

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

BRAHMS SYMPHONY NO. 3

SUNDAY, MAR 26, 2023 | 3PM

Wilson Center
Wilmington



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



Brahms Symphony No. 3

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WILSON CENTER

CAPE FEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WILMINGTON

North Carolina Symphony

Michelle Di Russo, *conductor*

Francesca Deگو, *violin*

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Slavonic Dances, Op. 46

No. 1 in C Major: Presto

Antonín Dvořák

Slavonic Dances, Op. 72

No. 2 in Minor: Allegretto grazioso

Antonín Dvořák

Slavonic Dances, Op. 72

No. 7 in C Major: Allegro vivace

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 63

I. Allegro moderato

II. Andante assai

III. Allegro, ben marcato

Francesca Deگو, *violin*

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90

I. Allegro con brio

II. Andante

III. Poco allegretto

IV. Allegro

About the Artists



Michelle Di Russo, conductor
The Maxine and Benjamin Swalin Chair

Michelle Di Russo is Associate Conductor of the North Carolina Symphony where she is responsible for conducting the Symphony's extensive statewide music education concerts. She has conducted UNC Health Summerfest performances, Young People's Concerts, and Statewide Holiday Pops concerts with the Symphony, and has been featured in the Symphony's "Behind the Music" concert preview videos. Recently Di Russo conducted the orchestra in statewide classical subscription performances and led the Symphony's first Holiday Pops concert in Spanish in Raleigh.

A graceful and powerful force on the podium, Michelle Di Russo is known for her compelling interpretations, passionate musicality, and championing of contemporary music. She is an advocate for underrepresented artists and in 2020 co-founded the organization Girls Who Conduct to support younger generations of women and non-binary conductors in overcoming obstacles they face due to their gender.

Di Russo's artistic journey began in her native country, Argentina, at the age of three with ballet lessons, followed by studies in voice and piano. She has acted on television and onstage. Di Russo holds multiple degrees in Orchestral Conducting from Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, University of Kentucky (M.M.), and Arizona State University (D.M.A.). She is a Freeman Conducting Fellow in Chicago Sinfonietta's prestigious Project Inclusion program and a recipient of the Concert Artists Guild's Richard S. Weinert Award.

Previously, Di Russo served as Interim Director of Orchestras at Cornell University, Assistant Conductor for the Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestra, cover conductor and assistant for The Phoenix Symphony and Arizona Musicfest, and as a conducting fellow at the Cortona Sessions for New Music in Italy. She has also acted as cover conductor for the Minnesota Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and the National Symphony Orchestra. In the summer of 2022, she served as the Joel Revzen Conducting Fellow at Festival Napa Valley.



Francesca Dego, violin

These concerts are Francesca Dego's debut with the North Carolina Symphony.

The 22/23 season for Francesca Dego includes debuts with Orchestre de Champs-Élysées, Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Sofia Philharmonic, and Faroese Symphony Orchestras. She also returns to the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, and Orchestra della Toscana, performs in a special project at Dubai Opera House, and makes her debut in recital at the Wigmore Hall alongside pianist Alessio Bax.

Highlights of recent seasons include concerts across Japan with NHK Symphony Orchestra, Bernstein's *Serenade* at Teatro La Fenice, Orchestre de chambre de Lausanne, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, the Hallé, La Verdi, the Royal Philharmonic and Royal Scottish National Orchestras, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Opera Carlo Felice Genova at St Petersburg's Stars of the White Nights festival, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, Oviedo Filarmonía, Santa Barbara Symphony, Het Gelders Orkest, and the Orkest van het Oosten.

Dego's recent recording of Mozart Violin Concertos No. 3 and 4, conducted by Sir Roger Norrington with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, was named *BBC Music Magazine* "Record of the Month." Other releases include concertos by Paganini and Wolf-Ferrari alongside the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Daniele Rustioni, the recital disc *Il Cannone*, and a complete survey of the violin sonatas by Beethoven and of Paganini's Caprices.

A frequent contributor to specialist music magazines, penning a monthly column for *Suonare News* among others, Dego has written articles and opinion pieces for the *BBC Music Magazine*, *The Strad*, *Musical Opinion*, and *Strings Magazine*. She has also recently published her first book, *Tra le note. Classica: 24 chiavi di lettura*, in which she explores how classical music can be listened to and better understood today.

Based in London, Dego performs on a rare Francesco Ruggeri violin (Cremona 1697).

About the Music



Selections from *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 46 & 72

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

THE STORY:

Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* were originally published in two parts (Op. 46 and Op. 72) as piano duets for four hands. Inspired by his friend Brahms's *Hungarian Dances*, they also owe their success to the older and more established composer, who persuaded his publisher, Simrock, to take on Dvořák's compositions. At the time of the publication of the first set of *Slavonic Dances* (1878), Dvořák was a relatively unknown composer, but the popularity of the work led to his international recognition virtually overnight. Following up on the success of the dances, Simrock asked Dvořák to write another set. Although Dvořák protested that "to do the same thing twice is fiendishly difficult!" Simrock eventually prevailed, and in 1886 Dvořák composed the second set, Op. 72.

The title of each dance refers to a specific type of folk dance, such as *furiant*, *dumka*, or polka. While some of Dvořák's melodies bear strong resemblance to well-known folk songs, others invoke folk idioms (through rhythm, instrumentation, ornamentation, etc.) without alluding to any pre-existing material. Characteristic of the Czech language, the beginnings of Dvořák's phrases (such as in the opening *furiant*) often stress the downbeat. While the first set of dances draws primarily on those of Czech origin, the second set incorporates Polish, Serbian, and other dances. Throughout, Dvořák shows off his flair for orchestration in colorful flashes of the piccolo and shimmering chimes of the triangle while reminding his audiences of the folk origins of his music through the rustic sound of oboes in their low register or through the off-kilter accents that drive his melodies forward.

LISTEN FOR:

- The opening *furiant*, a Czech couples' dance in which the beat switches between groups of two and three
- The alternation between contrasting sections of mournful and festive music; this juxtaposition of different moods is characteristic of the *dumka*, as in this program's second selection

INSTRUMENTATION:

Op. 46, No. 1:

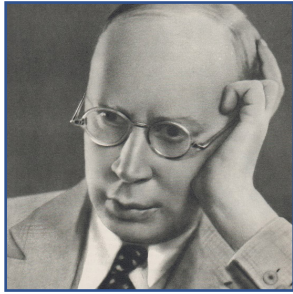
Piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, strings

Op. 72, No. 2:

Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, strings

Op. 72, No. 7:

Piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, strings



Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 63

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

THE STORY:

In 1934, Prokofiev wrote that “the question of what kind of music should be written at the present time is one that interests many Soviet composers today.... To begin with it must be melodious; moreover[,] the melody must be simple and comprehensible, without being repetitive or trivial.... The same applies to the technique and idiom; it must be clear and simple, but not banal. We must seek a new simplicity.” This new turn in Prokofiev’s style, marked by “new simplicity,” is evident in the Second Violin Concerto, his last commission before the composer returned to his native Russia the following year.

Having left Russia in 1918—in the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution—Prokofiev lived primarily in Paris but made several international tours as a pianist and enjoyed global recognition as a performer and composer. The Soviet Union promised Prokofiev much in their efforts to woo him back to his native land—and indeed, the composer was given a warm welcome when he returned in 1936. But at the height of Stalin’s purges, the composer was not immune to criticism, nor was his repatriation an entirely happy experience. In 1948, Prokofiev’s music, along with that by other colleagues including Shostakovich, was denounced as “decadent” in its modernist language and contrary to the values of the Soviet people. By strange coincidence, Prokofiev and Stalin died the same day: March 5, 1953.

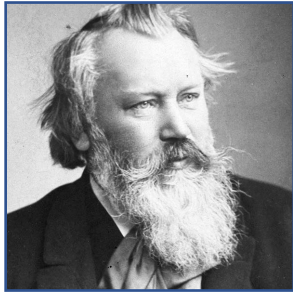
Indicative of Prokofiev’s “new simplicity,” the Violin Concerto juxtaposes clear, transparent textures and beautifully crafted yet simple melodies alongside spiky technical passages and eerie orchestral colors. These qualities in Prokofiev’s music highlight his particular way of bringing together innovation with accessibility, and it is his eclectic style that draws in the listener.

LISTEN FOR:

- The sensuous, haunting melody introduced by the violin alone—before the orchestra joins in a different key from the violin: this first theme transforms from a lyrical melody to fit more technical passages later in the first movement, and is reintroduced by the cellos and basses in the recapitulation
- The violin’s soaring, unending melody in the second movement, which seems to shine ever more brilliantly as it climbs higher: while plucked strings accompany the violin in the first statement of the melody, the soloist takes on the role of accompanist when the same melody is presented for the last time in the low woodwinds
- The castanets in the finale—which must have delighted the audience in Madrid, where the concerto premiered

INSTRUMENTATION:

Solo violin; two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, percussion, strings



Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

THE STORY:

Brahms experienced a difficult start to composing symphonies: the gestation period of his First Symphony spanned over 14 years. He felt considerable anxiety in the shadow of Beethoven's monumental symphonies and confessed to a friend, "You can't have any idea what it's like always to hear such a giant [Beethoven] marching behind you!"

By the Third Symphony, Brahms had grown more comfortable writing for the orchestra and composed the work in only a few months. While the first two symphonies are of sprawling length, the Third is the shortest of his four; but despite its relative compactness, the Third Symphony possesses a wealth of allusions that shed light on his musical relationships with his friends.

The symphony begins with a powerful statement of three notes, F – A-flat – F, the last of which begins the first note of the first theme. The three-note motif is a musical cipher for Brahms's personal motto, "frei aber froh" ("free but happy"), which was in turn an answer to the motto "F – A – E" ("frei aber einsam" – "free but lonely") of his friend, the famous violinist Joseph Joachim. The commanding first theme references music by another close friend of Brahms and Joachim: Robert Schumann's Third Symphony, the "Rhenish." It was during this same period that Schumann prophesied that the young, talented Brahms would become the successor to Beethoven.

Indeed, Brahms reached the height of his fame by the 1880s, and the warm reception to the Third Symphony attests to the renown he achieved. Clara Schumann, the widow of Robert and Brahms's lifelong friend, declared each movement a "jewel," and Antonín Dvořák, a younger composer championed by Brahms, proclaimed, "this work surpasses his first two symphonies; if not, perhaps, in grandeur and powerful conception—then certainly in—beauty."

LISTEN FOR:

- The opening motto, F – A-flat – F: the first two notes are scored for winds alone, the last note begins the first theme, vigorously stated by the strings above the heaving swells of the low brass
- Various iterations of three-note motto in different instruments throughout the symphony—for example, in the horn and the oboe as they foreshadow the recapitulation of the first movement, and at the conclusion of the entire symphony
- The soulful waltz in the third movement: first introduced in the cellos, repeated an octave higher by the violins, then by the woodwinds

INSTRUMENTATION:

Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, 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.

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