

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

Dvořák: New World Symphony

SUN, SEP 28, 2025 | 3PM

MEMORIAL HALL, CHAPEL HILL

North Carolina Symphony
Carlos Miguel Prieto, *conductor*
Samuel Almaguer, *clarinet*

PROGRAM

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
Essay No. 2, Op. 17

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
Clarinet Concerto
Slowly and expressively – Cadenza – Rather fast
Samuel Almaguer, *clarinet*

Intermission

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)
Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World"
I. Adagio – Allegro molto
II. Largo
III. Molto vivace
IV. Allegro con fuoco



In celebration of **America 250**, this program explores the nation's musical voice—from Dvořák's New World vision to Barber's lyricism and Copland's jazz-infused Clarinet Concerto, written for Benny Goodman.

*Thank you to the generous individuals, businesses, foundations, and community partners
who support the North Carolina Symphony through contributions each season.*

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 served as Music Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra from 2006 to 2023, helping lead the cultural renewal of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and earning a Grammy in 2024. Since 2008, he has also led the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería (OSM), guiding the ensemble to a Latin Grammy award and residencies at Bravo! Vail in 2024 and 2025. This past summer, he continued an ambitious recording project of the complete works of Revueltas and Ortiz, as well as recording Beethoven Piano Concertos with Anne-Marie McDermott.

Prieto is in demand as a guest conductor for major 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. In 2025, he led concerts with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London and Switzerland and conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. He also served as Semifinal and Final Round Conductor for the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

Since 2002, Prieto has conducted the Orchestra of the Americas, serving as Principal Conductor until 2011, when he was appointed Music Director. He has also worked extensively with young musicians at The Juilliard School, the Colburn School, the Curtis Institute, and elsewhere. In 2025 he led the Sinfónica Azteca (Mexico’s acclaimed youth orchestra) tour of Mexico. He continues to mentor emerging talent through 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 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.



Samuel Almaguer, *clarinet*

The Mr. and Mrs. J. Christopher Walker, II Chair

Samuel Almaguer was most recently featured as a soloist for North Carolina Symphony concerts in 2023, performing in R. Strauss' Duet-Concertino for Clarinet and Bassoon along with NCS Principal Bassoon Aaron Apaza.

A native of San Antonio, TX, Samuel Almaguer has served as Principal Clarinet of the North Carolina Symphony since 2015. He has been featured as a soloist with the North Carolina Symphony on multiple occasions performing the concertos of Mozart, Copland, and Richard Strauss. He has performed as guest principal clarinet with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and with La Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería in Mexico City. In addition, he has performed with The Cleveland Orchestra and Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

As a chamber musician, Almaguer has been featured at the Incontri Musicali festival in Spoleto, Italy; the Cactus Pear Music Festival in San Antonio, TX; and the Annapolis Chamber Music Festival. He has enjoyed dabbling in contemporary music, performing as a guest artist with the Festival of Contemporary Music at Tanglewood, Wild Up! in Los Angeles, and New Music Raleigh. He frequently performs with North Carolina Symphony musicians in chamber and contemporary music projects throughout the Triangle area.

Almaguer's performances have been broadcast on WGBH Boston, WUNC, and local television in Los Angeles. At a young age he was featured on National Public Radio's *From the Top* with pianist Christopher O'Riley. He received his undergraduate degree at The Colburn School in Los Angeles and attended Rice University for graduate studies. He was also a fellow at both the Tanglewood Music Center and Music Academy of the West. His primary teachers include Yehuda Gilad, Richie Hawley, and Ilya Shterenberg. He was a 2013 Vandoren Emerging Artist.

About the Music



Essay No. 2, Op. 17

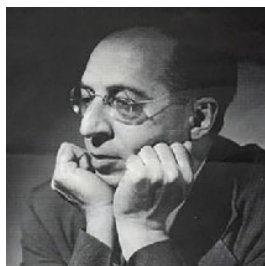
[1942]

SAMUEL BARBER

Samuel Barber caught his big break in 1938, when Arturo Toscanini featured two works by the 28-year-old composer on a national radio broadcast. One was the Adagio for Strings, arranged from the slow movement of Barber's First String Quartet; the other was a single-movement *Essay* for orchestra. Barber returned to the *Essay* genre twice more, using it to signify a compact work for orchestra, similar in scope to the written essay, and without the specific "storytelling" of a tone poem.

Barber composed the second *Essay* at the request of Bruno Walter, who conducted the premiere with the New York Philharmonic in 1942. "Although it has no program," Barber later wrote of the work, "one perhaps hears that it was written in wartime." There is a yearning tension in the opening themes that leap and hover over a bare drone, voiced by the plaintive sounds of solo flute (in its pale lower range), bass clarinet, and English horn. More overt shades of war come through in contrasting material powered by the full force of the timpani and brass section. Flowing through a "very fast and energetic" section that begins with woodwinds trading volleys in strict counterpoint, and continuing to the solemn chorale that builds to a saturated conclusion, Barber leans into certain leaps and recurring motives that unify and integrate his musical argument, in true essay fashion.

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



Clarinet Concerto

[1948]

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)

Aaron Copland, the son of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania, was born in 1900 in Brooklyn. Like so many eager American artists, he spent time in the 1920s in Paris, where lessons with Nadia Boulanger helped him find his true voice. In the 1930s, visits to Mexico and a pair of ballet scores meant to evoke cowboy culture helped this neurotic city slicker tap into a spacious ethos of simple intervals and pure harmonies. His bold yet humble American sound captivated the nation, and his wartime works including “Fanfare for the Common Man” and *Appalachian Spring* confirmed his arrival as the country’s leading composer.

*Commissioned by jazz icon Benny Goodman, Copland’s Clarinet Concerto takes center stage with the North Carolina Symphony, channeling the bold, boundary-defying spirit of **America 250** and elevating a voice from popular music into the orchestral canon.*

Copland’s music even caught the ear of an unlikely champion of contemporary concert music: Benny Goodman, the “King of Swing,” who was on a mission to use his considerable earnings to commission new repertoire for the clarinet. With a \$2,000 advance and free rein on what to compose, Copland made fitful progress in 1947-48, until he finally delivered a Clarinet Concerto that Goodman debuted during a national radio broadcast with the NBC Symphony Orchestra in 1950.

Copland scored the concerto for a reduced orchestra of strings, harp and piano. The structure is also more compact than a typical concerto, using only two linked sections instead of three separate movements. The opening section, played “slowly and expressively,” has the clarinet weaving long, delicate strands over a sparing accompaniment. The clarinet connects the two sections with an extended cadenza, which gives an impression of free improvisation, even though it is fully notated. The “rather fast” second section begins with “staccato, delicate, wraith-like” music, as marked in the piano part that enters here for the first time. A more playful side emerges when the clarinet plays lazy phrases over the jazzy sound of slap bass.

Solo clarinet; harp, piano, strings



Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World" [1893]

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Antonín Dvořák came from a small Bohemian village, where his zither-playing father was the local butcher and innkeeper. He might have spent his whole life scraping by as a freelance musician in Prague had it not been for the intervention of a most influential champion, Johannes Brahms, who encountered Dvořák's music while judging a competition. On Brahms' recommendation, the publisher Simrock commissioned Dvořák in 1878, and the resulting *Slavonic Dances* catapulted the Czech composer onto the international stage.

Even after three decades of writing symphonies and chamber music scores that proved him to be a worthy heir to Beethoven and Brahms, Antonín Dvořák was thought of, for better or worse, as a Czech composer. That reputation paid off when a wealthy patron who was setting up a conservatory in New York recruited Dvořák to come direct the school and teach its composition students. Just as he had defined a Czech style for the world, he was tasked with leading American composers toward their own national sound.

Dvořák homed in on two essential sources: the musical traditions of Black Americans and Indigenous Americans. His understanding of Indian culture was indirect, gleaned from Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) and from melodies that appeared in heavily edited songbooks. Dvořák did have the benefit of direct contact with Black music through one of his students at the conservatory, Harry Burleigh, a singer and composer who had learned spirituals from his formerly enslaved grandfather.

Going beyond just teaching others, Dvořák incorporated American sounds into his own works from that period, including the symphony that he composed in New York for a debut at Carnegie Hall, subtitled "From the New World." In the symphony's first movement, a leaping motive sounded by the horns at the start of the Allegro molto section becomes a building block for adventurous exploration. A secondary theme set in a major key, first heard in the flute, introduces a pastoral contrast.

Reflecting on **America 250** throughout this season, we celebrate music shaped by American landscapes, audiences, and artistic ideals—Barber's bold overture and the jazz harmonies flavoring Rachmaninoff's concerto join Dvořák's groundbreaking symphony inspired by American folk music.

The “New World” influences become more salient starting in the *Largo* second movement. Drawing on the melodies he learned from Burleigh, Dvořák crafted an original theme first presented as a solo for English horn. Later, with the addition of lyrics by William Arms Fisher, this melody became “Goin’ Home,” and the fact that it is frequently mistaken for an authentic spiritual proves how well Dvořák synthesized his source material.

The third movement fulfills the traditional function of a symphonic scherzo in the mold of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, while also tying the work together with quotations from the two preceding movements. According to Dvořák, a wedding scene from *The Song of Hiawatha* served as inspiration for this festive music.

The finale, like the opening movement, blends European-leaning themes and techniques with glints of folk material, including flashbacks to some of the symphony’s earlier highlights. As the Czech composer duly acknowledged, “I should never have written the symphony ‘just so’ if I hadn’t seen America.”

Piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, 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

Justin Bruns, Concertmaster
*The Annabelle Lundy Fetterman
Chair*

Anna Black*,
Associate Concertmaster
*The Assad Meymandi and Family
Chair*

Karen Strittmatter Galvin,
Assistant Concertmaster

Rotating,
Assistant Concertmaster
The Anne Heartt Gregory Chair

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*

K. Lee Morris
The Harvey At-Large Chair

Esther Roestan

Jessica Ryou
The James C. Byrd and Family Chair

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

Erin Zehngut
The J. Felix Arnold Chair

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

Amy Mason
The J. Sidney Kirk Chair

Daniel Moore

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

To Be Filled

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

Emma Cary
The Sara Wilson Hodgkins Chair

David Meyer
The Nell Hirschberg Chair

Marc Moskovitz*
The William Charles Rankin Chair

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*

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

To Be Filled
*The Harlee H. and Pauline G. Jobe
Chair*

To Be Filled

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*

Vaynu Kadiyali
The Jack and Sing Boddie Chair

Piccolo

Vaynu Kadiyali

Oboe

Melanie Wilsden, Principal
The Hardison and Stoltze Chair

Joseph Peters, Associate Principal
The Lizette T. Dunham Chair

Hoon Chang
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 Mary Susan Kirk Fulghum Chair

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



Trumpet

Paul Randall, Principal
The George Smedes Poyner Chair

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

Trombone

Devin Drinan, Principal
The Thomas Warwick Steed, Jr. Family Chair

John Ilika, 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.

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

NORTH CAROLINA SYMPHONY

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