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University of Richmond
Department of Music

**Fall 2022-Spring 2023
Concert Series**

UR Symphony Orchestra

Naima Burrs, conductor

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

7:30 p.m.

Alice Jepson Theatre



music.richmond.edu

PROGRAM

Carmen Suite No. 1 Georges Bizet
(1838-1875)
Prélude
Aragonaise
Intermezzo
Séguedille
Les Dragons d'Alcala
Final: Les Toréadors

Concerto in E-flat Major for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra, op. 109 Alexander Glazunov
(1865-1936)

Tim Wen, saxophone
Winner of the 2022 Concerto Competition

-- Intermission --

Petite suite de concert, op. 77 Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
(1875-1912)
II. *Demande et réponse*

Carmen Suite No. 2 Bizet
Marche des contrebandiers
Habanera
Nocturne
Chanson du toréador
La Garde montante
Danse bohème

*Please silence all electronic devices before the performance begins.
Recording of any kind and photography are strictly prohibited.*

Notes on the Program

Georges Bizet. *Carmen* Suites, Nos. 1 and 2

The son of two musicians, Georges Bizet was so precocious that the Paris Conservatoire waived its age requirement to admit him just shy of his tenth birthday. The boy made astonishing progress, earning prizes for his piano playing, although it took two attempts to win the famed *Prix de Rome* composition contest. While Bizet enjoyed the Italian sojourn that his victory provided, he was less diligent about writing the music that was expected from the winner. Returning home after three years, he discovered that doors did not open easily for him. Parisian opera houses, where Bizet intended to make his mark, were largely unreceptive to young French composers. His first staged opera, *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (*The Pearl Fishers*), was a failure, and his second, *La jolie Fille de Perth* (*The Fair Maid of Perth*) earned only moderate success. The response to Bizet's orchestral and chamber works was similarly underwhelming, although a suite fashioned from his incidental music for the play *L'Arlesienne* was enthusiastically received.

In 1872 Bizet began work on the composition that would earn him everlasting fame: *Carmen*, commissioned by the Opéra Comique, a theater that specialized in family entertainment. Typical of the works staged here, *Carmen* alternated musical numbers with spoken dialogue; shockingly unexpected, however, were its amoral characters and violent ending. Casting difficulties and resistance within the theater's management delayed the first performance, which ended in failure and scandal. Weeks later, the 36-year-old Bizet died unexpectedly of a heart attack. Later that year, *Carmen* was performed in Vienna, with sung recitatives composed by Bizet's friend Ernest Guiraud in place of the spoken dialogue. This production was the first of many to triumph, earning Bizet posthumous accolades for his exciting, Spanish-tinged score. Today, *Carmen* is one of the most beloved and frequently performed operas in the repertoire.

A few years after Bizet's death, Guiraud arranged themes from *Carmen* into two suites for orchestra. Neither follows the order of the original score, with the first suite comprised largely of orchestral interludes and the second of vocal numbers from all four acts.

Continued ...

Alexander Glazunov. Concerto in E-flat Major for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra

Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, to a wealthy family. His gifts as both a pianist and a composer were quickly recognized, and while still a teenager he began studies with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. With the support of a wealthy merchant, Glazunov was soon gaining notice as both a conductor and a composer. By his late twenties he had written four of his eight symphonies, as well as three string quartets, several songs, and numerous piano works. In 1899 he began teaching at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and in 1905 he became its director. Fallout from the Russian Revolution made Glazunov's job increasingly difficult. In 1928 he left the USSR to settle in Paris, where he wrote four more symphonies, five concertos, and his best-known work, the ballet *The Seasons*, among other compositions. Glazunov died in 1936, at the age of 70. He was initially buried in Paris, but in the 1970s his remains were returned to the Soviet Union, where he was finally, if belatedly, recognized as a great composer.

Glazunov's interest in the saxophone dates from the early 1930s, when he composed a quartet that has become a standard of the repertoire for this instrument. A few years later, the German virtuoso Sigurd Raschèr approached Glazunov to compose a saxophone concerto for him. While Glazunov appears to have regarded Raschèr as a nuisance, he nonetheless finished the one-movement concerto in 1934. It turned out to be his final work, which he did not live to hear performed.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Petite suite de concert

Born in London to a white English mother and an African father, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor exhibited musical talent at an early age. Sent to study violin at the Royal College of Music, he soon switched to composition under the tutelage of Charles Villiers Stanford. Coleridge-Taylor found success as both a conductor and a composer, earning him the nickname "the African Mahler," and his cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* was once as popular as Handel's *Messiah*. While touring the United States in 1904, Coleridge-Taylor was invited to the White House by Theodore Roosevelt. An interest in the

heritage of his father, a descendant of formerly enslaved Africans who resettled in Sierra Leone, inspired Coleridge-Taylor to incorporate elements of traditional African music into many of his compositions, and to speak out against racial prejudice. A prolific composer, he wrote numerous orchestral pieces, choral works, a violin concerto, and an unfinished opera. Despite the praise that was showered on his music, Coleridge-Taylor struggled financially, and at age 37 he died of pneumonia, exacerbated by overwork. Reflecting the esteem in which he was held, King George V granted his widow a small pension.

Coleridge-Taylor composed the *Petite suite de concert* in 1910. One of his lighter works, it consists of four movements: “La caprice de Nanette,” “Demande et réponse,” “Un sonnet d’amour,” and “Tarantelle frétilante.” The melody of the graceful “Demande et réponse” was later adapted into a song titled “Question and Answer.”

-- Notes by Linda B. Fairtile

The Performers

Tim Wen is a sophomore at the University of Richmond majoring in economics, geography, and music. He is from Suzhou, China. He started his musical journey when he began studying saxophone with Mingjie Yin at the age of 10. In high school, he joined the school’s big band and started self-learning saxophone for two years. After coming to the University of Richmond in 2021, Tim began saxophone studies with Jason Scott and won second place in the woodwind group in the 2022 Young



Soloist International Competition. He participates in both the Chamber Ensembles, under the direction of Dr. Joanne Kong, and the Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Dr. Michael Davison. He is also a member of *A Jazz Christmas* off-campus, under the direction of Dr. David Esleck. After graduation, Tim is interested in pursuing a Ph.D. either in urban studies or urban planning. He would like

Continued ...

to thank Mr. Yin, Mr. Scott, Dr. Kong, Dr. Davison, his parents, and friends for all of their support on his musical journey.

Naima Burrs is a violinist and conductor from Richmond, Virginia. She studied at the University of Northern Iowa, where she received a Master of Music degree in violin performance while serving as a Graduate Assistant during her studies. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Virginia Commonwealth University. Burrs was featured as a guest on NPR's show *With Good Reason*, where she discussed her upbringing and career, and performed works celebrating the contributions of African-American composers and musicians.



Burrs was one of four conductors chosen to participate in the 2021 Wintergreen Music Festival, as a Summit Conductor, where she worked with master teachers James Ross and Erin Freeman. In July of 2022, she was selected as a participant in Conducting Academy of the Domaine Forget International Music Festival (Québec, Canada), where she studied with Maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin, music director of the Metropolitan Opera.

During the 2021-22 season, Burrs served as conductor of the Hopkins Concert Orchestra and the assistant conductor of the Hopkins Symphony Orchestra at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. In January of 2022, Burrs was appointed Music Director of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra. Also this year, she joined the faculty at the University of Richmond, serving as conductor of the University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra.

Burrs is a full-time instructor at Virginia State University. She has also served on the faculty at Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College. Burrs is a Doctor of Musical Arts degree candidate in instrumental conducting at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

University of Richmond Symphony Orchestra
Naima Burrs, Conductor

Violin 1

Noah Robinson, concertmaster
Faith Yeh, assistant concertmaster
Emelie Hochwald
Nori Stone
Parisa Mershon
John Turner*

Violin 2

Hannah Lwin, principal
Gabba Aldeguer
Lianna Augusto
Kevin Zhang
Ria Valenzi*
Rex Britton*
Eileen Downey***

Viola

Adele Kelley, principal
Katie Baker*
John Bander*
Dick Stone**

Cello

Julia Stevermer, principal
Miah Wilson
Amy Jablonski
Marilyn Kern*
Sidney Whitlock*

Bass

Michael Stumpf*, principal

Flute

Jasmin Rubiera, principal
Susan Jones*

Clarinet

Michael Goldberg*, principal
Caty Campbell

Oboe

Bryant Keeling, principal

Bassoon

Arnold Wexler*, principal

Horn

Gretchen Georgas*, principal
Nelson Lawson*
Roxanne Williams*

Trumpet

Argenis Gonzalez*, principal
Thom McCarty*

Trombone

Eli Chancey, principal
Rebecca Buffington***
Russ Wolz*

Tuba

Russ Wolz*

Harp

Aelan Snyder

Timpani/Percussion

Steven Barton***, principal
Cameron Peterson
Holly Wimple
David Chambliss*
Steven Shepperson*

* Community Musician

** University of Richmond Alumni

*** University of Richmond Faculty/Staff



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