THE FREDERICKSBURG SYMPHONY

"BRIDGING A GREAT COMMUNITY WITH GREAT MUSIC"

2023-2024 SEASON GRAND OPENING!

-October Masterworks-



DR. KEVIN P. BARTRAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Brian Balmages, guest conductor

Sponsored by Mary Wynn and Charles McDaniel

Friday, October 20, 2023
Lifepoint Auditorium 7:30 p.m.

Block of complimentary student tickets sponsored by Tommy Mitchell

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Message from the Music Director



Welcome to the FSO's third season! We've been working hard to prepare four incredible concerts this year, and I'm excited to open the season with "Halloween Classics." Spooky music today is generally limited to cinematic or gaming special effects, but classical music is filled with great examples of the Halloween spirit. Tonight we'll feature four of the very best, culminating in the massive "Symphonie Fantastique" by Hector Berlioz.

We're joined tonight by our good friend, composer Brian Balmages. Brian wrote a piece for the Fredericksburg City Schools, and my own group from James Monroe HS will join forces with the FSO to perform the world premiere of "Ode to a Joyride."

We can't thank you enough for supporting your hometown symphony. Your generous donations make this all possible. A special thank you to Mary Wynn and Charles McDaniel for sponsoring tonight's concert. Also, check out our new online Symphony Store! Samples and links can be found in the lobby. And remember—a percentage of all purchases supports the FSO.

We hope you enjoy our Halloween Classics tonight. Don't miss out on ticket sales for our Holiday Pops on December 15. Tickets go on sale for Symphony Supporters on November 6 and November 13 for the general public. On behalf of the staff and musicians of the FSO, we want to thank our great Board of Directors, our Symphony Supporters, and the superb staff of Lifepoint Auditorium for their continued support.

Kevin P. Bartram

Dr. Kevin P. Bartram, Music Director
Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra

Thank you to the Chancellor HS orchestra and Michele Kucic for their pre-concert performance in the lobby tonight! Look for other school groups to perform before upcoming FSO concerts.

PROGRAM

Danse Macabre ..... Camille Saint-Saëns (1874)

Night on Bald Mountain ..... Modest Mussorgsky, arr. Rimsky-Korsakov (1867)

Ode to a Joyride ..... Brian Balmages (World Premiere)
Brian Balmages, conductor
James Monroe HS Orchestra, guest performers

INTERMISSION

Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 ..... Edvard Grieg (1875)
Brian Balmages, conductor

I. Morning Mood
II. Aase's Death
IV. In the Hall of the Mountain King

Symphonie Fantastique ..... Hector Berlioz (1831)
I. Visions and passions
IV. The procession to the stake
V. The Witches' sabbath

Use of recording devices is prohibited.

FSO PERSONNEL

VIOLIN I
Robyn Bauer
Concertmaster
-The Sheldon Lampert Concertmaster Chair-
Kelsey Payne
Assoc. Concertmaster
Dina Felts
Rachel Pitts
Marissa Resmini
Charles Stout
Peter Wong
Kathy Buchanan

VIOLIN II
Nathan Wisniewski *-Principal*
Chris Dixon
Carly Steenstra
Michael Sienkowski
Michele Kucic
Tia Hederer Iverson
Alexander Romanoff
(FSO Student Intern)

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Laura O'Konski *-Ass't Principal*
Benjamin Pereyra
Rob Leong
Kaylee Payne
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Jilleen Giroux Read
Cynthia Dement

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Anna Miller
Debra Anker
Anna Henke
Christine Hartigan
Jacob Dean
Lucas Miller
Hannah Gould

BASS
Ayça Kartari *-Principal*
Raymond Irving *-Ass't Principal*
Zachary Smith
Alex Rodriguez
Bryan Haderlie

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Marla Snyder *-Principal*
Deb Clare

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Katie Highfill

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Mary McClain *-Principal*
Laurel Siberts

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-The Mary Wynn Richmond McDaniel Principal Clarinet Chair-
Tony Moran
Timmy Johnson
(FSO Student Intern)

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Jarrett Rodriguez*-Assoc. Principal*
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-The Tessa and William Pou Principal Trumpet Chair-
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The FSO Intern Program

In 2023-24, we are excited to inaugurate the FSO's Intern Program. Designed to offer performance opportunities for high school students considering a career in music, students will rehearse and perform concerts with the FSO. Students are nominated by their high school teachers and must audition directly for Maestro Bartram. We are excited to host two interns for tonight's performance.

Danse macabre, Op. 40
Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

While he would have preferred to be remembered for his piano concertos or symphonies, today, Camille Saint-Saëns' best-known works are programmatic—music accompanied by a story or narrative. Given his fondness for abstract music, Saint-Saëns might well be chagrined. In his memoirs, he wrote, "Music is something besides a source of sensuous pleasure and keen emotion … He who does not get absolute pleasure from a simple series of well-constructed chords, beautiful only in their arrangement, is not really fond of music."

Saint-Saëns originally composed *Danse macabre* as a song with text from a poem by Henri Cazalis (1840-1909). The text features lurid images of skeletons dancing on their own graves, tempting the living to join them in an inexorable Totentanz (Death Dance). Two years later, Saint-Saëns arranged *Danse Macabre* for orchestra, featuring the first violin. Saint-Saëns also spotlighted the xylophone, rarely used in the orchestra at that time, to represent the clattering of bones. Audiences at the premiere were also disturbed by the morbid references to the *Dies irae*, a sequence from the Mass for the Dead, and the solo violin's repeated sounding of the tritone, a harsh interval known since medieval times as *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music). Despite the initial negative reaction, *Danse Macabre* has become a staple of programmatic repertoire, and has made its way into popular culture.

Saint-Saëns included an excerpt of the text on the front of his manuscript score:

"Zig, zig, zig, Death in a cadence
Striking with his heel a tomb,
Death at midnight plays a dance-tune,
Zig, zig, zag, on his violin.

The winter wind blows, and the night is dark;
Moans are heard in the linden-trees.
Through the gloom white skeletons pass,
Running and leaping in their shrouds.

Zig, zig, zig, each one is frisking;
The bones of the dancers are heard to clatter –
But Sst! All of a sudden they quit the round,
They push forward, they fly; the cock has crowed!"

© *Elizabeth Schwartz*

Night on Bald Mountain

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881), arr. Rimsky-Korsakov

Over time, Modest Mussorgsky has acquired a reputation as the wild man of Russian music — a notion that is understandable if not entirely deserved. It is certainly reinforced by the thundering climaxes and raw emotion we hear in his music. But while the mysterious Mussorgsky seemed to shun the conservatory, training as a composer primarily through personal association with other composers and independent study, he was well-born and musically disciplined. If his compositions are moody and steeped in Russian folk tradition, that description could fit the music of many of his peers. Still, Mussorgsky's voice is well-nigh unmistakable, especially in the brooding, innovative harmonies we hear in *A Night on Bald Mountain* and his other major compositions, such as his opera *Boris Godunov.*

Led by his passions and ardent in his beliefs, Mussorgsky left a relatively small body of work, some of it remaining unfinished. All of it is marked by high drama, dark textures and the bold harmonies that Mussorgsky's colleagues, including Rimsky-Korsakov, judged as excitingly expressive but raw. The exposed emotion and vividness of Mussorgsky's expression suggests a visual component in almost everything he wrote. In *A Night on Bald Mountain* we can almost see the violence of the wind.

Composed in 1867, when Mussorgsky was still in his twenties, *A Night on Bald Mountain* is early Mussorgsky and vintage subject matter: a tone poem depicting a witches' Sabbath occurring on St. John's Eve, the very night (June 23) when he completed the work to his evident satisfaction. Mussorgsky recycled some of its musical materials in the opera-ballet Mlada and the opera *The Fair at Sorochyntsi*, but *A Night on Bald Mountain* was never heard during the composer's lifetime.

The version of the tone poem that has achieved popularity among today's concert audiences is an arrangement that Rimsky based on Mussorgsky's music in Sorochintsy Fair. It received its concert premiere in St. Petersburg in 1886, five years after Mussorgsky's death, and achieved immediate success. In the West, our indelible images of the windswept Bald Mountain are derived from the vivid collaboration between Leopold Stokowski and the Disney studios in the animated classic *Fantasia* (1940).

There is much more to the eerie content of this tone poem than just Mussorgsky's characteristically vivid tone-painting of a craggy peak at night in bad weather. He larded his score with bone chilling elements, including the sinister roll of the bass drum and scary descending phrases that slither like serpents. In fact, the composer's four-part structure for this tone poem begins with [1] "an underground noise of inhuman voices. Appearance of the Spirits of Darkness followed by an appearance of Satan and [2] his adoration. [3] A Black Mass. [4] Joyful dancing of the Witches' Sabbath." With the tolling of a church bell, the darkness is finally dispersed.

Interestingly, the Black Mass section originally included a parody of a Russian Orthodox chant that Mussorgsky's contemporary audiences in Russia would have recognized immediately – a shocking compositional strategy much like the bold religious parodies Berlioz worked into his *Symphonie Fantastique.* Rimsky deleted the references, but *A Night on Bald Mountain* still chills us to the bone, especially on Halloween.

© *Michael Clive*

Ode to a Joyride (World Premiere)

Brian Balmages

As part of a residency with the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra, I was doing an outreach program with multiple orchestras in the Fredericksburg City Schools, especially Walker-Grant Middle School and James Monroe High School. During a combined rehearsal with younger players who were playing my *A Beethoven Lullaby* I joked around with them how they wanted to rush the phrases so much that I was going to write a piece called *The Great Beethoven Race*. They all insisted that I should do it, we had a great laugh, and then went back to work taking the time to allow the phrases to come to life. After a weekend making music with both middle and high school students in the area, and culminating with a performance of the Fredericksburg Symphony of my 18-minute work *Through Waterless Places*, I felt a lot of gratitude for all the opportunities throughout the residency. And I thought that was it…

Needless to say "The Great Beethoven Race" would not leave my head. And finally, after tabling the idea for months, I sat down to write what would become *Ode to a Joyride*. This piece takes Beethoven's famous melody and gives it an adrenaline boost akin to rolling down the window and turning up the volume. Musicians get to experience the melody in a completely new way while having a lot of fun in the process!

Ode to a Joyride is dedicated to Kevin Bartram, conductor of the Fredericksburg Symphony, and the Fredericksburg City Schools orchestra programs.

© Brian Balmages (2023)

Peer Gynt Suite No. 1

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), a Norwegian composer of the Romantic era, is best known for his enduring and evocative music inspired by the landscapes and folk traditions of Norway. His *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*, based on Henrik Ibsen's play of the same name, is a collection of captivating orchestral pieces that showcase Grieg's mastery of melody, colorful orchestration, and ability to capture the essence of the Norwegian spirit.

The *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1* consists of four movements, (three of which are performed tonight) each representing a different scene from Ibsen's play. Grieg's intention was not only to create incidental music for the theater production but also to craft standalone orchestral pieces that would evoke the atmosphere and emotions of the original narrative.

The suite opens with the famous "Morning Mood," a tranquil and serene piece that transports the listener to the beauty of a Norwegian sunrise. The music gently unfolds with delicate melodies played by the flutes and oboes, accompanied by shimmering strings. Grieg's use of soft dynamics and a steady pulse creates a sense of tranquility and awakening, capturing the peacefulness of a new day dawning.

The second movement, "The Death of Åse," is a poignant and emotional piece that reflects the sorrow and grief of the play. Grieg's use of dark and mournful melodies, accompanied by somber strings and melancholic brass solos, creates a powerful and deeply moving atmosphere. The music ebbs and flows with a sense of longing, portraying the loss and tragedy within the narrative.

The suite concludes with the exuberant and triumphant "In the Hall of the Mountain King." This iconic movement depicts Peer Gynt's (based on a real-life character from Norway) encounter with the troll king and his frenzied pursuit through the caverns. Grieg's use of menacing melodies, building tension, and dynamic orchestration creates a thrilling and dramatic atmosphere. As the music escalates, the full orchestra unleashes a torrent of sound, capturing the chaos and intensity of the scene.

Edvard Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1* remains a beloved masterpiece in the classical repertoire, enchanting audiences with its melodic beauty, dramatic storytelling, and the timeless allure of Norwegian folk traditions. It stands as a testament to Grieg's enduring legacy as a composer and his profound contribution to the world of music.

© *CantonSymphony.org*

Symphonie Fantastique (1830)

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

As a young composer, virtually unknown outside the music field, Hector Berlioz fell head-over-heels in love with the Irish actress Harriet Smithson, whom he had never met. He wrote her impassioned letters, and finally composed this symphony. Requesting that his program notes accompany performances of the work, we include them here:

> A young musician of morbid sensitivity and ardent imagination poisons himself with opium in a moment of despair caused by frustrated love. The dose of narcotic, while too weak to cause his death, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by the strangest of visions, in which his experiences, feelings and memories are translated in his feverish brain into musical thoughts and images. His beloved becomes for him a melody and like an idée fixe [literally, "fixed idea"], which he meets and hears everywhere.

I. Daydreams, passions

He remembers first the uneasiness of spirit, the indefinable passion, the melancholy, the aimless joys he felt even before seeing his beloved; then the explosive love she suddenly inspired in him, his delirious anguish, his fits of jealous fury, his returns of tenderness, his religious consolations.

II. A ball

He meets again his beloved in a ball during a glittering fête. *(Not performed tonight.)*

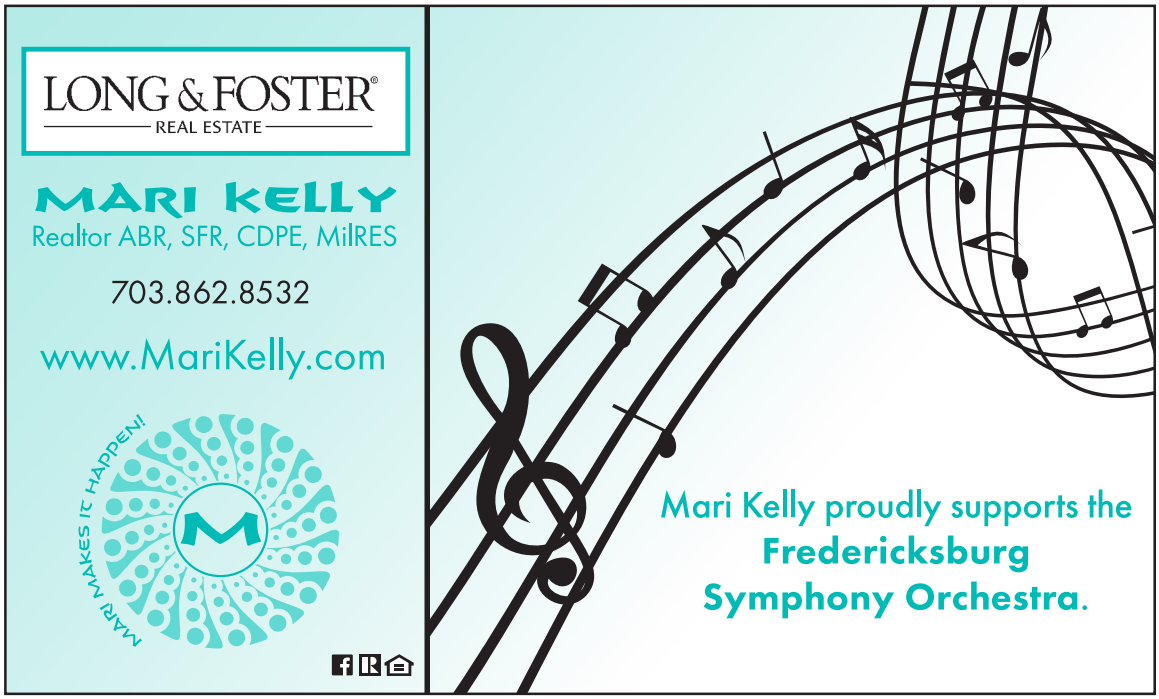
IV. March to the scaffold

He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned to death and led to execution. The procession advances to the sound of a march that is sometimes somber and wild, and sometimes brilliant and solemn, in which a dull sound of heavy footsteps follows without transition the loudest outbursts. At the end, the idée fixe reappears for a moment like a final thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

V. Dream of a witches' sabbath

He sees himself at a witches' sabbath, in the midst of a hideous gathering of shades, sorcerers and monsters of every kind who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, outbursts of laughter; distant shouts which seem to be answered by more shouts. The beloved melody appears once more, but has now lost its noble and shy character; it is now no more than a vulgar dance-tune, trivial and grotesque: it is she who is coming to the sabbath… Roars of delight at her arrival… She joins the diabolical orgy… The funeral knell tolls, burlesque parody of the Dies Irae. The dance of the witches. The dance of the witches combined with the Dies Irae.

© Rueben Blundell, College Orchestra Directors Association



Maestro Kevin Bartram



Dr. Bartram has done it all in the field of music: celebrated conductor of both orchestras and bands, author, researcher, and guest speaker. With over 30 years' experience directing groups from the high school to college and professional ranks, he has a track record of producing extraordinary results.

His high school groups were among the finest in the nation, earning a Grammy Signature Award in 2001 for Top 100 Program in the United States and an Exemplary Music Program Award from the Maryland Music Educators Association. Consistently earning Superior Ratings at Festivals, his full symphony orchestra won seven Gold Medals in eight years performing Grade VI literature (professional level). There, he also founded and directed the Maryland Wind Symphony, which performed for the state MMEA Conference. At the University of Mary Washington (2002-2020), he conducted the UMW Philharmonic Orchestra and taught courses in music education.

In 2004, he created the Philharmonic Celebrity Series, which annually brought in world-class artists to perform with the college-community orchestra here in Fredericksburg. Artists included Itzhak Perlman, Renee Fleming, Sir James Galway, Joshua Bell, Kenny Rogers, Michael Feinstein, Tony Bennett, the Canadian Brass, Judy Collins, Nadya Salerno-Sonnenberg, Jose Carreras, Marvin Hamlisch, Kristin Chenoweth, and Paul Anka. He also added guest narrators including LeVar Burton and Henry Winkler. In 2010, Bartram was honored as a semi-finalist in the American Prize for orchestral conducting, and the UMW Philharmonic was also honored in orchestral performance. In 2011, he produced and directed "A Fiddler's Holiday" with guest artist Jay Ungar and the Family Band, which became a national PBS Holiday pledge show. In 2006, he took the Philharmonic on the first of its five European tours, and in 2018, the group was the featured performer at the College Orchestra Directors Association's National Conference in Los Angeles.

Maestro Bartram became President of the College Orchestra Directors Association in 2017, after having served as the organization's first National Development Director, Vice-President, and President-elect. He has also served the Fredericksburg community in several capacities. In 2010, he joined the Arts Commission, eventually becoming Chairman, where he founded the Via Colori arts festival and led the effort to establish an Arts and Cultural District in Fredericksburg. He also served on the EDA Advisory Committee and as a member of the Rappahannock Rotary.

As a writer, Bartram has published several national articles on teaching and conducting, and recently completed a book entitled "Great Teachers: Exploring Excellence in Education." Based on 15 years of observation and research, the book profiles and analyzes the technique of America's most iconic teachers across a wide spectrum of disciplines. The book, which recently won the National Book Award (gold medal) from the Non-Fiction Authors Association, was published by New Forums Press in 2022 (available on Amazon) and is a professional development book for K-12 educators as well as college education students.

After 30+ years in the classroom, Bartram returned to his roots as a K-12 teacher…in the Fredericksburg City Schools. Seeking to give back to the community, he joined the staff at James Monroe High School and Walker-Grant Middle School as orchestra director in the Fall of 2021. He has a Bachelor of Music Education from Northwestern University, a Masters of Music in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a Doctor of Music Education from Shenandoah Conservatory. He and his wife Connie (an elementary school music teacher) live in Spotsylvania with their two boys, Nicholas and Willie.

Brian Balmages



Brian Balmages is known worldwide as a composer and conductor who equally spans the worlds of orchestral, band, and chamber music. His music has been performed by groups ranging from professional symphony orchestras to elementary schools in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Sydney Opera House, Toronto Centre for the Arts, and many more. He is a recipient of the A. Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association, won the 2020 NBA William D. Revelli Composition Contest with his work Love and Light, and was awarded the inaugural James Madison University Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Visual and Performing Arts. In the same year, he was commissioned by his other alma mater, the University of Miami, to compose music for the inauguration of the institution's 6th president, Dr. Julio Frenk. His music was also performed as part of the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service, which was attended by both President Obama and Vice President Biden.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys regular engagements with all-state and regional ensembles as well as university and professional groups throughout the world. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, Maryborough Music Conference (Australia), College Band Directors Conference, American School Band Directors Association National Conference, numerous state ASTA conferences, Teatro dell'Aquila (Italy), and others. He is an elected member of the American Bandmasters Association and has taught instrumental conducting at Towson University where he also served as Assistant Director of Bands and Orchestras. Currently, he is Director of MakeMusic Publications and Digital Education for Alfred and MakeMusic.

James Monroe HS Advanced Orchestra



The JMHS Advanced Orchestra is one of three orchestras at James Monroe HS in the city of Fredericksburg. Dr. Bartram joined the faculty in the Fall of 2021 to lead the orchestra program at both JMHS and Walker-Grant Middle School. Under his direction, the JMHS orchestra has earned Superior Ratings all three years at Spring Orchestra Competitions. The JMHS Orchestra will join with Walker-Grant MS to perform their own Halloween concert on Thursday, Oct. 26 at 7pm at James Monroe HS. The concert will feature a costume parade for children. This concert is free and open to the public.



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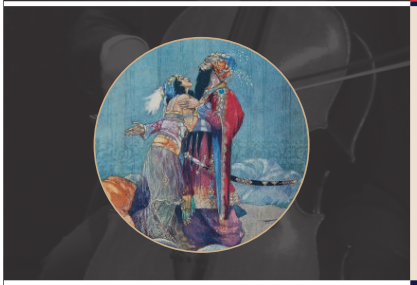
2023-2024 SEASON



Holiday Pops- "Home for the Holidays"

December 15, 7:30 pm Lifepoint Auditorium

Ticket sales:
Symphony Supporters - Nov. 6 | General public - Nov. 13



Valentine's Special- "Romantic Fantasies"

February 9, 7:30 pm Lifepoint Auditorium

Ticket sales:
Symphony Supporters - Jan. 2 | General public - Jan. 8



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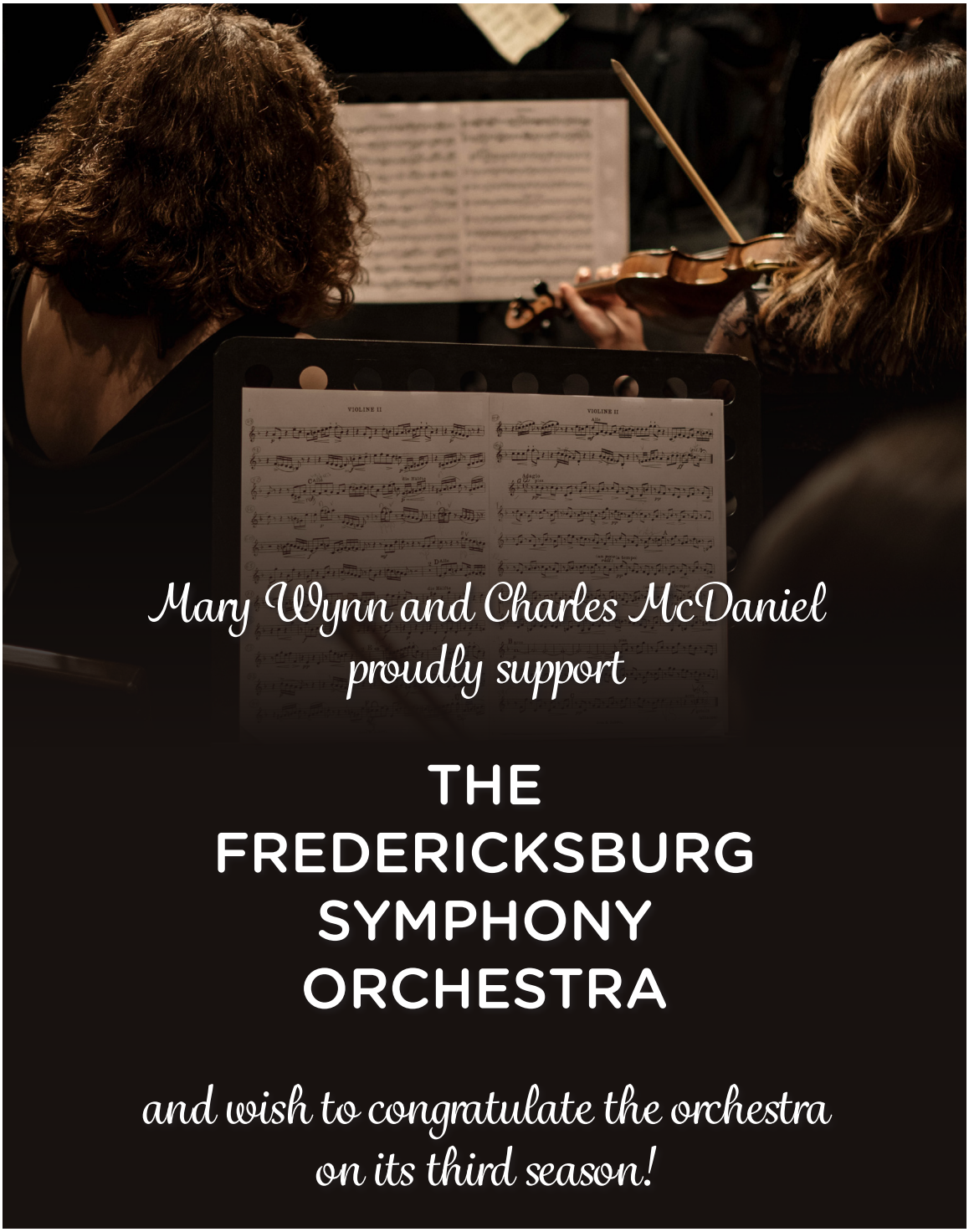
Instrument Petting Zoo 6:00 pm

May 24, 7:30 pm Lifepoint Auditorium

Ticket sales:
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For more information, visit

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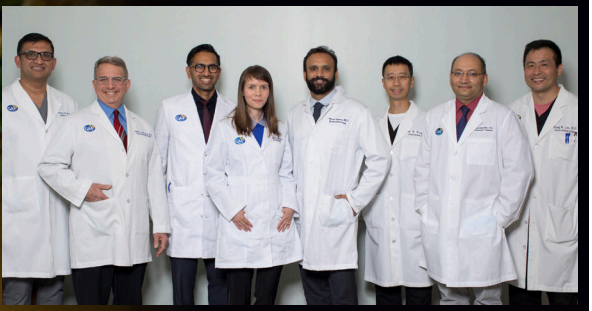
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Peter W.K. Wong, MD, FACP, FACG

Northern Virginia Magazine



Medical Education: University of Virginia

Internship: Walter Reed Army Medical Center

GI Fellowship: Brooke Army Medical Center

Board Certified in Gastroenterology

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Did you know? Approximately 55% of this season's operating budget comes from ticket sales. The remaining 45% comes from the generosity of Symphony Supporters. Truly, YOU make performances like tonight possible. If you are not yet a Symphony Supporter, please consider joining like-minded community members to ensure the future of this great orchestra. All donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for your ongoing support, and we look forward to welcoming you back to Lifepoint Auditorium on Friday, December 15 for Holiday Pops - "Home for the Holidays."

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