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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
Department of Music

Fall 2023 – Spring 2024
Concert Series

University of Richmond
Symphony Orchestra

Naima Burrs, Conductor

Wednesday, December 6, 2023
7:30 PM
Camp Concert Hall
Booker Hall of Music



music.richmond.edu

PROGRAM

Sinfonietta No. 1 (“Silver”)

I. Serenata

II. Let Me Tell You How It Started

Bob Good

(b. 1959)

Concerto No. 2 in C Minor,
for Piano and Orchestra

I. *Moderato*

Sergei Rachmaninoff

(1873-1943)

Ben Nguyen, piano

Winner of the 2023 Concerto Competition

-- Pause (10 minutes) --

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor (“Unfinished”)

I. *Allegro moderato*

II. *Andante con moto*

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

African Suite

IV. *Danse nègre* (African Dance)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

(1875-1912)

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Bob Good. Sinfonietta No. 1

Bob Good is a prolific British composer, arranger, and conductor with an eclectic body of work grounded in classical, jazz, and musical theatre traditions. His 500 tracks of production music – recordings licensed for use in film, television, radio, commercials, and corporate communications – have had global reach. Placements have included BBC, ITV, Australia 9, Finnish Films, and Canal Vie. He has produced a series of albums of music for use by dance teachers in instruction, rehearsal, and competition. Many of Good's production music and other compositions are available as sheet music. *Sinfonietta No. 1* comprises three movements, each about three minutes long: "Serenata," "Let Me Tell You How It Started," and "After the Storm." The second and third movements were inspired by melodies from Good's musical *Silver's Ghost*. The composer says that he was prompted to create a short, melodic, accessible symphony as a means of getting young people interested in classical music. The work premiered in Reading, England in October 2022. (Notes from Ottawa Youth Concert Orchestra)

Sergei Rachmaninoff. Concerto in C Minor, for Piano and Orchestra

Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor is a powerful and emotive work composed in 1900-1901. The concerto is renowned for its lush melodies, intricate pianism, and expansive Romantic expression.

The first movement, *Moderato*, opens with a dramatic theme introduced by the orchestra. The piano enters with a contrasting, passionate melody, leading to a captivating interplay between the soloist and the orchestra. Rachmaninoff's signature use of rich harmonies and sweeping melodies is evident throughout.

Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto is celebrated for its technical demands on the pianist, as well as its emotional depth and grand orchestral writing. It

remains one of the most beloved and frequently performed piano concertos in the classical repertoire.

Franz Schubert. Symphony No. 8 in B Minor

Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, commonly known as the "Unfinished Symphony," is a notable work from the early 19th century. Composed in 1822, it consists of two movements: *Allegro moderato* and *Andante con moto*. Schubert left the symphony incomplete, with only these two movements fully orchestrated.

The *Allegro moderato* presents a dramatic and mysterious opening, marked by a haunting melody and a sense of tension. The *Andante con moto*, in contrast, features a lyrical and expressive second movement with a beautiful melody.

The symphony is celebrated for its emotional depth, memorable melodies, and the unresolved mystery of why Schubert left it unfinished. Despite its incomplete nature, the "Unfinished Symphony" remains a masterpiece in the Romantic repertoire, captivating audiences with its rich orchestration and poignant themes.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Danse nègre

Danse nègre is a captivating composition by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a British composer of mixed-race descent who gained prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Composed in 1904, it was originally a short piano piece (later arranged for full orchestra) reflecting Coleridge-Taylor's interest in African and African-American musical elements, such as the lively and syncopated opening rhythm. The melody is characterized by catchy motifs and a rhythmic vitality that captures the spirit of a dance.

Coleridge-Taylor, influenced by the Romantic tradition, infuses *Danse nègre* with a blend of exoticism and impressionism, creating a unique and evocative

atmosphere. The composition is a testament to Coleridge-Taylor's exploration of diverse musical influences and his commitment to representing his heritage in his works.

Overall, *Danse nègre* stands as a vivid example of Coleridge-Taylor's ability to blend various musical styles while celebrating the rich cultural tapestry from which he drew inspiration. It remains a charming and historically significant piece within the composer's repertoire.

-- Notes by Naima Burrs



Ben Nguyen (piano soloist) is a sophomore at the University of Richmond, majoring in mathematical economics and business administration with a concentration in finance. He is from Hanoi, Vietnam. He began studying the piano at the age of seven with Dr. Huy Phuong. Throughout his musical journey, Ben has won first and second places in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, in International Piano Competitions in Nanning (China), Bangkok (Thailand), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), and Seoul (Korea). In high school, he joined HAT (Hanoi - Amsterdam Art Team) and co-hosted theatre shows for two years. In addition, Ben was awarded the LMusA diploma by the Australian Music Examinations Board in 2019. Since coming to the University of Richmond in 2022, Ben participates in both piano lessons, under the direction of Mr. Richard Becker, and chamber ensembles, under the direction of Dr. Joanne Kong.



Naima Burrs (conductor) 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

Violin 1

Noah Robinson, concertmaster
Emelie Hochwald
Hannah Lwin
Lydiya Chambers
Brett Phillips
John W. Turner*

Violin 2

Lucas Chuidian, principal
Isabella Aldeguer
Ria Valenzi*
Rex Britton*
Mingyang Jiang
Eileen Downey**
Megan Campbell

Viola

Adele Kelley, principal
Greg Hughes
Leo Muller
Vanessa Giraldo-Castano
John Bander*
Dick Stone***
Katie Baker*

Cello

Lena Ondreyka, principal
Miah Wilson
Kate Bae
Josh Walker

Bass

Michael A. Stumpf*, principal

Flute

Susan Jones***

Oboe

Karl Spiker*, principal
Lisa Bilski*

Clarinet

Michael Goldberg*, principal
Cathy Campbell

Bassoon

Arnold Wexler*

Horn

Gretchen Georgas*, principal
Ava Scott
Roxanne Williams*
Andrew Adams

Continued...

Trumpet

Argenis Gonzalez*, principal
Nomar Mejia

Trombone

Rebecca Buffington**, principal
Dave Davis*

Tuba

Russell Wolz*

Timpani

Cory Woessner

Percussion

Cameron Peterson

* Community Musician

** University of Richmond Faculty/Staff

*** University of Richmond Alumni



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