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University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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MUSIC

Concert Series

The Department of Music Presents in Concert

**University of Richmond
Symphony Orchestra**

Alexander Kordzaia, artistic director and conductor

Dr. Joanne Kong, piano soloist

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Camp Concert Hall

MUSIC.RICHMOND.EDU

PROGRAM

Carmen Suite No. 1

Georges Bizet

Aragonaise

(1838-1875)

Intermezzo

Seguedille

Les Dragons d'Alcala

Les Toreadors

Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Egyptian") in F Major, op. 103 Camille Saint-Saëns

Allegro animato

(1835-1921)

Andante

Molto Allegro

Dr. Joanne Kong, *piano*

Please silence cell phones, digital watches, and paging devices before the concert.

Georges Bizet. *Carmen* Suite No. 1

Bizet composed *Carmen* in 1874, but the opera's first performance was not a success and it was heavily criticized due to its scandalous subject matter. Only after the composer's sudden death at the age of 36 did *Carmen* become popular and widely performed. Now the role of Carmen is a staple of the mezzo soprano repertoire in both Europe and the United States. After Bizet's death, his friend Ernest Guiraud made an orchestral arrangement of popular music from *Carmen*, which included the preludes to each act as well as the vocal numbers. Guiraud's arrangement takes the form of two orchestral suites, which conductors often program because their storytelling nature and instantly accessible music make listening to classical music an enjoyable experience. Brilliant orchestration, lush melodies, driving tempos, and colorful canvases of sound painting make this music memorable and desirable. Tonight the UR Symphony Orchestra will perform the first *Carmen* Suite along with Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 5. Saint-Saëns was in the audience at the first performance of *Carmen* and was very impressed with young Bizet's music.

— Alexander Kordzaia

Camille Saint-Saëns. Piano Concerto No. 5, op. 103

Camille Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 5, op. 103, known as "The Egyptian," was premiered by the composer in 1896 to critical acclaim. Saint-Saëns, a frequent traveler, enjoyed winter vacations to the Mediterranean and North African shores, and this work, his last in the genre, drew colorful inspiration from an 1895-96 trip to Luxor, Egypt. The first movement opens with a gentle theme reminiscent of a chorale, stated in the piano and giving way to sparkling figuration and arpeggios. The bright virtuosity of the

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passagework is beautifully contrasted with a tender, melancholy theme which makes its final appearance at the close of the movement.

It is the notable coloristic and exotic effects of the second movement that prompted the concerto's nickname. Eastern flavor in the piano writing includes pervasive melodic use of the augmented second, parallel thirds spaced in such a way that seem to evoke the sounds of a Javanese gamelan, use of a theme that Saint-Saëns described as "a Nubian love song that I heard sung by the boatmen on the Nile as it went down the river in a *dahabieh* [a large passenger boat]," and a notable piano passage where a pentatonic melody is accompanied by a repetitive figure in the upper range, supposedly imitating the sound of chirping tree frogs. Undoubtedly, the unique flavor of this movement reflects cultural and aesthetic influences at the turn of the century, in particular the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889, where visitors developed a fascination with the music of other cultures, especially the sounds of the gamelan at the Java exhibit. Saint-Saëns effectively translates exotic timbres into his musical language, yet maintains the structural integrity and orchestral clarity that are hallmarks of his compositional style. The brilliant third movement was once described by the composer as "the joy of a sea crossing," with the opening piano material depicting the driving propellers of a ship. A short passage in ragtime style follows, lending added exuberance to a movement that is dazzling in its virtuosity. Dramatically-effective contrasts are achieved as well, with a soaring secondary theme and a light march-like theme that becomes more rhapsodic, and then triumphant, as the concerto comes to a close.

— Joanne Kong

The Performers

Keyboardist **Joanne Kong** captures the attention of audiences in compelling performances that celebrate the vibrancy and eloquence of musical expression. Embracing a broad range of repertoire from Baroque to contemporary music, her performances have been praised for “great finesse and flexibility” (*The Washington Post*), “superb” playing (*The Boston Globe*), “utmost keyboard sensitivity and variety of tone” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*), “remarkable technical ability” (*The Oregonian*), and “superb artistry” (*San Antonio Express-News*) for works “sensitively played” (*The New York Times*). Her versatility includes the distinction of being the first artist to release a harpsichord-piano recording of the J. S. Bach *Goldberg* and Beethoven *Diabelli Variations*, on the BRIOSO label. Other critically-acclaimed recordings on the same label include English music with former Richmond Symphony concertmaster Karen Johnson, and a recording of German and Russian songs with baritone Zheng Zhou.



Kong has performed to critical acclaim at numerous venues including the Los Angeles and Oregon Bach Festivals; Abbey Bach Festival; Texas Bach Collegium; Houston Harpsichord Recital Series; Memphis Chamber Music Society; Stotsenberg Concert Series; San Antonio Festival; Los Angeles Monday Evening Concert Series; Virginia Waterfront International Festival of the Arts; the Royal Netherlands Embassy; National Gallery of Art Concert Series in Washington, DC; Strathmore Hall's "Music in the Mansion" series; Columbia University; Harvard University; the Conservatorio Dall'Abaco in Verona, Italy; the Melk Abbey Summer Concert Series and Baden's Haus der Kunst in Austria; and orchestral performances under William McGlaughlin, Myung-Whun Chung, Alberto Bolet, Steven Smith, Samuel Baron, George Manahan,

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Alexander Kordzaia, Eckart Preu, John Sinclair, Mark Russell Smith, Gil Rose, and Alex Pauk. A gifted collaborator, she has performed with numerous artists including the Shanghai String Quartet, flutist Eugenia Zukerman, cellist James Wilson, violinist Karen Johnson, soprano Ying Huang, baritones James Weaver and Zheng Zhou, and viola da gambist Lisa Terry. She has been a guest teacher for New York University's prestigious Piano Artist Master Class Series.

A native of Southern California, Dr. Kong is the recipient of national and international honors including performance fellowships from the American Academy of the Arts in Europe and the Bach Aria Festival, designation as a Laureate in the 1983 National Beethoven Foundation Fellowship Auditions, three Ruth Lorraine Close Fellowships, and the Irl Allison Grand Prize in the 1985 International Piano Recording Competition for her performance of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*. In addition to concertizing, her performances have been broadcast over numerous radio stations including National Public Radio, WQXR in New York, WFMT in Chicago and CKWR in Ontario.

Recent international performances include appearances in the 2013 International Festival of Orchestras and Youth in Cartagena, Colombia; a 2015 10-day concert tour of Brazil under the auspices of the Partners of the Americas and the U. S. State Department; and performances this past October with University of Richmond's Dr. Michael Davison and President Ronald Crutcher in Havana, Cuba. She is in frequent demand as a chamber, instrumental and vocal coach, and has been recognized for her exceptional work with gifted young musicians, including pianist Kyle Hu who last year was the first prize winner of both the Arhus International Piano Competition and the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. Dr. Kong is currently the director of the accompanying and chamber music programs at the University of Richmond.

Website: www.joannekongmusic.com

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 these groups on triumphant tours of the former U.S.S.R.

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

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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 performed 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.

University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra

1st violin

Hannah Sullivan, Concertmaster
Daniel Yoo, Assistant Concertmaster
Mary Lee
Brian Sun
Michael Robinson
Shiv Toolsidass
Noah Robinson
John Turner*
Karen Titus*
Lani Wisner*
Anna Saakian*
Dhilan Kamani*

2nd violin

Makayla Clemmer,* Principal
Jenna Lee
Grace Allen*
William Hunt*
Abigail Schofield
Randy Allen*
Aaron Ellerbrock*
Carolyn Thurber*
Eileen Downey**
Lauren Campbell*

Viola

Teresa Conti,* Principal
Katie Baker*
Kitty Moyer*
John Bander*
Nicole D'Onofrio
Hannah VanHuss
Amanda Schmitt

Cello

Catherine Edwards, Principal
John Cavaliere
Francy Cabrera Paz
Colette Creamer
Marilyn Kern*
Sidney Whitlock*
Laura Perez Rondon
Yesai Saakian*

Flute

Rachel Lantz, Principal
Tomi Jegede flute/piccolo
Eve Gilles
Chloe Lubin-Kirchner

Oboe

Elise Favia, oboe/English horn,
Principal
Benedict Roemer
Sam Cunde*, oboe/English horn

Clarinet

Michael Goldberg, Principal*
Anthony Isenhour
Doug Hurt*, bass clarinet

Bassoon

Arnold Wexler, Principal*
Eric Chang, Principal

Horn

Gretchen Georgas*, Principal
Michael Hartsough*
Dale Dean*
Emory Waters*

Continued ...

Trumpet

Thomas McCarty, Principal*

Timothy Park

Trombone

Rebecca Buffington, Principal**

Matt Chaffin*

Russ Wolz*

Timpani

John Hubbard**

Percussion

Korry Woessner*

Harp

Azalea Ginete

Caroline Fernandez

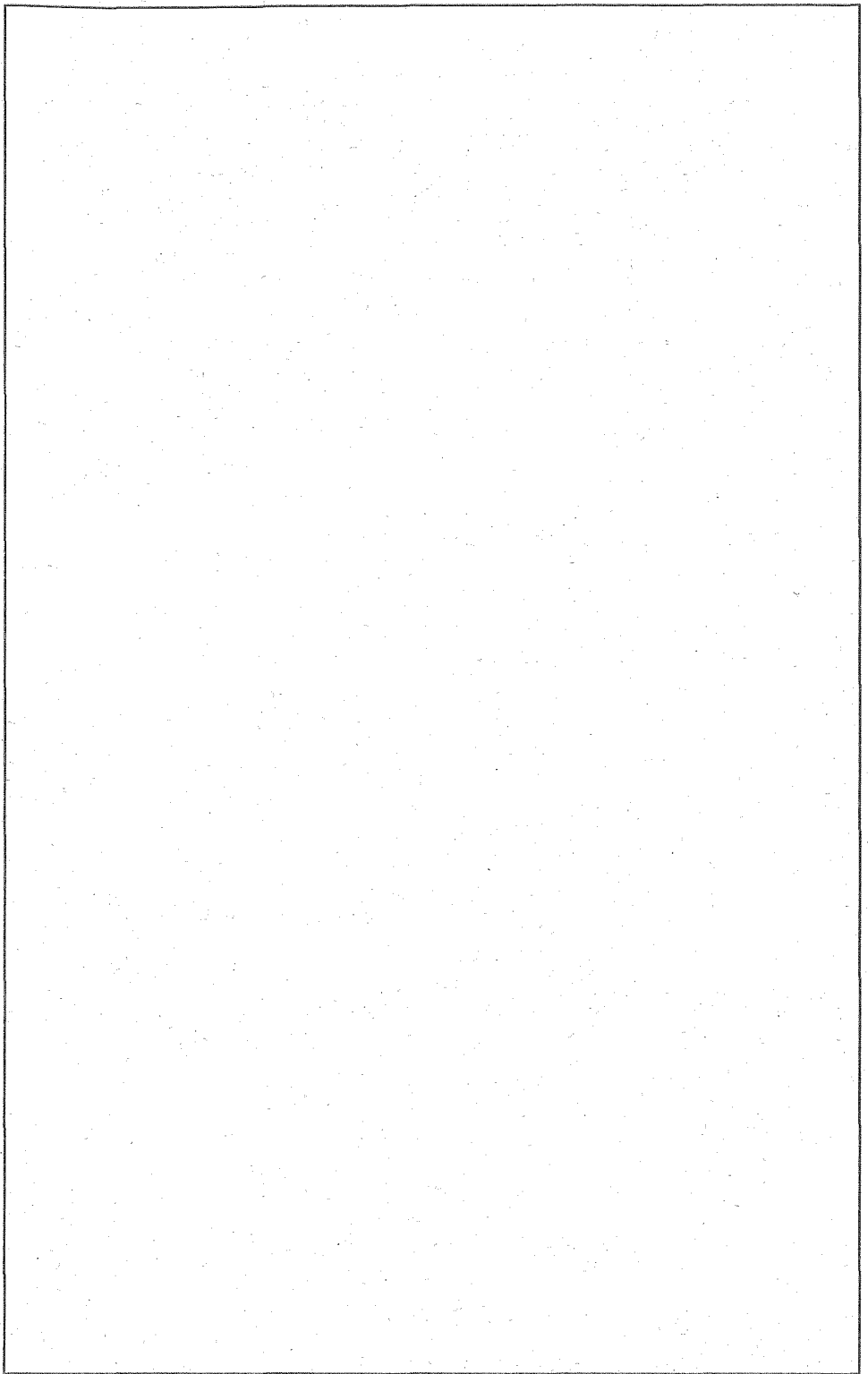
Librarian and Assistant to the Conductor: Elise Favia

Community Musicians' Personnel Manager: Gretchen Georgas*

*Community Musician

** University of Richmond Faculty/Staff

*** University of Richmond Alumni





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