

Dear VSS Members,

The 2019/2020 season has begun; and what a wonderful season it is! From thrilling performances at the Ferguson Center to intimate socials and dinners in Williamsburg, there is something for all VSS members and their families.



We kicked off the season here in Williamsburg with a spectacular concert at Lake Matoaka. Mother Nature made up for last year's disappointment with a gorgeous evening and beautiful sunset against the back drop of the lake. Guests of all ages enjoyed the VSO's performance of music selections from various cartoons that spanned the decades and evoked happy memories for all. We are so lucky to have such an event in our community.

It was my honor to present the VSO with a check for the money raised by you, VSS members, and our sponsors during the previous season. This is only possible because of your dedication and generosity. Thank you so much for your continued support.

It was also a privilege to welcome and introduce at the concert Dr. Katherine Rowe, William and Mary's first female president. Over the past year, our community has

celebrated groundbreaking women – from the commemoration of the first women to arrive at Jamestown in 1619 to the first female students accepted at W&M 100 years ago. Dr. Rowe is certainly among these groundbreaking women. Another, of course, is JoAnn Falletta.

As you know, this is JoAnn's last season as director of the VSO. Her final appearance at the podium will be right here in Williamsburg on March 14th at Jamestown High School. VSS members and friends will also have the unique opportunity to bid her a personal farewell on April 26th, when she will attend our 2020 gala at Two Rivers Country Club as our honoree. The evening will be a tribute to women in music and to JoAnn herself. Although it is several months off, please mark your calendars and tell your friends now, as this will be an event you cannot miss!

While we are focused heavily on planning a successful gala, we also have ongoing events and concerts this Fall. We held a lovely first social of the season at the home of JeanMarie and Bob Thompson with Concertmaster Vahn Armstrong as our performer for the evening. We also tried a new type of event focused on exposing the VSS to the community and growing our membership at Murdoch's Tavern in Ford's Colony with VSO principal cellist, Michael Daniels. And we have, in fact, added several new members this fall, which is very exciting! We are also thrilled



that long-time member Carol Carkner has joined the VSS board.

Next up on the calendar is our first Williamsburg concert of the year. On Saturday, November 23rd, Benjamin Rous, well-known and loved by VSS members, will return to CrossWalk Church to conduct the VSO performing works by Vivaldi and other baroque composers. And we hope to see many of you at the VSS's preconcert dinner at Colonial Heritage that evening. Invitations will come in the mail, but don't wait to rsvp, as space at the dinner will be limited.

Last but not least, the very popular Holiday Brass concert will take place on Wednesday, December 18th at St. Bede Catholic Church. Information will be forthcoming regarding a holiday social.

As you can see, there is always lots to do and we always welcome VSS members to join us in these efforts. If you'd like to get more involved or volunteer in any way, please contact me at [sarah.gelinas@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.gelinas@gmail.com) or Volunteer Coordinator Martha Jean Howell at [mjhw11957@gmail.com](mailto:mjhw11957@gmail.com).

Happy Fall and hope to see you soon!

All the best,

*Sarah Ortego*

*Left to right: Vahn Armstrong, Bob Thompson, Bert Aaron, Olivia Grimsley and (in front) Kathryn Ortego*



## October Social

Almost 60 members and guests attended our October Social at the home of JeanMarie and Bob Thompson in Ford's Colony.

VSO

Concertmaster

Vahn Armstrong was our guest performer. He played four parts from Bach's Partita No. 2 in D minor followed by the familiar "Thais". He got a sustained and standing ovation.



Vahn also answered several questions posed by the guests, the most interesting of which referred to his violin. The instrument is on loan to the VSO and was made in 1685 by Guarneri.

The hors d'oeuvres were delicious and plentiful. The conversation flowed freely and everyone agreed it was a fine event.



*Left to right: Don Murfee, Susan Murfee, Gulya Berryman, Clyde Berryman*



## JoAnn Named Music Director Laureate

In celebration of JoAnn Falletta's long and significant tenure as Music Director, the Virginia Symphony Orchestra announced that she will be named the Connie and Marc Jacobson Music Director Laureate when she steps down after 29 years with the Orchestra next spring.

News of the appointment comes as the Orchestra opened its exciting 2019-2020 season conducted by Ms. Falletta. In addition, the new season will feature multiple guest conductors as part of a global search for its new leader, looking forward to a second century as one of America's most innovative musical ensembles.



About this new appointment, Ms. Falletta commented, "Marc and Connie Jacobson have been my treasured friends since my very first days as music director, and I am deeply moved by the family's generosity to the Virginia Symphony, and their personal friendship and love."

Grammy-winning JoAnn Falletta is credited with putting the VSO on the nation's musical map – even as her own career skyrocketed through the years – working with community supporters to take the Orchestra to its debuts at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, earning recognition from multiple national prizes, releasing an unprecedented total of 17 recordings including discs on the internationally acclaimed Naxos label, Albany Records, NPR and the orchestra's own Hampton Roads label, and commissioning new music by such composers as Kenneth Fuchs, Behzad Ranjbaran, Michael Daugherty and Lowell Liebermann which garnered praise for the Orchestra through its adventurous programming.

"JoAnn's leadership has been steady and inspiring throughout her time with us," noted VSO Board Chair Mike R. McClellan. "While we focus our attention on the current search for her successor, we are pleased to also look forward to an ongoing and meaningful relationship with JoAnn in coming years."

JoAnn commented in a letter published in the Virginia Pilot: "While I have experienced many accolades in my time at the helm of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, the warmth with which the musicians and I were received at the first three concerts of my final season as music director was extraordinary. In addition, the honor of being named the Connie and Marc Jacobson Music Director Laureate next season is one of the most meaningful of my career.

Although I will be stepping aside from my post as music director of our beloved orchestra next spring, my husband Robert and I will remain part of this community that we have come to love. Along with all of you, I look forward to the future growth and success of the remarkable arts we enjoy in Hampton Roads. Our own Virginia Symphony is a strong and vibrant organization, and I feel the time is right for a healthy transition to new artistic leadership.

When that time comes to 'hand off the baton' to my successor, I know that what the musicians and I have built together over the past 29 years will not only endure, but will thrive — with your continued support.

Many thanks from both Robert and me for your love and friendship. I look forward to seeing you again soon."

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## Holiday Brass

You won't want to miss the holiday concert at St. Bede here in Williamsburg on December 18th. The bold sounds of the Virginia Symphony brass section ring in the holidays with a blast! Experience the festive sounds of the season in a concert filled with wit, virtuosity, and the glorious music of the holidays—featuring the VSO brass and percussion sections in an all-new program. You'll enjoy music from a variety of styles that have made this concert a new holiday tradition!

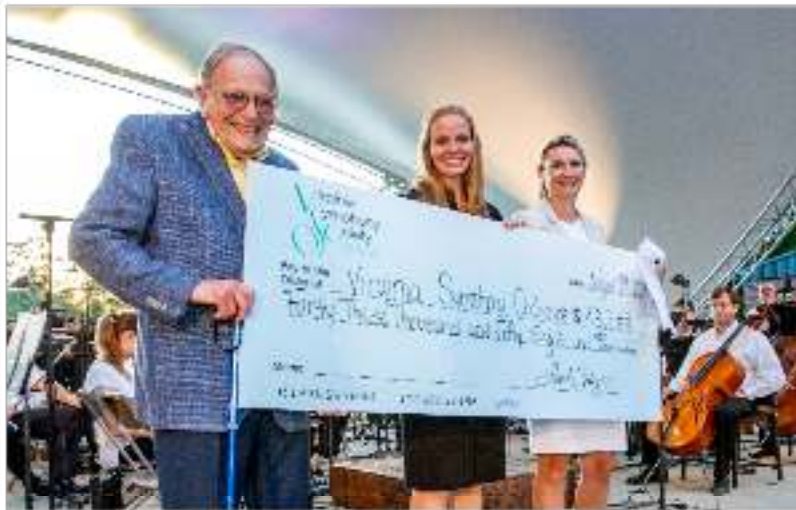


## Symphony Under the Stars

“Symphony under the Stars” at the Lake Matoaka Amphitheater is a musical tradition in Williamsburg. The concert was presented by William & Mary Student Assembly and the City of Williamsburg.

Thursday, August 29th, was a beautiful day that slipped into a warm, clear summer evening! The gates opened at six o'clock and a long line of people quickly moved into the amphitheater. The grassy slope behind the seats was dotted with blankets as groups unpacked picnic baskets. By seven o'clock the amphitheater was filled to capacity. The clouds hovering overhead soon were streaked with the red-orange glow of the setting sun and the orchestra was ready on stage anticipating the performance.

Katherine Rowe, President of William & Mary, welcomed the symphony and audience to the campus. President Rowe was followed by the President of The Virginia Symphony Society, Sarah Ortego. She also welcomed the audience and presented a check for \$43,058. to the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. The funds were raised by the VSS for the benefit of the VSO and the orchestra's music education support in the local school district.



The program featured “Toons for a Summer Evening.” Aaron Breid was the conductor for the performance of classical compositions with familiar tunes used as themes for the movie cartoons. Joseph Mazzara, baritone, sang arias from the *Barber of Seville* and *Carmen*. His rich, full voice filled the evening air with dramatic intensity. Mr. Mazzara is a member of Herndon Foundation Emerging Artists Program with Virginia Opera.

Smiles appeared as the themes of various cartoon characters appeared in portions of *Overture of Barber of Seville*, *the Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 C minor*, *Carmen*, and the *Lion King Orchestral Suite!* The Flintstones, Bugs Bunny, Pink Panther, the Road Runner, and Tom and Jerry scampered into the audience's memories as the lively notes were played.

It was a perfect evening blending music, memories, and moonlight!

Thanks to our volunteers from the VSS who passed out two thousand programs and welcomed folks as they arrived for the performance. A special thank you to Page and Ginny Cranford who sat at the VSS membership table both at Lake Matoaka and the Friday evening performance at Yorktown. The Cranfords reported both concerts were a delight and drew large audiences.

## In Memorium

Lester Dubnick, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, died on September 13.

Dr. Dubnick was a founding member of the Virginia Symphony Society, and served on the Board of Directors of the Society and on the Education Committee of the Virginia Symphony. For six years, he produced the Society's “Music in Your Life” series at the Williamsburg Regional Library. In 2001, he was awarded an “Alli Award” by the Cultural Alliance of Greater Hampton Roads. Between 2005 and 2011, he also served as a Commissioner on the Williamsburg Area Arts Commission. During the 1944-1945 season, he played in the violin section of the Norfolk Symphony.



Celebration of Life Service November 16th from noon to 3pm at Riverview Room at Kingsmill.



## The Last Night of the Proms - Aboard Queen Mary 2

The Proms is an eight-week season of classical music concerts held in the Royal Albert Hall in central London and produced by the BBC. The season is a significant event in British culture and in classical music. Prom is short for promenade concert, originally held outdoors, where the audience was free to stroll around while the orchestra was playing. The final concert in the series is "The Last Night of the Proms" which is very different from the other concerts. It is broadcast by the BBC and is a major event in the UK. The concert is traditionally in a lighter, 'winding-down' vein, with popular classics followed by a second half of British patriotic pieces.



and Hubert Parry's *Jerusalem* (the audience sang along with each of these).

The concert concluded with Edward Elgar's *Pomp & Circumstance March No. 1* (to part of which *Land of Hope and Glory* is sung). The audience demanded and got an encore of the last piece.

Following the concert many passengers went down to the ballroom to dance the night away to the music of the Queens Room orchestra. As it was a formal night, everyone was dressed in black tie and ball gowns. It was a wonderful experience. A fantastic evening.

This is the concert which was faithfully recreated on Queen Mary 2 during its September 15th crossing from New York to Southampton. The British National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Anthony Inglis was aboard. Two hundred passengers were recruited to sing in the choir and they rehearsed with the orchestra for five days prior to the concert. Half of them were "Choir 1" for the 8:30 performance and the other half, "Choir 2," for the 10:30 performance. The Royal Court Theater was packed with an enthusiastic crowd for both performances. They had British flags to wave around and were in a mood to cheer loudly and to clap and sing along with the music.

The concert opened with *God Save the Queen* followed by a number of classics including *Amazing Grace* which was sung in six part harmony by the choir. The second part included the traditional patriotic sequence including Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* (with the audience clapping enthusiastically in time to the beat), followed by Thomas Arne's *Rule, Britannia!*





## VSO Announces New Musicians

The Virginia Symphony Orchestra proudly announces the addition of violinists Jacqueline Kitzmiller, Hui Cao, Allison Kim, Anna Bishop and percussionist Will McVay.



A native of Cincinnati, OH, Jacqueline Kitzmiller began studying the violin at the age of four. She received a Bachelor of Music degree from Rice University, and recently graduated from Indiana University with a Master of Music. Jacqueline made her debut in 2011 with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and has continued to perform with orchestras around the world.

Hui Cao started on the violin at the age of four under violinist Duoxin Xu in Shanghai, China. By nine years old, he was accepted into the middle school affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. When he graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory, he began performing with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. Later, Cao relocated to Macau, China and joined the Macau Symphony Orchestra. He moved to California with his wife and their son, Felix. They are very excited for their new life in Virginia.



Allison Kim began playing the violin after receiving a quarter size violin as a gift from her grandfather for her eighth birthday. She grew up in Asunción, Paraguay and Busan, South Korea before moving to Colorado where she began her formal training with the concertmaster of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and the Minnesota Orchestra. She received her Bachelor of Music at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Master of Music at Indiana University, and Advanced Music Studies certificate at Carnegie Mellon University.

A native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Will McVay is a percussionist and educator. Will spent the last three years in Boston, MA, where he earned a Master of Music with Honors from New England Conservatory. Will received a Bachelor of Music from the University of Southern California, during which he studied with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Section Percussionist and its Principal Timpanist. An avid performer of new music, Will attended Tanglewood Music Center twice where he premiered pieces including operas, brass ensemble, percussion ensemble, and mixed chamber ensembles.



Anna Bishop is the daughter of VSO section violinist Lesa McCoy Bishop, now in her thirty-first year with the VSO, and the late Tim Bishop, who was an integral member of the Virginia Symphony's percussion section for thirty years. She was raised in Virginia Beach and attended the Governor's School for the Arts. She holds a B.M. from Virginia Commonwealth University and attended the graduate program at Chicago College of Performing Arts on scholarship. She has performed at several prestigious festivals and has been a member of the Richmond Symphony, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and Opera on the James, and continues to perform with the Williamsburg Symphony and Williamsburg Opera.



## Coming Up January 24th at Ferguson

In January the VSO's Classic Series will welcome our second guest conductor of the season, Douglas Boyd. Under his direction, the program will include:

Stravinsky: Fireworks

Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending

Ravel: Tzigane

Berlioz: Symphonic Fantastique

Glasgow-born conductor Douglas Boyd enjoyed a stellar career as a world-renowned oboist, before stepping away after 21 years to begin an international career as conductor. Currently,



Boyd is Music Director of the L'Orchestre de Chambre de Paris as well as Artistic Director of the summer opera festival, Garsington Opera, in Buckinghamshire, England. Boyd has conducted all the BBC Orchestras, as well as orchestras throughout Europe, Australia, and the United States. For his debut performances in Hampton Roads, Boyd conducts Hector Berlioz' Symphonic Fantastique, a romantic symphonic portrayal of the gifted artist's challenges with unrequited love.

Violinist Elena Urioste will be featured in the concert. For her, the year 2019 has brought a shout-out from New York's WQXR-FM as one of an elite group of classical artists commanding attention. On its website the station profiles and pictures its "19 for 19," described as "a group of artists we love that includes long-time heroes, established favorites and newcomers set for stardom."

Meet the artists and discover the orchestra experience from a new perspective during Behind the Notes, a pre-concert talk hosted by guest conductor Douglas Boyd. The talk begins one hour before the concert.

## Berlioz' Symphony Fantastique

The symphony tells the story of an artist's self-destructive passion for a beautiful woman. The story is a self-portrait of its composer.

In 1827, the 23-year-old Hector Berlioz attended a performance of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Harriet Smithson, a charismatic Irish actress, was playing Ophelia. Berlioz was smitten and wrote her an impassioned letter – Smithson did not reply. Undeterred, he continued to bombard her with messages but she left Paris without making contact.

The composer had to find an outlet for his obsessive love and that was music. He formed the idea of a "fantastic symphony" portraying an episode in the life of an artist who is constantly haunted by the vision of the perfect, unattainable woman. Central to the work is the "idée fixe" ("fixed idea"), a recurring theme of rising longing and falling despair – a depiction of gripping obsession and Romanticism.

Symphonic Fantastique is cast in five movements: the first a dream, the second a ball where the artist is haunted by the sight of his beloved. After a country scene, the fourth movement slips into nightmare: "Convinced that his love is spurned, the artist poisons himself with opium," explained Berlioz.

Now everything descends into the thrillingly horrific Dream Of A Witches' Sabbath, which weaves in the medieval Dies Irae plainchant. The artist's perfect beloved transforms into a whore and is cast into Hell (symbolically, perhaps, for Smithson was rumoured to be having an affair with her manager at the time).

Smithson realised she might be the inspiration for it. Intrigued, she agreed to meet the composer and was blown away by the force of his emotion. Despite neither speaking the other's language, Harriet and Hector married on October 3, 1833. Happy ever after? Sadly, no – the obsession faded and they divorced seven years later.

**Holiday Pops**  
**Friday, December 13 at 8PM**  
**at the Ferguson Center**

Join the VSO for the must-see holiday tradition of the season – Holiday Pops! There’s no better way to lift your spirits than with seasonal songs and traditional carols delivered in full sound and spectacle by the Virginia Symphony, the inspirational voices of Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus, and special guests. Holiday Pops will have all the magical elements you’ve come to expect — high energy, familiar carols, and lots of holiday warmth! And we’ll even throw in a surprise or two! We can’t wait to celebrate

Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Robert Shoup, chorusmaster



For tickets to any performance call 757-892-6366  
For all details and concert information visit [www.virginiasympphony.org](http://www.virginiasympphony.org)

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