

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

VIRTUOSO SERIES CONCERT

RON FRANCOIS, VIOLIN MAURICIO NADER, PIANO

APRIL 11, 2025, 7:30 P.M. | ORGAN RECITAL HALL



COORDINACIÓN NACIONAL DE
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MAURICIO NADER – PIANO
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PROGRAM

Sonatina in D Major D. 384

Franz Schubert (1763-1830)

- I. Allegro Molto
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro Vivace

Fratres

Arvo Part (b. 1935)

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 3 in C minor Op.45

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

- I. Allegro Molto ed appassionato
- II. Allegretto espressivo alla Romanza
- III. Allegro animato

Estrellita (Arr. J. Heifetz)

Manuel Ponce (1882-1948)

In the style of Albeniz

Rodion Schedrin (b. 1932)

Franz Schubert – Sonatina in D Major, D. 384

Composed when Schubert was just 19 years old, the Sonatina in D Major (1816) captures the charm and clarity of the Classical style while hinting at the lyricism that would define his mature works. Though modest in scope compared to his later compositions, this piece brims with youthful energy and graceful melodic lines. The first movement presents elegant themes with light-hearted momentum, followed by a lyrical second movement and a sprightly rondo finale. Originally intended for domestic music-making, the sonatina reveals Schubert's remarkable gift for melody and his deep understanding of instrumental dialogue.

Arvo Pärt – Fratres (1977/1980)

Fratres is one of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's most iconic works, embodying his distinctive "tintinnabuli" style—a technique inspired by Gregorian chant and the sound of bells. Composed in 1977 and revised in various versions, the piece alternates between contemplative stillness and dramatic outbursts, structured around a repeating sequence of harmonies over a constant drone. The violin and piano version, arranged in 1980, emphasizes both the spiritual intensity and temporal suspension that define Pärt's aesthetic, inviting listeners into a sound world that feels both ancient and hauntingly modern.

Edvard Grieg – Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 45

Grieg's third and final violin sonata, composed in 1886, stands as his most dramatic and ambitious chamber work. Infused with the spirit of Norwegian folk music and Romantic passion, the sonata contrasts brooding intensity with moments of lyrical tenderness. The opening movement moves between turbulent and serene moods, while the second offers a song-like interlude with hints of pastoral color. The energetic finale incorporates dance rhythms and bold harmonic shifts, showcasing Grieg's nationalist voice within the classical sonata form. This work remains a cornerstone of the violin-piano repertoire.

Manuel Ponce - Estrellita

Manuel Ponce's Estrellita (Little Star), composed in 1912, is one of the most beloved works in the Mexican folk music tradition. The piece, originally written for voice and piano, is a tender and lyrical romantic song that reflects the composer's deep connection to the rich emotional landscape of his homeland. In this arrangement for violin and piano by the legendary Jascha Heifetz, Estrellita takes on an intimate, yet passionate character. Heifetz's arrangement emphasizes the violin's expressive potential, with soaring melodies that evoke the sense of longing and warmth found in Ponce's original song. The interplay between the violin and

piano brings out the work's full emotional depth, creating a hauntingly beautiful experience that showcases the delicate beauty of Latin American music through the lens of Heifetz's unparalleled virtuosity.

Rodion Shchedrin – In the Style of Albéniz

Rodion Shchedrin's *In the Style of Albéniz* is a vibrant homage to the fiery Spanish flair of Isaac Albéniz, refracted through the lens of a modern Russian composer. Written in 1952, the piece is a reimagining of Albéniz's *Tango from España*, infusing it with playful virtuosity, rhythmic zest, and a touch of postmodern wit. Shchedrin retains the sultry essence of the original while adding his own harmonic color and pianistic brilliance. The result is both a tribute and a transformation—familiar yet freshly inventive.

RON FRANCOIS, VIOLIN

Ron Francois has performed in venues across the United States, Canada, Europe and Mexico as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. His performances have consistently won the acclaim of notable musicians. "...A fantastic violinist...a big talent" quoted Abram Shtern—concertmaster of the Kiev State Opera and Professor at the Kiev Conservatory. Francois' playing is "...extremely musical. Francois plays with great sensitivity and warmth" quoted concert violinist Daniel Heifetz"...A wonderful musician...sensitive ensemble player and a brilliant violinist" said Michael Tree from the Guarneri String Quartet.

Ron François has collaborated with some of the world's finest musicians including Boris Garlitsky-former concertmaster of the London Philharmonic orchestra, Martin Chalifour-concertmaster of the Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestra, Arkady Fomin of the Dallas Symphony, the Borromeo String Quartet to name a few. He has appeared with major orchestras in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

As a chamber musician, Ron Francois has a broad experience. From 2008-2012, Ron Francois served as the violinist for the Mendelssohn Trio and performed numerous concerts in Europe and the United States with this group. In 2010, the Denver post named the Mendelssohn Trio one of Colorado's top chamber music groups. As a member of the Canadian chamber orchestra IMusici de Montreal, Francois toured extensively in Canada and the USA. Francois appears on two CD's with this group on the Chandos Label.

Founder of the Duo Francois with pianist Silvana Santinelli, the duo was the winner of the Silver Medal in the best "Duo" and "Emerging Artists" category at the Global Music Awards. This prize was awarded for the 2017 release of the Duo Francois' first CD entitled "Mexico City Blues" on the Itinerant Classics label. This CD was also nominated as a Semifinalist in the "American Prize Awards" under the category of "Professional Chamber Music Groups". "Mexico City Blues" compiles works from three modern composers from Canada, Mexico and the United States. The CD was partially funded by the prestigious Mexican grant, FONCA (Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes).

Since then, the Duo Francois has commissioned the Sonata No. 5, Op. 95 for Violin and Piano by Canadian composer Andrew Paul MacDonald, "Vault", Veil, and Veer". The premiere took place in September 2022 at the University Center for the Arts in Fort Collins, CO. The recording of this piece will be in the near future.

Ron Francois' most influential mentors were, Concert Violinist Daniel Heifetz, Arnold Steinhart and John Dalley from the Guarneri String Quartet, Elizabeth Adkins-former concertmaster of the National Symphony, David Salness of the Audubon Quartet, Svi Zeitlin and Charles Castleman from the Eastman School of Music.

Renown as wonderful teacher and pedagogue, Ron Francois has been in demand since 2004. He has presented masterclasses in Canada, the United States, Mexico and China. For more than 15 years he has been invited frequently to teach and give master classes at Universities and Conservatories in Mexico. He just came back from performing and teaching at the prestigious Festival Internacional de Camara, (FICA25) in Xalapa Veracruz.

In 2013, he won the Outstanding Service Award for teaching from the Colorado ASTA chapter.

Since 2002, Ron Francois has served as the head of the string division and is the main violin professor at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado.

MAURICIO NADER, PIANO

Mexican pianist Mauricio Náder (1967) he began performing at the age of nine years old and has maintained an active career, performing at major venues of the American continent, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. He has appeared extensively in Mexico, the United States, Canada, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, China, Lebanon and Pakistan. He has also contributed towards the promotion of Mexican Music at venues such as the Jay Pritzker Pavilion/Millennium Park (Chicago), Inter-American Development Bank (Washington, DC), Spivey Hall (Atlanta), Americas Society (New York), The Prince of Asturias Foundation Series (Spain), National Center for the Performing Arts (Beijing, China), Oslo Konserthus (Oslo), Hotel National des Invalides (Paris), Centro Cultural de Belem (Lisboa), Teatro Municipal (Rio de Janeiro), Art Institute of Chicago, Teatro Sánchez Aguilar (Guayaquil), and many others.

His interpretative warmth, the power of his artistic personality and his ability to face an immense repertory ranging from the Baroque to the contemporary music have led him to become one of today's Latin American musicians who most hold the attention of concert organizers. He debuted as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra (Mexico) at the age of nineteen years old. Since then, he is frequently invited by all of Mexico's major orchestras, as well as by diverse orchestras from abroad. Some of his projects have included the "premier in Mexico" of George Crumb's *Makrokosmos* (complete books I and II) during the Festival Internacional Cervantino (2009) and the premier of Manuel M. Ponce's *Piano Concerto* in several countries. His work can be appreciated in over thirty compact discs, which exemplify his natural ability to appear as a soloist, in chamber music and as a vocal accompanist.

Mr. Náder obtained the “First Prize” at the “Bartók-Kabalevsky” International Piano Competition (USA) and the same year he was granted a commemorative medal for the Austrian Millenium. He also obtained “First Prize” at the Piano Biennial (Mexico), the National Edvard Grieg Competition and the National Xalapa Competition, while he also received a “Most Distinguished” mention at the Ibla Grand Prize- World Music Competition (Italy) and diverse prizes and distinctions at the First National “Angélica Morales” Piano Competition (Mexico), the Texas Music Teachers’ Association Competition, Tuesday Musical Club Young Artists Awards, Victoria Young Musicians’ Competition, Chopin Piano Competition of Texas and the International Audio and Video Tape Piano Competition, among others.

He has also been a recipient of fellowships granted by the National Fund for Culture and the Art under the category “performers with an outstanding career” and at present he is a member of the Concert Artists Group (National Institute for the Fine Arts, Mexico) as “Primer Concertino”, the highest rank within the group. His photograph appears, along with some of the most relevant Mexican artists of the 20th century, on the commemorative stamp entitled “México del Siglo XX al Tercer Milenio/Arte” (Mexico in the Twentieth Century, at the turn of the Third Millennium/Art) issued by the Mexican Postal Service in 2000.

Mr. Náder frequently offers masterclasses and serves as a juror for competitions such as The Lang Lang-Telefonica International Competition, The Bartók-Kabalevsky International Piano Competition, the Bucaramanga International Piano Festival and Competition, the “Angelica Morales” National Piano Competition, Fiestas Iberoamericanas de las Artes (Puerto Rico), Villahermosa International Piano Competition and many others. He served as Academic Piano Professor at the Mexican Center of Graduate Studies in Music and was a member of leading contemporary music ensembles such as The Composer’s Forum, Ensamble 3, Ensamble Ónix and Ensamble Cello Alterno.

Some of his private students have received prizes at National and International piano competitions, while others have been accepted to continue their musical studies at institutions such as The Manhattan School of Music and the University of Houston (USA); the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatorium at Milan (Italy); the Superior School of Music of Santander; the Escorial Conservatorium (Spain) and the Rotterdam Conservatorium (The Netherlands).

Mr. Náder held musical studies at the National Music Conservatory (Mexico), the University of Houston (BM) and the Eastman School of Music (MM), where he was unanimously awarded the Performers’ Certificate.

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