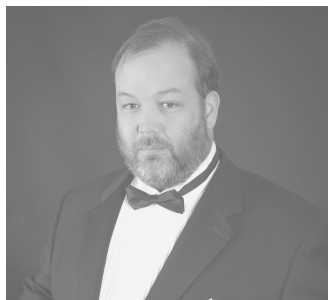


Mainstage Orchestra Series: Masterworks I



**7:00 PM September 18, 2021
Riverside Baptist Church Greer, SC 29650**



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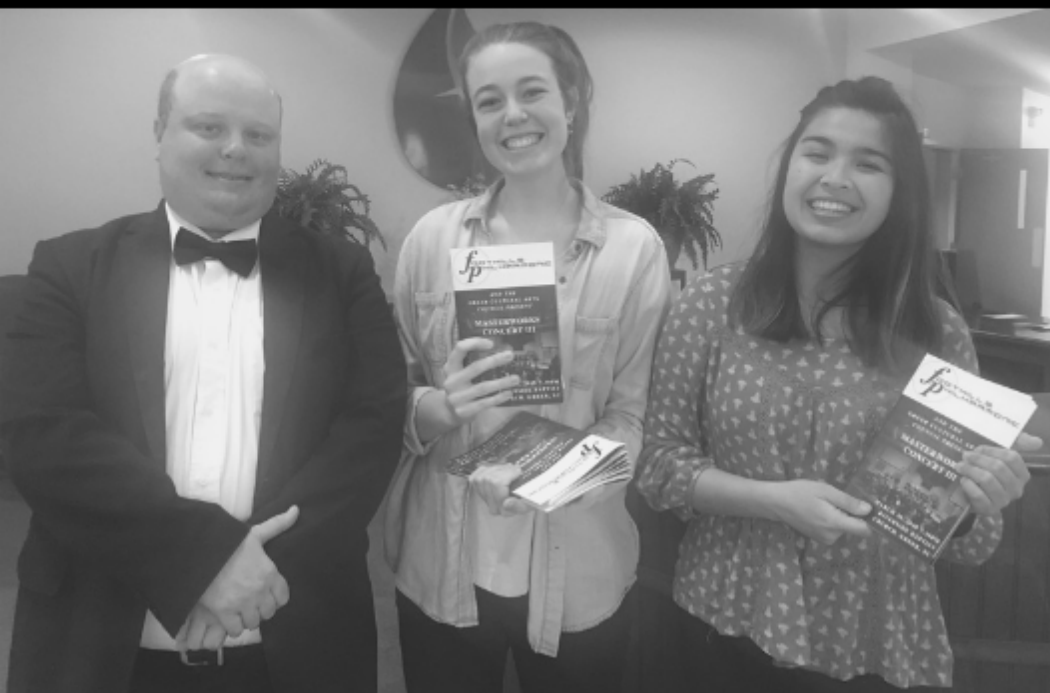
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Opening Night Gala: Art Sala and Masterworks I

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Greer Community Ministries Food Drive and Masterworks II

Saturday, December 11, 2021

Christmas Pops Concert, 7:00 pm

Saturday, February 5, 2022

Chamber Orchestra, 7:00 pm

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Masterworks, 7:00 pm

Saturday, April 30, 2022

Pops Celebration & Instrument Petting Zoo, 7:00 pm



2021-22 Spotlight Chamber Series

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City of Greer Center for the Arts
804 Trade Street Greer, SC 29651**

Friday, October 8, 7:00pm

Mike Criss, 7:00pm

**Saturday, November 20, 2021:
Brass Quintet Concert, 7:00 pm**

**Saturday, February 26, 2022
String Quartet Concert, 7:00pm**

**Saturday, March 12, 2022
Woodwind Quintet Concert, 7:00pm**

**Saturday, April 9, 2022
Chamber Selections Concert, 7:00 pm**

Artistic Director

Kory Vrieze



Artistic Director Kory Vrieze is returning to the podium for his ninth season. Since being introduced to the orchestra as guest conductor in 2011, Mr. Vrieze has led the Foothills Philharmonic through a variety of styles of classical music- some well-known works of mastery and some lesser known gems of the art music world.

Whether Pops or Masterworks, he continues to lead our orchestra of fabulous musicians bringing quality music to your ears.

For 20 years, Mr. Vrieze was a music educator, working in the classroom, managing the Greater Newark Youth Orchestra, and working with the Newark Early Strings Program. For three years, he was a Music Education Specialist at Musical Innovations and is now working with Kaleidoscope Adventures providing meaningful travel experiences for student groups. With experience working as Manager of Education at the New Jersey Symphony and Festival Coordinator at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival, Mr. Vrieze has brought not only a diverse musical background, but also a practical knowledge that contributes to the further growth and development of Foothills Philharmonic as the Upstate's only all-volunteer orchestra.

Kory Vrieze received his BM in Music Education from Berry College and did his graduate studies at the University of South Dakota in History of Musical Instruments where he studied at the Shrine to Music Museum.

In addition to maintaining a private woodwind studio, Mr. Vrieze is also Adjunct Professor of Woodwinds at Erskine College and is the director of the Erskine Sinfonia. As a clinician and educator, Mr. Vrieze has worked in Georgia, Texas, South Dakota, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, Tennessee and Iowa. Mr. Vrieze has enjoyed playing as well as teaching by playing clarinet in the Huron Symphony, the Golden Isles Symphony, the Cherokee Symphony and the Sewanee Festival Orchestra.



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Program Notes: Masterworks I

by Andrew Kearns

Léo Delibes (1836-1891), *Cortège de Bacchus* from *Sylvia* (1876)

Delibes made his mark on the Parisian scene during the later 1850s as a composer of light operettas, a genre somewhat akin to the modern musical. As a chorus master at the Théâtre Lyrique he worked on more substantial operas by Gounod, Bizet and Berlioz, and was inspired to try his hand at a comic opera, *Le jardinier et son seigneur*, premiered there in 1863. He became chorus master at the Opéra the following year and in 1866 contributed his first music for ballet to *La source*, a highly successful collaboration for which his colleague Louis Minkus also supplied some music. Delibes continued to produce ballets and operas. His most successful are the ballets *Coppélia* (1870) and *Sylvia* (1876), which are significant contributions to the development of the genre in the nineteenth century, and the still-beloved opera *Lakmé* (1883).

Sylvia was the first full-evening ballet performed in the new home of the Paris Opéra, the Palais Garnier, completed in 1875. The beautiful building was indeed a palace to the arts, famous for its grand staircase and statuary and (at least for Phantom of the Opera fans), its subterranean lake providing a readily available supply of water in case of fire (a common occurrence in theaters before electrification). Premiered on 14 June 1876, the ballet was given an opulent staging befitting the Opéra's new home.

The complicated plot involves a love triangle between the shepherd Amyntas who falls in love with the nymph Sylvia, a servant of Diana, goddess of the hunt. It is no surprise, therefore, that the third member of the triangle is none other than the hunter Orion, who turns out to be the villain of the piece. His attempt to destroy Amyntas is thwarted with the help of Eros (aka the boy-god Cupid), and the marriage of Amyntas and Sylvia is ultimately blessed by Diana herself. So, what does a procession in honor of the god Bacchus have to do with anything? Mainly as an excuse for some lively dance numbers that help delay the resolution of the plot! So, imagine the opening of Act 3, “a wooded landscape on the seacoast” near the temple of Diana. A trumpet fanfare leads to a march as people arrive for festivities in honor of the god of wine. That there are several categories of participants we can gather from the contrasting middle section, which introduces several new ideas before returning to the march theme. A faster section leads to a climactic hymn-like statement of one of the themes of the middle section, perhaps in homage of Bacchus, before the pace picks up in a frenetic conclusion.

Serge Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Symphonic Dances (1940)

Rachmaninoff was one of the most brilliant pianists of his generation, a reputation that tended to eclipse his activity as a conductor and composer. He didn't always find it easy to balance these three activities, tending to concentrate on one at a time, touring as a pianist or conductor during concert season and spending the summers composing. His composing career began early, during his years at the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories, and he graduated in composition from the latter institution with the Great Gold Medal for his opera *Aleko*, only the third person so honored. Despite the opera's success when premiered at the Bolshoi Theater in 1893 (Tchaikovsky was an admirer), this promising start to a career in composition was derailed by the disastrous premiere of his First Symphony in an ill-prepared performance under Glazunov in 1897. Rachmaninoff was so shaken by this experience that he developed composer's block, unable to create new works. Although this hiatus in composition allowed him to develop his skills as a conductor, his heart lay in wanting to create. Some concerned friends set up a meeting with the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, thinking a meeting of two genius minds could help Rachmaninoff out of his predicament. Tolstoy merely told the composer to get to work, then asked to hear some of his music, after which he said, "tell me, does anybody need music like that?"

Tolstoy's question would soon be answered in the affirmative. Rachmaninoff would receive the help he needed from Dr. Nikolay Dahl. Whether or not the good doctor's specialty in hypnosis played a significant role in his meetings with Rachmaninoff, the musician soon found the will to compose again, producing acclaimed works that would make him famous, such as the Second Piano Concerto (1901), the Second Symphony (1907), the Third Piano Concerto (1909) and the *Vocalise* from his Op. 34 set of songs (1912). All the while he continued his activities as a pianist and conductor, and a pattern developed of touring widely in Russia, Western Europe and the United States during the concert season and spending the summers at his family estate in Russia, where he concentrated on composition. The Russian Revolution disrupted this pattern mainly in that he left Russia in 1918, never to return. He spent more time in the United States, settling for a while in New York and receiving a recording contract with the Victor Talking Machine Company (which became RCA), and continuing to tour widely in Western Europe, where he also spent some summers, eventually purchasing land on Lake Lucerne where he built a villa he named *Senar* (combining the first syllables of his name with that of his wife, Natalia Satina, whom he had married in 1901).

In 1934 he wrote the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, which became one of his most popular pieces and was successfully choreographed in a ballet version by Mikhail Fokine in 1937. The gathering clouds of war caused Rachmaninoff to spend

more time in the United States after 1939. After an exhausting tour that included a festival of his music in Philadelphia and minor operation, he rented an estate called Orchard Point on Long Island in the summer of 1940. As he regained his strength he also regained his inspiration to compose, producing his last completed work. In August he wrote to Eugene Ormandy, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, offering him the first performance of what he then called *Fantastic Dances*. He also played the work on piano for Fokine, who was living nearby. The choreographer expressed interest in creating a ballet based on the work, and Rachmaninoff even suggested that the movements could be thought of as “Noon,” “Twilight,” and “Midnight,” but Fokine died before he could carry out his plans, and Rachmaninoff did not include programmatic titles for the movements in his published score. The premiere of the *Symphonic Dances* was given on 3 January 1941 with Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. While not as enthusiastically received as some other of the composer’s works, it eventually has been recognized as one of Rachmaninoff’s most remarkable achievements.

Rachmaninoff is often regarded as the last great Russian Romantic composer, and certainly his style betrays his admiration for Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in particular. But he was not immune from the musical trends of his time, even if out of sympathy with much musical modernism. His lush melodies, delicate orchestration, and interest in the macabre are Romantic elements balanced by adventurous harmonies, odd intervals, complex and often syncopated rhythms, and innovative ways of using instruments (both piano and orchestra).

The *Symphonic Dances* is in three movements. While dance rhythms tend to permeate the work, only the second movement is an identifiable dance (the waltz), and each movement has a contrasting middle section that does not always maintain a dance-like feel. While not programmatic, the work contains material that references music by Rachmaninoff and others and even the human struggle with death. Other elements point to the nostalgia the long-exiled composer felt for his homeland. If one takes the hint of Rachmaninoff’s suggested movement titles, the work has much to do with the end of a long career and life.

The first dance, *Non allegro*, develops from the descending three-note figure first heard in the woodwinds. As a march-like theme coalesces around this figure, it is accompanied by percussive rhythms. A dreamy middle section features an extended solo for alto saxophone, accompanied by delicate filigree in woodwinds. This is the only example of Rachmaninoff writing for saxophone, and while he must have been aware of the importance of the instrument in jazz and some American works, the melody of this section is as Russian sounding as anything the composer wrote. The saxophone solo leads into an impassioned statement of the melody by the strings before the first section returns. Another lyrical string theme is introduced toward the end of the movement, providing a moment of reflection as the movement concludes. It is a quote of a theme derived from Russian Orthodox chant from

the composer's First Symphony, but not one he intended his audience to recognize as the symphony was unpublished and thought lost at the time.

The second dance, *Andante con moto* (Tempo di valse), is a fantasy on the idea of a waltz, rather than a conventional waltz. It has been called a "valse triste" (sad waltz) in character and ghostly in the fragmentary way it presents many of the clichés of the waltz genre. The elements include an introductory figure first heard on muted trumpets and stopped horns, sounding more like a warning than a call to the dance, the waltz rhythm with woodwind arabesques, a noodling violin solo, various waltz tunes presented as solos for woodwinds, and occasional full-throated orchestral statements of waltz themes that coalesce into a truly fantastic dance.

An early critic called the third movement a *danse macabre*, alluding to the medieval Dance of the Dead as interpreted by Romantic composers. While the original purpose of artwork depicting the Dance of the Dead was to show how people from all walks of life were equal before their creator on the Day of Judgment, the Romantics gave the Dance a more sinister association with witches, dancing skeletons, and the like. The *Dies Irae*, the Gregorian chant from the Mass for the Dead, became a popular way to express this musically, as is found in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Saint-Saens's *Danse macabre*, Liszt's *Totentanz*, and several works by Rachmaninoff himself, including the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. This interpretation is further strengthened by Rachmaninoff's inclusion of motives derived from another favorite source of his, Russian Orthodox church music.

The movement begins with a slow sighing motive before taking off with an *Allegro vivace*. This section is a wild dance with highly syncopated rhythms and brilliant orchestration. It abruptly ends with a return of the sighing motive from the introduction, followed by a more relaxed and lyrical middle section. A hint of the *Dies Irae* occurs near the beginning of this section, but it is largely a respite from the frenzy of the first part, presenting a lyrical theme developed throughout the orchestra. The final section of the movement returns to the material of the *Allegro vivace*, but the *Dies Irae* becomes more prominent battling with other melodic elements, some derived from Russian Orthodox chants. Towards the end of the movement, Rachmaninoff introduces a jubilant new theme based on the Resurrection Hymn, which he had set in his *Vespers*, and as if to make clear the triumph of the soul's resurrection over death, wrote "Alliluya" over its appearance in his score. At the end of his manuscript he added: "I thank thee, Lord."



Foothills Philharmonic
and the Greer Cultural Arts Council

Presents

Masterworks I

Cortege De Bacchus from *Sylvia*

Leo Delibes
1836-91

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

I. *(Non) Allegro*

II. *Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)*

III *Lento assai-Allegro Vivace-Lento
assai. Come prima-Allegro Vivace*

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Foothills Philharmonic Orchestra

Personnel List

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Jessica Morgan,
Concertmaster

Julia Burr

Karen Connor

Amy Lukawecki

Yogi Rana

Mary Margaret St. John

Violin II

Jen Bidwell

Gwen Johnson

Gina McKay

Amber Moffitt

Martha Morgan

Ruthie Pilgrim

Viola

Suzy Jones

Randy Lee

Jenny Lee

Sally Potosky

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Suzette Wood

Cello

Lee Perkins

Kelly Piepho

Shari Schick

Bass

Don Barrett

James Higdon

Weslie Higdon

Flute

Amanda Barrett

Carri Burgess

Terry Davidson

Carolyn Hutchinson

Oboe

Shelly Black

Linda Dupont

Linda VonderHaar

English Horn

Shelly Black

Bassoon

Ted Gentry

Larry Kramer

Clarinet

Mike Criss

Khris Kirk

Gina League

Bass Clarinet

Mike Criss

Saxophone

Mike Criss

Trumpet

Mark Alkire

Evan Duke

Rita James

David Lowery

Ian Milne

French Horn

Jonathan Crothers

Drew Kearns

Laird Minor

Maria Wooldridge

Trombone

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Zach Taylor

Percussion

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