

# NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

## Dvořák: New World Symphony

**SAT, SEP 27, 2025 | 7:30PM**

HUFF CONCERT HALL, METHODIST UNIVERSITY, FAYETTEVILLE

**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.

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## About the Artists

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**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

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### *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

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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*

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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 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

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