

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

BEETHOVEN
“EMPEROR”

THURSDAY, MAR 10, 2022 | 7:30PM

Memorial Hall
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



The North Carolina Symphony, in grateful acknowledgment of its generous grant-in-aid, performs under the auspices of the State of North Carolina, the Honorable Roy Cooper, Governor.



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Beethoven "Emperor"

Chapel Hill

Thur, Mar 10, 2022 | 7:30pm

MEMORIAL HALL

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL

Program

North Carolina Symphony

Francesco Lecce-Chong, *conductor*

Conrad Tao, *piano*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73, "Emperor"

Conrad Tao, *piano*

- I. Allegro
 - II. Adagio un poco mosso
 - III. Rondo: Allegro
-

Intermission

Jessie Montgomery (b.1981)

Records from a Vanishing City

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

In the South (Alassio), Op. 50

For the complete program, text the word **program** to 919.364.6864 or scan this QR code with your phone:



About the Artists



Francesco Lecce-Chong

conductor

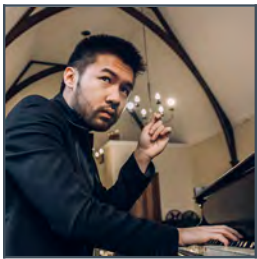
This concert is the North Carolina Symphony debut of Francesco Lecce-Chong.

Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong is Music Director of the Eugene Symphony in Oregon and the Santa Rosa Symphony in Northern California. He has appeared with orchestras around the world, including the San Francisco Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and Seattle Symphony; the National Symphony Orchestra and the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Toronto, and St. Louis; and the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

In 2019, Lecce-Chong debuted in subscription concerts with the San Francisco Symphony. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called his conducting “first rate,” praising the “vitality and brilliance of the music-making he drew from members of the San Francisco Symphony.” Other recent debuts include the Seattle Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and Xi’an Symphony Orchestra. The 2021/22 season will mark his subscription debuts with the Utah and North Carolina Symphonies.

During the 2021/22 season, both the Eugene and Santa Rosa symphonies are continuing the four-year “First Symphony Project” that is commissioning a symphony each year from a young American composer. The Eugene Symphony will embark on a three-part concert presentation of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* and the Santa Rosa Symphony will begin a cycle of the large orchestral works of Rachmaninoff paired with legendary film composers.

Lecce-Chong has served as Associate Conductor with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and is the recipient of such distinctions as the Career Assistance Award from the Solti Foundation U.S. Trained also as a pianist and composer, he completed his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music after attending the Mannes School of Music in New York City and Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Italy.



Conrad Tao

piano

Conrad Tao makes his North Carolina Symphony debut with this concert.

Conrad Tao has been dubbed “the kind of musician who is shaping the future of classical music” by *New York Magazine* and as an artist of “probing intellect and open-hearted vision” by *The New York Times*. He has received the Avery Fisher Career Grant and was named a Gilmore Young Artist. As a composer, he was also the recipient of a 2019 New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award for *More Forever*, his collaboration with dancer and choreographer Caleb Teicher.

Tao has recently appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, and Boston Symphony Orchestra. As a composer, his first large-scale orchestral work, *Everything Must Go*, was premiered by the New York Philharmonic and will be premiered in Europe next month by the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. His violin concerto, written for Stefan Jackiw, is being premiered this season by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

Last season, Tao was the focus of a series of concerts and interviews with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, performing Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4 and Andrew Norman’s *Suspend* live on television. He also appeared with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Seattle Symphony, among others. Following his debut at Blossom Music Center, The Cleveland Orchestra invited him to perform at Severance Hall in a special program, which included improvisation alongside pianist Aaron Diehl.

Tao’s debut disc *Voyages* was declared a “spiky debut” by *The New Yorker’s* Alex Ross. His next album, *Pictures*, was hailed by *The New York Times* as “a fascinating album [by] a thoughtful artist and dynamic performer...played with enormous imagination, color and command.” His third album, *American Rage*, was released in 2019.

Tao was born in Urbana, Illinois in 1994. He has studied piano with Emilio del Rosario in Chicago and Yoheved Kaplinsky in New York, and composition with Christopher Theofanidis.

About the Music



Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73, "Emperor"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

THE STORY

In 1809, Ludwig van Beethoven was at work on a new piano concerto for his friend, patron, and student Archduke Rudolph. With the imminent approach of Napoleon's army—and with his apartment right in the line of fire—Beethoven took refuge in his brother's cellar. It was there, intermittently covering his already-damaged ears with pillows to protect them from the sounds of gunfire and explosions, that he completed the Piano Concerto No. 5.

Even after the siege ended, life in Vienna was far from normal. "The whole course of events has affected my body and soul," Beethoven wrote. "What a disturbing, wild life around me; nothing but drums, cannons, men, misery of all sorts." For that reason, it took two full years before the concerto could finally be premiered. By that time, Beethoven's hearing had declined too much to be able to perform the piano part; the soloist for the first public performance was Friedrich Schneider.

Perhaps because he could not perform the part himself, Beethoven took control in another way—by writing out each solo cadenza and, in the score, forbidding the pianist to perform any cadenza other than what was written. (At the time, it was still common for soloists to improvise their own cadenzas.) Also surprisingly, the concerto launches immediately into a cadenza-like passage at the opening, whereas it typically would come closer to the end of the movement. "It is without doubt one of the most original, imaginative, and effective, but also one of the most difficult, of all existing concertos," praised a review of the premiere.

Allegedly, there was also an enthusiastic reviewer at the Vienna premiere the following year in 1812—a French soldier is said to have exclaimed that the work was "an emperor among concertos." This is one theory about the mysterious origins of the nickname "Emperor" (which was not given by Beethoven), but it is not substantiated.

In any case, the "Emperor" concerto is imperial in size and scope. Written squarely in Beethoven's middle period—known for works composed on a large scale—its grandeur is reinforced with stately dotted rhythms (particularly in the third movement) and its key of E-flat, which Beethoven associated with nobility and heroism.

Beethoven is said to have once confronted a French soldier, remarking, "If I were a general and knew as much about strategy as I do about counterpoint, I'd give you fellows something to think about." The boldness of his "Emperor" concerto seems to prove the point.

LISTEN FOR

- An ascending chromatic scale with a trill at the top (two notes quickly alternating back-and-forth) to signal the beginning of new sections in the first movement
- The hushed strings at the opening of the second movement and the dream-like entry of the soloist
- The emphasis on the weak beat in the finale's theme, giving it a hobbling feeling

INSTRUMENTATION

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



Records from a Vanishing City
Jessie Montgomery (b.1981)

THE STORY

Composer Jessie Montgomery shares:

Records from a Vanishing City is a tone poem based on my recollections of the music that surrounded me as I grew up on Manhattan’s Lower East Side in the 1980s and 1990s. Artists, truth seekers, and cultures of all kinds defined our vibrant community. The embracing diversity burst out with an effortless everydayness in block parties, festivals, and shindigs of every sort. Partly because my parents were artists—but also because I just couldn’t help it—I soaked up all that surrounded me: Latin jazz, alternative rock, Western classical, avant-garde poetry, and Caribbean dance music, to name a few.

A year before completing this work, a very dear family friend passed away and it was decided that I would be the one to inherit a large portion of his eclectic record collection. James Rose was one of the many sons in the Lower East Side cosmos who often hosted parties and generous gatherings for our extended artist family. His record collection was a treasure trove of the great jazz recordings of the 1950s, 1960s, and beyond—he was mad for John Coltrane, but also Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk and Ornette Coleman, as well as traditional folk artists from Africa, Asia, and South America.

In the process of imagining this piece, a particular track on a record of music from Angola caught my ear: a traditional lullaby which is sung in call-and-response by a women’s chorus. This lullaby rang with an uncanny familiarity in me. An adaptation of this lullaby and the rhythmic chant that follows it appears in each of the three main sections of *Records*.

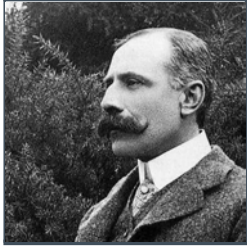
This piece is dedicated to James Rose.

LISTEN FOR

- Overlapping musical styles, from avant-garde jazz to Angolan lullabies
- Colorful, unexpected, and artfully layered textures and harmonies
- The Gershwin-like wailing clarinet
- The steady pulsing of the strings
- A sweep of chromatically ascending parallel chords, creating a wistful farewell at the conclusion of the work

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings



In the South (Alassio), Op. 50

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

THE STORY

Exhausted after completing *The Apostles*, Edward Elgar decided to spend the winter months of 1903 in sunny Alassio, Italy, with his wife and daughter. Unfortunately, sunny it was not—the weather on the Italian Riviera that winter was not much improved from that in England. The Elgars reported being depressed at the relentless rain and wind; to make matters worse, Elgar had hoped the scenic Mediterranean would be an ideal place to begin work on his first symphony but found himself unable to write.

When the weather finally cleared, musical inspiration did come—but it was for a tone poem rather than a symphony. *In the South*, Elgar wrote, evokes “the thoughts and sensations of one beautiful afternoon” in the valley of Andora, with “streams, flowers, hills, and distant snowy mountains in one direction and the blue Mediterranean in the other.” On that beautiful afternoon, he also considered all of the history held in that very spot—imagining battles that took place, a chapel that had stood there, and a shepherd among its ruins. Envisioning these scenes, the music came to Elgar almost immediately and, as he described it, “the rest was merely writing it down.”

This Italian-flavored tone poem is characterized by rapid fluctuations in mood, which Elgar illustrated with charming notations in his score. The exuberant theme, for example, is labeled “Joy of living (wine and macaroni).” As the tempo slows, he pictures “El. & family musing (this is not bad).”

LISTEN FOR

- The vigorous opening theme—music critic Michael Kennedy remarked, “nothing in the whole of Elgar is more thrilling than the leaping opening”
- A calmer, pastoral section that Elgar described as “romance creeping into the picture”
- The work’s most famous theme, a striding melody in the viola that sounded so authentically Italian that it was assumed to have been adapted from a local folksong but was in fact an original Elgar creation; it was later published as a song for soprano, “In Moonlight”

INSTRUMENTATION

Three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings

About Our Musicians

Grant Llewellyn, Music Director Laureate
The Maxine and Benjamin Swalin Chair

Carlos Miguel Prieto, Artistic Advisor

Michelle Di Russo, Assistant Conductor
The Lucy Moore Ruffin Chair

Violin I

Brian Reagin, Concertmaster
The Annabelle Lundy Fetterman Chair

Dovid Friedlander**, Associate
Concertmaster
The Assad Meymandi and Family Chair

Emily Rist Glover*, Associate
Concertmaster
The Anne Heartt Gregory Chair

Karen Strittmatter Galvin**, Assistant
Concertmaster

Erin Zehngut*, Assistant Concertmaster

Robert Anemone**

Carol Chung*
The James C. Byrd and Family 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

Leah Latorraca*

Maria Meyer**
The Tom and Mary Mac Bradshaw Chair

Irina Shelepov*

Lin-Ti Wang*
The Jessie Wyatt Ethridge Chair

Eileen Wynne
The Harvey At-Large Chair

To Be Filled
The J. Felix Arnold 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

David Kilbride*, Associate Principal
The Blanche Martin Shaw Chair

Anton Shelepov*, Assistant Principal

Qi Cao

Janet Gayer Hall

Mallory Hayes*

Oskar Ozolinch

Pablo Sánchez Pazos*

Jeanine Wynton

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

To Be Filled, Assistant Principal

Petra Berényi

Celia Daggy*

Paul Malcolm

Amy Mason
The J. Sidney Kirk Chair

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

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

David Meyer
The Nell Hirschberg Chair

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

Robert K. Anderson, Associate Principal
The Dr. and Mrs. Preston H. Gada Chair

Craig Brown
The Mark W. McClure Foundation Chair

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

Bruce Ridge
The John C. and Margaret P. Parker 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

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

Matthew Griffith*, 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

Christopher Caudill**

Rachel Niketopoulos**

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.