

The Aiken Symphony Orchestra Announces 2019-2020 Season

Season subscriptions now on sale

For more information and subscriber season tickets: 803-642-9453.

Single concert tickets available July 15: www.aikensymphonyorchestra.com or 803-220-7251.

The Aiken Symphony Orchestra and Maestro Donald Portnoy present a series of nine concerts and world-renowned guest artists for the 2019-2020 season, including four classical orchestral performances, three chamber performances, together with a performance of Handel's Messiah, and two pops concerts including a Christmas program. The orchestra's fifth season opens September 14 with a concert featuring Peter I. Tchaikovsky, "The Russian Genius." Preceding each classical orchestral concert at 6:30 p.m., Dr. Portnoy presents "Illuminations," a pre-concert talk. All classical orchestral concerts take place at 7:30 p.m. at the USC Aiken Etherredge Center (471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801); pops and chamber performances take place as noted.

Saturday, September 14, 2019 7:30pm, Etherredge Center

Tchaikovsky "The Russian Genius"

U. S. National Anthem

Concerto for Piano & Orchestra, Op. 16, A Minor Edvard Grieg
Andrew Tyson, Piano

INTERMISSION

Symphony, No. 5, Op. 64, E Minor P. I. Tchaikovsky

Edvard Grieg, a Norwegian, composed his concerto for piano & orchestra in the summer of 1868 while vacationing in Denmark. At the outset, it was received with high praise, and has been described as charming and idyllic, with Norwegian folk influences.

Our soloist, world class pianist, Mr. Andrew Tyson, is a graduate of the Curtis School of Music, who later earned his Master's degree and Artist Diploma at the Juilliard School. He has been hailed by BBC Radio as "a real poet of the piano," and has played with symphonic orchestras in major cities across the U.S. and Europe. Mr. Tyson holds numerous awards in piano competition.

Written and first performed in 1888, Tchaikovsky conducted the debut of his Fifth Symphony in St. Petersburg where it was tepidly received by music critics. It was later performed in Moscow and Hamburg where it was wildly cheered by adoring crowds. The work's thematic progression evokes "Fate," ranging from a gloomy, weary, mysterious theme, crossing the emotional spectrum to its last movement of bold, vigorous, emphatic, self-confident allegro. It has been said that the work reflects the ongoing emotional moods of Tchaikovsky's life. When first written, Tchaikovsky considered it a mediocre work, however changed his opinion after it would come to be acknowledged by many as his greatest work.

Saturday, October 26, 2019 7:30 pm, Etherredge Center

Brahms "Magnitude & Power"

Symphony, No. 2, Op. 43, D Major Jean Sibelius
INTERMISSION

Violin Concerto, Op. 77, D Major Johannes Brahms
Jennifer Frautschi, Violin

Composed in 1902, Sibelius' Symphony #2 has proved to be the most popular of all the Sibelius symphonies. It is dramatic, moving, tragic, stirring and overwhelming in its emotions and climactic surges.

First performed in 1879, the Brahms Violin Concerto in D Major has been described as magnificent in its strength and originality, and abounds in Brahms's profoundest thoughts.

Our soloist, Ms. Jennifer Frautschi began the violin at age 3. She was a student at the Colburn School for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles. She also attended Harvard, the New England Conservatory of Music, and The Juilliard School. She is a two-time GRAMMY nominee and has garnered worldwide acclaim as a musically adventurous violinist with a wide-ranging repertoire. She has appeared with many symphonic orchestras of renown worldwide and performs on a 1722 Antonio Stradivarius violin known as the "ex-Cadiz," on generous loan to her from a private American foundation.

Sunday, November 24, 2019 3:00pm

St. John's United Methodist Church, 104 Newberry St., NW, Aiken

W.A. Mozart "Amadeus & Friends"

Exsultate Jubilate, K. 165 W. A. Mozart

Diana Amos, Soprano

Concerto for Flute & Harp, K. 299 W. A. Mozart

Wendy Cohen, Flute

Vonda Darr, Harp

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 29, K. 201, A Major W. A. Mozart

Mozart was sixteen years old when he wrote the Exsultate Jubilate, a religious motet, for a popular Milanese castrato named Venanzio Rauzzini, who Mozart admired for his technical excellence.

Our soprano soloist for the Jubilate, Dr. Diana Amos, has performed with the Aiken Symphony Orchestra in the past, at its very well received performance of Dvorak's *Te Deum* (April 2019). She has performed over sixty leading roles on the stages of thirty-five European opera companies, and was awarded the North Rhine Westphalia Young Artist Award in Dusseldorf. She holds the Associate Professor of Voice & Musical Theatre, and Program Chair at Columbia College.

Mozart's Concerto for Flute & Harp was composed during a visit to Paris by Mozart in 1788, and is one of only two double concertos that he wrote.

Our guest musicians for the Concerto, Wendy Cohen and Vonda Darr, known as the "Duo Venandi," have been performing together for over fifteen years as principal harpist and flutist of the Symphony Orchestra Augusta, and began playing together as a duo in 2011. They are annual performers on the Chase Concert Series in Augusta, and they continue to perform in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia.

Mozart's Symphony No. 29 in four movements was written in 1774 and is one of his better-known early symphonies. Written in four movements – Allegro/Andante/Menuetto/Allegro, it is a landmark, personal in tone, indeed perhaps more individual in its combination of an intimate, chamber music style with a still fiery and impulsive manner.

Tuesday, December 10, 2019 7:30pm

St. Mary Help of Christians Church 138 Fairfield St., SE, Aiken

Handel's "Messiah"

Messiah G. F. Handel

Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass to be announced

Aiken Symphony Orchestra Festival Chorus

The text for "Messiah," drawn from biblical sources, was compiled by Charles Jennens, and music composed by George Frederic Handel in 1741. The "Messiah" is considered to be the most important work of the Baroque period. Employing the oratorio form (innovative at that time), the work was composed in only 24 days to which Handel ascribed his effort to divine guidance. The work is traditionally divided into two segments generally described and congruent with the Christmas and Easter seasons, and has been sung worldwide.

The work employs Soprano, Alto, and Bass soloist voices, and the Aiken Symphony Chamber Orchestra is joined by the Aiken Symphony Festival Chorus.

Saturday, December 14, 2019 7:30pm, Etherredge Center

"Home for the Holidays"

Christmas and Broadway Holiday Favorites and Orchestra's Classical Holiday Selections

Scarlett Strallen, Vocalist

Aiken Choral Society, and Aiken Civic Ballet

"Oh, Holy Night," "We Need a Little Christmas," "My Favorite Things," ...and other popular Christmas melodies.

Our vocalist, Scarlett Strallen is an English stage actress, best known for her work in musical theatre productions in the West End, and on Broadway. She has received two Olivier Award nominations, in 2006 for her portrayal of Josephine in *HMS Pinafore*, and in 2012 for her role in *Singin' in the Rain*. She has played the title role in the West End and Broadway productions of *Mary Poppins*. Strallen provided the voice of Princess in the 1995 animated film *The Snow Queen*. She also lent her voice to the animated television series *The Dreamstone*, *The Big Knights*, and *Molly's Gang*.

The Aiken Choral Society has appeared with the Aiken Symphony Orchestra in past performances of its Christmas program and its production of Handel's *Messiah*. The Aiken Civic Ballet has performed in excerpts of the *"Nutcracker,"* with the Aiken Symphony Orchestra's Christmas performances.

Sunday, January 19, 2020 3:00pm

St. John's United Methodist Church, 104 Newberry St., NW, Aiken

"Glorious Strings"

Adagio for Strings	Samuel Barber
Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky, Op 35a	Anton Arensky
Romance, Op 42, C Major	Jean Sibelius
INTERMISSION	
Serenade for Strings, Op 48, C Major	P. I. Tchaikovsky

Samuel Barber is an important American composer. His *Adagio* was composed in 1936 and has been described as the most poignant works of an American composer. Its mournful tempo has become associated with solemn events and has been used in films, such as "Platoon", to set a pall over certain dramatic segments.

Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky was composed as a tribute to Tchaikovsky in 1894, the year after his death. The piece consists of seven variations followed by a coda. Written for a quartet, it remains among the most popular of Arensky's works.

Romance, Op 42, C Major is a miniature composition written in 1903. Originally entitled "Andante," Sibelius changed its name in 1908 following suggestions from a reviewer. Romance is formed of three main sections, a slow, Andante beginning, a more rapid middle section, and finally another slow section. Then entire piece lasts about five minutes.

Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings* was composed in homage to his idol Mozart. It consists of four movements with the first movement an imitation of Mozart's style. It has been said that the work evokes something "between a symphony and a string quartet." It was composed in 1880 and first performed publicly at St. Petersburg in October of 1881.

Saturday, February 1, 2020 7:30pm, Etherredge Center

Beethoven "Happy Birthday Ludwig"

Symphony No. 7, Op. 92, A Major	Ludwig van Beethoven
INTERMISSION	
Concerto, Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op. 56, C Major (Triple Concerto)	Ludwig van Beethoven
Eroica Trio	
Erika Nickrenz, Piano; Sara Parkins, Violin; Sara Sant'Ambrogio, Cello	

Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 was premiered in Vienna in December of 1813 and immediately declared a remarkable success. Beethoven himself conducted its premier, although his deafness prevented him from hearing all but the loud tones of the orchestra. The seventh symphony has been described as energetic in rhythm, splendid in orchestration, and magnificent in thematic integration. It was at this time that Beethoven fell in love with an unnamed woman, whom he described as his "Immortal Beloved," in a passionate letter. The woman's identity is a riddle that has never been solved.

Written in three movements; allegro, largo, finale rondo, the "Triple Concerto," as it is known, premiered in 1807 and no other performance was made during Beethoven's lifetime. Perhaps this is due to the fact, as claimed by Beethoven's biographer, that the work was written for Beethoven's royal pupil, the Archduke Rudolf of Austria, who became an accomplished pianist under Beethoven's tutelage.

Our guest musicians, The Eroica Trio, has played together since childhood and is the most sought- after trio in the world. They have been nominated for the GRAMMY Award and have performed the Beethoven "Triple Concerto" more frequently than any other trio in the world.

Saturday, March 7, 2020 7:30pm, Etherredge Center

Scheherazade "The Thousand & One Nights"

Fledermaus: Overture Johann Strauss, Jr.

Cello Concerto, Op. 129, A Minor Robert Schumann

Zlatomir Fung, Cello

INTERMISSION

Scheherazade, Op. 35 Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

The overture to the operetta "Die Fledermaus," (The Bat), was produced in 1874 by J. Strauss, who was widely acclaimed for his waltzes and conducting prowess. Fledermaus was Strauss's second venture into theatre where the libretto and score became instantly popular, earning him the title, "Operetta King."

R. Schumann's Cello Concerto was completed in a fortnight in 1850. The work was never performed in his lifetime. The concerto is written in three movements and has been described as a highly ingenious weaving of cello and orchestra.

Our cello concerto soloist, Zlatomir Fung, was born in Oregon and is of Bulgarian-Chinese heritage. He attended the New England Conservatory Preparation School, and presently is the Kovnar Fellowship recipient at The Juilliard School. Mr. Fung has captured multiple first prizes in the Young Concert Artists competition, and has performed with symphony orchestras across the U.S., Romania, Bucharest, and Switzerland.

Without question "Scheherazade" is Rimsky-Korsakov's most famous work, thus far maintaining unabated its popularity at symphony concerts. Built on material from *The Arabian Nights*, it is Rimsky-Korsakov's most descriptive music, full of the colors of the Orient and touched with its subtle flavors. "Scheherazade" was composed in 1888, and premiered in St. Petersburg.

Sunday, April 19, 2020 3:00pm, Etherredge Center

"Swinging on a Star"

Famous Broadway Music and Composers

Debbie Gravitte, Vocalist

Debbie Gravitte has been an actress and singer on Broadway since 1979 when she appeared in "They're Playing our Song." She has had parts in a number of Broadway productions, most notably "Les Miserables," as Fantine in 1994; "Chicago," as Matron Mama Morton in 2003, among others. She performs in concerts, including with the National Symphony with Marvin Hamlisch, the Boston Pops, the Atlanta Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony in addition to others.

"I Enjoy Being a Girl" (Flower Drum Song)

Richard Rodgers

"My Heart Belongs to Daddy" (Leave It to Me)

Cole Porter

"I Can Cook, Too" (On the Town)

Leonard Bernstein

"Mister Monotony" (Easter Parade)

Irving Berlin

"Gotta Get a Gimmick"

Stephen Sondheim

"The Music That Makes Me Dance"

Julie Styne

"Moonlight Serenade"

Glenn Miller

"Surrey with the Fringe on Top" (Oklahoma)

Richard Rodgers

"I Got Rhythm" (Girl Crazy)

George Gershwin

"Daddy"

Bobby Troup

INTERMISSION

"April in Paris"

Vernon Duke

"Let Me Entertain You" (Gypsy)

Julie Styn

"My Ship" (Lady in the Dark)

Kurt Weill

"When You're Good to Mama" (Chicago)

John Kander

"Canadian Sunset"

Eddie Heywood

"Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered (Pal Joey)
"Lulu's Back in Town" (Broadway Gondolier)
"From This Moment On" (Kiss Me Kate)

Richard Rodgers
Harry Warren
Cole Porter