THE FREDERICKSBURG SYMPHONY

2026-27 SEASON

RISING STARS

The Sound of Tomorrow, Performing Today

NEW! CLASSICAL MASTERWORKS

CLASSICAL'S GREATEST HITS

TIMOTHY CHOOI, VIOLIN

DR. KEVIN P. BARTRAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Sponsored by Mary Jane and Ron Branscome

Saturday, October 24, 2026

Monroe Auditorium • 7:30 p.m.

FREDERICKSBURGSYMPHONY.ORG



Message from the Music Director



Welcome to Classical's Greatest Hits and the first concert of our new Classical Masterworks!

I created Classical Masterworks for a simple reason. Some of the greatest music ever written calls for a smaller orchestra than the FSO usually fields, so we have never performed it. Bach and Mozart top that list, and tonight is our first step into their world.

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 is played one on a part: eleven musicians, each one a soloist. Mozart's Symphony No. 40 follows with a Classical-sized orchestra and some of the most restless, urgent music he ever wrote. My Listening Guide to the symphony is online.

After intermission, the full orchestra returns, and I am thrilled to welcome Timothy Chooi for Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. Timothy is one of the finest violinists of his generation, and I have been looking forward to this week for a long time. Tchaikovsky wrote the concerto just weeks after the Fourth Symphony we played last month. Same turbulent year, but this time the music sings. Timothy is also giving a masterclass for my students at James Monroe High School, and I can't wait to see what he brings out of them.

My thanks to our musicians, Audra Bielke, Nora McIntire, our Board, and everyone behind the scenes. A special thank-you goes to Mary Jane and Ron Branscome for sponsoring tonight's performance. As always, thank you to our Symphony Supporters. We couldn't do this without you! We are also grateful to Dr. Marci Catlett and Fredericksburg City Schools for hosting the FSO.

Our season continues December 19 with Christmas Bells Are Ringing. Enjoy the concert!



Dr. Kevin P. Bartram

Music Director • Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra

Classical's Greatest Hits

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 7:30 P.M.

Monroe Auditorium

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, BWV 1048

Johann Sebastian Bach (dedicated 1721)

I. [Allegro]
II. Adagio
III. Allegro

Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1788)

I. Molto allegro
II. Andante
III. Menuetto: Allegretto — Trio
IV. Finale: Allegro assai

INTERMISSION

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1878)

Timothy Chooi, violin

I. Allegro moderato
II. Canzonetta: Andante —
III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

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

Timothy Chooi, violin



Internationally acclaimed violinist Timothy Chooi (pronounced "Chewy") is celebrated for his passionate interpretations, emotional depth and dynamic stage presence. Praised for "dazzling the audience with a combination of flawless technique and heartfelt expression" (El Informador, Guadalajara), he has appeared with leading orchestras and at prestigious venues worldwide. Beyond the concert stage, Chooi is recognized as a cultural leader, committed to expanding access to classical music through education, outreach, and digital platforms that have reached millions of viewers worldwide. His artistry reflects the traditional roots of Asia, the elegance of European training and the openness of his North American upbringing—embodying the voice of a 21st-century violinist.

A laureate of some of the world's most distinguished competitions, Chooi won First Prize at the Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition in Hannover, Second Prize at the Queen Elisabeth International Violin Competition in Brussels and the Yves Paternot Prize from Switzerland's Verbier Festival. His career has been supported and mentored by luminaries including Pinchas Zukerman and Anne-Sophie Mutter, whose encouragement has helped shape his path as one of today's leading violinists.

Chooi has collaborated with renowned conductors including Gianandrea Noseda, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Michele Mariotti, Xian Zhang and Pinchas Zukerman. His orchestral partners include the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Belgian National Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Wiener Concert-Verein and Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

He made his solo concerto debut at age 16 with l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal (OSM), launching a career that has since taken him to Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, London's Royal Albert Hall and Suntory Hall in Tokyo.

The 2026–27 season marks a significant milestone in Chooi's career, highlighted by his debuts with the NHK Symphony Orchestra and Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, as well as a major European tour with the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra across Munich, Innsbruck, Paris, Antwerp, Eindhoven, Linz, and Prague. Other highlights from previous seasons include Hong Kong's Generation Next Arts Festival; concerto engagements with the Calgary Philharmonic and other North American orchestras; his appointment as Artistic Partner of Wiener Concert-Verein for the 2025–26 season, including a concert at the Musikverein Wien and performances in France. Festival appearances include the Verbier Festival, Toronto Summer Music Festival and recitals in Vancouver, Brussels, Antwerp, Tokyo, Seoul, Ottawa, and New York City.

Chooi's artistry is widely broadcast and recorded, including collaborations with Anne-Sophie Mutter and Mutter's Virtuosi for Deutsche Grammophon, Medici TV features and appearances on NPO Radio Klassiek (Amsterdam), WQXR (New York), RTBF (Belgium), Swiss Public Radio, CBC Radio Canada, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and Danish Public Radio.

Born in Canada to Chinese-Indonesian parents, Chooi is now Professor of Violin at the University of Ottawa (Canada), where he received the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Award in 2025. His work emphasizes research in violin performance and classical music as a cultural connector, community engagement, accessibility and nurturing the future of the violin as a mentor and teacher.

Timothy Chooi performs on the legendary 1714 "Dolphin" Stradivarius, once played by Jascha Heifetz, generously loaned by the Nippon Music Foundation. He also plays the 1741 "Titan" Guarneri del Gesù (CANIMEX Group, Drummondville, Québec) and a 1761 Landolfi violin (University of Ottawa).

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OCTOBER 24, 2026

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Program Notes

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, BWV 1048

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

This is the first time the FSO has played Bach, and I wanted to start with the purest version of him: eleven players, an animated musical discussion, every line exposed. It is joyful music, fun to play, and it rewards an orchestra that listens to itself. The Brandenburg Concertos are among the summits of the Baroque, and No. 3 may be the most ingenious of the six. Bach builds an entire movement from a handful of notes, then hands that idea to nine equal voices and lets them trade it back and forth. That is why it opens Classical Masterworks. Everything Classical Masterworks stands for, smaller forces, chamber-music listening, and great music we have never had the chance to play, begins here.

-K. Bartram

In 1721, while serving as Kapellmeister at the court of Cöthen, Bach sent a beautifully bound manuscript of six concertos to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg. The dedication was likely a bid for future employment. It brought none, and the Margrave appears never to have performed them. The six works sat largely unknown for more than a century. Today they are among the most celebrated instrumental music of the Baroque.

Each concerto calls for a different combination of instruments, and No. 3 is the most compact and the most unusual. There are no winds and no featured soloist. Instead Bach writes for three violins, three violas, and three cellos, supported by bass and harpsichord. Nine players are divided into three choirs of three, and any one of them may step forward with the theme at any moment.

The opening movement is built from a small, sturdy motive that Bach passes from group to group, splits apart, and reassembles. Listen for the moments when all nine string parts move together in unison, then branch back into independent voices. The effect is less like a soloist against an orchestra than like a lively conversation among equals.

The second movement is one of the great puzzles in Bach's music. He wrote only two chords, marked Adagio. That cadence forms a bridge to the finale, and performers have long debated how much music, if any, should be added in that space.

The finale is a quick, dancing movement in the style of a gigue. Its running figures travel through every section of the ensemble with irresistible momentum, and with only eleven musicians on stage, every one of them is carrying the music forward.

Program note prepared for the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra.

Program Notes

Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Last month we heard Tchaikovsky wrestle with Fate on a grand scale. Mozart does something just as dramatic with a much smaller orchestra. From the first bar, this symphony is restless. It never quite lets you settle. That is what makes it one of Mozart's greatest works: there is not a wasted note, and every idea feeds the tension. Beethoven admired it enough to copy out a passage of the finale in his own sketchbook. I chose it for this program because it carries our season's thread of psychological drama, and because a smaller orchestra lets you hear every line. For the FSO, there is no better first step into Mozart's world.

-K. Bartram

In the summer of 1788, Mozart completed his last three symphonies in roughly six weeks: No. 39 in E-flat, No. 40 in G minor, and No. 41, the "Jupiter." He was living in Vienna under growing financial strain, and no commission or premiere is documented for any of the three. Yet he later revised No. 40 to add clarinets, a change that suggests he expected to hear it performed. Tonight we play that revised version.

Only two of Mozart's symphonies are in a minor key, and both are in G minor. The first movement begins not with a grand chord but with a quiet, agitated accompaniment in the violas. Above it, the violins enter with a sighing, urgent theme that has become one of the most recognizable melodies in classical music. Mozart drives the music forward through long sequences, repeating a figure at rising or falling pitch levels, so that the tension builds without release.

The Andante, in E-flat major, offers a gentler world, though even here the harmony keeps shifting beneath the surface. The Menuetto is anything but a polite court dance. Its accents cut across the meter, giving it a hard, almost defiant edge, while the Trio in G major provides a brief pastoral moment featuring horns and winds.

The finale opens with a rising figure that shoots upward like a rocket. In the development section, Mozart breaks the theme apart with startling harmonic boldness, passing through key after key. The symphony ends as it began, in G minor, with no turn to the major. It is Mozart at his most intense, and it remains one of the touchstones of the Classical era.

For a deeper look, see the Maestro's Listening Guide to Symphony No. 40 at FredericksburgSymphony.org.

Program note prepared for the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra.

Program Notes

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Tchaikovsky wrote this concerto in the same year as the Fourth Symphony, while he was still recovering from one of the worst crises of his life. Where the symphony fights, the concerto sings. It needs a violinist who can do both: handle the fireworks and still make every melody sound like a song. That is exactly what Timothy Chooi does. His tone is warm and singing, his technique is effortless, and he never lets brilliance get in the way of the music. Listen for the soloist's first entrance, which sets the lyrical tone for everything that follows; the cadenza in the middle of the first movement; the muted, intimate voice of the Canzonetta; and the finale, which bursts in like a village dance and never lets up. Having Timothy here is a gift to our audience and to our students.

-K. Bartram

In the spring of 1878, Tchaikovsky was recovering at Clarens, on the shores of Lake Geneva, after the collapse of his marriage. The young violinist Iosif Kotek, a former student, joined him there, and the two played through violin repertoire together. Inspired, Tchaikovsky began a concerto of his own and completed it in about a month.

He was not satisfied with his original slow movement and replaced it with the Canzonetta we hear tonight. The discarded movement survives as Méditation, the first of his three pieces for violin and piano titled Souvenir d'un lieu cher.

The concerto's early life was difficult. Tchaikovsky dedicated it to Leopold Auer, the leading violinist in St. Petersburg, who declined to perform it and considered parts of it unplayable. The premiere finally took place in Vienna in December 1881, with Adolph Brodsky as soloist and Hans Richter conducting. The influential critic Eduard Hanslick attacked it savagely. Brodsky continued to champion the work, and Tchaikovsky transferred the dedication to him. Auer himself later came to perform and teach it.

The first movement opens with a brief orchestral introduction before the soloist enters with a warm, lyrical theme that soon blossoms into brilliant passagework. The movement's cadenza is placed before the recapitulation rather than near the end. The Canzonetta is a song of quiet melancholy, introduced by the muted soloist after a hushed woodwind chorale. It leads without pause into the finale, a whirlwind of Russian dance rhythms and rustic color that pushes the soloist to the limits of virtuosity.

Program note prepared for the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra.

Still to Come This Season



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Maestro Kevin Bartram



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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, and arts advocate.

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 community responded beyond every expectation. By its second season, the FSO was regularly selling out the 1,000-seat auditorium, and it has since become one of the nation's most dynamic new regional orchestras.

For many years, Bartram served on the faculty of the University of Mary Washington as conductor of the UMW Philharmonic Orchestra and professor of music education. He founded the Philharmonic Celebrity Series, which brought Itzhak Perlman, Renée Fleming, Joshua Bell, and many other internationally renowned artists to Fredericksburg. Under his direction, the Philharmonic toured Europe five times and appeared nationally on PBS. Earlier, his Maryland public school orchestras earned the Grammy Signature Award as one of the Top 100 music programs in the United States.

Bartram has served as President of the College Orchestra Directors Association and was a national semifinalist for The American Prize in Orchestral Conducting. As Chairman of the Fredericksburg Arts Commission, he helped establish the City's Arts & Cultural District, founded the Via Colori street painting festival, and launched the summer concert series now known as Sounds of Summer. He is the author of Great Teachers: Exploring Excellence in Education (New Forums Press).

Since 2021, Bartram has also served as orchestra director at James Monroe High School and Walker-Grant Middle School, where his ensembles consistently earn Superior ratings. He holds degrees from Northwestern University, the University of Missouri–Columbia, and Shenandoah Conservatory.

He and his wife, Connie, an elementary music teacher, live in Spotsylvania County with their two sons, Nicholas and Willie.

Read Maestro Bartram's full biography at FredericksburgSymphony.org.

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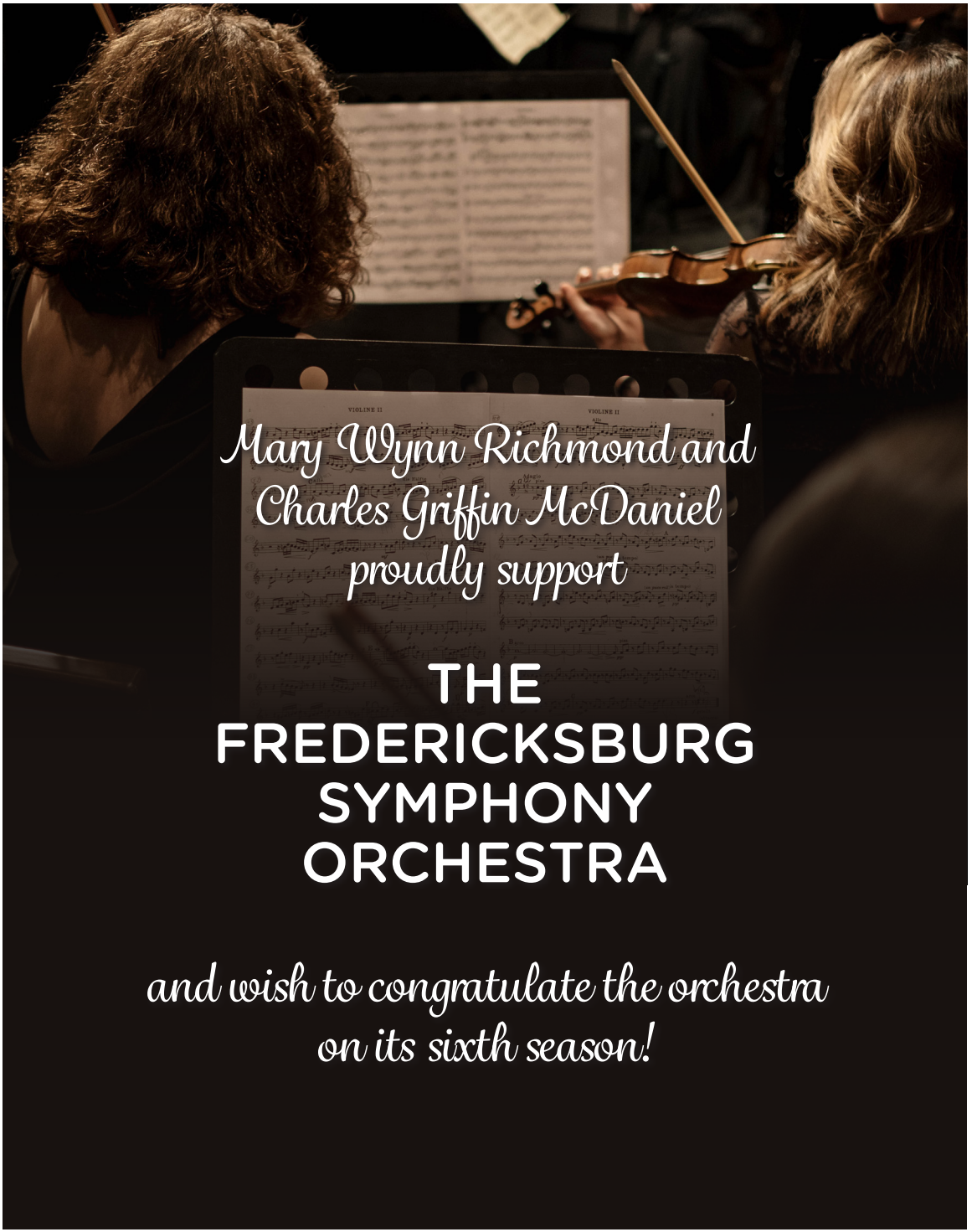
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