NORTH CAROLINA **SYMPHONY**

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5

FRI/SAT, NOV 6-7, 2026 | 8PM
MEYMANDI CONCERT HALL, RALEIGH

North Carolina Symphony
Anna Rakitina, *conductor*
Johannes Moser, *cello*

PROGRAM

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
***The Hebrides*, Op. 26, "Fingal's Cave"**

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85
I. Adagio
II. Lento
III. Adagio
IV. Allegro
Johannes Moser, *cello*

Intermission

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64
I. Andante – Allegro con anima
II. Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza
III. Valse: Allegro moderato
IV. Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace

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Martin Marietta Center for the Performing Arts

About the Artists



Anna Rakitina, *conductor*

Anna Rakitina made her North Carolina Symphony debut in January, 2025 with a program including the Dvořák Violin Concerto, with soloist Stella Chen; Haydn's Symphony No. 101, "The Clock;" and Leonora's Dream, by Elena Langer.

Anna Rakitina has conducted the Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, and Vancouver symphony orchestras; the San Francisco, Houston, Utah, North Carolina, and Jacksonville symphonies; the Orchestra of St. Luke's; and the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic in the United States. European engagements have included Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Staatskapelle Dresden, BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, and SWR Symphonieorchester. Further afield, she had her Japan debut with Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in 2023. In 2025, she received the prestigious European Cultural Award in recognition of her extraordinary talent and remarkable contributions to the world of classical music.

Rakitina opens the 2026/27 season at the Brucknerfest Linz performing Zimmermann's trumpet concerto "Nobody Knows de Trouble I See" with Hakan Hardenberger, followed by the season opening of the Grazer Philharmoniker with pianist Rudolf Buchbinder. Further highlights of the season include debuts with the Spanish National Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester and Hamburger Symphoniker, as well as the Nashville and Omaha symphonies and Symphony San Jose. She enjoys working with the new generation of musicians and appears with the Bundesjugendorchester and the Bergen Youth Orchestra. Conducting the Konzerthausorchester Berlin at the Opus Klassik 2026 Gala is another highlight of the season.

An advocate of new music and female composers, her repertoire includes Anna Clyne, Elena Langer, Ellen Reid, Jessie Montgomery, and Caroline Shaw. She regularly collaborates with soloists such as Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Lucas & Arthur Jussen, Joshua Bell, Augustin Hadelich, Gil Shaham, Christian Tetzlaff, Gautier Capuçon, Alisa Weilerstein, and Xavier de Mestre.Rakitina was Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 2019 to 2023, and Dudamel Fellow of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the 2019/20 season. Her awards include second prize at the Malko Competition 2018 and prizes at the Deutscher Dirigentenpreis 2017 and the TCO International Conducting Competition Taipei 2015.

Born in Moscow to a Ukrainian father and a Russian mother, Rakitina grew up in a musical family and began her education as a violinist before studying conducting at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory with Stanislav Dyachenko and later in Hamburg with Prof. Ulrich Windfuhr. She was a finalist of "Das kritische Orchester" in 2018 and participated in Lucerne Festival Academy's conducting fellowship scheme led by Alan Gilbert and Bernard Haitink. She lives in Berlin with her family.



Johannes Moser, *cello*

In 2018, Johannes Moser performed Dvořák's Cello Concerto with the Symphony in Raleigh and Chapel Hill. He has previously performed the Elgar Cello Concerto with the Symphony in 2012.

Hailed by *Gramophone* Magazine as "one of the finest among the astonishing gallery of young virtuoso cellists," German-Canadian cellist Johannes Moser has performed with the world's leading orchestras such as the Berliner Philharmoniker, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, BBC Philharmonic at the Proms, London Symphony Orchestra, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Tokyo NHK Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and The Cleveland Orchestra. Upcoming engagements include the Colorado Symphony and the Baltimore and St. Louis symphony orchestras.

His recordings include the concertos by Dvořák, Lalo, Elgar, Lutosławski, Dutilleux, Tchaikovsky, Thomas Olesen, and Fabrice Bollon (Electric Cello), which have gained him the prestigious Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik and the Diapason d'Or. In 2022, Moser released a new album featuring six new commissions for electric cello, alongside multi-layered arrangements of works for cello ensemble for which *The Strad* commented, "…there's no questioning Moser's ambition, nor the sheer sense of verve with which he pulls it all off…". *Alone Together* is one of the first classical music albums to use multi-tracking so extensively.

In addition to the World Premiere performance of Anna Thorvaldsdottir's Cello Concerto "*Before we fall"* with San Francisco Symphony and its London premiere at the BBC Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the 2024/25 season, Moser was Artist in Residence with the Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava and toured in a trio with Andrei Korobeinikov and Vadim Gluzman.

A dedicated chamber musician, Moser has performed with Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Jonathan Biss, James Ehnes, Vadim Gluzman, Leonidas Kavakos, Midori, Menahem Pressler, and Yevgeny Sudbin. He is also a regular at festivals including the Verbier, Schleswig-Holstein, Gstaad and Kissinger festivals, the Mehta Chamber Music Festival, and the Colorado, Seattle, and Brevard music festivals.

Moser has recently been heavily involved in commissioning works by Julia Wolfe, Ellen Reid, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Johannes Kalitzke, Jelena Firsowa, Detlev Glanert, Chris Cerrone, Annie Gosfield, and Bernd Richard Deutsch, amongst many more. In 2011 he premiered *MAGNETAR* for electric cello by Enrico Chapela with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, and in the following season he continued this relationship with the orchestra performing Michel van der Aa's cello concerto *Up-close*. Throughout his career, he has been committed to reaching out to all audiences, from kindergarten to college and beyond. He combines most of his concert engagements with masterclasses, school visits and preconcert lectures.

Born into a musical family in 1979, Moser began studying the cello at the age of eight and became a student of Professor David Geringas in 1997. He was the top prize winner at the 2002 Tchaikovsky Competition, in addition to being awarded the Special Prize for his interpretation of the R*ococo Variations*. In 2014 he was awarded with the prestigious Brahms prize.

Moser plays on an Andrea Guarneri Cello from 1694 from a private collection.

About the Music

The Hebrides, Op. 26, "Fingal's Cave" [1832]

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Felix Mendelssohn took full advantage of the opportunities that came with being the grandson of a famous philosopher and the son of an extraordinarily wealthy banker. This was a child who celebrated his 12th birthday with a private performance of his first musical, in a fully staged production at his house in Berlin, featuring members of the royal orchestra!

At the age of 20, Felix Mendelssohn performed a typical rite of passage for well-heeled young men, embarking on a "grand tour" of Europe. On August 7, 1829, he reached the Hebrides Islands off the western coast of Scotland, where the scenery inspired him to scribble a few phrases of music into a letter sent home to Berlin. His boat voyage the next day to the famous Fingal's Cave provided additional fodder for a new work he began plotting.

After continuing on to Rome, Mendelssohn fashioned his Hebrides sketch into a concert overture as a birthday present for his father, under the original title of Lonely Island. He tinkered with the score and the title several more times—various drafts were known as "The Isles of Fingal," "Fingal's Cave," and "The Hebrides"—until he signed off on a definitive version in 1832. His very first sketch remained in place as the overture's nucleus, as heard in the rocking, wave-like cascades that appear in the opening measures.

Piccolo, two flutes, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings

Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85 [1919]

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

For 200 years following Henry Purcell's death in 1695, the only significant music created in England was the work of foreigners, including Handel, J.C. Bach, and Haydn. The man who broke England's dry spell was an unlikely candidate—the son of a piano tuner, Catholic in a Protestant country, and untrained in music except for some violin lessons as a teenager. Edward Elgar gained international recognition with his intriguing "Enigma Variations" in 1899, and he helped forge a distinctly British sound in the waning years of the Romantic era.

When a shellshocked Europe emerged from World War I with a distinct bitterness toward the grandiosity and sentimentality of the "Before Times," many older composers found themselves marginalized. Elgar, for his part, rose to the challenge with four substantial compositions that met the modern moment using historical tools. Three looked back to the chamber music tradition of Brahms and Schumann: the Violin Sonata in E minor, the String Quartet in E minor, and the Piano Quintet in A minor. The final product of this late surge was the Cello Concerto in E minor, which Elgar conducted himself in October 1919 with the cellist Felix Salmond and the London Symphony Orchestra. Elgar's wife died several months later, and the heartbroken composer fell silent for his remaining 14 years, producing no more major pieces.

The mood of the Cello Concerto matches the image of Elgar in his autumnal years: nostalgic, dignified, and uncompromising. The cello drops into a serious theme from the first downbeat, starting with three wide chords. The body of the movement pulses with a restrained tempo, providing a platform for expressive melodies and tasteful virtuosity that never overshadows the musical narrative.

Plucked versions of the same three chords provide the link to the second movement. After another free-flowing introduction, the material gathers itself into a light-stepping *scherzo* full of chattering bow strokes. The *Adagio* movement responds with endless melodic lines that whisper over a reduced orchestra and inch ever forward, the cello resting for only one measure. The final phrase lands on an unresolved harmony, and the orchestra provides the answer in the form of an agitated transition back to the home key. A free-form introduction echoes the mood of the opening movement, and even the finale's most spirited music cannot stave off the concerto's urge to turn inward, with memories lingering of the three mysterious chords heard in earlier movements.

Solo cello; piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, strings

Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 [1888]

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

When Tchaikovsky was drafting his Fifth Symphony in 1888, his external triumphs as a respected composer of symphonies, operas, and ballets did nothing to temper the anguish of his ongoing health challenges, several recent deaths of loved ones, and the ever-present loneliness of being gay and closeted in a homophobic society. He left no public record of an underlying program to shape the Fifth Symphony, but the discovery in the 1950s of a journal entry offered new insights into the work's meaning. The note laid out a form for the symphony, or at least its first two movements, with references to "complete resignation before Fate" in the introduction and "murmurs [and] doubts" in the fast portion of the first movement, followed by this question for the second movement: "Shall I throw myself in the embrace of faith?"

Through the lens of this journal entry, the Fifth Symphony can be interpreted as a treatise on fate and faith, with a musical arc venturing from dark to light in the manner of Beethoven's Fifth. Tchaikovsky had already explored similar themes in the Fourth Symphony, with a recurring motto that represented fate, and the Fifth Symphony likewise wove an inescapable theme into all four movements.

The all-important motto theme opens the Fifth Symphony's slow introduction, voiced in the haunting low range of the clarinets and supported by the strings. The primary theme of the *Allegro con anima* body of the movement resembles the motto in its repeated notes and scale fragments, but a snappy rhythm contributes new energy.

The gorgeous horn theme from the start of the slow movement may be familiar from a 1939 jazz adaptation, "Moon Love," a staple of Glenn Miller and Chet Baker. The music becomes questioning and then imploring, capped by a brassy return of the motto.

In place of a typical symphonic *scherzo*, the *Allegro moderato* third movement begins as a kindly waltz. It gathers into a restless *scherzo* texture, and tendrils of that fast activity dovetail into the return of the dance music. The motto appears at the end, in a version made less severe by the waltz pulse and syncopations. The finale celebrates the arrival of the new key of E with a ceremonial introduction featuring a new version of the motto, and its climax anchors that central theme in the optimistic major key with much fanfare and pageantry.

Piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, strings

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**Acting position*
***Leave of absence*

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

NORTH CAROLINA
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