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# University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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# *Free Music Concert Series*

The Department of Music  
Presents in Concert

University of Richmond  
Symphony Orchestra

Alexander Kordzaia,  
director and conductor

Mary Beth Bennett, organ

Wednesday, April 5, 2017  
7:30 p.m.

Camp Concert Hall



**MUSIC.RICHMOND.EDU**

## PROGRAM

Overture to *La forza del destino*

Giuseppe Verdi  
(1813 – 1901)

Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, op. 78

Camille Saint-Saëns  
(1835 – 1921)

- I. *Adagio; allegro moderato; poco adagio*
- II. *Maestoso; allegro*

Mary Beth Bennett, *organ*

*There will be no intermission during this concert.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) was one of the most influential composers of Italian opera in the nineteenth century. Verdi went well beyond the work of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini. His works are frequently performed in opera houses throughout the world, transcending the boundaries of the genre. Some of his themes have long since taken root in popular culture, such as “La donna è mobile” from *Rigoletto* and “Libiamo ne’ lieti calici” from *La traviata*. Verdi’s masterworks continue to dominate the standard repertoire a century and a half after their composition. *La forza del destino* is an opera in four acts with a libretto by Francesco Marie Piave; after the Spanish play *Don Alvaro, o la fuerza del sino*.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was born in Paris and died in Algiers. He was a versatile pianist, composer, organist, and conductor, writing works for every genre of French music. The Symphony in C Minor, op. 78 is his most frequently performed and popular work among his symphonic poems, instrumental concertos, and chamber music. This symphony — often called the “Organ Symphony” or “Symphony with Organ,” as the composer frequently referred to it — is orchestrated for large symphony orchestra, with full brass, percussion, organ, and two pianos. The symphony is divided into two movements, with two sections that include the organ. This work is a perfect example of Romantic-era orchestral writing, with beautiful melodies, harmonic changes, and driving

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rhythms. Listeners will enjoy the *Adagio* from the first movement, its unforgettable melody in the strings played in unison, and the masterful orchestration of the same theme at the end of the movement. When listening to this symphony, one can easily detect influences of Schumann (first movement) and Saint-Saëns' love of Bach's polyphonic style, (finale, *Maestoso*). The University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra is proud to be able to perform this masterpiece today with Dr. Mary Beth Bennett, organist, who is performing on the organ loaned by St. Paul's Catholic Church in Richmond.

— Notes by Alexander Kordzaia

## BIOGRAPHIES

### ALEXANDER KORDZAIA

Alexander Kordzaia accepted the position of Music Director of the University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra in 2007. In 2012 he was appointed to two positions in Cartagena, Colombia: Principal Guest Conductor of the Filarmónica Cartagena, and Artistic Director of the Festival of Orchestras and Youth. Under his leadership, nine students from the University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra participated in the 2013 festival.



A conductor and pianist, Maestro Kordzaia is a native of Tbilisi, the Republic of Georgia. Born into a musical family, he demonstrated great musical ability at an early age. At the age of seven, he began serious study of the piano and composition in Georgia's premiere music school. By the age of 12, he was performing as a soloist with orchestras and was considered a child prodigy as a composer. Soon it was evident to his teachers that he also had talent and a desire for conducting. By the time Kordzaia graduated from the Tbilisi Conservatory of Music, he was appointed as the Music Director and Conductor of the Georgia State Cappella and assistant conductor at the Tbilisi Opera House, the two most prestigious musical ensembles in the nation. Kordzaia led both of

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these groups on triumphant tours of the former USSR.

He came to the United States in 1991 to further his studies in New York at the Mannes College of Music and the Juilliard School of Music. Since his arrival in the United States, Kordzaia has performed as pianist and conducted orchestras to critical acclaim. He has conducted Cincinnati Symphony musicians at the American Harp Society National Conference, the Cincinnati Symphonietta, Shenandoah Conservatory Symphony Orchestra, the Okanogan Symphony in Spokane, Washington, the Charlotte Civic Orchestra, Central Regional Orchestra of Virginia (2009 and 2012), South Central Virginia Senior Regional Orchestra, and the 2012 All-State Virginia Orchestra. He appeared as an opera conductor with CPCC Opera Company in Charlotte, North Carolina, and served as Assistant Conductor of the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra from 1999-2001, Music Director of the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra from 2001-2003, Music Director of the Charlotte Civic Orchestra from 2003-2006, and Conductor Emeritus of the Charlotte Civic Orchestra from 2006-2007.

Kordzaia has organized numerous international tours with the American Youth Harp Ensemble, as co-director and guest conductor. The critically-acclaimed ensemble has travelled to the Netherlands, England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and the Czech Republic. He has led them in performances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and the White House.

An active chamber musician, Kordzaia has recently given concerts in Washington, DC, Maryland, New York, Vienna, Austria, and Cartagena, Colombia. He is an active teacher/educator and classical music advocate throughout the mid-Atlantic states, and is frequently invited as an adjudicator, music coach, and master class clinician in schools and with youth music organizations throughout the country. He also has continued to be a frequent guest conductor and pianist in the United States, France, Austria, Eastern Europe, South America, Georgia, and Russia.

## MARY BETH BENNETT

Dr. Mary Beth Bennett is an internationally recognized performer, composer, and improviser. She serves on the adjunct music faculty of the University of Richmond and is Director of Music Ministries at First Presbyterian Church in Gloucester, Virginia. Having previously held various positions in Washington, DC, including at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and as Ceremonial Organist for the United States Government, she holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Stetson University, the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik (Cologne, Germany), and the University of Southern California. Her organ teachers have included David Craighead, Paul Jenkins, Paul Manz, Michael Schneider, Ladd Thomas, and Cherry Rhodes. The winner of eight national and regional awards in performance and composition, she has received commissions in multiple genres from the American Guild of Organists, National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Association of Anglican Musicians, The Paul VI Institute for the Arts, Millennia Consort, and various churches, chamber ensembles, and private parties. This year she won the AGO/ECS National Publishing Award in Choral Composition. She also maintains a studio of improvisation students and has served as a judge for the AGO National Competition in Organ Improvisation, and presented improvisation seminars for major conventions of the AGO and NPM, as well as the Smithsonian Institution. As a conductor, she has directed the Basilica of the National Shrine's professional choir in Washington, DC, as well as the 120-voice West Los Angeles Chorale, among others. She has served as a judge for the national women's composition competition of AAM and the AGO International Year of the Organ composition competition. As a performing member of the Liturgical Organists Consortium, she recorded three compact discs which have garnered critical acclaim, including a "Golden Ear Award" for best organ CD of the year from *Absolute Sound Magazine*. Her most recent CD, *Bennett plays Bennett*, was recorded in 2015. Her performances and compositions have been featured multiple times on APM's *Pipe Dreams* radio program with host, Michael Barone, and her compositions are published by Augsburg-Fortress, Concordia, Selah, G.I.A., World Library, National, Hope, and Oxford University Press.



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# UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

## **1st Violins**

Lillian Hughes, Concertmaster  
Micah Hunter-Chang, Assistant Concertmaster  
Hannah Sullivan  
Darah Rathi  
Michael Robinson  
Grace Leng  
Madeleine Burke  
Melisa Gu  
Rebekah Robinson\*  
Shiv Toolsidass  
Dhilan Kamani  
Karen Titus\*

## **2nd violins**

Ellie Owen, Principal  
Robert Costanzo  
Anna Saakian\*  
Makayla Clemmer\*  
Randy Allen\*  
Ashley Magnuson\*  
Aaron Ellerbrock\*  
Carolyn Thurber\*  
Eileen Downey\*\*  
Lauren Campbell\*

## **Viola**

Sara Cloonan, Principal  
Katie Baker\*  
John Bander\*  
Teresa Conti\*  
Nicole D'Onofrio

\* Community Musician

\*\* University of Richmond Faculty

\*\*\* University of Richmond Alumnus/Alumna

**Cello**

Catherine Edwards, Principal  
John Cavaliere  
Nadia Neman  
Brenda Lim  
Marilyn Kern\*  
Sidney Whitlock\*  
Yesai Saakian\*  
Michael Knowles\*

**Bass**

Michael Stumpf\*, Principal  
Jake McHugh\*  
Brian Fletcher\*

**Flute**

Marie Fernandez, Principal  
Rachel Lantz  
Kehinde Jegede, flute/piccolo  
Chloe Lubin-Kirchner

**Oboe**

Erin Vidlak  
Elise Favia, oboe/English horn,  
Principal  
Benedict Roemer

**Clarinet**

Michael Goldberg\*, Principal  
Jane Song, Assistant Principal  
Doug Hurt\*, bass clarinet

**Bassoon**

Arnold Wexler\*, Principal  
Eric Chang, Principal  
Tom Baise\*, contrabassoon

**French horn**

Ryan Smout\*\*\*, Principal  
Gretchen Georgas\*  
Jenn Myers\*  
Dale Dean\*

**Trumpet**

Thomas McCarty\*, Principal  
Tony Scida\*  
Timothy Park  
Theresa Getsie\*

**Tromboni**

Rebecca Buffington\*\*\*, Principal  
Charles Newton\*  
Matt Chaffin\*

**Tuba**

Russ Wolz\*

**Organ**

Mary Beth Bennett

**Piano**

Paul Hanson  
Carl Lingerfelt

**Harp**

Azalea Ginete  
Meghan Neal\*

**Timpani**

John Hubbard\*\*\*

**Percussion**

James Fong  
Alexander Ginsberg

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**Librarian**

Erin Vidlak

**Assistant to the Conductor**

Sara Cloonan

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

St. Paul's Catholic Church, for graciously loaning their organ

David M. Storey, Pipe Organ Builders, Baltimore, MD, for loan of the organ bench

Sean Farrell, Production Manager, Modlin Center for the Arts

Robert Richards, Assistant Production Manager, Modlin Center for the Arts

Patrick Kraehenbuehl, Assistant Production Manager, Modlin Center for the Arts

Ray Breakall, Piano Technician, Department of Music

Nick Mobley

Michael Stumpf, Principal Bass

Jennifer Wilson Stumpf, UR Orchestra Photographer

Rev. Mr. R. Wayne Snellings, Deacon, Minister of Worship and Music, St. Paul's Catholic Church

Dr. Mary Beth Bennett

Jerry Mize, Famous Jerry's Piano Moving

Eighth Blackbird, UR Ensemble-in-Residence

Linda Smalley, Administrative Coordinator, Department of Music

Dr. Jeffrey Riehl, Chairman, Department of Music

Dr. Joanne Kong, Coordinator of UR Chamber Ensembles

All community musicians who perform in the Orchestra

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Thursday, April 6 | 7:30 p.m.

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Sunday, April 9 | 3 p.m.

## **UR Jazz and Contemporary Combos**

Monday, April 10 | 7:30 p.m.

## **UR Chamber Ensembles**

Monday, April 17 | 7:30 p.m.



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