

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

Stravinsky: The Firebird

FRI/SAT, MAY 9-10, 2025 | 8PM
MEYMANDI CONCERT HALL, RALEIGH

North Carolina Symphony
Carlos Miguel Prieto, *conductor*
Alessio Bax, *piano*

PROGRAM

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
La valse, poème chorégraphique

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)
***Nights in the Gardens of Spain* for Piano and Orchestra**

- I. *En el Generalife*
- II. *Danza lejana*
- III. *En los jardines de la Sierra de Córdoba*
Alessio Bax, *piano*

INTERMISSION

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)
Selections from Suite Española, Op. 47

- I. *Castilla*
- II. *Granada*
- III. *Sevilla*
- IV. *Asturias*
- V. *Aragón*

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
Suite from The Firebird

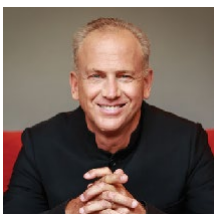
- I. *Introduction and Dance of the Firebird*
- II. *Dance of the Princesses*
- III. *Infernal Dance of King Kastchei*
- IV. *Berceuse*
- V. *Finale*

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The North Carolina Symphony expresses our appreciation to Saturday Concert
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The Saturday concert is made possible in part by
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About the Artists



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

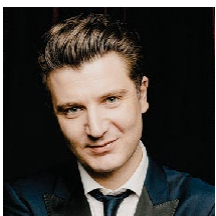
Mexican conductor and Grammy-winner Carlos Miguel Prieto started his tenure as Music Director of the North Carolina Symphony at the beginning of the 2023/24 season. From 2007 to 2022, he was Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México. In 2023 he received the Fine Arts Medal, Mexico's 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 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.



Alessio Bax, piano

Among several appearances with the North Carolina Symphony, Alessio Bax most recently performed Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos alongside his wife, pianist Lucille Chung, for Opening Weekend in 2019.

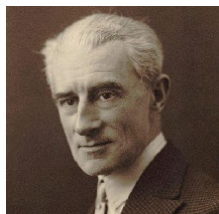
Described by *Gramophone* magazine as "among the most remarkable young pianists now before the public," Alessio Bax won First Prize at both the 2000 Leeds International Piano Competition and the 1997 Hamamatsu International Piano Competition and is now active on five continents as a recitalist, chamber musician, and concerto soloist. He has appeared with over 150 orchestras, including the New York, London, Royal, and St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestras, the Boston, Baltimore, Dallas, Cincinnati, Seattle, Sydney, and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras, and the Tokyo and NHK Symphony in Japan.

Since 2017, Bax has been the Artistic Director of the Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival, a Summer Music Festival in the Val d'Orcia region of Tuscany. In 2009, he was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and four years later he received both the Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award and the Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists.

Bax's most recent album releases are *Forgotten Dances* and *Debussy & Ravel for Two* with Lucille Chung. His discography also includes *Italian Inspirations*; *Beethoven's Hammerklavier* and *Moonlight Sonatas* (a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice); *Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto*; *Alessio Bax: Scriabin & Mussorgsky*; and *Alessio Bax plays Brahms* (a *Gramophone* Critics' Choice). He performed Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata for Daniel Barenboim in the PBS-TV documentary *Barenboim on Beethoven: Masterclass*, available on DVD.

At the age of 14, Bax graduated with top honors from the conservatory of Bari, his hometown in Italy; after further studies in Europe, he moved to the United States in 1994. He has been on the piano faculty of Boston's New England Conservatory since the fall of 2019 and serves as co-artistic director of the Joaquín Achúcarro Foundation for emerging pianists.

About the Music



La valse, poème chorégraphique

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

THE STORY

Vienna earned its reputation as the “City of Music” for being headquarters to composers including Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and more. The city’s musical identity is arguably most defined by its association with the waltz, a dance known for its elegance and as a symbol of high society. The “Viennese waltz” is practically a genre unto itself, spurred by the hundreds of works of 19th-century composer Johann Strauss II (known as the Waltz King), including the famous “Beautiful Blue Danube.”

In 1906, Maurice Ravel wished to honor that rich history in a musical tribute. His work was interrupted by other projects and eventually by World War I during which he served as an ambulance driver. A front-row seat to the destruction of Europe, the loss of close friends, and the trauma of war affected Ravel deeply; by the time he resumed work on the piece in 1919, the once-admiring ode to Vienna and its defining dance had become something more sinister.

The piece, initially commissioned as a work for ballet, was turned down by Russian choreographer Sergei Diaghilev. However, it quickly became a favorite for orchestras. Though Ravel denied any commentary on the aftermath of war and described the work’s setting as “an imperial court, about 1855,” it is difficult to ignore the music’s journey from light and beauty toward chaos.

LISTEN FOR

- A sense of foreboding at the opening of the work; Ravel features the low end of the orchestra—bass clarinets, basses, and bassoons—and instructs the strings to use mutes
- The slow and continuous build as Ravel, famous for his brilliant orchestration, uses different combinations of instruments to create striking soundscapes

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo, three flutes, three oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps, strings



Nights in the Gardens of Spain for Piano and Orchestra
MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

THE STORY

Night has been a source of constant inspiration for music, from the serenades of Mozart to the gorgeous nocturnes of Chopin. Manuel de Falla's contribution to music of the night is rooted in Spanish folk song and dance. Born on the southern coast of Spain in the city of Cádiz, de Falla studied classical composition in Madrid, where he was also exposed to the fiery dance rhythms of Andalusian flamenco. The marriage of these two styles defined his identity as a composer.

Initially he wrote a set of four nocturnes for solo piano, but a friend advised him to adapt it for a large ensemble, recognizing the work's textural possibilities were only achievable by an orchestra. De Falla wisely took the suggestion, returning to Spain and working on the piece over the next eight years. The result was a three-part work for piano and orchestra; de Falla insisted it was not a concerto featuring a soloist, but rather a complete work in which the piano was an integral part of the orchestral texture. After a premiere in Madrid in 1916, the work quickly gained performances in Paris, London, and Buenos Aires.

LISTEN FOR

- The pizzicatos in the strings, imitating Spanish guitars, which open the first movement titled *In the Generalife*, named for a summer palace in Granada
- The flamenco dance rhythms and harmonies in the second movement, *Distant Dance*, depicting the titillating effect on a listener witnessing an exotic dance occurring in a garden seen from a distance
- The piano in the third movement, *In the Gardens of the Sierra de Córdoba*, which takes on the role of *cante jondo*, or "deep song"—the dramatic and intense singing style of flamenco

INSTRUMENTATION

Solo piano; piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, strings



Selections from *Suite Española*, Op. 47
ISAAC ALBÉNIZ (1860-1909)

THE STORY

Isaac Albéniz's *Suite española* is a tour of distinctive regions in his native Spain and their musical styles.

Originally conceived in 1886 for solo piano, the first version consisted of four individual pieces: *Granada*, *Cataluña*, *Sevilla*, and *Cuba*. Following his death in 1909, a second version was published including four additional regions: *Cádiz*, *Asturias*, *Aragón*, and *Castilla*.

Albéniz's music has been arranged for a variety of instruments. The most obvious and perhaps most appropriate editions have been for the guitar, whose sound is essential to the musical identity of Spain. The most famous orchestral arrangement was compiled in the mid-1960s by Spanish conductor Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, who adapted five of the eight movements. With the full palette of the orchestra, Albéniz's depiction of his homeland comes to life in vibrant color.

LISTEN FOR

- The bouncing triple meter of *Castilla*, depicting the region in central Spain and its signature dance, the *seguidilla*—with a swinging rhythm punctuated by the percussion's skipping pattern
- The gorgeous flute solo of *Granada*, inspired by a city in southern Spain where music and culture took in Middle Eastern influences due to the proximity of Northern Africa
- The jumping melodic style of *Sevilla: Sevillanas*, the folk music and dance of Seville, draws influences from *flamenco* along with the *seguidilla* dance heard in the first movement
- The dramatic and fiery fourth movement, which Albéniz's publisher named after the northern region of *Asturias* although the music is in the southern style called *flamenco*—with its constant rhythmic motor in the violins and sudden punctuations in the winds, brass, and percussion mimicking stomping feet
- The soaring theme in the strings of the final movement, named for the north-eastern *Aragón*, juxtaposed with the opening, boisterous section

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo, two flutes, alto flute, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, strings



Suite from *The Firebird*
IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

THE STORY

Like many great artists, composer Igor Stravinsky gained international fame because of a big break. Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev, the creative force behind the internationally renowned ballet company the *Ballet Russes*, was in search of a composer to bring his vision for a new ballet to life. He had stitched together a story from several Russian folktales, in which a Prince, with the aid of a mythic Firebird, rescues 13 princesses (and an oppressed kingdom) from the clutches of an evil sorcerer king.

Diaghilev had already approached two well-known composers in Russia, but both had proven difficult to work with. Desperate, the impresario turned to Stravinsky, then 28 years old and virtually unknown. Hungry to prove himself, the young composer jumped at the chance and worked quickly. The premiere, held in Paris on June 25, 1910, was an instant success—with Stravinsky's score at the forefront of the conversation.

Diaghilev and Stravinsky would go on to have a fruitful partnership that would birth some of the orchestral and ballet world's greatest works, including *Petrushka* and the infamous *Rite of Spring*. But Stravinsky's legend was born with *The Firebird*.

LISTEN FOR

- The basses and cellos playing the introduction—some basses play with the bow while others pluck their strings, giving the ominous opening a unique timbre
- The uneven rhythmic patterns and incredible orchestration of the *Infernal Dance*, depicting a battle between the evil king and his minions against the Prince and the Firebird
- The slow build of the Finale, beginning with a gorgeous solo in the horn and ending with the entire orchestra playing in tandem to depict the breaking of the evil king's spell as the sun shines on a bright future for the kingdom

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta, 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

To Be Filled,
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
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Erik Dyke
*The Harlee H. and Pauline G.
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Bruce Ridge
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Flute

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Assistant Principal
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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

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*All string players rotate stands on
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Principals, and Assistant
Principals.*

*The North Carolina Symphony
is a member of the League of
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*The North Carolina Master
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the North Carolina Symphony.*

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