

University of South Carolina  
**Symphony Orchestra**  
Scott Weiss, Music Director & Conductor

# The Firebird and The Phoenix

Sponsored by  
Peggy and Bill Maltarich

Thursday, September 26, 2024  
7:30 p.m.  
Koger Center for the Arts

**ODE  
TO JOY**

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF MUSIC AT CAROLINA

1924-2024  
**100**  
SING THY HIGH PRAISE  
YEARS OF MUSIC



School of Music  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

# University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestra

Scott Weiss, *Conductor and Director of Orchestras*

Wu Wei, *Sheng*

Jordan Brooks, *Conductor*

## First Violin

Julia Jacobsen,  
*Concertmaster*  
Wenxin Xi, *Associate  
Concertmaster*  
Margie Moore  
Ziyi Deng  
Colin Coviello  
Mac Tollefsen  
Caitlyn McDonald  
Elizabeth Sutherland  
William Edwards  
Finn McGregor  
Katie Rojas  
Thomas Sunderland  
Steven Kyle Humphries  
Holly Workman

## Second Violin

Miguel Calleja, *Principal*  
Aidan Billings, *Assistant  
Principal*  
Vira Adams  
Savannah Elgin  
Greyson Sherman  
McKenzie Sightler  
Gabriela McWethy  
Sarah-lyuna Spencer  
Naomi Wright  
Philip Howe  
Kayla Mathis  
Nicole Bedoya  
Grace Pennington

## Viola

Douglas Temples, *Principal*  
Nicky Moore, *Assistant  
Principal*  
Anthony Joyce  
Derek George  
Amanda Harrell  
Ian Hall  
Tiaryca Green  
Elijah Skinner  
Esais Jones

## Cello

Jordan Bartow, *Principal*  
Hillary Flowers, *Assistant  
Principal*  
Paul Maxwell  
Tristan Groscoat  
Miranda Ramirez  
Decker Elam  
Luka Doering  
Brendan Short  
John Koontz

## Bass

Joe Gaskins, *Principal*  
Joshua Groscoat, *Assistant  
Principal*  
Avea Diamond  
Ian Hamrick  
Ella Johnson  
Geordan Raisler  
Sadie Wood

## Flute

Deepti Vadhiyar, *Principal\**  
Ashleigh Wallace #  
Olivia Norton  
Lizzie Runion  
Shelby Miller

## Oboe

Jonathan Krause, *Principal\*#*  
Jaden Bowers  
Sydney Fulcher  
Madison Constantine

## Clarinet

Andrew Kevic, *Principal\*#*  
Tayshaun Brown  
Addison Sullivan  
Ellie Lawhorn  
Quiara McBride  
Jackson Farmer

## Bassoon

Ed Senn, *Principal\**  
Aaron Nealy#  
Christina French  
Peyton Mann

## Horn

Charlie VanAtter, *Principal\*#*  
Sadie Becht  
Micah Sullivan  
Fern Walker  
Connor Hammond  
Charlie Winston  
Ayden Barnett  
Braydon Corbett

## Trumpet

Francisco Ballestas,  
*Principal\**  
Connor Bruce #  
Ben Schell  
George Bernard

## Trombone

Luke Propst, *Principal\*#*  
Wills Kane  
Evelyn Hadley

## Bass Trombone

Ryan Self, *Principal*

## Tuba

Chad Hall, *Principal*

## Percussion

Julia Ross, *Principal*  
Adam Clifton  
Ben Millesen  
Clay Schneider  
Zach Cook  
Ian Mahaffey

## Harp

Xueying Piao, *Principal*

## Piano

Will Byrd, *Principal*

\* = *Principal on Fang*

# = *Principal on Stravinsky*

# The Firebird and The Phoenix

Thursday, September 26, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Koger Center for the Arts

---

Scott Weiss, Conductor and Director of Orchestras

Wu Wei, Sheng

Jordan Brooks, Conductor

Sponsored by Peggy and Bill Maltarich

## » Program «

Song of the Flaming Phoenix 火凤凰的笙音

Fang Man (b. 1977)

*A Symphonic Poem for Sheng (Mouth Organ) and Large Orchestra*

The Firebird Suite (1919)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Introduction

The Firebird and its Dance

Variation of the Firebird

Round Dance of the Princesses

Infernal Dance of King Kashchei

Lullaby

Finale

*This evening's program will be performed without intermission.*

---

*A very special thanks to Mary Peak, Assistant Dean for Finance,  
for her assistance in making this evening's performance  
of The Song of the Flaming Phoenix possible.*

# » Program Notes «

## Song of the Flaming Phoenix

Composer Fang Man writes: “When I was three, my mother bought me a toy piano. I was obsessed with it and played it all the time, so she decided to buy me a real one. In the early 80s in China a piano was very expensive to afford (it almost doubled my family’s yearly expenses), but she was a strong and determined person. She bought a piano and arranged to have it shipped to my hometown, JiuJiang, over 1,000 kilometers away from Guangzhou. As I grew up, she accompanied me to piano competitions, music school auditions, and performances—no matter where, she was always there to support me.

During the 20 months of working on Song of the Flaming Phoenix, my mother’s health declined. The compositional process was slow and difficult; I would write a few measures, then make phone calls with doctors and family in China for hours. No matter how sick she was, she would always smile when I told her about my work. On the night I was writing the final bars of the piece, my father called to tell me that my mother had passed away. It felt as if she held her last breath, waiting for me to finish this piece, as if she knew that I would be too sad to continue.

The idea of this work came from Esa-Pekka Salonen’s initial proposal to pair a piece of mine with Scriabin’s Prometheus. Song of the Flaming Phoenix was composed using inspiration of the octatonic sets and the color schemes of Prometheus. Reflecting another great loss in my life, the very last conversation I had with my mentor Steven Stucky before he passed was about the tetrachords in Lutosławski’s music in relation to the octatonic set.

The Fenghuang, known as the Phoenix, was considered the king of all birds in Chinese mythology.

“Of the five elements, its green head represented wood, its white neck metal, its red back fire, its black chest water, and its yellow feet earth. Its feathers were patterned to represent written characters: on its head a “德” for “virtue;” on each of its wings a “义” for “righteousness;” on its back a “礼” for “courtesy;” on its chest a “仁” for “benevolence;” and on its belly a “信” for “trust.” When the four virtues of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, and trust were displayed on its body — and with its every auspicious appearance — the world was at peace.” (*Excerpt taken from Fantastic creatures of the Mountains and Seas text by Jiankun Sun, translated by Howard Goldblatt.*)

In the latter half of *Song of the Flaming Phoenix*, I translated the birdsongs heard in my backyard in South Carolina into seven other mythical birds: Yu (Carolina Chickadee), Changfu (Carolina Wren), Manman (Yellow-Rumped Warbler), Luan (Tufted Titmouse), Lingyao (Northern Cardinal & Summer Tanager), Qiyu (Red-breasted Nuthatch & Northern Mockingbird), and Min (Blue-gray Gnatcatcher). I imagine that the Fenghuang lead her feathered friends from heaven to save humanity from the ongoing disasters.

The solo instrument Sheng is the world's oldest free-reed mouth organ, with a history of more than 3,000 years. It is a representation of 凤凰 (fenghuang) Phoenix, 和 (he) Harmony, and 笙 (sheng) - 生 life. I also noticed that the flag of the city of San Francisco depicts a rising phoenix, symbolic of the city's recovery from the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fires.

The piece is dedicated to Wu Wei (Sheng virtuoso), Maestro Salonen, and the San Francisco Symphony, in the memory of my mother (1940-2022)."



## The Firebird Suite (1919)

The Firebird, its original French title *L'Oiseau de feu*, is a ballet and orchestral work by Russian composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). Stravinsky was one of the 20th century's leading composers and a pioneer of new music during his lifetime. Born in Russia and spending most of his adult life in France and eventually the United States, Stravinsky was highly regarded for his mastery and influence in a great number of styles and genres.

The Firebird, composed and premiered in 1910, was written at the request of Sergei Diaghilev for the Ballet Russes. Stravinsky was a little-known composer at the time and had only a few mature pieces. However, the success of the Firebird performance launched Stravinsky to international fame and led to further collaborations with Diaghilev and the Ballet Russes, including *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*. The story of the ballet is based on Russian fairy tales of the Firebird and the blessings and curses brought to the owner of the Firebird. Stravinsky cut, rearranged, and reorchestrated the music three times for concert performance resulting in three orchestral suites. The 1919 suite reduces the complete ballet to its essential musical elements and reduces the orchestration to be playable by a standard-sized symphony orchestra.



## Scott Weiss | *Conductor*

**S**cott Weiss is the Music Director and Conductor of the Aiken Symphony and the Director of Orchestras at the University of South Carolina School of Music. In demand internationally as a guest conductor, Weiss has conducted recent performances with the orchestras of Shenzhen, Tianjin, Hunan, Inner Mongolia, Shandong and Nanchang and at major international venues including the Taipei National Theatre and Concert Hall, the

National Centre for the Performing Arts Concert Hall in Beijing and the Hangzhou Grand Theatre Concert Hall. Soloists he has recently shared the stage with include Elena Urioste, Angelo Xiang Yu, Zuill Bailey, Awadagin Pratt, John O'Connor, Marina Lomazov and Paul Jacobs.

Weiss has several critically-acclaimed recordings on the Naxos Records and Summit Records labels. His latest offering is the world premiere recording of Nico Muhly's *Reliable Sources*, released on the Cantaloupe Music label in October 2021. The piece is one of dozens of new works that Weiss has commissioned from many of today's leading composers, including Samuel Adler, Jennifer Higdon, Zhou Long, Cindy McTee and Joseph Schwanter. At the University of South Carolina, Weiss is the Sarah Bolick Smith Distinguished Professor of Music. In addition to conducting the USC Symphony Orchestra, Weiss leads the master's and doctoral programs in orchestral conducting at USC, and his studio is a destination for talented young conductors from around the world. He is frequently invited to conduct performances and teach masterclasses at leading conservatoires and music schools, including the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the Central Conservatory of Music (Beijing), the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the University of Western Australia. Each summer, he teaches at the Los Angeles Conducting Workshop and Competition.

Born in Monterey, California in 1967, Weiss holds degrees from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the University of Illinois, where he studied conducting with Donald Schleicher. Before joining the faculty at the University of South Carolina in 2010, he held conducting posts at the University of Kansas and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Weiss and his wife Teah are intrepid travelers and enjoy hiking, surfing and fine wines. They are the proud parents of John, a PhD student in chemistry at Northwestern University.

## Jordan Brooks | *Conductor*

Jordan Brooks is an orchestral and operatic conductor currently based in Columbia, South Carolina. He is currently the Assistant Conductor for the Aiken Symphony, Assistant Conductor for the University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestra, as well as Music Director of the university's Campus Orchestra. At the University of South Carolina, Jordan studies with Dr. Scott Weiss and holds a Graduate Assistantship with the orchestra. Previously, he was the Assistant Conductor of the University of Pennsylvania Symphony Orchestra, cover conductor for the Delaware County Symphony and the Youth Orchestra of Bucks County Philharmonia, and Conductor in Residence with the Center City Chamber Orchestra.



Also active as an operatic conductor, Jordan serves as a Conductor with Opera at USC. He was the conductor for Opera at USC's 2024 production of *She Loves Me* and was assistant conductor for their 2023 production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and will hold the same position for their 2024 production of *Gilbert and Sullivan's Ruddigore*. He made his international conducting debut in Berlin, Germany in July 2023 as an Assistant Conductor at the Berlin Opera Academy, and has also been a student at Miami Music Festival's Opera Conducting Bootcamp. Previous summer studies include Mostly Modern Festival and Conductors Retreat at Medomak. Jordan counts among his conducting teachers and mentors Scott Weiss, Kensho Watanabe, Thomas Hong, Andreas Delfs, and Kenneth Kiesler.

Originally from the Philadelphia area, Jordan graduated from Temple University in 2021 where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree in cello performance. He studied cello with John Koen of the Philadelphia Orchestra and has also worked with other members of the Philadelphia Orchestra as principal cello with the Temple University Symphony Orchestra and was involved in dozens of world premieres with local composers. He was also the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Temple University Repertory Orchestra.



## Fang Man | *Composer*

Fang Man is currently an Associate Professor of Composition and Composition Program Coordinator at the University of South Carolina School of Music.

Hailed as “inventive and breathtaking” by the New York Times, Fang Man is a Chinese-born American composer who has received education in China, the United States, and Europe. Her musical prowess is shaped by the harmonious fusion of Eastern and Western

traditions, resulting in a captivating and innovative style. Drawing inspiration from the rich tapestry of traditional Chinese operas and instrumental music, she fearlessly incorporates these elements into her compositions. Through her artistry, Fang bridges cultural divides and creates an evocative musical landscape. Over the years, she has developed a keen interest in interdisciplinary art, involving dance, visual arts, film, opera, and theatre.

Her music has been performed worldwide by notable orchestras and ensembles such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra New Music Group, Camerata Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Mannheimer Philharmoniker, Basel Sinfonietta, American Composers Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, National Orchestre de Lorraine, Minnesota Orchestra, Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Aldeburgh Symphony Orchestra, Peabody Symphony Orchestra, Baldwin-Wallace Symphony Orchestra, USC Wind Ensemble, Prism Saxophone Quartet, Dolce Suono Ensemble, Ensemble UnitedBerlin, Cassatt String Quartet, Music from China, among others.

With a generous grant from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, her large-scale Sheng (Chinese mouth organ) concerto “Song of the Flaming Phoenix” was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony and League of American Orchestras, and premiered by Sheng virtuoso Wu Wei and conducted by SFSO’s esteemed director Esa-Pekka Salonen in the 2021-2022 season. In 2019-20, she was featured as the composer-in-residence with the Mannheimer Philharmoniker under Boian Videnoff in Germany for their 2019-20 season to celebrate the orchestra’s 10th Anniversary, which includes performances and recordings of her orchestral works.

She is the recipient of a Charles Ives Fellowship (2024), Guggenheim Fellowship (2012), Koussevitzky Foundation Commission (2010), Music from China Award, among others.



## Wu Wei | *Sheng*

The artistry of internationally, renowned Sheng virtuoso Wu Wei reaches far beyond the traditional boundaries of his more than 3000-year-old Chinese instrument and brings it well into the 21st century.

The Sheng, a mouth organ, formed out of a bundle of bamboo reeds and cased in a metal bowl, sounds as the singing phoenix from a Chinese legend: silvery and fleeting as the wind.

Wu Wei's radiant and transparent tone as well as the infinite possibilities offered by his instrument in terms of melody, harmony, rhythm, polyphony have led him to collaborating with many artists and ensembles in traditional, chamber or orchestral settings, improvising in solo concerts or with jazz big Bands, playing electronic music as well as taking part to minimal, baroque music performances.

Wu Wei's desire to experiment with new sound and types of musical expression and his extraordinary capacity to create an individual world out of each performance are reflected in his collaborations with distinguished composers writing concertos for Sheng and orchestra especially for him: Huang Ruo (*The color of yellow* – 2007), Guus Janssen (*Four Songs* – 2008), Unsuk Chin (*Su* – 2009), Jukka Tiensuu (*Teoton* – 2015), Bernd Richard Deutsch (*Phaenomena* – 2019), Ondrej Adamek (*Lost Prayer Book* – 2019), Donghong Shin (*Anecdote* – 2019), Enjott Schneider (*change* – 2003 and several other concerti).

Wu Wei was born in 1970 in Gaoyou (China). He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and started his career in 1993 as a Sheng soloist in China where he performed among others with the Chinese Music Orchestra Shanghai. In 1995, he was selected by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and FNS (Friedrich Naumann Foundation) to take part in a four-year scholarship which brought him to Berlin, where he is still currently living. Since 2013, Wu Wei has been a Professor teaching the Sheng at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.



# With Gratitude to Our Contributors

The USC Symphony Orchestra thanks the following donors for their generous support. Your contributions provide much-needed funding for scholarships, fellowships, world-renowned guest artists, music rentals and many other items that support our program.

## **Maestro Sponsors (\$10,000+)**

Peggy and Bill Maltarich

## **Principal Sponsors (\$2,500)**

Cool Care

Schmoyer and Company

## **Sustaining Sponsors (\$2,000-\$9,999)**

Myra and Mike Nelson

Patricia and James Weiss

Lisa and Robert Wilcox

## **Sponsors (\$1,000-\$1,999)**

Nove Deypalan

Jerry Dell and Ben Gimarc

Sheila and Dwayne Josey

Bobbi and Jeff McKeever

Jeffry Caswell and Jose Cotto Ortiz

Nancy and Hunter Rentz

## **Patrons (\$500-\$999)**

Christine and Tayloe Harding

Audra and Johann Vaz

## **Contributor (\$250-\$499)**

Ronnie Belleggia

Daniela Friedman and Michael Dojc

Sharon and Ryan Gaskin

Pamela and Andy Gowan

Regina Moody

Tracey and Michael Snelling

Meira and Sam Warshauer

Teah and Scott Weiss

## **Partner (\$100-\$249)**

Barbara Bowers

Kris and Ronald Burns

Craig Butterfield

Ann and Robert Buys

Fang Man and Yi Sun

Wendy and Nathan Groscoast

Virginia Grose

Carol and Robert Hammond

Verotta Kennedy

Fredna Lee

Patty Lovit

Celia O'Brien

Sharon and Richard Shealy

Vans Violins

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but if your name is missing, please contact the School of Music Development Office at 803-576-5763.

Please support the USC Symphony Orchestra today. Your gift makes an immediate impact by providing critically needed funding and empowering us to meet emerging needs and opportunities, such as scholarships for deserving students, faculty recruitment and innovative new programming that enhances the overall Carolina experience. You can make a gift directly to the USC Symphony Orchestra Fund by using the QR code. For more information, contact **Brad Martin**, Assistant Director of Development at [brad.martin@sc.edu](mailto:brad.martin@sc.edu).



Thank you for helping us keep the music playing!

Proud supporter of the USC School of Music

# COOL CARE

HEATING • AIR  
PLUMBING &  
REFRIGERATION

*Famously Cool*



# Comfort is Key

803.772.7715 • [CoolCareHVAC.com](http://CoolCareHVAC.com)

# *Keeping Your Accounts Perfectly Tuned.*

*So You Can Enjoy Every Show!*



**Schmoyer and Company, LLC**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

*Supporting & Celebrating the Arts!*

1330 Lady Street, Suite 507, Columbia, SC 29201  
803.254.2050 [www.schmoyercpa.com](http://www.schmoyercpa.com)