2026-27 SEASON

THE FREDERICKSBURG SYMPHONY

RISING STARS

The Sound of Tomorrow, Performing Today

GRAND OPENING

SYMPHONIC FLASHBANG!

DR. KEVIN P. BARTRAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Sponsored by Mary Wynn Richmond and Charles G. McDaniel

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Monroe Auditorium • 7:30 p.m.

FREDERICKSBURGSYMPHONY.ORG



Message from the Music Director



Welcome to the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra's 2026–27 Season of Rising Stars!

We wanted to begin our sixth season with a program that shows exactly what a live orchestra can do: tell a story, unleash tremendous physical energy, and fill Monroe Auditorium with sound you can feel.

Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony begins with a declaration of Fate and spends the next forty minutes wrestling with it. Tchaikovsky described the work as a "musical confession of the soul," and that is how we have approached it—not simply as a display of orchestral power, but as a deeply human journey through struggle, memory, imagination, and hard-won joy.

After intermission, Copland takes us to the American West. The Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo bring us wide-open spaces, loneliness, humor, Saturday-night dancing, and the irresistible drive of Hoe-Down. Then Tchaikovsky returns with the 1812 Overture. Its bells, blazing brass, percussion, and great closing hymn make it one of the most spectacular finales in the repertoire—and an ideal conclusion to Symphonic Flashbang!

I am proud of the preparation, stamina, and commitment our musicians have brought to this concert. I am equally grateful to Audra Bielke, Nora McIntire, our Board, and everyone who works behind the scenes. A special thank-you goes to Mary Wynn Richmond and Charles Griffin McDaniel for sponsoring tonight's performance. We are also deeply grateful to Dr. Marci Catlett and Fredericksburg City Schools for hosting the FSO.

Most of all, thank you. Your attendance and support allow the FSO to bring exceptional live music to our region while expanding student access and community programs. Our season continues October 24 with Classical's Greatest Hits, featuring violinist Timothy Chooi. Tonight, however, we begin with Fate, the American West, and a finale built to shake the room. Enjoy the concert!

Kevin P. Bartram

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

Symphonic Flashbang!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 • 7:30 P.M.

Monroe Auditorium

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1877–78)

I. Andante sostenuto — Moderato con anima
II. Andantino in modo di canzona
III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato — Allegro
IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco

INTERMISSION

Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo

Aaron Copland (1942)

I. Buckaroo Holiday
II. Corral Nocturne
III. Saturday Night Waltz
IV. Hoe-Down

1812 Festival Overture, Op. 49

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1880)

Use of recording devices is prohibited.
Please silence phones and be sensitive to others, as screen light can be distracting during the performance.

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SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

VIOLIN I

Fiona Studebaker — Concertmaster
Rachel Pitts — Assoc. Concertmaster
Luz Recinos
Justin Daniels
Charles Stout
Kathy Buchanan
Peter Wong
Seth Bixler

VIOLIN II

John-Rine Zabanal — Principal
Zachary Casebolt — Ass't Principal
Chris Dixon
Carly Steenstra
Daniel Song
Michael Sienkowski
Michele Kucic
Linda Shapanka

VIOLA

Sandy Goldie — Principal
Laura O'Konski — Assistant Principal
Benjamin Pereyra
Alyssa Warcup
Kaylee Payne
Jilleen Read
Brenda Johnson
Marta Perrine

CELLO

John Keane — Principal
Alex Corley — Assistant Principal
Eli Coe
Joan Wolfe
Christine Hartigan
Anna Scully
Christine Abeel
Jacob Dean
Andreas Gould

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Ray Irving — Principal
Zachary W. Smith
Jack Penland
Pablo Miranda
Bryan Haderlie
Joey Lane

FLUTE

Alison Detmer — Principal
Deborah Clare

PICCOLO

Sarah Haines

OBOE

Amelia Bixler — Principal
Brendan Shirk

ENGLISH HORN

Emma Shields

CLARINET

Jason Russo — Principal
Tony Moran

BASS CLARINET

Chanse Morris

BASSOON

Walter Wynn — Principal
Jarrett Rodriguez — Ass't Principal
Karen O'Donoghue

TRUMPET

Pat Neidich — Principal
Zachary D. Smith
Mike Huffman

HORN

Damien Bollino — Co-Principal
Ryan Scott — Co-Principal
Christopher Short
Kristin Chamberlin

TROMBONE

Ed Steenstra — Principal
Douglas Haas

BASS TROMBONE

Austin Fairley

TUBA

Gary Carper

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Andrew Sheloski
David Vita

TIMPANI

Nora McIntire — Principal

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Anastasia Pike

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Program Notes

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

I have wanted the FSO to take on Tchaikovsky's Fourth for several years. It asks nearly everything of an orchestra: power, precision, endurance, and the courage to let the emotion speak without holding back. But beneath all of that is a story every listener understands—the struggle to find joy when life keeps interrupting it. That is what I hope you will hear tonight.
-K. Bartram

Tchaikovsky wrote his Fourth Symphony during one of the most unsettled periods of his life. In 1877, his disastrous marriage collapsed almost immediately, and he left Russia exhausted and deeply shaken. At the same time, a remarkable relationship was beginning. Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy widow and passionate admirer of his music, became his patron and confidante. They exchanged hundreds of letters but agreed never to meet. Her support gave Tchaikovsky both financial security and an unusually receptive listener, and he dedicated the new symphony to her simply as "my best friend."

To von Meck, Tchaikovsky offered an unusually detailed account of the symphony's emotional design. He called the opening fanfare "the germ of the entire symphony"—Fate, an inexorable force standing between the individual and happiness. The symphony is not a literal story, however. Tchaikovsky described it as a "musical confession of the soul," a sequence of feelings that music could express more powerfully than words.

The first movement opens with the Fate motto in horns and bassoons, reinforced by the brass. Listen for that sound whenever the music seems close to stability: it returns as an interruption, a reminder that happiness is never secure. Against it, Tchaikovsky sets a restless principal theme in a lilting 9/8 meter and a more graceful, dreamlike second subject. The music repeatedly reaches toward warmth or triumph, only to be pulled back. At the movement's climax, Fate returns with overwhelming force. Even the apparent victory of the closing pages feels driven rather than secure.

The second movement turns inward. Tchaikovsky compared it to sitting alone at evening, when a book falls from the hand and memories of youth begin to crowd in. The oboe begins a plaintive song that passes through the orchestra, gathering weight before it subsides. The central section briefly stirs the blood, but when the opening mood returns, the same melody feels changed—as memories often do after we have lived with them a little longer.

Then Tchaikovsky clears the stage. In the Scherzo, the strings play pizzicato throughout their principal sections, creating a quicksilver world without sustained tone. Woodwinds enter with rustic, almost tipsy figures; brass and piccolo suggest a military band passing somewhere in the distance. Tchaikovsky called these images 'capricious arabesques'—strange fragments drifting through the mind at the first touch of intoxication. Near the end, all three sound worlds overlap with astonishing lightness and precision.

The finale erupts without hesitation. Its second principal idea is the Russian folk song 'In the Field Stood a Birch Tree,' transformed through sharply contrasting moods. Tchaikovsky imagined a public festival: if we cannot find

Program Notes

joy within ourselves, perhaps we can step among other people and share theirs. Yet the celebration is not an escape. The Fate motto crashes back, and for a moment the entire struggle returns. This time the music regathers itself and answers. The blazing conclusion is not naive happiness; it is joy claimed in full knowledge of hardship.

First performed in Moscow on February 22, 1878, under Nikolai Rubinstein, the Fourth Symphony has become one of Tchaikovsky's defining works. Its power lies in the tension between private confession and public spectacle—the same tension that makes its final victory feel earned.

Program note prepared for the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra. Tchaikovsky quotations and movement descriptions are drawn from his letter to Nadezhda von Meck of February 17/March 1, 1878 (Letter 763, Tchaikovsky Research).

Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

After forty minutes with Tchaikovsky and Fate, I wanted to take you somewhere completely different. Copland's Rodeo does that almost instantly: the horizon opens, the rhythms spring to life, and a very human story begins. There is loneliness here, but also humor, warmth, and a Hoe-Down that never fails to pull an audience forward in its seats.
-K. Bartram

Copland helped create the sound many of us still associate with the American landscape: open intervals, transparent textures, folk material, and music that seems to breathe across enormous distances. Yet Rodeo is not really about scenery. It is about a young woman trying to discover where—and with whom—she belongs.

Picture Burnt Ranch, where a Cowgirl wants to be accepted by the cowboys and noticed by the Head Wrangler. Choreographer Agnes de Mille devised the scenario and danced the Cowgirl herself. Her first meeting with Copland was famously unpromising: they challenged and irritated one another. Yet that frank exchange produced a landmark of American ballet. Rodeo premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House on October 16, 1942, and the response reportedly brought twenty-two curtain calls.

Copland shaped four episodes for the concert hall. Buckaroo Holiday bursts into motion as the Cowgirl tries to prove herself by riding a bucking bronco—with predictably comic results. Listen for the cowboy song 'If He'd Be a Buckaroo by His Trade,' announced most memorably by the trombone.

Corral Nocturne reveals the loneliness beneath the comedy. Spacious phrases surround the Cowgirl as the ranch settles into night. Saturday Night Waltz gathers the community for a dance, but its hesitant opening tells us that she still feels outside the circle. Copland draws on the cowboy song 'Goodbye, Old Paint,' reshaping familiar material into something tender and unmistakably his own.

Hoe-Down changes everything. The Cowgirl returns transformed, and another young cowboy—one who has treated her with kindness—finally sees her. Copland builds the finale from fiddle tunes including 'Bonaparte's Retreat' and 'McLeod's Reel.' The snapping rhythms and headlong orchestral exchanges are irresistible, but the

Program Notes

excitement completes something more personal: the Cowgirl stops trying to become someone else and finds where she belongs.

Program note prepared for the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra. Historical references: Aaron Copland official works catalogue; Los Angeles Philharmonic, Rodeo, program note by Dave Kopplin.

1812 Festival Overture, Op. 49

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

I have always loved the contradiction at the heart of the 1812 Overture. Tchaikovsky doubted its artistic value, yet he created a piece audiences have embraced for generations—and he eventually conducted it more often than any of his other works. The spectacle is undeniable, but what fascinates me is how patiently he earns it: we begin with a prayer, travel through gathering conflict, and only then arrive at the bells and thunder.
-K. Bartram

The overture commemorates Russia's resistance to Napoleon's invasion in 1812. Tchaikovsky composed it in the autumn of 1880 after Nikolai Rubinstein requested a ceremonial work connected with the All-Russian Industrial and Art Exhibition and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Tchaikovsky warned Nadezhda von Meck that it would be 'very loud and noisy' and probably lack artistic merit. Audiences—and eventually the composer himself—were less dismissive.

Tchaikovsky turns history into a sequence of musical symbols. Low strings begin with the Orthodox hymn 'O Lord, Save Thy People,' a solemn prayer that gradually gathers strength. Distant military gestures and increasingly agitated exchanges suggest the approach of conflict. 'La Marseillaise' identifies Napoleon's army, while Russian folk material, including 'At the Gate, at My Gate,' provides a warmer, human counterweight. Neither anthem is historically exact for 1812; Tchaikovsky is giving us a story in sound rather than a documentary.

As the battle intensifies, French and Russian ideas collide. The French anthem gains ground, then fragments and recedes. The famous cannon shots mark the turning of the tide. In the final pages, the opening hymn returns in a massive brass setting, bells ring out, and 'God Save the Tsar' crowns the victory. The effect is overwhelming because we still remember how quietly the journey began.

That journey is the real secret of the overture's appeal. Its soft opening, rising tension, competing themes, and carefully timed returns make the narrative easy to follow even if we know none of the history. The celebrated effects matter because Tchaikovsky makes us wait for them. When the final release arrives, the entire orchestra—and the audience—has earned the right to let loose.

Program note prepared for the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra. Historical reference and Tchaikovsky quotation: Tchaikovsky Research, The Year 1812.

Still to Come This Season



OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 7:30 PM

TICKETS NOW ON SALE

Classical's Greatest Hits

Timothy Chooi, violin

Bach • Mozart • Tchaikovsky



DECEMBER 19, 2026 • 7:30 PM

Christmas Bells Are Ringing

2026 Holiday Pops

With the Stafford Regional Handbell Society



FEBRUARY 13, 2027 • 7:30 PM

George Li, piano

The FSO Rising Stars Series

Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2 • Gershwin: Catfish Row



APRIL 10, 2027 • 3:00 PM

Let's Go on Safari!

2027 FSO Family Series

With wildlife host Jeff Corwin



MAY 22, 2027 • 7:30 PM

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Season Finale

Featuring soloists from the Washington National Opera & Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

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Maestro Kevin Bartram



Conductor, educator, author, and arts advocate — building stronger communities through music.

For more than three decades, Maestro Kevin Bartram has believed that great orchestras do more than perform concerts—they build stronger communities. That philosophy has guided his work as a conductor, educator, author, researcher, and arts advocate throughout a career dedicated to inspiring audiences, developing musicians, and making classical music more accessible and meaningful for all.

In 2021, together with a group of passionate community leaders, Bartram founded the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra. Launching a new orchestra during the height of the pandemic was a bold leap of faith, but the response from the community exceeded every expectation. The orchestra quickly attracted many of the region's finest musicians, and by its second season, performances were regularly selling out the 1,000-seat auditorium.

Today, the Fredericksburg Symphony has become one of the nation's most dynamic new regional orchestras, attracting enthusiastic audiences, expanding community partnerships, and earning a reputation for artistic excellence.

Prior to founding the Fredericksburg Symphony, Bartram served for many years on the faculty of the University of Mary Washington, where he was conductor of the UMW Philharmonic Orchestra and professor of music education. During his tenure, he established the acclaimed Philharmonic Celebrity Series, bringing internationally renowned artists to Fredericksburg and making world-class performances accessible to local audiences.

Featured artists included Itzhak Perlman, Renée Fleming, Sir James Galway, Joshua Bell, Tony Bennett, Michael Feinstein, Kenny Rogers, Canadian Brass, Kristin Chenoweth, Judy Collins, José Carreras, Marvin Hamlisch, Paul Anka, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and many others. Distinguished guest narrators included LeVar Burton and Henry Winkler.

Under his direction, the UMW Philharmonic earned national recognition for artistic excellence. The orchestra toured Europe five times, became the featured collegiate orchestra at the College Orchestra Directors Association National Conference in Los Angeles, and appeared nationally on PBS with A Fiddler's Holiday, a holiday television special featuring Jay Ungar and Molly Mason.

Earlier in his career, Bartram directed nationally recognized public school orchestra programs in Maryland.

Maestro Kevin Bartram

His orchestras consistently earned Superior ratings at festivals and won seven Gold Medals in eight years while performing the highest level (Grade VI) orchestral literature. In recognition of the program's excellence, it received the Grammy Signature Award as one of the Top 100 music programs in the United States and the Maryland Music Educators Association's Exemplary Music Program Award.

During this time, he also founded and conducted the Maryland Wind Symphony, which performed for the Maryland Music Educators Association State Conference.

A respected leader within the profession, Bartram served as President of the College Orchestra Directors Association after previously serving as its first National Development Director, Vice President, and President-Elect. In 2010, he was recognized nationally as a semifinalist for The American Prize in Orchestral Conducting.

Beyond the concert hall, Bartram has devoted much of his career to strengthening the arts within the Fredericksburg region. As Chairman of the Fredericksburg Arts Commission, he helped establish the City's Arts & Cultural District, founded the Via Colori street painting festival, launched the summer concert series now known as Sounds of Summer, helped create the city's public sculpture initiative, and worked to strengthen the role of the arts in economic development.

He has also served on the Fredericksburg Economic Development Authority Advisory Committee and as a member of the Rappahannock Rotary.

As an author and researcher, Bartram has published numerous national articles on music education and conducting. His book, Great Teachers: Exploring Excellence in Education (New Forums Press), is the culmination of more than fifteen years of research examining America's most accomplished educators across a broad range of disciplines. The book has become a valuable professional resource for educators, school leaders, and university teacher preparation programs.

Bartram has guest conducted orchestras, bands, and honor ensembles throughout the United States and abroad. Career highlights include conducting a professional brass band in Argentina, leading performances of Fauré's Requiem at La Madeleine Church in Paris, and working with countless state, regional, and national honor ensembles.

In 2021, Bartram returned to public school teaching, joining Fredericksburg City Schools as orchestra director at James Monroe High School and Walker-Grant Middle School. While continuing his work with the Fredericksburg Symphony, he remains passionate about mentoring young musicians and inspiring the next generation of performers and arts supporters.

His ensembles in Fredericksburg have consistently earned Superior ratings at competitions, and one of the groups performed the world premiere of a work written for them by acclaimed composer Brian Balmages.

Bartram holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Northwestern University, a Master 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 music teacher, live in Spotsylvania County with their two sons, Nicholas and Willie.

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Kevin's personal Maestro's Listening Guide to tonight's symphony — the story behind the piece, and a few moments to listen for — is online now.

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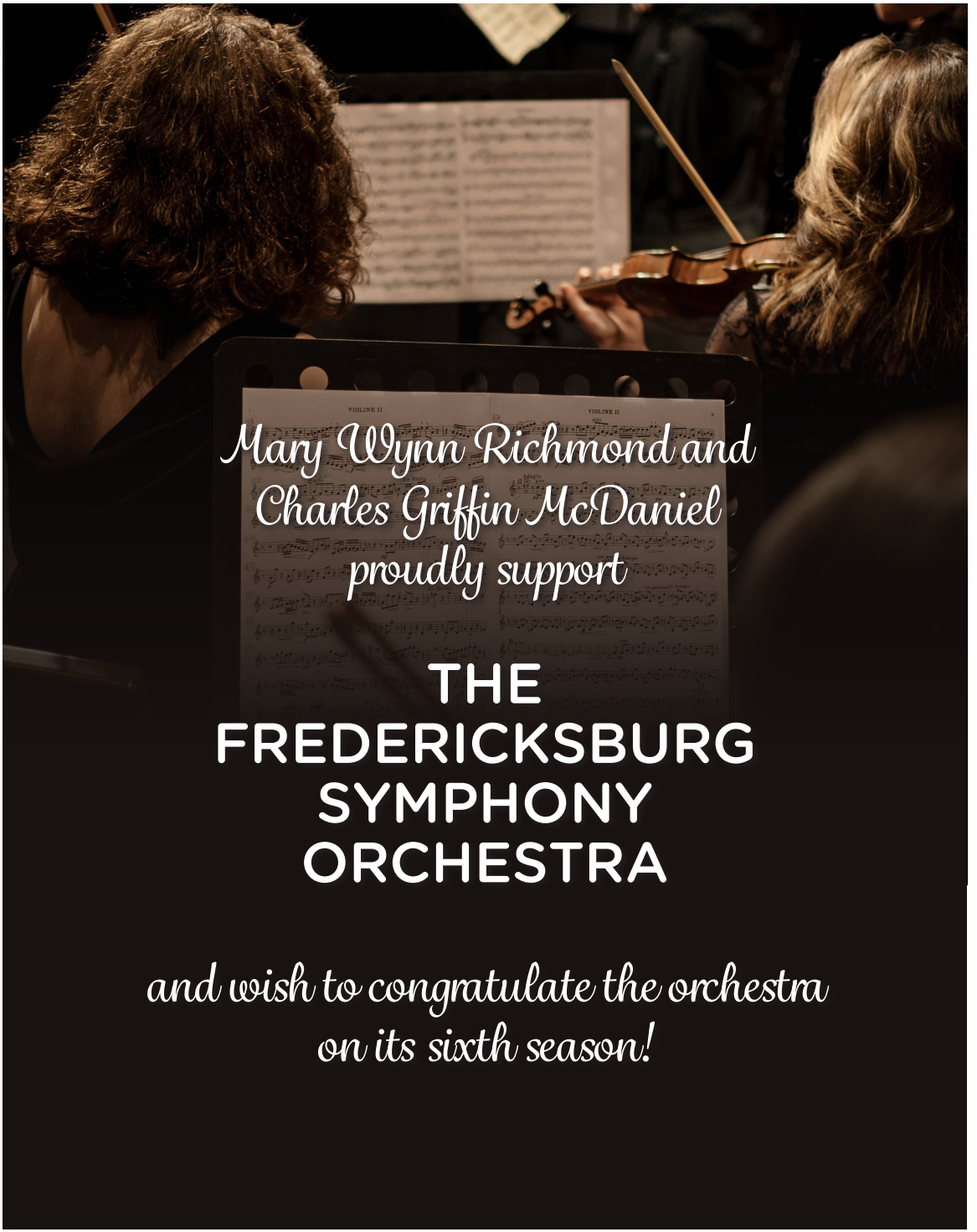
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