

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

ALL STRINGS

THURSDAY, FEB 2, 2023 | 7:30PM

Lee Auditorium
Southern Pines



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All Strings

Thu, Feb 2, 2023 | 7:30pm

LEE AUDITORIUM
SOUTHERN PINES

North Carolina Symphony
Michelle Di Russo, conductor

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
Serenade in E Minor for String Orchestra, Op. 20
I. Allegro piacevole
II. Larghetto
III. Allegretto

Clarice Assad (b. 1978)
Suite for Lower Strings

INTERMISSION

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)
Norwegian Melodies, Op. 63
Im Volkston
Kuhreigen and Bauerntanz

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
String Symphony No. 7 in D Minor
I. Allegro
II. Andante amorevole
III. Menuetto – Trio
IV. Allegro molto

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.

About the Music



Serenade in E Minor for String Orchestra, Op. 20

EDWARD ELGAR (1875-1912)

THE STORY:

Along with the concert overture *Froissart* (1892), Elgar's Serenade for String Orchestra constitutes his most significant work prior to the enormously popular "Enigma" Variations in 1899. Serenades trace their roots back to the Classical era, among which Mozart's contributions remained chief in the 18th century. Nearly a century later, Elgar joined several other Romantic composers in reviving these light orchestra pieces, beginning most notably with Brahms in the late 1850s, followed by Dvořák and Tchaikovsky.

Elgar noted in the Serenade's 1892 manuscript that his new wife Alice "helped a great deal to make these little tunes." While the String Serenade may owe its origins to Elgar's wife, posterity has also to thank the Worcester Ladies' Orchestral Class. As its conductor during the Serenade's inception, he was able to experiment with his newest work with this helpful band of women. They would also go on to premiere the piece in a private performance later that same year. The Serenade was not to be heard in public until a performance four years later in Antwerp, Belgium; and not in Britain until three years after that in 1899.

LISTEN FOR:

- The recurring, staccato rhythmic figure that weaves together the *Allegro piacevole*
- Beautiful, wide leaps in the melody of the charming *Larghetto* coupled with delicate turn figures
- The return of the first movement midway through the final *Allegretto*, now unfolding gracefully towards the final cadence

INSTRUMENTATION:

Strings



Suite for Lower Strings

CLARICE ASSAD (b.-1978)

THE STORY:

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Clarice Assad is one of the most widely performed Brazilian composers of her generation. A prolific Grammy Award–nominated composer with more than 70 works to her credit, she is a significant artistic voice in the classical, pop, jazz and world-music genres and is acclaimed for her evocative colors, rich textures, and diverse stylistic range. She has been commissioned by internationally renowned organizations, festivals, and artists, including a commission from Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg for her Violin Concerto (2004).

Assad holds a bachelor's degree in music from Roosevelt University in Chicago and a master's degree from the University of Michigan School of Music. Her numerous honors and awards include an Aaron Copland Award and several ASCAP awards.

Assad describes her Suite for Lower Strings (2009) as a fantasy in five-movements based on well-known themes by J.S. Bach. She says:

The work emphasizes the string section's lower voices, such as the viola, cello, and bass. Typically in Baroque music, the melody was given to the higher instruments—but the suite, commissioned by the New Century Chamber Orchestra, was specifically tasked to showcase the often under-used lower instruments. Each of the suite's short movements presents Bach's popular and recognizable melodies, often varying and combining them with elements from 20th-century styles.

LISTEN FOR:

- Riveting extended techniques offering a modern twist to the familiar repertoire
- Unconventional effects by the performers (snaps, slides, or playing on the bow's bridge) widening the timbral palette beyond the Baroque imagination
- New introductions, rhythmic accompaniments, added voices, occasional dissonances, and embellishments embroidering the familiar melodies

INSTRUMENTATION:

Strings



Norwegian Melodies, Op. 63

EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

THE STORY:

By the time Edvard Grieg wrote his *Norwegian Melodies* in 1895, he had already cemented his status as Scandinavia's leading composer. He had found fame with his Piano Concerto in A Minor from 1870, which had earned high praise from none other than Franz Liszt, and with the incidental suite for Henrik Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt* (1876), which remains well-known today for the famous *In the Hall of the Mountain King*.

While attending music conservatory in Leipzig, Grieg had the opportunity to hear the great string players of his day. But it was two musicians from his homeland, the virtuoso violinist Ole Bull and the well-known Norwegian folk-fiddler Torgeir Augundson, who exposed him to the traditional music of his native country and which had a profound and lasting influence on Grieg and his music. Though a pianist himself, the melding of these influences would move Grieg to compose many great works for strings.

The first of the *Norwegian Melodies*, *Im Volkston* ("Folk Style"), is based on a Nordic folk tune given to Grieg by Frederic Due, a Norwegian ambassador living in Paris to whom the work is dedicated. The second movement combines a pair of themes derived from Grieg's collection of solo piano works entitled *25 Norwegian Folk Songs and Dances*, written in 1869: *Kuhreigen* ("Cow Call") and *Bauerntanz* ("Peasant Dance").

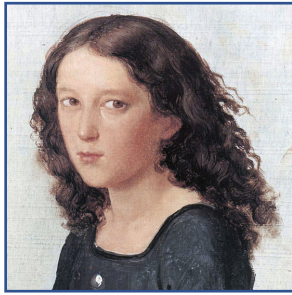
In a letter to his biographer, Grieg stated that "the essential feature of Norwegian folksongs, as compared with German ones, is a deep melancholy, which can suddenly veer into wild, uninhibited humor. Mysterious darkness and unbridled wildness—these are the two sides of Norwegian folksong."

LISTEN FOR:

- The varied textures of the eight-bar folk song, initially offered by the velvety timbre of the violas, echoed by cellos and bass, *pianissimo*
- The punctuated offbeat accompaniments in the second iteration of the melody, now led by cellos
- Triplet inner voices (with mutes) embellish the melody in the upper strings
- A full, rich orchestration from divided strings in the tune's final appearance
- The rustic, warm melody of *Cow-Call* with lilting pizzicato cellos
- Sprightly rhythms in *Peasant Dance* that conjure images of a convivial gathering celebrating the end of a hard workday

INSTRUMENTATION:

Strings



String Symphony No. 7 in D Minor

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

THE STORY:

Felix Mendelssohn's string symphonies date from early adolescence, when the young prodigy had been carefully mentored by Carl Friedrich Zelter. As professor of the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts and director of the prestigious Singakademie, Zelter had imbued the Prussian capital with an unparalleled musical life richly enhanced by his promotion of the old German masters. At the time, neither Bach nor Handel had fully achieved the status we allot them today. Zelter's spearheading of the Bach revival was part of his appeal to the Prussian monarch Frederick William III, that music was an essential part of a cultivated man's education.

Felix and his sister Fanny began lessons with Zelter in 1819, and the pedagogue's strict guidance along the tried paths of the old masters proved effective. Both quickly demonstrated fluency in composing canons and fugues of the strictest counterpoint, and were equally versatile in producing solo keyboard works, chamber music, *Lieder*, and four-part chorales.

The string symphonies also date from this period. By the age of 12, Felix had already produced six string *sinfonia*, a genre reflective of his teacher's familiarity with those by C. P. E. Bach, Mozart, and Haydn. Without winds and usually in three movements, the string symphonies were precursors to the four-movement symphony. Felix's first six follow the typical three-movement structure; numbers 7, 8, and 9, however, extend to four movements.

LISTEN FOR:

- Jagged, descending leaps in the opening *Allegro*, a throwback to the High Baroque style
- The major-key *Andante*, marked from the opening *amorevole* (Italian, "loving")
- The inclusion of a triple-meter Minuet for the third movement, originally a French aristocratic dance stylized and included within multi-movement works of the Classical period; the contrasting Trio in B-flat major presents a new mood and material
- The whirling *Allegro molto*, twice interrupted with a quasi-fugue, demonstrating young Felix's excellence in contrapuntal writing

INSTRUMENTATION:

Strings

Notes on the music by Joanna Chang

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.

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