

NORTH CAROLINA SYMPHONY

Mozart Piano Concerto No. 23

SUN, JAN 25, 2026 | 3PM

MEMORIAL HALL, CHAPEL HILL

North Carolina Symphony
Keitaro Harada, *conductor*
Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, *piano*

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Symphony No. 35 in D, K. 385, "Haffner"

- I. Allegro con spirito
- II. Andante
- III. Menuetto
- IV. Presto

Intermission

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*, K. 492

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Piano Concerto No. 23 in A, K. 488

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro assai

Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, *piano*

About the Artists



Keitaro Harada, conductor

These concerts are the North Carolina Symphony debut for Keitaro Harada.

Keitaro Harada has served as Music and Artistic Director of the Savannah Philharmonic since the 2020/21 season. In 2024, he was named Permanent Conductor of the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Partner for the Aichi Chamber Orchestra. He began a five-year tenure as Music and Artistic Director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra in the 2025/26 season. He has forged a close connection with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, with whom he appears frequently and has recorded three albums. He is a recipient of the 2023 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award.

This season, Harada has debut performances with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra and Utah Symphony. In the 2024/25 season, Harada made his debut with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, returned to Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and made his subscription debut with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Additional recent highlights include engagements with the Houston and Seattle symphonies; symphony orchestras in Japan including NHK, Yomiuri Nippon, Osaka, and Tokyo; and Orquesta Filarmónica de Sonora in Mexico.

Harada was a Seiji Ozawa Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center in 2010. Since then, he has led Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, and Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* at North Carolina Opera. In 2017, he led performances of *Carmen* at Bulgaria's Sofia National Opera, subsequently conducting the production on a tour of Japan. In past seasons and as Associate Conductor of Arizona Opera, he conducted *Don Pasquale*, *La fille du régiment*, and *Tosca*. In the 2025/26 season he returns to Dayton Opera, where he led Verdi's *Aida* in 2024, for Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*.

Harada was Associate Conductor for four years at the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops. He is a six-time recipient of The Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, and in 2013 he was invited to the Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview. Harada has released eight albums with various orchestras and served on the faculty of the Pacific Music Festival in 2016, 2018, and 2021.



Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, piano

These concerts are the North Carolina Symphony debut for Jeneba Kanneh-Mason.

Pianist Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, the third of the Kanneh-Mason family to establish herself as a soloist, made her BBC Proms debut in 2021 with the Chineke! Orchestra, performing the Florence Price Piano Concerto. The piece was then recorded with Chineke!, conducted by Leslie Suganandarajah, and released in 2023.

In December of 2025, Kanneh-Mason released a collection of solo piano works under the title *Jane Austen's Piano*, in honor of the author's 250th birthday. *Fantasie*, her debut solo album, was released in March of 2025 and named Classic FM's Album of the Week. In October, *Fantasie* won the Edison Klassiek Award in the "Newcomer" category. *Gramophone* praised Kanneh-Mason as "a pianist of enormous technical resources in service of an uncommonly rich and versatile musical imagination."

Kanneh-Mason's 2025/26 season in North America includes debut appearances with the Florida Orchestra and San Antonio Philharmonic and a solo recital tour. Other recent and forthcoming highlights include debuts with the Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, and Britten Sinfonia; an extensive UK tour with the Hungarian Radio Symphony and Riccardo Frizza; and performances with the Orchestre National de Lyon, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra.

A Keyboard Category Finalist in BBC Young Musician 2018, Kanneh-Mason was winner of the Murs du Son Prize at the Lagny-Sur-Marne International Piano Competition in France, 2014, and The Nottingham Young Musician 2013. She was also winner of the Iris Dyer Piano Prize at The Royal Academy of Music, Junior Academy, and was awarded the Victoria Robey Scholarship to The Royal College of Music.

Named one of Classic FM's "Rising Stars," Kanneh-Mason has been featured on several television and radio programs. With her siblings, she has recorded two family albums: *Carnival* (2020) and *River of Music* (2025).

About the Music



Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527

[1787]

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* only ran for nine performances during its first production in Vienna in 1786, an underwhelming box office result. It fared much better when an Italian singer and impresario launched a new production that winter in Prague, a success that led him commission another opera from Mozart and his *Figaro* librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, who took up the Spanish legend of the womanizer Don Juan.

Mozart cataloged *Don Giovanni* as an "opera buffa," emphasizing the comedic aspects of the work. *Don Giovanni* is certainly funny, with its deceits, jealousies, mistaken identities, and bungled romances—yet da Ponte's libretto and Mozart's music both push the opera toward uncommonly deep pathos and tension. The overture begins with a slow introduction in D minor, establishing musical gestures and dramatic currents that foreshadow the opera's searing climax. The rest of the overture momentarily dispels that tragic strain with robust and restless new themes.

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

Symphony No. 35 in D, K. 385, "Haffner"

[1782]

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Just a year after his move to Vienna, Mozart was "up to his eyes in work" during the whirlwind summer of 1782, as he detailed in a letter to his father. He had just prepared the opera *Abduction from the Seraglio* for its premiere, and he was rushing to arrange the score for a woodwind ensemble. ("Otherwise someone will beat me to it and secure the profits instead of me," he wrote.) He also moved houses, and he was arranging his wedding to Constanze Weber on the sly without tipping off his disapproving father quite yet.

In the midst of all this activity, Leopold asked his son to write a serenade for the ennoblement of Sigmund Haffner, a boyhood chum of Wolfgang's and the son of Salzburg's mayor. Mozart completed a first movement within a week, and he dispatched subsequent movements as quickly as he could in the following weeks, not even making copies to keep himself.

Mozart remembered the score when he was preparing music for a self-produced concert, and he asked his father to send back the manuscript. When it arrived months later, Mozart replied, "My new Haffner symphony has positively amazed me, for I had forgotten every single note of it. It must surely produce a good effect."

When Mozart converted the original serenade into a symphony, he dropped the introductory march and added flutes and clarinets to the outer movements. The *Allegro con spirito* launches the symphony with regal leaps up an octave, a rousing motive that suits the music's ceremonial origins.

The spaciousness of the slow movement owes much to its use of repeated notes that bounce lightly to stretch out harmonies and melodic phrases. In the *Menuetto* third movement, trumpets and timpani provide unusual heft, counterbalanced by a central trio section with a pastoral melody in the oboes.

Mozart probably went too far for a lighthearted serenade in his finale, with all its boisterous humor, rude surprises, and drama worthy of the operatic stage. We don't know how it was received in stodgy Salzburg in its original form, but it was a hit with the discerning crowd at Vienna's Burgtheater in its new symphonic guise.

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

Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*, K. 492

[1786]

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Mozart's lucrative run as a freelancer in Vienna began to crumble in 1786, when a war with the Ottoman Empire scattered the aristocrats who flocked to his concerts. It was just then that a welcome invitation from the court of Emperor Joseph II rekindled Mozart's ultimate ambition: to compose operas.

Mozart paired with Lorenzo da Ponte, an Italian librettist then based in Vienna, for the first of what turned out to be three immortal collaborations. Their 1786 adaptation of *The Marriage of Figaro* was based on the French play from 1778 that Pierre Beaumarchais wrote as a sequel to his earlier hit, *The Barber of Seville*. It was banned in Vienna at the time for its unflattering view of that era's ruling class, but the Italian libretto scrubbed away just enough of the political agenda to get it past the emperor's censors.

The Marriage of Figaro transpires over the course of "one crazy day," when Figaro, the head servant to Count Almaviva, is due to wed the maid Susanna, who must first scheme her way out of the count's lecherous grasp. The music of the overture has no major presence later in the opera, but its frenetic *Presto* tempo and insistent eighth-notes set the scene for the mayhem that ensues.

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

Piano Concerto No. 23 in A, K. 488

[1786]

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Mozart delighted his fans in Vienna by introducing a dozen new piano concertos between 1784 and 1786, with many of them heard first at his highly anticipated subscription concerts. He entered the Piano Concerto No. 23 in A into his catalog of completed compositions on March 2, 1786, and he probably debuted it on one of the three programs he presented that spring.

Preliminary sketches, which may date from as early as 1784, included a pair of oboes in the instrumentation, but the final version substituted clarinets instead. (Mozart's deepening friendship with a clarinetist and fellow freemason had much to do with the surge of clarinet music he wrote in his final years.) The concerto's first movement gives the woodwinds far more attention than they would have been accustomed to at that time, starting with unaccompanied phrases in the orchestra's introductory tutti and continuing in the conversational development section.

Later editions notched the tempo of the middle movement up to *Andante*, but Mozart's manuscript for this heavy-hearted movement clearly calls for the slower and more affecting *Adagio* tempo. Again the woodwinds play an outsized role in accompanying and answering the piano, and they also introduce the only wholly cheerful passage in the movement, in the contrasting major key. Minor-key episodes within the rondo finale rehash some of the angst of the slow movement, but the main recurring theme always reaffirms the jovial home key with its definitive leaps.

Solo piano; flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, strings

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*The North Carolina Symphony Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous gift of the Lupot violin from Arnold and Zenat Lerman.
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NORTH CAROLINA SYMPHONY

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