

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

RACHMANINOFF SYMPHONIC
DANCES

THURSDAY, JAN 12, 2023 | 7:30PM

Wilson Center
Wilmington



The North Carolina Symphony gratefully acknowledges
financial support from the State of North Carolina.



NORTH CAROLINA
SYMPHONY

Rachmaninoff Symphonic Dances

Thu, Jan 12, 2023 | 7:30pm
WILSON CENTER
WILMINGTON

North Carolina Symphony
Stephanie Childress, *conductor*
Michelle Cann, *piano*

Gabriella Smith (b. 1991)
Tumblebird Contrails

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54
I. Allegro affettuoso
II. Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso
III. Allegro vivace
Michelle Cann, *piano*

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
Symphonic Dances, Op. 45
I. Non allegro
II. Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)
III. Lento assai – Allegro vivace

Michelle Cann appears by arrangement with the Curtis Institute of Music.

About the Artists



Stephanie Childress, conductor

Stephanie Childress first led the North Carolina Symphony in 2021 for concerts in Raleigh with a program including Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 3, Stravinsky's Pulcinella Suite, selections from Respighi's Ancient Airs and Dances, and Prokofiev's Classical Symphony.

Assistant Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for three seasons from 2020 through 2022, Stephanie Childress also served as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. She began her 2022/23 season with a Glyndebourne Festival debut conducting Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at home in Lewes and on tour. Alongside the opera production, Childress also conducted the Glyndebourne Festival orchestra and chorus for performances of Mozart's Requiem. Her 2022/23 season also includes debuts with Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, and New World Symphony Orchestra.

Childress also has strong connections to the Opera de Paris and in spring 2023 she joins Carlo Rizzi as assistant conductor for Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*. She has been an assistant conductor at the English National Opera and conducted Jeremy Sams' *The Enchanted Island* with the British Youth Opera, Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at St John's College (Cambridge), Lennox Berkeley's *A Dinner Engagement* for the Cambridge University Opera Society, and the world premiere of Anna Semple's *The Next Station is Green Park* at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



Michelle Cann, piano

Michelle Cann's debut with the North Carolina Symphony included concerts in Raleigh and Chapel Hill in 2018. She performed Piano Concerto in One Movement by Florence Price.

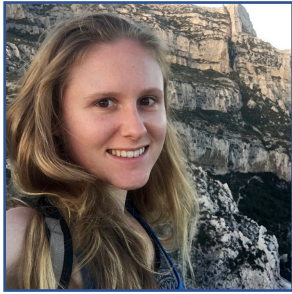
Lauded as “technically fearless with...an enormous, rich sound” (*La Scena Musicale*), Michelle Cann made her orchestral debut at age fourteen and has since performed as a soloist with orchestras such as the Atlanta and Cincinnati symphony orchestras, The Cleveland Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony, and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Cann’s 2022/23 season includes an appearance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, return engagements with the Cincinnati and New Jersey symphony orchestras, and debut performances with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra as well as the New World, Seattle, and Utah symphonies. She makes her debut at Carnegie Hall with the New York Youth Symphony.

Cann is the recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by the Sphinx Organization. She has also appeared as co-host and collaborative pianist with NPR’s *From the Top*.

Cann studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Curtis Institute of Music, where she serves on the piano faculty as the inaugural Eleanor Sokoloff Chair in Piano Studies.

About the Music



Tumblebird Contrails

GABRIELLA SMITH (b. 1991)

THE STORY:

Tumblebird Contrails (2014) premiered a year after San-Francisco native Gabriella Smith completed her undergraduate studies in composition at the Curtis Institute of Music. The Pacific Harmony Foundation commissioned the work from the recent graduate, and Marin Alsop premiered it at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in San Francisco.

As Smith explains, the work expresses the composer's passion for the outdoors:

*"Tumblebird Contrails is inspired by a single moment I experienced while backpacking in Point Reyes, sitting in the sand at the edge of the ocean, listening to the hallucinatory sounds of the Pacific (the keening gulls, pounding surf, rush of approaching waves, sizzle of sand and sea foam in receding tides), the constant ebb and flow of pitch to pitchless, tune to texture, grooving to free-flowing, watching a pair of ravens playing in the wind, rolling, swooping, diving, soaring—imagining the ecstasy of wind in the wings—jet trails painting never-ending streaks across the sky. The title, *Tumblebird Contrails*, is a Kerouac-inspired, nonsense phrase I invented to evoke the sound and feeling of the piece."*

LISTEN FOR:

- Extended techniques in the strings
- Constant sense of motion propelled by gradual rises in pitch and rhythmic punctuations in the percussion

INSTRUMENTATION:

Three flutes, three oboes, two clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, strings



Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

THE STORY:

In 1845, Robert Schumann published his only piano concerto. His contribution came at the heels of Chopin's two piano concertos (both 1830), Mendelssohn's two (1830, 1837) and Beethoven's five (1801-09). Refining an earlier, unmarketable Phantasie in A minor from the composer's symphonic year of 1841, Schumann added a lyrical second movement (*Intermezzo*) and the *Allegro vivace*. The resulting concerto was premiered in Dresden by the composer's wife Clara, arguably the greatest female concert pianist of her time.

Schumann's concerto reflects his ideals for the genre, which he believed should balance poetic discourse with virtuosic prowess. Schumann sought to restore its spiritual and musical purity: "[The] core of a composition should be divested first of all its adornments. Only then will it become apparent whether it is really beautifully formed... And if still a beautiful melody remains, if it also embodies a healthy, noble harmony, then the composer has won and deserves our applause. This requirement seems so simple, yet how seldom is it successfully fulfilled!"

LISTEN FOR:

- The soloist's dotted chords that open the work—typically, it is the orchestra that introduces the main themes before the soloist's entrance, but here Schumann reverses the order
- The massive solo cadenza towards the end of the movement, showcasing a virtuosic return of the main themes
- The graceful *Intermezzo* with playful exchanges between pianist and orchestra
- The buoyant *Allegro vivace* ending triumphantly in A major

INSTRUMENTATION:

Solo piano; two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings



Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)

THE STORY:

Performing on the stage hampered Rachmaninoff's later career as a composer, even if he regarded composing "one of the necessary functions of living." The mild reception of three large-scale works (*Variations on a Theme by Corelli*, *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* for piano and orchestra, and *Symphony No. 3*) in the 1930s did little to dissuade him from returning to composition in August of 1940, when respite at Orchard Point, the summer estate near Huntington, Long Island, afforded sufficient seclusion to pen the *Symphonic Dances*—his last major work.

The march, waltz, and quasi-*Danse macabre* qualities of the three movements eschew flashy dance steps popular on the 1930s jazz scene and instead align closely to the belated Romantic symphonic style. A rich variety of timbres in the orchestration and melancholic lyricism in the strings reminisce of a bygone era. Orchestrating the work at a rapid pace before the coming concert season, Rachmaninoff dedicated his *Symphonic Dances* to Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra months before its premiere in January 1941.

LISTEN FOR:

- Nimble staccatos that introduce the first dance's stamping yet moderate march-like rhythm
- The middle section's doleful alto saxophone, a new instrument for Rachmaninoff—Broadway composer Robert Russell Bennett advised him on which saxophone best suited the work
- The little bells that accompany the strings' quotation of Rachmaninoff's *Symphony No. 1* at the end of the first dance—whereas the troubled debut of his first symphony in 1897 shattered Rachmaninoff's confidence as a composer for a time, the theme's major-key reappearance in the *Symphonic Dances* four decades later seems to heal that once debilitating memory
- Dark shadows cast by muted brass over the *valse triste*, while various orchestra members whirl about over the oom-pa-pa dance rhythms
- The *Dies irae* motif in the sprightly final movement, a tribute to Eastern Orthodox liturgy from Rachmaninoff's native country

INSTRUMENTATION:

Two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, alto saxophone, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, harp, strings

About Our Musicians

Carlos Miguel Prieto,
Music Director Designate
The Maxine and Benjamin Swalin Chair

Grant Llewellyn,
Music Director Laureate

Michelle Di Russo,
Associate Conductor
The Lucy Moore Ruffin Chair

Violin I

Brian Reagin, Concertmaster
The Annabelle Lundy Fetterman Chair

To Be Filled, Associate Concertmaster
The Assad Meymandi and Family Chair

To Be Filled, Assistant Concertmaster
The Anne Heartt Gregory Chair

Karen Strittmatter Galvin, Assistant
Concertmaster

Emily Rist Glover
The Jessie Wyatt Ethridge Chair

Paul Goldsberry
The Richard and Joy Cook Chair

So Yun Kim
The Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. Chair

Marilyn Kouba
The Phyllis ("Pat") Conrad Wells Chair

Maria Meyer
The Tom and Mary Mac Bradshaw Chair

Pablo Sánchez Pazos

Jessica Ryou

Lin-Ti Wang*

Eileen Wynne
The Harvey At-Large Chair

Erin Zehngut
The J. Felix Arnold Chair

To Be Filled
The James C. Byrd and Family Chair

**The North Carolina Symphony Foundation
gratefully acknowledges the generous gift of
the Lupot violin from Arnold and Zenat
Lerman.**

**deceased*

Violin II

Jacqueline Saed Wolborsky, Principal
The Nancy Finch Wallace Chair

To Be Filled, Associate Principal
The Blanche Martin Shaw Chair

David Kilbride, Assistant Principal

Qi Cao

Janet Gayer Hall

Oskar Ozolinch

Anton Shelepov

Jeanine Wynton

To Be Filled

Viola

Samuel Gold, Principal
*The Florence Spinks and Charles Jacob
Cate and Alma Yondorf and Sylvan
Hirschberg Chair*

Kurt Tseng, Associate Principal
The Betty Ellen Madry Chair

Brian Sherwood, Assistant Principal

Petra Berényi

Paul Malcolm

Amy Mason
The J. Sidney Kirk Chair

Sandra Schwarcz
*The Samuel H. and Anne Latham Johnson
Chair*

Kirsten Swanson*

Cello

Bonnie Thron, Principal
The June and Tom Roberg Chair

Elizabeth Beilman, Associate Principal
The Sarah Carlyle Herbert Dorroh Chair

Peng Li, Assistant Principal
Anonymously Endowed

Yewon Ahn
Anonymously Endowed

Sunrise Kim**
The William Charles Rankin Chair

Rosalind Leavell*

David Meyer**
The Nell Hirschberg Chair

Marc Moskovitz*

Lisa Howard Shaughnessy
The Sara Wilson Hodgkins Chair

Nathaniel Yaffe
*The Secretary of Cultural Resources
Betty Ray McCain Chair*

Double Bass

Leonid Finkelshteyn, Principal
The Martha and Peyton Woodson Chair

Bruce Ridge*, Associate Principal
The John C. and Margaret P. Parker Chair

Craig Brown
The Mark W. McClure Foundation Chair

Erik Dyke
The Harllee H. and Pauline G. Jobe Chair

John Spuller*
The Dr. and Mrs. Preston H. Gada Chair

Flute

Anne Whaley Laney, Principal
*The Mr. and Mrs. George M. Stephens
Chair*

Mary E. Boone, Assistant Principal
The Dr. and Mrs. Shaler Stidham, Jr. Chair

Elizabeth Anderton Lunsford
The Jack and Sing Boddie Chair

Piccolo

Elizabeth Anderton Lunsford
The Jean Dunn Williams Chair

Oboe

Melanie Wilsden, Principal
The Hardison and Stoltze Chair

Joseph Peters, Associate Principal
The Lizette T. Dunham Chair

Amanda LaBrecque*

Sandra Posch**
The Clarence and Alice Aycock Poe Chair

English Horn

Joseph Peters
The Bruce and Margaret King Chair

Clarinet

Samuel Almaguer, Principal
The Mr. and Mrs. J. Christopher Walker, II Chair

Zhenyu Wang*, Assistant Principal
The Kathryn Powell and Green Flavie Cooper Chair

Bassoon

Aaron Apaza, Principal
The Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald S. Hudson Chair

Wenmin Zhang, Assistant Principal
The Beethoven Chair

French Horn

Rebekah Daley, Principal
The Mary T. McCurdy Chair

Kimberly Van Pelt, Associate Principal
The Paul R. Villard and Gabriel Wolf Chair

Corbin Castro*
The Roger Colson and Bobbi Lyon Hackett Chair

Tanner West*
The James Marion Poyner Chair

To Be Filled
The Mary Susan Kirk Fulghum Chair

Trumpet

Paul Randall, Principal
The George Smedes Poyner Chair

David Dash*, Associate Principal
The Henry and Martha Zaytoun and Family Chair

Trombone

John Ilika, Principal
The Thomas Warwick Steed, Jr. Family Chair

Jonathan Randazzo, Assistant Principal
The Frances Armour Bryant Chair

Bass Trombone

Matthew Neff
Anonymously Endowed

Tuba

Seth Horner, Principal
The Governor and Mrs. James G. Martin, Jr. Chair

Harp

Anita Burroughs-Price
Vonda Darr

Timpani

Colin Hartnett, Principal
The Patricia R., Steven T. and George F. Hackney III Chair

Percussion

Richard Motylinski, Principal
The Margery and Earl Johnson, Jr. Chair

Rajesh Prasad, Assistant Principal
The Abram and Frances Pascher Kanof Chair

Organ

To Be Filled
The Albert and Susan Jenkins and Family Organ Chair

Library

Stephanie Wilson, Principal Orchestra Librarian
The Mary Colvert and Banks C. Talley Chair

*Acting position

**Leave of absence

Named musician chairs are made possible through very meaningful gifts to the Symphony's endowment. As such, these donor families are also members of the Lamar Stringfield Society.

All string players rotate stands on a periodic basis in each section with the exception of titled players: Principals, Associate Principals, and Assistant Principals.

The North Carolina Symphony is a member of the League of American Orchestras and the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians.

The North Carolina Master Chorale is the Resident Chorus of the North Carolina Symphony.

Thank you to the generous individuals, businesses, foundations, and community partners who support the North Carolina Symphony through contributions each season. The Symphony's performances and extensive music education and community service programs are made possible by your support.

Scan here for a list of our generous donors:

