



# LATIN FIESTA!

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3 & 4, AT 8 PM

## NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

**GIANCARLO GUERRERO**, conductor  
Martha & Bronson Ingram Music Director Chair

**ANNE AKIKO MEYERS**, violin

**MAURICE RAVEL**

*Alborada del gracioso*

**8 minutes**

**ARTURO MÁRQUEZ**

*Fandango*

*Anne Akiko Meyers, violin*

**30 minutes**

**INTERMISSION**

**20 minutes**

**CHEN YI**

**Introduction, Andante and Allegro**

**19 minutes**

I. *Introduction: Tranquillo, spazioso*

II. *Andante: Freely*

III. *Allegro*

**MAURICE RAVEL**

*Rapsodie espagnole*

**16 minutes**

I. *Prélude à la nuit*

II. *Malagueña*

III. *Habanera*

IV. *Feria*

*This concert will last approximately one hour, 33 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.*

# MAURICE RAVEL

## *Alborada del gracioso*

Born on March 7, 1875, in  
Ciboure, France

Died on December 28, 1937,  
in Paris, France

**Composed:**  
1904-05

**Estimated  
length:**  
8 minutes



### First performance:

January 6, 1906 (piano version);  
May 17, 1919 (orchestral version),  
with Rhené-Baton conducting the  
Pasdeloup Orchestra in Paris.

### First Nashville Symphony performance:

February 14, 1966,  
with Willis Page conducting at  
War Memorial Auditorium.

**T**ogether with Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel shared a long-standing fascination with Spanish themes. But he had the additional advantage of a mother of Basque origin who instilled in her son a lifelong enthusiasm for Spanish culture. This applies to several works besides his best known composition, the ballet *Boléro*—including the pieces that frame our program.

Ravel originally wrote *Alborada del gracioso* as the fourth in a five-piece suite for solo piano titled *Miroirs* (1904-05), each of which he dedicated to a member of his inner circle. He returned to this music twice to orchestrate two different pieces: *Un Barque sur l'océan* (“A Barque on the Ocean”) in 1906 and, in 1919, at the request of the ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev, *Alborada del gracioso*.

The latter title refers to a dawn serenade or dance (*alborada*) that is performed by the Spanish Renaissance version of a jester or buffoon (the *gracioso*). Ravel defined the character he had in mind as “more philosophical, less well-meaning than his Spanish ancestor.”

That fact adds a touch of irony to the scenario of such a serenade, which signals the last song lovers share before they must part with the arrival of day.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Syncopated rhythms give a jaunty energy to the opening music. Ravel’s orchestration involves a kind of double-mirror effect of having the musicians imitate the original piano version’s imitation of a guitar on the keyboard. With a mood of exaggerated self-pity, a bassoon representing the *gracioso* initiates the slower, songlike music at the center, but the dance rhythms and swirling melodies of the opening emerge at various points in the background. These become irrepressible, erupting with spectacular force.

Scored for 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, 2 harps and strings.

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# ARTURO MÁRQUEZ

## *Fandango*

Born on December 20, 1950, in  
Álamos, Sonora, Mexico

Currently resides in the larger  
Mexico City region

**Composed:**  
2020-21

**Estimated  
length:**  
30 minutes



**First performance:**

August 24, 2021, with Anne Akiko Meyers as the soloist and Gustavo Dudamel conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

**First Nashville Symphony  
performance:**

These are the Nashville Symphony's first performances of this work.

**S**ince introducing Arturo Márquez's *Fandango* in 2021 at the Hollywood Bowl (summer venue of the Los Angeles Philharmonic), Anne Akiko Meyers has been performing the concerto to great acclaim across the country. Some of the most prominent living composers have written music for the violinist, an intrepid champion of new music—among them Jennifer Higdon, Winton Marsalis, Arvo Pärt, Mason Bates and Michael Daugherty (whose *Blue Electra*, a musical portrait of Amelia Earhart via the concerto format, she premiered this past fall).

In 2018, Meyers asked Márquez to write a work for violin and orchestra that would draw on the musical legacy of his native Mexico. Her request galvanized the composer to write a concerto based on the topic of the fandango, thus finally realizing a project he had embarked on some two decades ago but subsequently abandoned.

Born in a small desert town in Sonora in northwestern Mexico, Márquez grew up listening to his violinist father playing in mariachi bands and, as a child, himself took up the violin as his first instrument. His composition studies led him to Paris and, later, the California Institute of the Arts. Early in his career, Márquez followed a more experimental direction, blending acoustic and electronic music and collaborating on mixed-media efforts. But his research on the variety of Mexico's traditions inspired Márquez to adapt these vernacular idioms into a musical language that has made him internationally famous, above all through his series of *Danzón* pieces. These

draw on rhythmic, melodic and formal prototypes that, in the composer's words, fuse "sensuality and qualitative seriousness."

The fandango is an essential ingredient of this language. Originating from the Iberian Peninsula (where it is closely associated with flamenco culture), the fandango was imported to the Americas, where it hybridized with local influences. These new variants took root in places like the states on Mexico's Gulf Coast. Márquez explains that the Mexican version of the fandango, which has a meaning similar to what is connoted by *huapango* style, acquired "a tinge different from the Spanish genre; for centuries, it has been a special festival for musicians, singers, poets and dancers. Everyone gathers around a wooden platform to stamp their feet, sing and improvise [occasional poetry]."

Somewhat reminiscent of Astor Piazzolla's expansion of the tango archetype, Márquez has used the fandango and other popular dance idioms to reinvigorate classical formats—and, vice versa, opened up new dimensions for these popular styles through classical techniques and procedures, as in the concerto we hear. Márquez pours this new wine into the familiar bottle of the concerto, focusing on a different aspect in each of *Fandango*'s three movements. In addition, he points to the role that Meyers's special brand of virtuosity played in his concept of the piece. The sensitivity of her lyricism in slow movements, for example, led him to replace an earlier sketch for the middle movement with a prayerful chaconne.

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The first movement, titled “Folia Tropical,” alludes to an ancient dance that originated in Portugal and Spain. (The root meaning of “folia,” which is “madness,” has a convoluted history.) Following an introduction that recalls “the remote history of the fandango,” as Márquez explains, a pair of themes is presented—the first based on the Caribbean rhythm known as the “clave,” and the second highly expressive and reminiscent of “a romantic bolero.”

“Plegaria” (“Prayer”), as the second movement is named, imagines a musical marriage between Old and New Worlds as it pays tribute to the “rhythmic and emotional” aspects of the *huapango* style of mariachi music as well as the Spanish fandango—but without using traditional themes. Instead, Márquez calls to mind the legacies of three Spanish composers he especially admires: Pablo Sarasate,

Manuel de Falla and Issac Albeniz. Formally, “Plegaria” is “a loosely treated chaconne”—a dance form in which variations unfold over a repeating harmonic sequence.

The finale (“Fandanguito”) is inspired by the music of Mexico’s Huasteca region on the Gulf Coast (where fandango styles have flourished). According to the composer, the Huasteco violin is one of the most virtuosic instruments in the Americas and is expected to demonstrate the personal stamp of the musician as it accompanies a singer improvising verses. Sharing certain features with Baroque music, this style is characterized by “great rhythmic vitality and a rich variety of bow strokes. It demands a great virtuosity from the soloist, and it is the music that I have kept in my heart for decades.”

*In addition to solo violin, scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.*

## ABOUT THE SOLOISTS



### ANNE AKIKO MEYERS

Violin

Anne Akiko Meyers is “a musical wizard, with astonishing access to every

kind of expressive color” (*The San Diego Union-Tribune*) and has inspired many of today’s leading composers to create new violin repertoire for her.

She regularly performs around the world as soloist with leading orchestras, in recital, and is a prolific recording artist with more than 40 recordings. A muse and champion of living composers, she recently premiered and performed *Fandango* by Arturo Márquez with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic at The Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Hall and the Auditorio Nacional in Mexico City. She also premiered *Blue Electra* by Michael Daugherty at The Kennedy Center with Gianandrea Noseda and the National Symphony Orchestra to massive critical and audience acclaim.

Anne has inspired today’s leading composers to create new violin repertoire and premiered new music with symphony orchestras globally.

She has worked closely with Mason Bates, Jakub Ciupiński, John Corigliano, Michael Daugherty, Jennifer Higdon, Morten Lauridsen, Wynton Marsalis, Arturo Márquez, Arvo Pärt, Gene Pritsker, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Somei Satoh and Adam Schoenberg, among others.

Anne recently released *Shining Night* and *Mysterium*, and her 40+ recordings are a staple of streaming platforms and classical radio stations around the world. She has appeared twice on *The Tonight Show*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, *Morning Edition* and *Great Performances*.

Anne was born in San Diego and studied at the Colburn School of Performing Arts and The Juilliard School on invitation by legendary teacher, Dorothy DeLay. She has received the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Distinguished Alumna Award from the Colburn School of Music, and serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of The Juilliard School. Anne performs on the Ex-Vieuxtemps Guarneri del Gesù, dated 1741, considered by many to be the finest sounding violin in existence, and endorses Larsen Strings.

More at [AnneAkikoMeyers.com](http://AnneAkikoMeyers.com).

# CHEN YI

## Introduction, Andante and Allegro

Born on April 4, 1953, in Guangzhou in southern China

Currently resides in Kansas City, Missouri

**Composed:**  
2018

**Estimated length:**  
19 minutes



### First performance:

February 16, 2019, by the Seattle Symphony conducted by Ludovic Morlot.

### First Nashville Symphony performance:

These are the Nashville Symphony's first performances of this work.

**C**hen Yi belongs to a generation of composers born in China who, after emerging at the end of the 20th century, have built careers in the United States and, in the process, developed original hybrids comprising elements from Chinese folk music and Western models. Chen's own exposure to Western classical music began at an early age. She began studying piano and violin as a young child and enjoyed listening to her parents' extensive record collection. But the so-called Cultural Revolution of the 1960s-70s, which intransigently banned anything to do with Western music, disrupted not just her musical education, but the fabric of her family life.

As a teenager, Chen was sent to the countryside to be "reeducated." One of her assigned tasks involved hauling heavy sacks uphill, under the eyes of the Red Guard, to help build military fortifications. She made important contacts with Chinese folk music during this period. Chen was eventually allowed to return to her hometown in southern China (close to Hong Kong), where her skills as a violinist landed her employment as concertmaster of the local Peking opera company. She spent nearly a decade there, where her responsibilities included preparing arrangements and orchestrations, and received further grounding in traditional Chinese music.

Chen, who reaches the milestone age of 70 in April, was among the first group of students to enroll in the Central Conservatory in Beijing when it reopened—and the first woman to earn a

master's degree in composition there. She relocated to the United States in 1986 and studied serialism, electronic music and other types of Western musical Modernism at Columbia University. This blend of influences gives her music a fascinating and unique perspective. From it she has cultivated a vibrant and lyrical language. Chen's skill as an orchestrator is apparent in a prolific catalogue that includes numerous contributions to such genres as the concerto and symphony. These works often incorporate storytelling devices from traditional Chinese music, such as those used in Peking opera, a recurrent theme in Chen's scores.

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Two sacred animals from Chinese legend inspired Chen's concept of *Introduction, Andante and Allegro*: the black tortoise known as the *xuanwu* (typically depicted as a tortoise entwined with a snake), which represents the north and wintertime; and the white tiger, symbol of the west and autumn. These are two of the symbolic "four creatures" from Chinese legend, which also figure in Chen's 2016 piano concerto *Four Spirits*.

The first movement, *Introduction*, draws from a pentatonic Chinese folk tune played by traditional ensembles and known as "Old Eight Beats" (*Lao Baban*). Chen expands this into "a bold melody in Peking opera style," as she explains, the music ranging "from tranquil to vivid and energetic." Her depiction of the black *xuanwu* determines

the “dark, mysterious” soundscape of the *Andante* movement, in which Chen imagines a “boundless space.” The powerfully dramatic music of the final movement, *Allegro*, which portrays the white tiger, poses a striking contrast. A persistent figure serves as the engine for the movement, which develops

with menacing majesty and awe and brings the work to a dazzling close.

Scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani (doubling triangle and tam-tam), 2 percussion and strings.

## MAURICE RAVEL

### *Rapsodie espagnole*

Born on March 7, 1875, in  
Ciboure, France

Died on December 28, 1937,  
in Paris, France

**Composed:**  
1907-08

**Estimated  
length:**  
16 minutes



**First performance:**  
March 15, 1908, in Paris, with  
Édouard Colonne conducting.

**First Nashville Symphony  
performance:**  
January 27, 1989, with  
Michael Barrett conducting at  
War Memorial Auditorium.

Ravel didn't actually visit Spain until 1911, but he was inspired by Spanish themes from early on in his career. *Rapsodie espagnole*, his first major orchestral work, originated in 1907, a pivotal year for the young composer that also included work on his Spanish-themed first opera, *L'heure espagnole*. Resembling a miniature four-movement symphony, *Rapsodie espagnole* treats the instruments as characters and demonstrates the composer's exquisite precision as an orchestrator.

In “Habanera,” which derives from an earlier piano piece, Ravel gives the impression of reflecting on this Afro-Cuban-tinged dance rhythm, holding it up for inspection and festooning it with surprising touches of orchestral color. The concluding “Feria” (“Festival Day”), the longest of the four sections, is a tour de force of blended tints and charged rhythmic energy. When a languorous middle section interrupts, the nocturnal attitude of the opening returns to hold sway briefly. But the celebratory impulse wins out with an impressive shower of orchestral fireworks.

Scored for pairs of piccolos and flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, sarrusophone or contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, celesta, 2 harps and strings

— Thomas May is the Nashville Symphony's program annotator.

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The hypnotically repeating four-note idea in “Prelude to the Night” almost prefigures the much later *Boléro* in its persistence. Ravel evokes the mystery of night undiluted by light pollution, as eyes adjust to shifting shadows. “Malagueña,” the second section, refers to flamenco-like folk music of Andalusian Spain. Ravel quickly builds from the quiet opening to a dizzying collage of sonic images before a doleful English horn solo tempers things and signals the return of the “Prelude” theme.