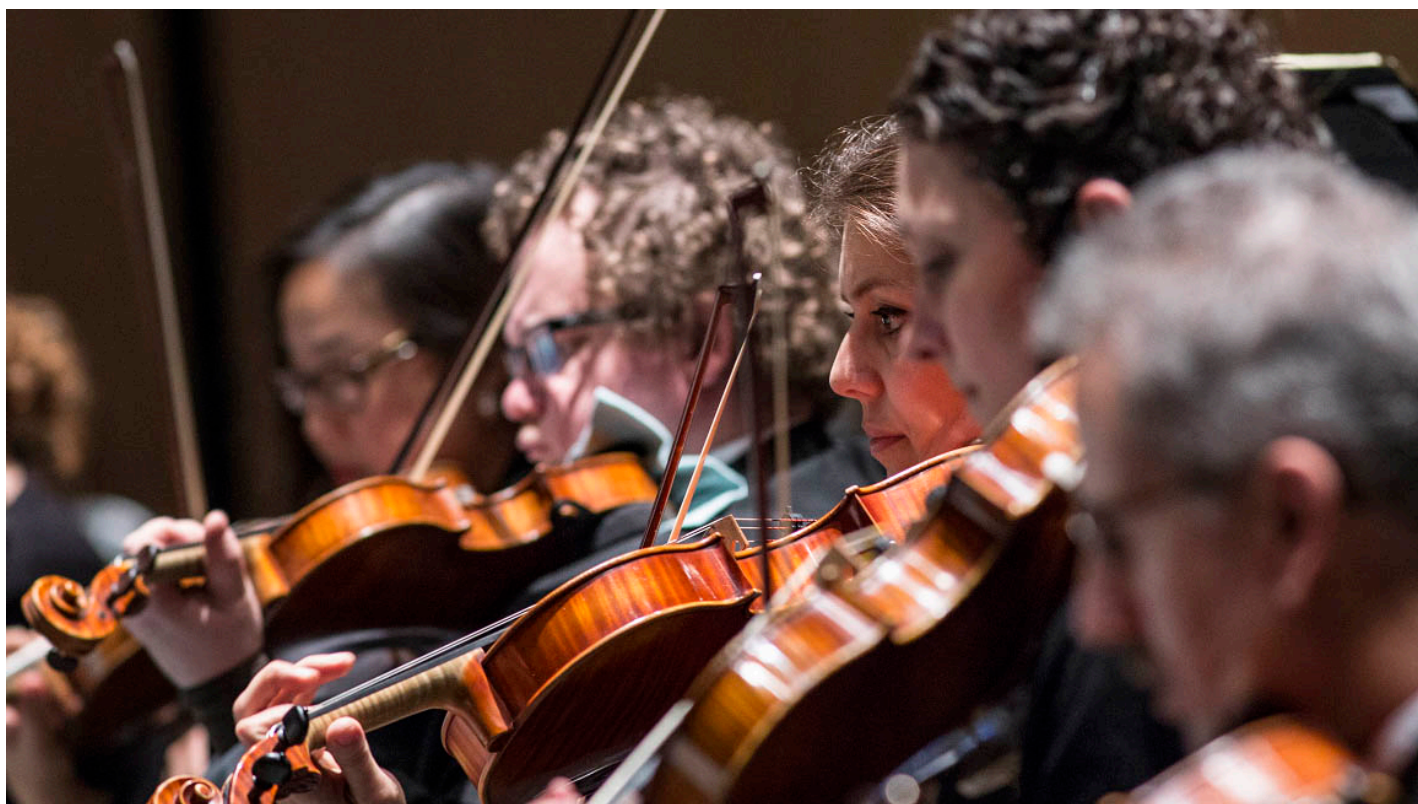


NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

ROMEO & JULIET

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2023 | 7:30PM

Wilson Center
Wilmington



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



NORTH CAROLINA
SYMPHONY

Romeo & Juliet

Sat, May 20, 2023 | 7:30pm
WILSON CENTER
WILMINGTON

North Carolina Symphony
Michelle Di Russo, *conductor*

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)
L'Italiana in Algeri Overture

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) / Arr. William Ryden
El amor brujo Concert Suite
Chez Gitanes
Song of Love's Sorrow
The Magic Circle
Midnight
Ritual Fire Dance

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) / Arr. Gian Luigi Zampieri
Libertango

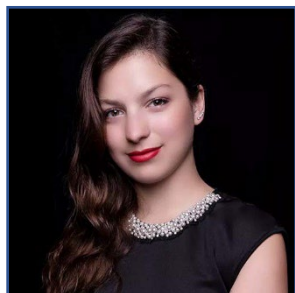
Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) / Arr. Maurice Peress
Overture to West Side Story

INTERMISSION

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Bacchanale from *Samson and Delilah*

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. Recently Di Russo has 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.

A Message from Our Conductor

Dear friends,

I am so happy to bring our Romeo and Juliet program to our North Carolina Symphony patrons in Wilmington. When developing this program, I reflected on the theme of love—love for our loved ones, love for ourselves, and love for our roots. The program takes us through some of the most famous love stories—like Romeo and Juliet, and Maria and Tony in West Side Story—and music from composers that I personally love, like de Falla and Piazzolla. It is important for me to share with you a little about my own roots and passion for music and I think these pieces reflect that. Thank you for joining us in celebrating love and beauty in music with your North Carolina Symphony.

With warm wishes,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Di Russo'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Michelle Di Russo
Associate Conductor

About the Music



L'Italiana in Algeri Overture

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)

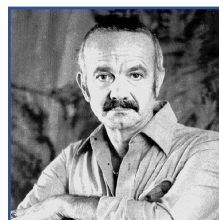
Premiered in Venice nearly 210 years ago, *L'Italiana in Algeri* (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*) is regarded as Gioachino Rossini's first comic masterpiece, preceding his most beloved opera *The Barber of Seville* by three years. The 21-year-old Rossini composed the two-act opera in just under four weeks; the overture is packed full of the wit, manic energy, and bombast featured in the complete work. Listen for Rossini's trademark frenetic passages and lively play of contrasts—the opening moments are sure to surprise!



El amor brujo Concert Suite

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

Initially commissioned in 1915 as a *gitanería*—a Flamenco dance native to Spanish Andalusia—Manuel de Falla eventually revised *El amor brujo* (*Love, the Magician*) into a suite for piano (1922) and finally a ballet with expanded orchestra (1924). Based on a story involving ghostly love affairs, hauntings, and magic spells, de Falla's score captures the Andalusian charm and fiery musical features characteristic of the region. Listen for the snappy rhythms and flamboyant melodies showcased in these select scenes of Spanish enchantment.



Libertango

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)

Regarded as the foremost composer of tango music, Astor Piazzolla fused traditional tango with compositional elements from both jazz and classical music—known as *nuevo tango*. *Libertango*, composed in 1974, features the traditional *tresillo* rhythm (3-3-2) in the low strings, but also incorporates counter-melodies and a jazzy approach to harmony. Listen for this driving rhythm as it takes the ever-evolving melodies on a brief, but lively journey.



Overture to West Side Story

LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)

Leonard Bernstein's 1957 retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* through the lens of 1950s New York City has undoubtedly become a staple of American culture. The Overture wraps the dynamism of the Broadway musical into a compact highlight reel. Bernstein's bustling rhythms with a hint of blues open the work—a vivid depiction of the city—before surveying the tunes of Maria and Tony's romance and closing with the animated mambo.



Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky began composing his *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* in 1869 at the suggestion of his friend and fellow composer Mily Balakirev. To portray the Shakespearean tragedy, Tchaikovsky followed the drama: after an introduction, a tempestuous first theme begins—meant to depict the rivaling families—with a “love” theme emerging amidst the tumult. After an interruption by the first theme, the love theme returns in a transcendent culmination meant to depict a love that endures beyond death. Tchaikovsky's penchant for lush harmonies and immense pathos is on full display in this landmark work, whose “love” theme has become iconic.



Bacchanale from Samson and Delilah

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

Named after Bacchus, the Roman god of wine and pleasure, a “bacchanale” is a dance marked for its hedonistic decadence. In this movement from Camille Saint-Saëns' 1877 opera *Samson and Delilah*, he portrays the licentious reveling of the Philistines over the humiliation of the Israelite Samson, who, blind and sapped of his supernatural strength, is chained to the pillars of the Philistine temple. Listen for the evocative use of Middle Eastern modalities, swirling dance rhythms, and the amorous middle section, perhaps serving as a retrospective of Samson and Delilah's broken love.

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

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Maria Meyer
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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
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**The North Carolina Symphony Foundation
gratefully acknowledges the generous gift of
the Lupot violin from Arnold and Zenat
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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
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Kurt Tseng, Associate Principal
The Betty Ellen Madry Chair

Brian Sherwood, Assistant Principal

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Sandra Schwarcz
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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

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The William Charles Rankin Chair

Rosalind Leavell*

David Meyer**
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Marc Moskovitz*

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John Spuller*
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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.

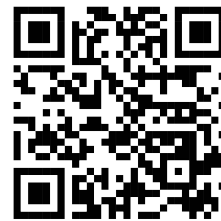
All string players rotate stands on a periodic basis in each section with the exception of titled players: Principals, Associate Principals, and Assistant Principals.

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

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