

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

Beethoven Symphony No. 9

FRI/SAT, FEB 21-22, 2025 | 8PM

MEYMANDI CONCERT HALL, RALEIGH

North Carolina Symphony
Carlos Miguel Prieto, *conductor*
Ann Toomey, *soprano*
Susan Platts, *mezzo-soprano*
Travon D. Walker, *tenor*
Michael Sumuel, *bass-baritone*
North Carolina Master Chorale
Dr. Alfred E. Sturgis, *Music Director*

PROGRAM

Rhiannon Giddens (b. 1977)
and Michael Abels (b. 1962)
Psalm 23 from *Omar*
Travon D. Walker, *tenor*

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53
Susan Platts, *alto*
North Carolina Master Chorale

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, "Choral"
I. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso
II. Molto vivace
III. Adagio molto e cantábile
IV. Presto – Allegro assai – Allegro assai vivace
Ann Toomey, *soprano*
Susan Platts, *mezzo-soprano*
Travon D. Walker, *tenor*
Michael Sumuel, *bass-baritone*
North Carolina Master Chorale

The North Carolina Symphony expresses our appreciation to
Concert Sponsors **Mr. Don K. Davis and Ms. Peggy L. Wilks** for
their generous support.

About the Artists



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

Mexican conductor and Grammy-winner Carlos Miguel Prieto started his tenure as Music Director of the North Carolina Symphony at the beginning of the 2023/24 season. From 2007 to 2022, he was Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México. In 2023 he received the Fine Arts Medal, Mexico's highest honor for a musician. He was Music Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra from 2006 to 2023, where he helped lead the cultural renewal of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and won a Grammy in 2024. In 2008, he was appointed Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería (OSM), which he has led to a Latin Grammy nomination, a Grammy award, and a residence in 2024 at Bravo! Vail.

Prieto is in demand as a guest conductor for orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Dallas, and Toronto; The Cleveland Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra; and the San Francisco, Houston, and New World symphonies. He made his BBC Proms debut in 2023 and led the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in 2024. Recent engagements include the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Spanish National Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Auckland Philharmonia.

Since 2002 Prieto has conducted the Orchestra of the Americas, which draws young musicians from the entire American continent—serving as Principal Conductor until 2011, when he was appointed Music Director. He has also worked with young musicians at The Juilliard School, the Colburn School, the Curtis Institute, and elsewhere, and leads the Carlos Miguel Prieto Conducting Fellowship at OAcademy, an online conservatory bringing together teachers and students from around the world. He has also worked with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and conducted both the National Youth Orchestra-USA and NYO2 at Carnegie Hall.

Prieto has conducted over 100 world premieres of works by Mexican and American composers, many commissioned by him. He places equal importance on championing works by Black and African American composers such as Florence Price, Margaret Bonds, and Courtney Bryan, among others.

Prieto has an extensive discography and was recognized by *Musical America* as Conductor of the Year in 2019. He is a graduate of Princeton and Harvard universities.



Ann Toomey, *soprano*

These concerts are the North Carolina Symphony debut for Ann Toomey.

American soprano Ann Toomey is a former member of the Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, a 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions national semifinalist, and a 2019 Richard F. Gold Career Grant Recipient. She made her European debut at the Berlin Philharmonie, performing the title role in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*.

Highlights of the immediate past and current season include Woglinde in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Nashville Symphony, Meg Page in Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love* as well as a crossover recital at Bard SummerScape, Mrs. Lovett in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* with Dayton Opera, the Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with OPERA San Antonio, and First Lady in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with Glyndebourne Festival.

In recent seasons, Toomey sang the title role of Puccini's *Tosca* with Sarasota Opera, Opera Naples, and Livermore Valley Opera and returned to Wolf Trap Opera to perform the title role in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*.

Toomey is a native of Detroit and currently lives in Chicago.



Susan Platts, *mezzo-soprano*

The most recent performances by Susan Platts with the North Carolina Symphony were in 2023, as a soloist for the Mozart Requiem.

British-born Canadian mezzo-soprano Susan Platts has performed with, among others, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra; Orchestre de Paris; the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa; the symphony orchestras of Montreal, Toronto, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Baltimore; the Handel and Haydn Society; and the Los Angeles and St. Paul chamber orchestras. As a Fellow of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, she had the opportunity to work closely with Jessye Norman.

Platts has appeared on art song series including Vocal Arts DC at The John F. Kennedy Center and the Art of the Song series in New York City. Recent opera highlights include Wagner's *Die Walküre* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Royal Opera House, and John Adams' *Nixon in China* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Platts' discography includes Schmitt's *La Tragédie de Salomé*, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (both the chamber version and the full version), Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Brahms *Zwei Gesänge*, and a solo disc of *Lieder* by Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, and Johannes Brahms. In 2021, she wrote the cookbook *Aria Ready for Dessert?: A Musician Takes Center Stage in the Kitchen* and started a food blog called *Baking, Bits & Bobs*.



Travon D. Walker, *tenor*

These concerts are the North Carolina Symphony debut for Travon D. Walker.

A Ryan Opera Center tenor with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Travon D. Walker recently received his master's degree from Rice University, where he sang Sam Kaplan in Weill's *Street Scene*. In Lyric's 2024/25 Season, he has appeared in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and in the leading role of Jeanine Tesori's *Blue*; he will return for Puccini's *La Bohème*.

A native of Hinesville, Georgia, Walker completed his undergraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music. While there, he made his operatic debut in Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. He has been a Studio Artist at Wolf Trap Opera and was invited to participate in Renée Fleming's 2023 SongStudio and Joyce DiDonato's 2024 Masterclass Series, both at Carnegie Hall, as well as the 2023 Britten Pears Young Artist Program. Other engagements include the Erie Philharmonic and Houston Grand Opera (in the world premiere of Jeremy Howard Beck's *Another City*).

Walker received an Encouragement Award from the Kansas City District in the 2023 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, the 2024 Best Vocal Artist Award from the American Opera Society, and the 2024 Luminarts Cultural Foundation Men's Voice Fellowship.



Michael Sumuel, *bass-baritone*

In 2017, Michael Sumuel appeared with the North Carolina Symphony as a soloist for the Mozart Requiem for concerts in Raleigh and Chapel Hill.

In the 2024/25 season, American bass-baritone Michael Sumuel will return to the Metropolitan Opera to sing the title role in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* and sing his first performances of Porgy in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with Washington National Opera. He also makes his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, performing Mozart's Coronation Mass.

Previous operatic highlights include the Metropolitan Opera (Reginald in Anthony Davis' *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and Belcore in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*) and notable performances with San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Seattle Opera, Detroit Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and LA Opera. In concert, previous work has included Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Seattle Symphony and Mozart's Requiem with the New York Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony, Music of the Baroque, Orchestra of St. Luke's, and North Carolina Symphony.

Sumuel's competition accolades include a Richard Tucker Career Grant. A Texas native, he is an alumnus of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, and the Filene Young Artist program at Wolf Trap Opera. He currently resides in San Francisco with his wife and son.



North Carolina Master Chorale

The North Carolina Master Chorale is the Resident Chorus of the North Carolina Symphony. Their most recent concerts with the Symphony featured selections from Handel's Messiah and Bach's Christmas Oratorio, conducted by Carlos Miguel Prieto in December, 2024. They will join the Symphony again in May for performances of the Mozart Requiem.

Founded in 1942 as the Raleigh Oratorio Society, the North Carolina Master Chorale has been performing for over 80 years. The Master Chorale includes a 175-voice Symphonic Choir, a professional Chamber Choir of 16-60 voices, and the North Carolina Master Chorale Youth Choir, which is a professionally directed honors choir for high school students. Singers in all of these choirs are selected through auditions.

Named in 2014 as the resident choir of the North Carolina Symphony, the North Carolina Master Chorale provides choral support for the Symphony for major choral works in addition to their own performances. The Master Chorale's season consists of five to six concerts for the adult choirs, and one Youth Choir performance. The Chorale also provides the choir for Carolina Ballet performances, regularly collaborates with other arts organizations, and provides choral music to North Carolina choirs through a newly created Music Lending Library. The organization has been awarded a Raleigh Medal of Arts, and has twice filmed their holiday concert for broadcast on PBS North Carolina.

Music Director Dr. Alfred Sturgis has led the Master Chorale for more than 30 years. He is also Music Director of the Carolina Ballet and the Tar River Orchestra. In September 2023, Sturgis was awarded the Order of the Longleaf Pine.

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

TEXT & TRANSLATION

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MARTIN MARIETTA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, RALEIGH

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Travon D. Walker, *tenor*
Michael Sumuel, *bass-baritone*

North Carolina Master Chorale
Dr. Alfred E. Sturgis, *Music Director*

SOPRANOS

Brooke Adkins
Katie Andress
Amy Athavale
Tiffany Bartholomew
Denise Berry
Alyson Boswell
Hannah Burchard
Milo Clements
Claire Diefenderfer
Margaret Escobar
Debra Lynn Etheridge
Kathryn Ferro
Camille Fields
Samantha Gottlieb
Erin Kate Grady
Olivia Haley
Abigale Hawkins
Leslie Heal
Sara Hepler
Amber Hitchcock
Rachel Holmes
Letia Johnson

Stephanie Johnson
Katy Kaltenbrun
Zumanah Kamal
Mallory Kinczyk
Alicia Kirwan
Ayn-Monique Klahre
Kazue Kojima
Briana Lamet
Elizabeth Marks
Sarah Marks
Lindsay Anne McCall
Amanda McCollough
Tarron McCord
Myra Michot
Jung Eun Moon
Svetlana Mungalov
Glenna Musante
Abby Nardo
Tricia Neff
Lesley Page
Veronica Passarelli
Mariah Piro

Cathy Poole
Angela Santucci
Rebekah Shamberger
Emily Sheffield
Martha Stallmann
Kit Sweeney
Vickie Ta
Catherine Ta
Lauren Takitch
Mariah Tarry
Leona Taylor
Allison Taylor
Cynthia Thomas
Sally Thomas
Olivia Toso
Fran Tracy-Walls
Taylor Troyer
Rachel Walter
Caroline Webster
Rachel Wilson
Jessica Woodbury
Merranie Zellweger

TENORS

Richmond Agyapong
Alan Brown
Dan Gaugert
Anil Gehi
Ken Griffo
Jerrod Godwin
Philip Guadagno
Joseph Guarascio
Jeff Hensley
Taylor Hoyt
Kenichi Kojima
Eduardo Magistrado
Steven Martin
Rick Mullen
Jack Neely
Randy Neighbarger
Mark Rossnagel
Wesley Shearer
Peter Sherk
Mason Walker
Caleb Waters

BASSES

Colin Anderson
Paul Berry
Richard Best
Tim Champion
Francis Cianfrocca
Ryan Downey
Mike Gilliam
Dan Harrell
Lee Harrison
Eric Heidepriem
Bill Isler
Jeff Johnson
Chris King
Jack Krupicka
Michael Lawrence
Bradley Layton
Matthew Lubin
Scott MacCracken
Kurt Marsden
Brian McFeaters
Josh Mizesko
DeMar Neal
Robert Nelson
Sammy Pearce
Jamie Taylor
Stan Taylor
Joseph Walls
Jack Ward
Curtis Weispenning

ALTOS

Pam Alachi
Jennifer Alkove
Alison Anderson
Jenny Anderson
Kay Birdwhistell
Cathy Brawner
Kelli Bullock
Ginger Calloway
Randi Chalfant
Mairead Colby
Catie DeLiso
Ellen Demitraszek
Gina Difino
Jane Dunbar
Emily Eisenlohr
Frances Foner
Jennifer Fredette
Nadine Gershman

Veronica Gibson
Olivia Gilbert
Josenny Gonzalez
Megan Gray
Rebekah Haithcock
Claire Heins
Nancy Herje
Jenna Higgs
Kathy Hopkins
Katie Horneffer
Paula Hostetter
Stacie Howard
Laura Jones
Karen Kletter
Abby Kolb
Barbara Lehenbauer
Olga Lobastova
Judith Lyon-Mitchell

Heather Minchew
Phyllis O'Keef
Kimberly Palgrave
Vanessa Patrick
Kayla Pierce
Deborah Radisch
Sarai Schweers
Melissa Shaheen
Joy Snipes
Carmen Stewart
Jen Summers
Beth Vandergriff
Barbara Wanamaker
Kate Woomer-Deters
Alexa Young

For a complete program of tonight's concert, text the word **program** to 919.364.6864 or scan this QR code:



For more information about the **North Carolina Master Chorale**, scan this QR code:



Psalm 23 from Omar

RHIANNON GIDDENS (b. 1977)
AND MICHAEL ABELS (b. 1962)

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“The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters.”
Still waters, deep waters...
Across the waters, I came here against my will, terrified.
Caught in the crook in the path, in that unseen crook in
the path,
If you could see me you would laugh, Mother.
Well, first, you’d cry.
My tongue has gone silent, no ears will have heard,
Instead I speak with another’s words.
This earth I had held within my hands,
The ground turned red in a distant land.
The time passes, and the me I had known, the me I had
owned,
Gives way to the me that I am now, in a perpetual bow.
And yet, did I not already bow to you, oh Lord?
How much lower should I go?
“He restoreth my soul,
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His
name’s sake.”

And what is in a name?
This Christian power, this Three in One,
From God to Son?
Son, a mighty prophet indeed, just not mine.
I already have what I need in the divine.
I miss your voice, Mother, your eyes.
How wise you were, Mother, you knew the choice
was never mine.
“Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for you are with me.
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence
of mine enemies.
Thou anointest my head with oil.
My cup, my cup, my cup, my cup runneth over.
Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the
days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, in the
house of the Lord!
Forever.”

Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Alto

Aber abseits wer ist’s?
Im Gebüsch verliert sich der Pfad.
Hinter ihm schlagen die Sträucher
zusammen, das Gras steht wieder auf,
Die Öde verschlingt ihn.

Ach, wer heilet die Schmerzen
Des, dem Balsam zu Gift ward?
Der sich Menschenhass
Aus der Fülle der Liebe trank?
Erst verachtet, nun ein Verächter,
Zehrt er heimlich auf
Seinen eigenen Wert
In ungenügender Selbstsucht.

Alto and Chorus

Ist auf deinem Psalter,
Vater der Liebe, ein Ton
Seinem Ohre vernehmlich,
So erquicke sein Herz!
Öffne den umwölkten Blick
Über die tausend Quellen
Neben dem Durstenden
In der Wüste!

But who goes there alone?
In the brake from his pathway he strays.
After him clash the branches together,
the grass rises again,
the desert engulfs him.

Who can comfort his anguish?
Who, if balsam be deadly?
If the hate of men
from the fullness of love be drained?
He that was scorned turned to a scorner,
lonely, devours
all he hath of worth
in a barren self-seeking.

If there is on your psaltery,
Father of love, one note
his ear can hear,
then refresh his heart!
Open his clouded gaze
to the thousand springs
next to him who thirsts
in the wilderness!

Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, "Choral"

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

The Ode to Joy, as printed below, is performed in the fourth movement of Symphony No. 9.

Baritone

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!
Sondern lasst uns
angenehmere anstimmen,
und freudenvollere.

O friends, not these sounds!
Rather let us
sing more pleasing songs,
full of joy.

Baritone and Chorus

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum.
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Joy, brilliant spark of the gods,
daughter of Elysium,
drunk with fire, we enter,
Divinity, your sacred shrine.
Your magic again unites
all that custom harshly tore apart;
all men become brothers
beneath your gentle hovering wing.

Quartet and Chorus

Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen,
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein,
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen,
Mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

Whoever has won in that great gamble
of being friend to a friend,
whoever has won a gracious wife,
let him join in our rejoicing!
Yes, even if there is only one other soul
he can call his own on the whole earth!
And he who never accomplished this,
let him steal away weeping from this company!

Freude trinken alle Wesen
An den Brüsten der Natur,
Alle Guten, alle Bösen
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott!

All creatures drink of joy
at Nature's breast,
All men, good and evil,
follow her rose-strewn path.
Kisses she gave us and vines,
a friend, faithful to death;
desire was even given to the worm,
and the cherub stands before God!

Tenor and Chorus

Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig wie ein Held zum Siegen.

Joyously, just as His suns fly
through the splendid arena of heaven,
run, brothers, your course
gladly, like a hero to victory.

continued on next page

Chorus

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum.
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.
Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.
Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muss er wohnen.

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Brüder! Brüder!
Über'm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Quartet and Chorus

Freude, Tochter aus Elysium,
Deine Zauber binden wieder
Was die Mode streng geteilt.
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Seid umschlungen Millionen!
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium!

Joy, brilliant spark of the gods,
daughter of Elysium,
drunk with fire, we enter,
Divinity, your sacred shrine.
Your magic again unites
all that custom harshly tore apart;
all men become brothers
beneath your gentle hovering wing.
Be embraced, ye millions!
This kiss is for the entire world!
Brothers, above the canopy of stars
surely a loving Father dwells.
Do you bow down, ye millions?
Do you sense the Creator, World?
Seek Him above the canopy of stars!
Above the stars must He dwell.

Joy, brilliant spark of the gods,
daughter of Elysium,
drunk with fire, we enter,
Divinity, your sacred shrine.

Be embraced, ye millions!
This kiss is for the entire world!

Do you bow down, ye millions?
Do you sense the Creator, World? Seek
Him above the canopy of stars!
Brothers! Brothers!
Above the canopy of stars
surely a loving Father dwells.

Joy, daughter of Elysium,
Your magic again unites
all that custom harshly tore apart; all
men become brothers
beneath your gentle hovering wing.

Be embraced, ye millions!
This kiss is for the entire world!
Brothers, above the canopy of stars
surely a loving Father dwells.

Joy, brilliant spark of the gods,
daughter of Elysium!

About the Music



Psalm 23 from *Omar*

RHIANNON GIDDENS (b. 1977)

AND MICHAEL ABELS (b. 1962)

THE STORY

The opera *Omar* is based on the 1831 memoir *A Muslim American Slave: The Life of Omar ibn Said*—one of the few accounts from an enslaved African to survive in the United States, and the only one in Arabic. A Muslim scholar who was kidnapped and enslaved in 1807, Omar ibn Said spent the last five decades of his life on a plantation in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where today there is a mosque named for him. He died in 1864 as the Civil War raged around him.

Rhiannon Giddens, who wrote the libretto and composed the score with Michael Abels, described Psalm 23 in an interview as a “contemplative moment” for ibn Said: “In Act II... he has been given a Bible in Arabic...by his enslaver with the expectation of converting to Christianity. He’s looking at this Bible, and he starts to read Psalm 23, and then he starts to contemplate his whole existence. How did he get here? Why? What is the plan for him? What does Allah have in store for him? How is he trying to figure this out?” Abels says that the opera tells the story of [ibn Said’s] “spiritual journey,” including “the challenge of being asked to give up his spiritual identity as well as his freedom...”

Abels is best known for his scores for the films *Get Out*, *Us*, and *Nope*, all directed by the groundbreaking filmmaker Jordan Peele. Giddens, a native of Greensboro, North Carolina, is a multi-faceted singer, songwriter, and music historian known for her mastery of folk music genres—from co-founding the Carolina Chocolate Drops to succeeding Yo-Yo Ma as Artistic Director of the Silkroad music organization. Commissioned by the Spoleto Festival USA and Carolina Performing Arts, *Omar* had its premiere in 2022 and was awarded the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Music.

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo, two flutes, alto flute, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, contrabass trombone, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, strings



Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53
JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

THE STORY

As a young man, Johannes Brahms was viewed by many as a successor to Ludwig van Beethoven—extraordinary pressure for a musician just beginning his career. He would conspicuously avoid writing a symphony or a string quartet, both genres having been revolutionized by Beethoven, for many years. Instead, Brahms found his compositional voice through vocal works; his first great success as a composer came with the premiere in 1868 of his *German Requiem*.

The Alto Rhapsody was composed in 1869 when Brahms was in his mid-30s. The text, from a poem by German author and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe titled “Winter Journey in the Harz Mountains,” depicts a wanderer who journeys into the wilderness in search of spiritual relief from his earthly suffering.

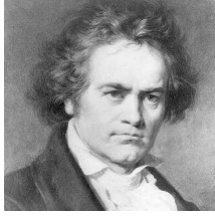
Brahms, who never married, struggled to establish and maintain romantic relationships. Some scholars have speculated that he had become enamored with Julie Schumann, the daughter of his mentors Robert and Clara Schumann, though most likely he never made his feelings known. When Julie became engaged to another man, Brahms presented the Alto Rhapsody to her as a wedding gift.

LISTEN FOR

- The deep, rich timbre in the lowest register of the female singing voice, intoning the poet’s description of the solitary wanderer
- Three distinct sections in the work: an introduction in a minor key, in which the soloist sets the desolate scene; a beautiful aria that asks who will soothe the suffering of the protagonist; and finally, the entrance of the men’s choir, pleading for solace
- The final two words of the work, “...sein Herz!” (“...his heart!”)—the same progression as when singing “Amen,” called a plagal cadence

INSTRUMENTATION

Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, strings



Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, "Choral"
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

THE STORY

For Ludwig van Beethoven, his final symphony and magnum opus was the summarizing thesis for his life. He was born and raised in the small and colorful German city of Bonn, where a free-thinking culture revolved around a fierce passion for the humanist ideals of the Enlightenment. It was as a teenager in Bonn that Beethoven first heard Friedrich Schiller's poem "Ode to Joy."

The composer began work on the piece in 1820, at the age of forty-nine, with its premiere taking place in 1824. By this time in his life, Beethoven was completely deaf and isolated. His propensity for violent outbursts and bouts of deep depression had left him with few meaningful relationships, and severe stomach issues that had plagued him his entire life had reached an unbearable level. When asked what the subject for his new work would be, he said, "The search for a way to express joy." With the Ninth Symphony, Beethoven reaches through time with a triumphant message of unity.

LISTEN FOR

- The flashes of a motif in the violins at the beginning of the first movement, which then develops into the thunderous theme that will define the movement—ending with a funeral march
- The raucous minor-key second movement, interrupted by a beautiful, soaring theme in the woodwinds
- The main theme of the third movement, introduced by the strings, which is developed with variations and embellishments but never loses its sense of deep tranquility
- The entrance of the baritone and choir in the final movement and the first time in Western Classical music history that voices join the symphonic genre

INSTRUMENTATION

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

The Musicians of the North Carolina Symphony

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

Grant Llewellyn,
Music Director Laureate

Sophie Sze-Ki Mok,
Assistant Conductor
The Lucy Moore Ruffin Chair

Violin I

To Be Filled, Concertmaster *The
Annabelle Lundy Fetterman Chair*

Jessica Hung,
Associate Concertmaster *The Assad
Meymandi and Family Chair*

Anna Black,
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

Seula Lee
The Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. Chair

Joseph Meyer*

Maria Meyer
The Tom and Mary Mac Bradshaw Chair

Minjoo Moon*
The Harvey At-Large Chair

Pablo Sánchez Pazos
The Phyllis ("Pat") Conrad Wells Chair

Jessica Ryou
The James C. Byrd and Family Chair

Erin Zehngut
The J. Felix Arnold Chair

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

Violin II

Jacqueline Saed Wolborsky,
Principal
The Nancy Finch Wallace Chair

Tiffany Kang,
Associate Principal
The Blanche Martin Shaw Chair

David Kilbride,
Assistant Principal

Qi Cao

Janet Gayer Hall

Chris Jusell

Oskar Ozolinch

Subin Shin

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

Brian Sherwood,
Assistant Principal

Petra Berényi

Paul Malcolm

Amy Mason
The J. Sidney Kirk Chair

Daniel Moore

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

David Meyer
The Nell Hirschberg Chair

Marc Moskovitz*
*The William Charles Rankin
Chair*

Lisa Howard Shaughnessy
The Sara Wilson Hodgkins Chair

Samuel Sykes*

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

Double Bass

Leonid Finkelshteyn, Principal
*The Martha and Peyton
Woodson Chair*

Joshua DePoint,
Associate Principal
*The Dr. and Mrs. Preston H. Gada
Chair*

Craig Brown
*The Mark W. McClure Foundation
Chair*

Erik Dyke
*The Harlee H. and Pauline G.
Jobe Chair*

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

Flute

Megan Torti, Principal
*The Mr. and Mrs. George M.
Stephens Chair*

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

Alexandra Stokes*
The Jack and Sing Boddie Chair

Piccolo

Alexandra Stokes*
The Jean Dunn Williams Chair

Oboe

Melanie Wilsden, Principal
The Hardison and Stoltze Chair

Joseph Peters,
Associate Principal,
The Lizette T. Dunham Chair

To Be Filled
*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*

Sammy Lesnick,
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*

Gabriel Mairson
The James Marion Poyner Chair

Russell Rybicki
*The Roger Colson and
Bobbi Lyon Hackett Chair*

To Be Filled
*The Mary Susan Kirk Fulghum
Chair*

Trumpet

Paul Randall, Principal
The George Smedes Poyner Chair

Ben Hauser,
Associate Principal
*The Henry and Martha Zaytoun
and Family Chair*

Trombone

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

Steven Osborne*,
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*

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*

Taylor Troyer,
Assistant Orchestra Librarian

*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 each year.**

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acknowledges financial support from
Wake County, the City of Raleigh,
and the State of North Carolina.



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