphony's dual legacies of statewide service and music education. Llewellyn has been instrumental in building partnerships with fellow community organizations to create unique live music experiences—both in and outside of the concert hall—and has consistently crafted forward-thinking programs that give voice to new art and bring vibrancy to repertoire staples.

"In my final season as Music Director of this great orchestra, it will be my privilege to hear the insights that our incredibly talented musicians will bring to our repertoire—which, in many cases, is repertoire that has been particularly meaningful to me through the years," says Llewellyn. "In crafting this season's programs and inviting our spectacular guest artists, it is my hope and belief that my favorites will be favorites for our audiences, as well."

"The many exceptional soloists taking the stage with NCS and the monumental works programmed speak to the artistic caliber to which Grant has elevated NCS during his tenure," says NCS President & CEO Sandi Macdonald. "This season celebrates Grant, but true to form, he has spun it into a season celebrating masterful repertoire, the artists who bring it to life, and the partners who support us in sharing great music with all of North Carolina."

Llewellyn is especially thrilled for **returns by guest soloists who have become close artistic collaborators** during his tenure with the Symphony, including **Renée Fleming and Branford Marsalis**, joining for a Gala performance in May 2020; **Stephen Hough** (a friend of Llewellyn's since childhood), who takes on the complexity and sheer magnitude of Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2; **James Ehnes**, a two-time Grammy Award winner who brings his impeccable technique to the

nonstop virtuosic spectacle of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1; and **Jean-Yves Thibaudet**, who effortlessly melds jazz and impressionistic styles in Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major.

NCS will showcase the virtuosity of its own musicians, with the Symphony's low-brass section taking center stage in **Jennifer Higdon's Low Brass Concerto** and with **Concertmaster Brian Reagin** performing **George Frederick McKay's Violin Concerto** (a work that Reagin recorded with the National Radio Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in 2003).

Supporting the creation of new masterworks, **NCS regularly programs music by some of the most acclaimed composers of our time**. Works by women composers have appeared on programs each season since 2009/10—and, in fact the **living composers represented on the 2019/20 Classical Season are exclusively women**. In addition to the Higdon concerto, the Symphony co-commissions and gives one of the first performances of *The Listeners*, **a new work for chorus and orchestra by North Carolina native and Pulitzer Prize winner Caroline Shaw**, composed as a companion piece to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. NCS presents Shaw's work as part of *She Changed the World*, **a statewide and year-long celebration of notable North Carolina women, past and present, led by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**. NCS also performs **Salina Fisher's Rainphase** and **Lera Auerbach's Icarus**—both of which were composed in recent years and have gained quick notoriety and popularity—and **Julia Wolfe's Big, Beautiful, Dark, and Scary**, a response to the 9/11 attacks. The Symphony looks back to 19th- and 20th-century female composers, with works by **Lili Boulanger, Louise Farrenc, Fanny Mendelssohn, Ethyl Smyth, and Grace Mary Williams**. Works by women will also be featured on NCS Education Concerts.

Llewellyn builds the season to a dramatic close with his final two programs, **putting the orchestra's artistic excellence on full display with grand-scale statement pieces** that changed the course of music history: **The Symphony No. 9 of Beethoven** (whose 250th birthday will be celebrated in 2020) and **The Rite of Spring by Stravinsky**. Performed together with Debussy's *Jeux* and Wagner's Prelude from *Parsifal*, Llewellyn calls *The Rite of Spring* program "the most ambitious I will ever conduct," and one he would only attempt with an orchestra he knows as well as NCS.

Other repertoire with particular personal significance to Llewellyn includes the season-opener's **"Enigma" Variations by Elgar**, which was one of the first works he conducted with NCS; and **Handel's Messiah** during the holiday season, which is by far the work he has conducted most frequently over the course of his career.

The Symphony will see the returns of guest conductors who have been audience and musician favorites, including **Karina Canellakis** (conducting Mahler's Symphony No. 5 and works by Boulanger and Smyth) and **Rune Bergmann** (conducting Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2, the Barber Violin Concerto, and a newly arranged suite of Charlie Chaplin songs featuring violinist Phillipe Quint). Renowned guest conductors throughout the Classical Season will balance new or rarely-heard works with beloved masterpieces—**Dvořák's "New World" Symphony, Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade**, and many more—appealing to seasoned classical music lovers and newcomers alike.

Thoughtfully programmed for a wide range of ages and musical tastes, the **Pops Season and Special Event Concerts are also expected to draw new audiences** to the Symphony. **Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back** will play on the big screen as NCS performs the John Williams score live; **Hamilton star Leslie Odom, Jr.** takes the stage with jazz and Broadway favorites; and programs featuring hits from **Elton John, Rodgers & Hammerstein**, and the **swing era** all showcase the

Symphony's vast musical range. NCS has a longstanding tradition of bringing its community together through music at the holidays, and the 2019/20 season offers the family favorite **Holiday Pops**; Handel's famous *Messiah* with the North Carolina Master Chorale; **Cirque de Noel** featuring high-flying acrobatics with festive holiday selections; and a **New Year's Eve** concert that looks back to the Roaring '20s to usher in 2020.

Each summer, thousands of North Carolinians gather for music under the stars at UNC REX Healthcare Summerfest concerts. Held at the Symphony's summer home in Cary, **Koka Booth Amphitheatre**, Summerfest concerts offer classical masterworks and pops programs in a relaxed and family-friendly outdoor environment. Concertgoers spread out blankets, lawn chairs, and picnics, and enjoy the picturesque natural surroundings and pre-concert activities such as the popular Instrument Zoo.

A highlight of Summerfest 2019 is the ***Space Spectacular, through which NCS joins in Lift Off NC: Apollo & Beyond, a statewide celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing.*** The Symphony performs selections from Holst's *The Planets*, the *Star Wars* saga, and more—plus, costumed *Star Wars* characters from the 501st Legion will be on site for photo opportunities and the Morehead Planetarium will bring telescopes for stargazing. The summer starts off with Berlioz's passionate ***Symphonie fantastique*** on Memorial Day weekend, and as part of the Town of Cary's annual "Play with the Pros," citizen musicians will join NCS musicians on stage for several selections. Other much-anticipated Summerfest programs include **Grammy-nominated violinist Jennifer Frautschi** performing Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, and a **classical-pop crossover concert with North Carolina native and singer-songwriter Ben Folds**. In a special summertime program apart from the Summerfest season, Booth Amphitheatre presents NCS with pop-culture satirist "**Weird Al**" **Yankovic**. As always, the Symphony performs patriotic favorites at the Town of Cary's free **Independence Day celebration** at Booth Amphitheatre.

Partnering with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, NCS leads the **most extensive education program of any symphony orchestra**. Each year, the Symphony engages 70,000 students of all ages across North Carolina—including more than 52,000 4th and 5th graders who attend NCS Education Concerts, learning core musical concepts such as tempo, rhythm, and dynamics, in alignment with the state curriculum. **For 2019/20, the music programmed on the Education Concerts will tie into the statewide *She Changed the World* campaign**, with an emphasis on female composers.

In addition to its education offerings for schools and students, the Symphony's **Young People's Concerts welcome families to experience music together**. The 2019/20 season includes the ***Halloween Spooktacular: The Composer Is Dead***, a murder-mystery based on the book by Lemony Snicket; ***Happy Feet to a Latin Beat***, in which a young boy discovers the excitement of rhythm and dance; and ***Fairy Tales & Dragons***, transporting families to the magical realm with music from *Sleeping Beauty*, *Frozen*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, and more. Young People's Concerts are preceded by family-fun activities such as the Instrument Zoo, face-painting, photos with characters, and hands-on crafts with Marbles Kids Museum.

With a commitment to making classical music accessible to the entire community, NCS looks forward to presenting its first sensory-friendly concert on September 14—a one-hour performance with a relaxed attitude toward movement and noise in the concert hall, encouraging those with differing needs to fully enjoy and express themselves. **Accommodations and services will be provided to support the needs of families from the autism community and others**

with sensory sensitivities—and the concert is welcoming and inclusive of individuals of all ages and abilities. Conducted by NCS Music Director Grant Llewellyn and featuring familiar classical and popular music, this concert is made possible in part by funding from the **William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust**. Additionally, in January, one performance of the Young People’s Concert *Happy Feet to a Latin Beat* will be designed as a sensory-friendly concert.

Other important initiatives expanding access to classical music and increasing the Symphony’s presence in the community include **Soundbites chamber music concerts**, which take place at Raleigh restaurants and feature an intimate concert with insights from the performers following a multi-course meal; the free **Manning Music** series at William Peace University; the free **Concerts in Your Community** series presented in outdoor settings throughout the state each summer; and a free **lecture series at Quail Ridge Books** in Raleigh. The Symphony’s quickly growing Young Professionals of the Symphony initiative will **continue to attract Millennial and Gen-X audiences with affordably-priced concert/after-party packages, as well as pop-up concerts at Raleigh hotspots**. Dates and details for these programs will be announced throughout the season.

The Symphony’s concert seasons in Chapel Hill, Wilmington, New Bern, Southern Pines, and Fayetteville offer many of the programs performed in Raleigh, as well as programs and guest artists heard only in those communities. 2019/20 programs across the state will be announced in the spring.

HOW TO PURCHASE

Online: ncsymphony.org (*TicketMaster fees apply*)

By phone: 919.733.2750 (*\$8 processing fee applies*)

In-person: NCS State Headquarters Offices (3700 Glenwood Ave., Suite 130, Raleigh)

CONCERTS BY SERIES

NCS offers numerous options for season-ticket subscription packages to the Classical Season, Pops Season, and Young People’s Concerts, including the flexible “Choose Your Own” package. **Season-ticket subscriptions are on sale now.** Individual tickets will be available for purchase in August.

Summerfest Lawn Flex Passes are valid for any Summerfest concert. Discounted 10-Packs are on sale now; individual Lawn Flex Passes will be available for purchase in April.

For additional ticket information, visit ncsymphony.org or call 919.733.2750.

CLASSICAL SEASON at Meymandi Concert Hall

Concerto for Two Pianos | September 20-21, 2019

Husband-and-wife duo Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung join NCS for Poulenc’s Concerto for Two Pianos—playful, impassioned, and dream-like. Elgar’s “Enigma” Variations offer one delight after

another, as he shares musical portraits of friends and family with humor, tenderness, and sweeping emotion. Grant Llewellyn leads this season-opener, which begins with Grace Mary Williams' *Sea Sketches*—a depiction of the Welsh coast, composed just miles from Llewellyn's childhood home.

Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 | October 11-12, 2019

Philippe Quint's jaw-dropping virtuosity and poetic artistry will shine in the Barber Violin Concerto's lightning-fast moments and lush, song-like passages. His violin also sings in a suite of Charlie Chaplin favorites, which Quint had a hand in arranging for his latest album. Featuring the return of guest conductor Rune Bergmann, the program builds to a triumphant conclusion with Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2, known as his "victory symphony."

Mahler's Symphony No. 5 | November 1-2, 2019

Audience- and musician-favorite Karina Canellakis returns to conduct Mahler's Fifth Symphony—a transformative experience, from the lone trumpet-call opening, to the indescribable beauty of the famous "Adagietto," to the irrepressible joy of the finale. NCS spotlights music by two early-20th-century female composers, with *D'un soir triste* by Lili Boulanger and *On the Cliffs of Cornwall* from the opera *The Wreckers* by Ethyl Smyth.

New World Symphony | November 15-16, 2019

The universal popularity of Dvořák's "New World" Symphony lies in the perfection of its expressive melodies, feeling immediately familiar and nostalgic. Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta is so masterfully constructed that every note seems inevitable, start to finish. André De Ridder, one of today's most daring and fascinating conductors, leads this program—opening with Julia Wolfe's *Big, Beautiful, Dark, and Scary*, a response to her experience witnessing the 9/11 attacks from two blocks away.

Bernstein & Copland | November 22-23, 2019

Longtime friends Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland were pillars of American music. Bernstein's Symphonic Dances brilliantly recount memorable moments from his hit musical *West Side Story*, and Copland's "Short Symphony" packs his trademark harmonies and rhythmic innovation into a single movement. With a spirited violin concerto by McKay (featuring NCS Concertmaster Brian Reagin) and the Overture to *The School for Scandal* by Barber, this program showcases our country's music at its finest. Christian Reif, a conductor of "technical assurance and forceful interpretive prowess" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) takes the podium.

The Planets | January 10-11, 2020

Earthly and other-worldly wonders inspired the works on this program, conducted by Gemma New. Holst imagined the varied personalities of Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune in *The Planets*, while Debussy turned to paintings of land, sky, and sea as the basis for his evocative Nocturnes. Salina Fisher's *Rainphase*, winner of a SOUNZ Contemporary Award, convincingly captures the sights and sounds of rainfall in her New Zealand homeland.

Hough Performs Brahms | January 24-25, 2020

Stephen Hough, one of the most distinguished pianists of our time, shares the tenderness and passion of Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2. This monumental concerto is paired with Schubert's Symphony No. 4, a work that seems to suspend time with its long-arching melodies and surprising twists and turns. Grant Llewellyn opens this program with the Overture No. 1 by 19th-century French composer Louise Farrenc.

Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 | February 7-8, 2020

Led by Grant Llewellyn, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 is a journey of haunting melodies, shocking climaxes, charming elegance, and joyful abandon. Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1—a wild ride with a nearly nonstop solo line—is performed by the impeccable violinist James Ehnes, a two-time 2019 Grammy Award winner.

Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 | February 28-29, 2020

Soulful, soaring, and electrifying, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 makes a striking dramatic statement—especially in the hands of pianist Natasha Paremski, a Rachmaninoff aficionado. The drama is echoed in Strauss' Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, which tells the tale of a love triangle with humor and wisdom; and in Lera Auerbach's *Icarus*, a symphonic poem based on the tragic Greek myth of a winged boy with abundant ambition. Dynamic guest conductor David Danzmayr makes his return appearance with NCS.

Thibaudet Performs Ravel | March 13-14, 2020

Jazz and impressionism strike up a lively conversation in the Ravel Piano Concerto, performed by Jean-Yves Thibaudet—hailed for his “brilliant technique and unassailable artistry” (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*). The Symphony reveals Gershwin's remarkable talent as a song spinner and vivid orchestrator with the “I Got Rhythm” Variations and *An American in Paris*. Works by Berlioz and Roussel complete this program of French and French-inspired music, conducted by Grant Llewellyn.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 | March 27-28, 2020

Beethoven's ebullient side comes to the forefront in the beloved Symphony No. 7, led by Grant Llewellyn. NCS's tuba, trombone, and bass trombone players come to front stage in the Low Brass Concerto by Jennifer Higdon—a work that explores the lyrical capabilities of these powerful instruments.

Scheherazade | April 17-18, 2020

Guest conductor Michał Nesterowicz shapes the sumptuous melodies and exotic soundscapes of *Scheherazade*, Rimsky-Korsakov's epic symphonic poem based on the tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*. The program opens with Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2—a virtuosic dazzler of bold strokes and robust colors—performed by Van Cliburn Gold Medalist Yekwon Sunwoo.

Beethoven's 9th | May 1-2, 2020

NCS presents a new choral work by North Carolina native and Pulitzer Prize winner Caroline Shaw—a companion piece to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Conducted by Grant Llewellyn, this program with the North Carolina Master Chorale illuminates the culmination of Beethoven's genius and the influence it still carries nearly 200 years later.

The Rite of Spring | May 15-16, 2020

In Paris of 1913, two drastically different ballets premiered and marked a new musical era. Debussy's *Jeux* was utterly elegant; Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* was raw and untamed. For his final statement as Music Director, Grant Llewellyn offers the striking combination of these two ballet scores, together with Wagner's Prelude from *Parsifal*—his final masterpiece. The program, and the season, concludes with the earth-shattering *Rite*, which feels just as fresh and vital today as in 1913.

POPS SEASON at Meymandi Concert Hall

Leslie Odom, Jr. | October 18-19, 2019

Best known for his Tony- and Grammy Award-winning performance as Aaron Burr in the original cast of Broadway's *Hamilton* and for his part in the musical TV series *Smash*, Leslie Odom, Jr. joins the Symphony with a specially curated selection of Broadway and jazz hits.

Holiday Pops | December 13-14, 2019

Bigger and better than ever for 2019, this family-friendly Triangle favorite will feature the North Carolina Symphony Children's Chorus, carolers, an audience sing-a-long, a chorus line of dancing Santas, falling snow in the concert hall, and many more surprises to make the holidays bright.

The Music of Elton John with Michael Cavanaugh | January 17-18, 2020

Michael Cavanaugh and the Symphony pay tribute to Elton John's greatest hits, including "Rocket Man," "Tiny Dancer," "Candle in the Wind," "Crocodile Rock," "Bennie and the Jets," and more.

Swing Is the Thing | February 14-15, 2020

Dancers, vocalists, and clarinet sensation Dave Bennett join for the swing music hits of '40s and the jukebox tunes of the '50s and '60s, from "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," to "Great Balls of Fire," to "Rock Around the Clock."

A Rodgers & Hammerstein Celebration | March 6-7, 2020

Starring Oscar Andy Hammerstein III, grandson of the beloved librettist and lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II, this concert celebrates the legendary duo's brilliant music with songs from *South Pacific*, *The Sound of Music*, *State Fair*, *The King and I*, *Carousel*, and *Oklahoma!*.

"Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back" In Concert | April 24-25, 2020

The saga continues with Darth Vader leading the hunt for Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. One of the most popular films of all time is shown on the big screen as John Williams' unforgettable score—from the brassy and foreboding *Imperial March* to the noble *Yoda's Theme*—is performed live. *This program is also presented as a Special Event Concert (apart from the Pops Season) on April 26, 2020.*

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERTS at Meymandi Concert Hall

Halloween Spooktacular: The Composer Is Dead | October 26, 2019

Families will help discover whodunit, as a "detective" interrogates each section of the orchestra in a musical telling of Lemony Snicket's popular children's book *The Composer Is Dead*. Children are invited to march in the annual costume parade at the end of the show—and NCS musicians are sure to dress up as well!

Happy Feet to a Latin Beat | January 4, 2020

This interactive concert will bring audiences to their feet and dancing in the aisles as NCS shares the story of Max—an energetic, impulsive young boy who makes his way onto the stage to "help" the orchestra and ends up on a whirlwind adventure exploring Latin-American rhythms and dance. The first performance at 1PM will be a sensory-friendly concert designed to be inclusive and welcoming

to all families, including children and individuals with autism or other sensory sensitivities.

Fairy Tales & Dragons | April 4, 2020

NCS and Triangle Youth Ballet bring families to the magical realm of mystery and imagination with music from beloved tales such as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Frozen*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and *How to Train your Dragon*.

2019 UNC REX HEALTHCARE SUMMERFEST at Koka Booth Amphitheatre

Symphonie Fantastique | May 25, 2019

NCS performs the bewitching masterpiece by Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, which tells the tale of an artist who becomes unraveled by unrequited love. Friends and neighbors will join the Symphony's professional musicians onstage as part of the Town of Cary's annual "Play with the Pros" in this Memorial Day weekend concert.

A Space Spectacular | June 1, 2019

NCS joins in a statewide celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, journeying through space and beyond with music from *Star Wars*, Holst's *The Planets*, and more. Costumed *Star Wars* characters will be on site to meet and take photos with audience members, and the Morehead Planetarium will bring telescopes for stargazing.

Piazzolla's Four Seasons | June 7, 2019

Piazzolla paints vivid musical images of Argentina in the tango-filled *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, featuring Grammy-nominated violinist Jennifer Frautschi. This program captures the playful rhythms, familiar dance tunes, and fiery passion of Latin and Latin-inspired music with works by Copland, Márquez, and more.

Vivaldi's Four Seasons | June 8, 2019

In the most well-known violin concertos ever written, Vivaldi evokes the sounds of the world's natural wonders—singing birds in springtime, raging summer thunderstorms, autumnal countryside scenes, and the icy beauty of winter. Mendelssohn echoes Vivaldi's talent for musical storytelling in his ethereal Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and selections from Handel's *Water Music* round out this program of familiar favorites.

Classics Under the Stars | June 15, 2019

NCS shares favorite light classics, including Rossini's *William Tell* Overture and works by Mozart and Beethoven.

Ben Folds | June 22, 2019

North Carolina native Ben Folds—singer, songwriter, and pianist—joins NCS for an electric crossover concert. The classically-trained pop/rock star brings unique energy to the stage as he performs his hits through the years.

Broadway's Greatest Hits | June 29, 2019

Some of the biggest songs from Broadway's biggest blockbusters come to Booth Amphitheatre. Show-tune lovers will indulge in an evening of songs from *Wicked*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, *Cats*, *The Lion King*, *Les Misérables*, *Mamma Mia!*, and *Beauty and the Beast*, all performed by top vocalists.

Independence Day Celebration | July 4, 2019

At this Triangle tradition, NCS salutes the red, white, and blue with patriotic favorites, high-spirited classics, and a fireworks display over Symphony Lake.

Russian Nights | July 6, 2019

Vivacious orchestral showstoppers by Russian masters—from heart-racing overtures by Shostakovich, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Glinka, to familiar romantic tunes by Khachaturian, to the theatrics and pure fun of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*—will make for an evening of splendor.

The Music of Chicago with Brass Transit | July 12, 2019

The legendary band Chicago melded the musical diversity of their beloved city into an iconic sound, with rock 'n' roll melodies and unforgettable horns. Together with the Symphony, Chicago tribute band Brass Transit performs hits including "Saturday in the Park," "25 or 6 to 4," "If You Leave Me Now," and "You're the Inspiration."

Beach Party Starring the Embers | July 20, 2019

At this Summerfest tradition, The Embers perform Carolina beach music that will have audiences singing along and dancing on the lawn until the stars come out. (NCS does not perform on this concert.)

SPECIAL EVENT CONCERTS

Special Event Concerts are some of **NCS's most anticipated performances of the season**. These shows, taking place at Meymandi Concert Hall, are **available to season-ticket subscribers for purchase now**; they go on sale to the general public in August.

Video Games Live | October 5, 2019

Back by popular demand, NCS performs music from the greatest video games of all time, including Mario, Zelda, Halo, Warcraft, Final Fantasy, and more. Gamers and non-gamers alike will be dazzled by synchronized cutting-edge video screen visuals, state-of-the-art lighting, and interactive segments.

Cirque de Noel | November 27, 29-30, 2019

The circus meets the symphony, with stunning aerial feats, mind-boggling contortions, and jaw-dropping juggling acts accompanied by favorite festive music to match the wonder of the season.

Handel's Messiah | December 6-7, 2019

The North Carolina Master Chorale joins NCS for one of the most inspiring works of music ever created. The drama of Handel's masterpiece comes to a climax in the joyous exultation of the "Hallelujah Chorus."

New Year's Eve: Vienna with a Twist | December 31, 2019

To welcome 2020, NCS looks back to the Roaring '20s with jazzy Big Band classics that will put the swing in New Year's Eve. The time-honored tradition of Viennese waltzes will make this a night to be remembered well into the New Year.

“Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back” In Concert | April 26, 2020

The saga continues with Darth Vader leading the hunt for Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. One of the most popular films of all time is shown on the big screen as John Williams’ unforgettable score—from the brassy and foreboding *Imperial March* to the noble *Yoda’s Theme*—is performed live. *This program is also presented as part of the Pops Season on April 24-25, 2020.*

Gala Performance with Renée Fleming & Branford Marsalis | May 9, 2020

Two superstars share the stage with the Symphony—the incomparable soprano Renée Fleming and jazz and saxophone great Branford Marsalis return in this elegant gala evening led by Grant Llewellyn.

CONCERTS BY DATE

All concerts listed below take place at Meymandi Concert Hall unless otherwise noted.

<p>SAT, MAY 25, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE Wesley Schulz, conductor</p> <p>Handel: Harp Concerto Berlioz: <i>Symphonie fantastique</i></p>
<p>SAT, JUN 1, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>A SPACE SPECTACULAR Keitaro Harada, conductor</p> <p>John Williams: Main Title from <i>Star Wars</i> Holst: Mars from <i>The Planets</i> John Williams: Rey’s Theme from <i>The Force Awakens</i> Hanson: Romantic Symphony, Movement II Holst: Uranus from <i>The Planets</i> John Williams: Princess Leia’s Theme from <i>Star Wars</i> John Williams: Imperial March from <i>The Empire Strikes Back</i> Holst: Jupiter from <i>The Planets</i> Debussy: <i>Clair de lune</i> John Williams: Adventures on Earth from <i>E.T.</i> Holst: Venus from <i>The Planets</i> John Williams: March of the Resistance from <i>The Force Awakens</i></p>
<p>FRI, JUN 7, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>PIAZZOLLA’S FOUR SEASONS Joshua Gersen, conductor Jennifer Frautschi, violin</p> <p>Copland: <i>El Salón México</i> Piazzolla: <i>The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires</i> Moncayo: <i>Huapango</i> Copland: <i>Three Latin American Sketches</i> Osvlado Golijov: <i>Last Round</i></p>

<p>SAT, JUN 8, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>Arturo Márquez: Danzón No. 2</p> <p>VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS Joshua Gersen, conductor Jennifer Frautschi, violin</p> <p>Mendelssohn: Overture to <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Handel: Suite No. 1 from <i>Water Music</i> Vivaldi: <i>The Four Seasons</i></p>
<p>SAT, JUN 15, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>CLASSICS UNDER THE STARS Wesley Schulz, conductor</p>
<p>SAT, JUNE 22, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheater</p>	<p>BEN FOLDS Edwin Outwater, conductor Ben Folds, vocals & piano</p>
<p>SAT, JUNE 29, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>BROADWAY'S GREATEST HITS Michael Krajewski, conductor Julie Reiber, vocals Rodney Ingram, vocals</p>
<p>THUR, JULY 4, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION Wesley Schulz, conductor</p>
<p>SAT, JULY 6, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>RUSSIAN NIGHTS Akiko Fujimoto, conductor</p> <p>Shostakovich: Festive Overture Borodin: <i>In the Steppes of Central Asia</i> Ippolitov-Ivanov: <i>Procession of the Sardar</i> Rimsky-Korsakov: <i>Russian Easter Festival Overture</i> Glinka: Overture to <i>Ruslan and Ludmilla</i> Khachaturian: Adagio of <i>Spartacus and Phrygia</i> Tchaikovsky: Waltz and Polonaise from <i>Eugene Onegin</i> Tchaikovsky: <i>1812 Overture</i></p>
<p>FRI, JULY 12, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>THE MUSIC OF CHICAGO WITH BRASS TRANSIT Brass Transit</p>
<p>SAT, JULY 13, 2019 8PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>WEIRD AL YANKOVIC Weird Al Yankovic, vocals</p>
<p>SAT, JULY 20, 2019 7:30PM Koka Booth Amphitheatre</p>	<p>BEACH PARTY The Embers (North Carolina Symphony does not perform)</p>
<p>SAT, SEP 14, 2019 1PM</p>	<p>SENSORY-FRIENDLY CONCERT Grant Llewellyn, conductor</p>

<p>FRI/SAT, SEP 20-21, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>CONCERTO FOR TWO PIANOS Grant Llewellyn, conductor Alessio Bax, piano Lucille Chung, piano</p> <p>G. Williams: <i>Sea Sketches</i> Poulenc: Concerto for Two Pianos Elgar: "Enigma" Variations</p>
<p>SAT, OCT 5, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>VIDEO GAMES LIVE</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, OCT 11-12, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>RACHMANINOFF'S SYMPHONY NO. 2 Rune Bergmann, conductor Philippe Quint, violin</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, OCT 18-19, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>Barber: Violin Concerto Chaplin: Suite for Violin and Orchestra Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, OCT 18-19, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>LESLIE ODOM, JR. Leslie Odom, Jr., vocals</p>
<p>FRI, OCT 26, 2018 1PM & 4PM</p>	<p>HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR: THE COMPOSER IS DEAD</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, NOV 1-2, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>Wesley Schulz, conductor</p> <p>MAHLER'S SYMPHONY NO. 5 Karina Canellakis, conductor</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, NOV 1-2, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>L. Boulanger: <i>D'un soir triste</i> Smyth: <i>On the Cliffs of Cornwall</i> Mahler: Symphony No. 5</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, NOV 15-16, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>NEW WORLD SYMPHONY André de Ridder, conductor</p> <p>Julia Wolfe: <i>Big, Beautiful, Dark, and Scary</i> Bartók: Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta Dvořák: Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, NOV 22-23, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>BERNSTEIN & COPLAND Christian Reif, conductor Brian Reagin, violin</p> <p>Barber: Overture to <i>The School for Scandal</i> McKay: Violin Concerto Copland: Symphony No. 2 "Short Symphony" Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from <i>West Side Story</i></p>

<p>WED, NOV 27, 2019 3PM FRI, NOV 29, 2019 3PM & 7:30PM SAT, NOV 30, 2019 3PM</p>	<p>CIRQUE DE NOEL</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, DEC 6-7, 2019 8PM</p>	<p>HANDEL'S MESSIAH Grant Llewellyn, conductor Ellie Dehn, soprano TBD, alto Andrew Owens, tenor Federico de Michelis, bass-baritone North Carolina Master Chorale</p> <p>Handel: <i>Messiah</i></p>
<p>FRI, DEC 13, 2019 8PM SAT, DEC 14, 2019 3PM & 8PM</p>	<p>HOLIDAY POPS Wesley Schulz, conductor North Carolina Symphony Children's Chorus Jeremy Tucker, chorus director</p>
<p>TUE, DEC 31, 2018 8PM</p>	<p>NEW YEAR'S EVE: VIENNA WITH A TWIST</p>
<p>SAT, JAN 4, 2020 1PM* & 4PM <i>*sensory-friendly performance</i></p>	<p>HAPPY FEET TO A LATIN BEAT</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, JAN 10-11, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>THE PLANETS Gemma New, conductor Women of the North Carolina Master Chorale</p> <p>Salina Fisher: <i>Rainphase</i> Debussy: <i>Nocturnes</i> Holst: <i>The Planets</i></p>
<p>FRI/SAT, JAN 17-18, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>THE MUSIC OF ELTON JOHN WITH MICHAEL CAVANAUGH Wesley Schulz, conductor Michael Cavanaugh, vocals & piano</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, JAN 24-25, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>HOUGH PERFORMS BRAHMS Grant Llewellyn, conductor Stephen Hough, piano</p> <p>Farrenc: <i>Overture No. 1</i> Schubert: <i>Symphony No. 4</i> Brahms: <i>Piano Concerto No. 2</i></p>
<p>FRI/SAT, FEB 7-8, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>TCHAIKOVSKY'S SYMPHONY NO. 5 Grant Llewellyn, conductor James Ehnes, violin</p>

<p>FRI/SAT, FEB 14-15, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>Prokofiev: <i>Overture on Hebrew Themes</i> Shostakovich: Violin Concerto No. 1 Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5</p> <p>SWING IS THE THING Dave Bennett, clarinet and vocals Julie Jo Hughes, vocals Stephen Sayer, dancer Chandrae Roettig, dancer Karine Hermes, dancer Hunter Krikac, dancer</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, FEB 28-29, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>RACHMANINOFF'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 David Danzmayr, conductor Natasha Paremski, piano</p> <p>Lera Auerbach: <i>Icarus</i> Strauss: Suite from <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i> Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 3</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, MAR 6-7, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>A RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN CELEBRATION Oscar Hammerstein III, host</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, MAR 13-14, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>THIBAUDET PERFORMS RAVEL Grant Llewellyn, conductor Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano</p> <p>Berlioz: <i>Roman Carnival Overture</i> Ravel: Piano Concerto in G Major Gershwin: "I Got Rhythm" Variations Roussel: <i>Bacchus et Ariadne</i> Gershwin: <i>An American in Paris</i></p>
<p>FRI/SAT, MAR 27-28, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 7 Grant Llewellyn, conductor</p> <p>Mozart: Overture and Ballet Music from <i>Idomeneo</i> Jennifer Higdon: Low Brass Concerto Beethoven: Symphony No. 7</p>
<p>SAT, APR 4, 2020 1PM & 4PM</p>	<p>FAIRY TALES & DRAGONS Wesley Schulz, conductor Triangle Youth Ballet</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, APR 17-18, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>SCHEHERAZADE Michał Nesterowicz, conductor Yekwon Sunwoo, piano</p> <p>F. Mendelssohn: Overture in C Major Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2</p>

<p>FRI/SAT, APR 24-25, 2020 8PM SUN, APR 26, 2020 7PM</p>	<p>Rimsky-Korsakov: <i>Scheherazade</i></p> <p>“STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK”</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, MAY 1-2, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>BEETHOVEN’S NINTH Grant Llewellyn, conductor Elizabeth Llewellyn, soprano Paula Murrihy, mezzo-soprano Nicholas Phan, tenor Dashon Burton, baritone North Carolina Master Chorale</p> <p>Caroline Shaw: <i>The Listeners</i> Beethoven: Symphony No. 9</p>
<p>SAT, MAY 9, 2020 7PM</p>	<p>GALA PERFORMANCE WITH RENÉE FLEMING & BRANFORD MARSALIS Grant Llewellyn, conductor Renée Fleming, soprano Branford Marsalis, saxophone</p>
<p>FRI/SAT, MAY 15-16, 2020 8PM</p>	<p>THE RITE OF SPRING Grant Llewellyn, conductor</p> <p>Wagner: Prelude from <i>Parsifal</i> Debussy: <i>Jeux</i> Stravinsky: <i>The Rite of Spring</i></p>

About the North Carolina Symphony

Founded in 1932, the North Carolina Symphony (NCS) is a vital and honored component of North Carolina's cultural life. Each year, the North Carolina Symphony travels more than 18,500 miles throughout the state, presenting 300 concerts, education programs, and community engagement events that are enjoyed by 250,000 adults and schoolchildren in more than 90 North Carolina counties—in communities large and small, and in concert halls, auditoriums, gymnasiums, restaurants, clubs, and outdoor settings. The Symphony's full-time professional musicians perform under the artistic leadership of Music Director Grant Llewellyn.

NCS's state headquarters venue is the spectacular Meymandi Concert Hall at the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Raleigh. The Symphony's service across the state includes series in Chapel Hill, Fayetteville, New Bern, Southern Pines, and Wilmington, as well as the Summerfest series at its summer home, the outdoor Koka Booth Amphitheatre in Cary. NCS brings some of the world's greatest talents to North Carolina and embraces home-state artists from classical musicians to bluegrass bands, creating live music experiences distinctive to North Carolina.

Committed to engaging students of all ages across North Carolina, NCS leads the most extensive education program of any symphony orchestra—serving nearly 70,000 students each year. In alignment with the curriculum set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the Symphony provides training and resources for teachers, sends small ensembles into classrooms, and presents full-orchestra Education Concerts that bring the fundamentals of music to life. Music Discovery for preschoolers combines music with storytelling, and at the middle and high school levels, students have opportunities to work directly with NCS artists and perform for NCS audiences.

NCS is dedicated to giving voice to new art, and has presented 49 U.S. or world premieres in its history. In 2017, NCS appeared at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., as one of four orchestras chosen for the inaugural year of *SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras*—an honor that recognized the Symphony’s creative programming and innovative community partnerships.

The first state-supported symphony in the country, NCS performs under the auspices of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. To learn more, visit ncsymphony.org.

About Music Director Grant Llewellyn

Grant Llewellyn is renowned for his exceptional charisma, energy, and easy authority in music of all styles and periods. A native of Tenby, South Wales, Llewellyn won a conducting fellowship to the Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts in 1985, where he worked with conducting legends Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Kurt Masur, and André Previn. As Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the early 1990s, he conducted at the Tanglewood Music Festival, and on classical series and Boston Pops concerts.

Llewellyn has conducted many orchestras in North America, most notably the symphonies of Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Milwaukee, Montreal, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Toronto. As Music Director of the Handel and Haydn Society, America’s leading period orchestra, he gained a reputation as a formidable interpreter of music of the Baroque and Classical periods.

Music Director of the Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne since 2015, Llewellyn has held positions with numerous other European orchestras—including Principal Conductor of the Royal Flanders Philharmonic, Principal Guest Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, and Associate Guest Conductor with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Recent guest engagements include the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Royal Scottish National Orchestra, amongst others. An accomplished opera conductor, Llewellyn’s recent productions include the U.S. premiere of Handel’s *Richard the Lionheart* with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and *Fidelio* with the Opéra de Rennes.

Llewellyn has led NCS in four critically acclaimed recordings, most recently Britten’s Cello Symphony and Prokofiev’s Sinfonia Concertante, both with cellist Zuill Bailey.

Deeply committed and passionate about engaging young people with music, Llewellyn regularly leads education activities with NCS and around the world. In 2017 he led the first ever “relaxed” BBC Prom with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, a concert specially designed for those with autism, sensory and communication impairments, and learning disabilities.