

NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

A Little Night Music

THU, JAN 29, 2026 | 7:30PM

OWENS AUDITORIUM, BRADSHAW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, PINEHURST

North Carolina Symphony

Sophie Mok, *conductor*

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525

- I. Allegro
- II. Romance: Andante
- III. Menuetto: Allegretto
- IV. Rondo: Allegro

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

Dance Card

- I. Raucous Rumpus
- II. Breeze Serenade
- III. Jumble Dance
- IV. Celestial Blue
- V. Machina Rockus

Intermission

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Serenade in E for String Orchestra, Op. 22

- I. Moderato
- II. Tempo di valse
- III. Scherzo: Vivace
- IV. Larghetto
- V. Finale: Allegro vivace

About the Artist



Sophie Mok, Assistant Conductor
The Lucy Moore Ruffin Chair

In 2024, Sophie Sze-Ki Mok began her tenure as Assistant Conductor of the North Carolina Symphony. Since 2023, she has also served as Assistant Conductor of the Asian Youth Orchestra, where she worked alongside Joseph Bastian and Jader Bignamini. She has assisted esteemed conductors including Marin Alsop, Jonathon Heyward, Thomas Wilkins, and Tan Dun. Upcoming engagements include serving as cover conductor for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Previously, she was a Conducting Fellow with the Miami Symphony Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the Frost Symphony Orchestra at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music.

Mok was selected to compete in the La Maestra Conducting Competition in 2024 and was one of several finalists to compete in Riccardo Muti's Italian Opera Academy in 2022. In 2019, she won second prize at the International Conductor's Competition held during the Deutsches Musikfest. For six years, she served as the conductor of the Hong Kong Youth Wind Philharmonia, mentoring young musicians from elementary school through college.

Born in Hong Kong, Mok began her musical journey as an oboist. She received her bachelor's degree in oboe performance from Hong Kong Baptist University and later furthered her studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she earned a master's degree. As a conductor, she holds a master's degree in orchestral conducting from the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), and an Artist Diploma in conducting from the University of Miami Frost School of Music under the tutelage of Gerard Schwarz.

About the Music



Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525

[1787]

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

When composers of Mozart's day were asked to entertain their patrons with party music, they usually dashed off bland, lighthearted pieces that were hardly worth reusing or remembering. But for young Mozart, his side gigs at private functions in his hometown of Salzburg were a welcome relief from his official church job, and he relished his opportunities to write and perform those crowd-pleasing divertimentos, serenades, and nocturnes.

After Mozart moved to Vienna in 1781 to set out as a freelancer, his career shifted away from that style of private entertainment, but the relatively few serenades and divertimentos he wrote in those years were crafted just as impeccably as his symphonies and concertos. The last example came from 1787, around the time he was writing *Don Giovanni*. No record remains of what prompted it, only an entry in his log of compositions listing *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, meaning "a little Serenade."

The first movement opens with one of the most memorable pairings in all of music: a questioning rise, answered by a balanced descent, each speaking in unadorned octaves. Mozart's genius, even in "light" music, was to find delight and surprise within such straightforward gestures, as in the whimsical key change that jumpstarts the central development section.

In calling the second movement a Romanze, Mozart referenced a tradition of tuneful music inspired by an earlier song style. The long skeins of melody remind us that Mozart was always, at heart, an opera composer.

The Menuetto borrows the courtly, three-beat stride of the French minuet, while the contrasting trio section glosses the melodies with slurred phrases. The finale takes the shape of a rondo that returns at key junctions to the main theme, each entrance prefaced by an upward arpeggio that echoes the serenade's memorable first phrase.

Strings



Dance Card

[2015]

JENNIFER HIGDON (b. 1962)

Jennifer Higdon is one of America's most acclaimed figures in contemporary classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, a 2010 Grammy for her Percussion Concerto, a 2018 Grammy for her Viola Concerto and, most recently, a 2020 Grammy for her Harp Concerto. Higdon's first opera, *Cold Mountain*, won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere and the opera recording was nominated for two Grammy awards. In 2018, Higdon received the prestigious Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University, awarded to contemporary classical composers of exceptional achievement who have significantly influenced the field of composition. Most recently, she was invited to become a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works and her works have been recorded on more than 70 CDs.

The North Carolina Symphony has performed several of Higdon's works, including "Blue Cathedral" (2016), the Low Brass Concerto (2022), and the Suite from *Cold Mountain* (2025).

The composer writes:

Dance Card is a celebration of the joy, lyricism and passion of a group of strings playing together! This piece is made up of five movements, each of which is designed so that it can also be played as a separate work. From a string fanfare, through gentle serenades, and actual wild dances, the musicians get a chance to highlight their soloistic and ensemble playing. This work reflects the deep commitment that string players bring to their music-making, not only in the many years of learning to play their instruments, but also in the dedication manifested in gorgeous music-making as an ensemble. When we attend as audience members, we in effect, fill our dance card with that shared experience.

Strings



Serenade in E for String Orchestra, Op. 22

[1875]

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Antonín Dvořák composed his Serenade for Strings in just two weeks, during a particularly joyous period in his life. He was happily married, and he and his wife had recently welcomed their first son. At age 34, Dvořák felt confident in his success as a composer for the first time in his life and was finally free from the fear of poverty, having been awarded a yearly allowance from the Austrian government. Each of the five movements, except for the last, roughly follows A–B–A form. Although the character shifts with each movement, the music remains enchanting, elegant, and gracious throughout.

The main theme is introduced immediately by the second violins and cellos at the beginning of the first movement. In the second movement, the “A” section concludes with a melancholy C-sharp minor chord when it first appears—but when it returns at the end of the movement, it resolves with a brighter C-sharp major chord.

The third movement develops the main theme in various tempos and moods. The Larghetto recalls a theme from the middle section of the previous movement, offering lyrical continuity. In the finale, Dvořák brings the work full circle with quotations from the main theme of the opening movement, creating a sense of unity and closure.

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*

Jakob Gerritsen

Omar Haffar
*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*

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 the State of North Carolina, the honorable Josh Stein, Governor.



Trumpet

Paul Randall, Principal
The George Smedes Poyner Chair

Benjamin 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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