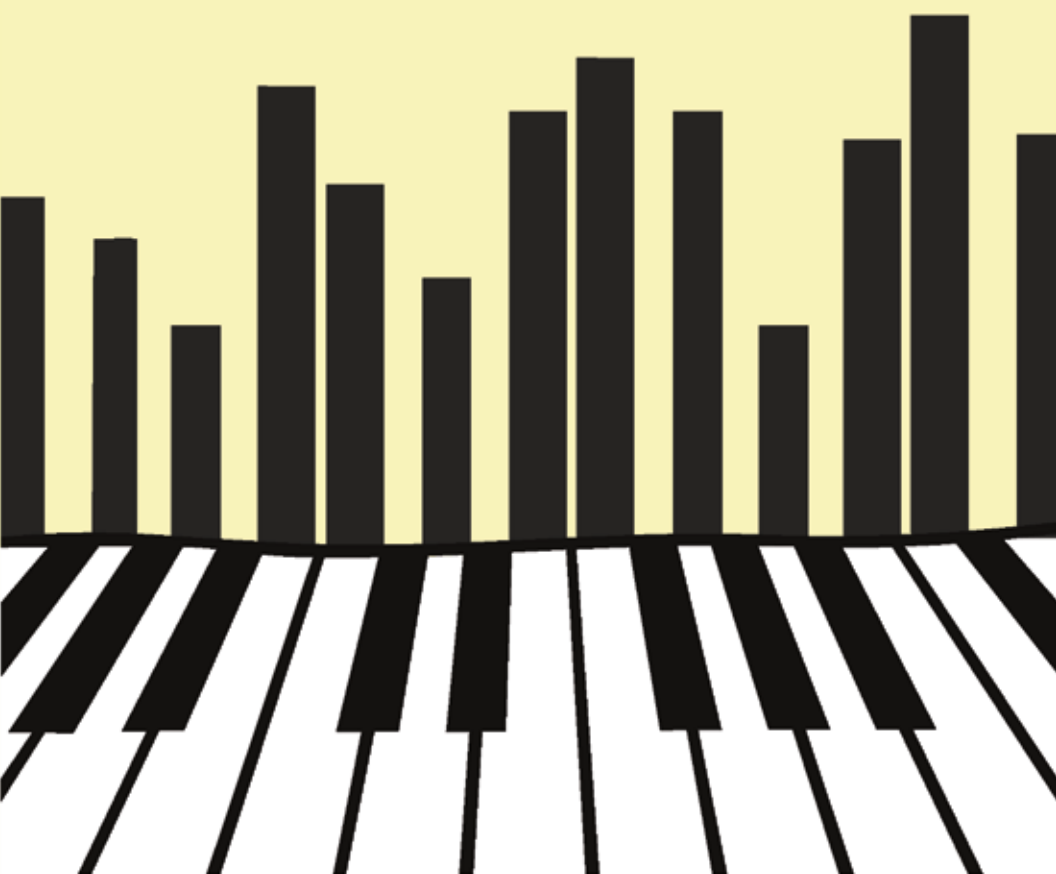


TRIUMPHANT

2021 - 2022 Season

VALDOSTA
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Valdosta Symphony Orchestra season at Valdosta State University. We are celebrating 32 years of changing lives through the power of music, and we are delighted to have you join us from your favorite seat in Whitehead Auditorium for what promises to be five exceptional concerts.

When the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra performed its first concert in November 1990, VSU was the only institution of higher education in Georgia to have its own university-affiliated symphony orchestra. Today we remain committed to leading development in and serving as a resource for arts that support the growth of our 41-county service area across South Georgia — because the arts play a central role in driving innovation.

The American Prize-winning Valdosta Symphony Orchestra serves both the cultural life of Valdosta and the regional academic mission of VSU. The high standard of performance of the orchestra enables it to attract guest soloists of national and international renown to the Valdosta community. Its membership is a unique blend of resident artist-faculty, students studying professional music disciplines, talented community performers, and carefully selected professionals from a five-state region.

The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra has become an important part of the cultural life of the entire region. In addition to its concert performances, it offers musical enrichment grants to support VSU students pursuing creative endeavors. It provides exploratory string classes for children and adults through the South Georgia String Project, offers a special Youth Concert Series for school children and their teachers, and introduces the instruments of the orchestra to young children during the annual Tunes for Tots.

The ongoing global pandemic has created opportunities for all of us to pivot and find unique ways to thrive during this time of unexpected challenge. It has also shown us that music plays a pivotal role in uplifting our lives, helping us maintain a sense of connectedness, and healing our souls.

We are grateful for every member of the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra — especially our Department of Music students, faculty, and staff — for their tireless dedication to the musical arts and their willingness to share their talents with others. We are also grateful for the many individuals, families, and corporations who generously support, protect, and nurture the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra's and VSU's tradition of musical excellence.

Thank you for being a part of our audience.

Enjoy the performance!



Richard A. Carvajal, Ph.D.
President of Valdosta State University



Greetings.

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the thirty second season of the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra. The 2021-2022 performances reflect a wide variety of stylistic vision and will provide wonderful experiences for our audiences. We are so fortunate to be able to feature talented guest performers as well as showcase the outstanding artistry of our faculty through solo performances, and collaborative leadership.



One of my favorite quotes I share with my students comes from the recently deceased artist, Chuck Close. Discussing the topic of inspiration, he says “Inspiration is for amateurs. The rest of us just show up and get to work. If you wait around for the clouds to part and a bolt of lightning to strike you in the brain, you are not going to make an awful lot of work. All the best ideas come out of the process; they come out of the work itself.”

I want to commend the many individuals who have spent the past year rolling up their sleeves and getting to work addressing the problems at hand, and discovering creative ways for us to be able to perform, create, and share with our patrons. The results of this work reflect the vision of the college and the talented individuals committed to artistic excellence, who believe in the strength of creative capital and its impact on our community. We are so grateful for the continued support of our advisory boards, benefactors, audiences, our faculty and students, and the support of Valdosta State University.

This great orchestra continues to evolve, sharing a spirit of inspiration, and creativity. Our goal is for that spirit to continue and we are delighted that you have chosen to be part of this effort. Together we reaffirm our mission to expand opportunities for the public to experience this unique art form throughout the region.

We appreciate your attendance and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Blake Pearce', written in a cursive style.

A. Blake Pearce

Dean, College of the Arts

Concert Sponsor



About the Artist

Beibei Lin

Dr. Beibei Lin serves on faculty at Valdosta State University as Assistant Professor of Piano and Graduate Coordinator of the Music Department. Dr. Lin debuted as a soloist with the MasterWorks Festival Orchestra at age seventeen, performing under the direction of Miriam Burns. Since then, she has maintained a busy schedule of performances; notable ones include collaborative appearances at the 2016 International Double Reed Society Conference and a solo appearance at the 2017 Women Composers Festival of Hartford. She served as a collaborative pianist at the 2018 and 2019 MasterWorks Festival at Converse College in Spartanburg, SC. She has presented solo and collaborative guest artist recitals at universities throughout the United States including University of Kansas, Wichita State University, University of Central Washington, Oklahoma City University, Texas Christian University, among others.



Widely sought after as an adjudicator, she has judged the Florida Junior and Senior Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Piano Competitions, the Alabama Music Teachers Association (AMTA) Auditions, the Georgia Music Teachers Association (GMTA) Auditions, and the Alabama All-State Orchestra Auditions.

As a researcher, Dr. Lin's work on the pedagogical trends in 21st-Century China was published in the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy Forum. She actively contributes to recent scholarship through performances and presentations at national conferences including The Sport Professionals' Experience and Research (SPEAR) Conference, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy (NCKP), the MTNA Piano Pedagogy Symposium, and the MTNA Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy (GP3) Forum. Recent research presentations include those for the Atlanta Music Teachers Association Chapter Meeting, the Georgia Music Teachers Association Conference, Florida State University MTNA Chapter, and the College Music Society Southern Division Conference.

She is currently serving as VP of Membership in the Georgia Music Teachers Association and hosts the Georgia Music Teachers Association Podcast.

Prior to her appointment at Valdosta State University, Dr. Lin taught at Columbus State University in Columbus, GA. Dr. Lin completed her Doctor of Music in Piano Performance and Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy and Performance from The Florida State University. She completed her Bachelor of Music, Summa Cum Laude, in Piano Performance at Arizona State University. Her piano mentors include Heidi Louise Williams and Walter Cosand.

Beibei Lin lives in Valdosta, GA with her faithful and loving cat, Zhazha. They are both avid gardeners.

About the Music Director

PHOTO BY PAUL LEAVY



Howard Hsu

Howard Hsu is the Music Director of the Valdosta (GA) Symphony Orchestra and also serves as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Orchestra Studies at Valdosta State University. Under his leadership, the Valdosta Symphony was selected as the 2014 winner of the American Prize in Orchestral

Performance (community division), and has had performances aired statewide on Georgia Public Broadcasting Radio's "Midday Music" and "Orchestras of Georgia" programs. Hsu has performed with the Canadian Brass, Robert McDuffie, Simone Dinnerstein, Jennifer Frautschi, Wendy Warner, Christine Brewer, Rachel Barton Pine, Orion Weiss, Stanford Olsen, Alexander Ghindin, Alexander Schimpf, Katia Skanavi, Awadagin Pratt, Elena Urioste, Amy Schwartz Moretti, the Empire Brass, and the Melodica Men. He conducted the world premiere of James Oliverio's Trumpet Concerto No. 1: World House, the U.S. premiere of Ned McGowan's Concerto for iPad and Orchestra (Rotterdam Concerto 2), and has given the Georgia premieres of Fernande Decruck's Sonata for Saxophone and Orchestra, several of the Debussy/Matthews Preludes, and Jonathan Bailey Holland's Motor City Dance Mix.

Howard Hsu has appeared as guest conductor with the Hartford (CT), Fox Valley (WI), Wyoming, Macon (GA), and New Britain (CT) Symphonies, as well as the Bronx (NY) Arts Ensemble, with whom he conducted the world premiere of Eleanor Cory's O'Keeffe's Flora. He was a Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Connecticut and Associate Conductor of the University of Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, and was Visiting Instructor of Music and Director of the Orchestra at Connecticut College.

Howard Hsu has worked closely with groups dedicated to training young musicians, including the Lake George (NY) Opera Festival, where he served as Associate Conductor and Music Director of the Apprentice opera scenes concerts. Hsu has conducted the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association All State Orchestra, Georgia Music Educators Association All State 9/10 Orchestra, and the Georgia Governor's Honors Program Orchestra and String Ensemble. Through the Hartford Symphony's Mentoring Program he served as a Master Teaching Artist, and was a faculty member with The Harlem (NY) School of the Arts. Howard Hsu received his D.M.A. from the University of Connecticut, his M.M. from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and his B.S. from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

About the Assistant Conductor

Neil Rao

Neil Rao is the Assistant Conductor for the Valdosta (GA) Symphony Orchestra and concurrently serves as the Graduate Assistant to Dr. Howard Hsu at Valdosta State University. A 2021 recipient of the Valdosta Symphony's Musician Enrichment Grant, Neil participated in the Monteux School and Music Festival in Hancock, Maine. Neil's teachers at the Monteux School include Michael Jinbo; Ludovic Morlot, former music director of the Seattle Symphony; and Neal Gittelman, Music Director of the Dayton Philharmonic.



Neil has an extensive background as a freelance composer, educator, and percussionist. Neil's compositions have been commissioned or performed by groups including the Louisville Orchestra, Lineage Percussion, the University of Louisville Percussion Ensemble, and musicians at the Pierre Monteux School. A fervent advocate for new music, Neil has performed dozens of world premieres and has commissioned solo percussion music which is now standard repertoire for the genre. Neil's career as a percussionist has taken him from Louisville's Brown Theater to the Salzburg Mozarteum, where he has performed solo, orchestral, and chamber music with equal fluency. He holds the B.M. in Timpani/Percussion from the Curtis Institute of Music.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

PLEASE DO

- Turn off your pager and watch alarms.
- Consult the program for the number of movements in a piece to know when to clap at the end.
- Unwrap your cough drop before the music starts so it's ready if you need it.
- Cover your mouth to cough/sneeze to muffle the sound.
- Wear your mask.
- Put your cell phone on silent.

PLEASE DON'T

- Talk or whisper during the performance.
- Sing, or tap your fingers/feet to the music.
- Bring young children to the concert - our Youth concerts are specially geared towards developing attention spans.
- Leave or take your seat during the music (unless you did not follow the previous rule - in that case, please escort your disruptive child out as quickly as possible). Please wait until you hear applause.
- Clap between movements thinking it's the end of the piece. When in doubt, wait for others to clap first.
- Use flash photography or recording devices during the concert (these actions are illegal in this hall).

The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra

32nd Season

Howard Hsu, Music Director

“Triumphant”

April 23, 2022

*This concert is sponsored by
Valdosta Family Medicine Associates, P.C.*

Finlandia, Op. 26 | 9 mins

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Neil Rao, conductor

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D-flat Major, Op. 10 | 17 mins

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

I. Allegro brioso

II. Andante assai

III. Allegro scherzando

Beibei Lin, piano

~ *INTERMISSION* ~

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 | 36 mins

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

I. Allegro con brio

II. Andante con moto

III. Scherzo: Allegro

IV. Allegro

Howard Hsu, conductor

THE VALDOSTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Clell Wright, *Chorusmaster*

Neil Rao, *Assistant Conductor*

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Nina Lutz, *Concertmaster*
Leona Strickland Hudson
Chair

Kristin Pfeifer Yu,
Acting Concertmaster;
Principal

Alexander Reshetnichenko,
Assistant Principal

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Carissa Walker
Erika Chinander
Sergio Sabillon

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Kenneth Davis, *Acting*
Principal

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Jennifer Clyde
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Laurel Yu, *Principal*
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Jared Cooper
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Jordan Galvarino
Lina Aldana
Christina Wong

Contrabass

Tod Leavitt, *Principal*
Gabriel Monticello, *Assistant*
Principal

Joshua Weathers
Abishai Diaz
Supushpa Mahadeo

Flute

Jessica Sherer, *Principal*
Kaitlyn Calcagino

Piccolo

Elizabeth Goode

Oboe

Susan Eischeid, *Principal*
Allan and Joan Dear Chair
Lindsay Miller

Clarinet

Peter Geldrich, *Principal*
Kay Jennett Chair
Kasey Cote

Bassoon

Nina Scheibe, *Principal*
Sherwood Wise

Contrabassoon

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Valdosta Symphony Orchestra

ABOUT THE MUSIC

by Alan M. Rothenberg

Finlandia

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Jean Sibelius' musical career began as a violin student at the Helsinki Music Institute, but he turned to composition in the late 1880s, studying in Vienna with Karl Goldmark, composer of the Rustic Wedding Symphony and other works popular at the time. He returned to his native Finland in 1891 and began studying Finnish folk songs and mythology, incorporating them into tone poems and other pieces.

Finland had been a Russian province since 1809, but in 1899 Tsar Nicholas II started to restrict its autonomy, igniting a simmering anger against the Russians. Shortly after Nicholas' decree, Sibelius composed a suite of pieces to accompany a historical melodrama. The final two scenes of the melodrama depicted the Russian invasion of Finland in 1714, and then a patriotic finale titled "Finland Awakes." At the suggestion of conductor Robert Kajanus, Sibelius took the music for the last section and expanded it into a stand-alone work. It was performed numerous times under different titles; it wasn't until he had published a piano version of the piece that it was given the title Finlandia.

Finlandia quickly became an orchestral staple, especially in Sibelius' home country, and many arrangements were made. Different texts were added to the hymn section first heard in the woodwinds and eventually taken up by the entire orchestra. In 1941, Sibelius agreed to creating a stand-alone version of the hymn using lyrics by Finnish poet Veikko Koskenniemi, and it is with this text that Finlandia has become a second national anthem for Finland.

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D-flat Major, Op. 10

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

A gifted pianist, Sergei Prokofiev's piano music is considered one of the cornerstones of the twentieth century repertoire. Prokofiev himself characterized the main elements of his compositions as: (1) the classical, with particular influence from Beethoven's piano sonatas, (2) an innovative harmonic idiom, (3) the toccata or motor element, (4) lyrical elements, and (5) satirical elements, which he called "scherzo-ness, jest, laughter, mockery."

Prokofiev was a brash, overconfident character, especially while a student at the Moscow Conservatory. By careful maneuvering, he got his first solo piano pieces published, which allowed him to seek out more prominent performing opportunities, such as a concerto with orchestra. At the age of twenty-one he premiered his first piano concerto—the first concerto he composed, and his first appearance as a soloist with orchestra. Critical reaction was not positive—one reviewer wrote that the young composer-pianist was "ripe for the straitjacket," although audience response

was quite positive. His persistence, and self-promotion, paid off, and with this concerto he won the conservatory's Anton Rubinstein Prize, and his dual career as pianist and composer began.

Jonathan Kramer explains the dichotomy between the critical and public reception of the concerto, noting that “it is easy to hear the brashness and verve that excited the first audiences and horrified Prokofiev’s learned professors and some of the stuffer newspaper critics... What struck early listeners as cacophony today seems more like the unbridled exuberance of youth. This is exciting, extroverted music.” Prokofiev biographer Harlow Robinson wrote, “The First Concerto established Prokofiev as a bold new force.”

The concerto can be viewed as in one movement with three sections, or as three movements played without pause. The concerto gets down to business right away, with a grandiose theme that returns periodically to provide a sense of unity. Much flashy pianism follows—Prokofiev treats the piano as a percussion instrument more than a melodic one. The slow middle section is reminiscent of Rachmaninoff, but without any sentimentality. The concluding section includes a long cadenza for the soloist before rushing headlong into a rousing finish.

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

Completed in 1808. About the same time: 1807: Thomas Moore publishes “Irish Melodies,” Thomas Bowdler publishes an expurgated version of Shakespeare (hence the term “bowdlerized”). 1808: Russia invades Finland, 1809: Walnut Street Theater opens in Philadelphia—the oldest continually operating theater in the U.S.

Along with Mozart’s Fortieth and Schubert’s “Unfinished,” Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is among the most performed symphonic works. It has been called everything from “the consummate example of symphonic logic” (Paul Henry Lang) to “unmeaning babble” (Ludwig Spohr). Goethe dismissed it as “merely astonishing and grandiose,” but Hector Berlioz said it heralded “a completely new style on an unprecedented scale.” While perhaps it suffers from a certain amount of overexposure, each hearing reminds us of how utterly unique and original it is.

Beethoven began the symphony in 1804, not long after completing the Eroica Symphony. This was a particularly productive period for the composer; between 1804 and 1808 Beethoven wrote the three Op. 59 string quartets, three symphonies (the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth), a piano concerto, and the violin concerto. The first performance of the Fifth took place as part of the famous (or perhaps more accurately, infamous) concert of December 22, 1808. That concert also included the first performances of the Sixth Symphony, the Fourth Piano Concerto, three movements from the Mass in C, the Choral Fantasy for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra, and a few other pieces.

We know little of how the symphony was received at its premiere. Most accounts comment on the four-hour length of the concert, the discomfort of the unheated theater, and the under-rehearsed performances. But the most telling statement about the concert was published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the foremost music journal of the time, “To judge all these pieces after one and only hearing, especially considering the language of Beethoven’s works, in that so many were performed one after the other, and that most of them are so grand and long, is downright impossible.”

continued on next page

The famous four-note motive that begins the piece is heard in virtually every measure of the first movement and forms the melodic and rhythmic basis for the entire symphony. The innate tension in this motive and its immediate repetition signals the beginning of some great existential conflict about to take place. Yet when the music begins again it is quiet, builds to a climax, and then stops. The movement seems internally conflicted: starting and stopping, and moments of apparent calm followed by sudden agitation. It ends abruptly, without a satisfying conclusion—the conflict has momentarily stopped, unresolved.

It is in the second movement where we discover the basis for the struggle. The music alternates between major and minor keys—sometimes celebratory, sometimes quiet and tentative. It is about a struggle between minor and major—between despair and triumph.

The third movement scherzo is where the struggle is resolved. It begins with a ghostly C minor recollection of moments from the first movement, then the four-note motive reappears, driving and forceful. A boisterous trio section in C major interrupts, but the opening returns, this time even more halting and uncertain. Then the “solution” to the struggle appears—paradoxically in a moment of apparent calm. The four-note motive is reduced to a series of soft timpani beats. The violins recall the first theme of the movement, quietly going from minor to major, leading to the fourth movement, which arrives—the orchestra now supplemented with piccolo, trombones, and contrabassoon—as a celebration of C major. The festivities are interrupted by a quiet recollection of the first movement and the four-note motive, leading to a recapitulation of the movement’s opening rejoicing. A sudden increase in tempo carries us to an extended coda, where all the exuberance is reduced to just tonic and dominant chords before finally landing on the final C major chord. The first movement’s conflict—whatever it was—has been resolved in triumph.

Program Notes © 2022 by Alan M. Rothenberg www.noteperfectnotes.com

Valdosta Symphony Orchestra

2022-23 Season

September 24, 2022

Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*

October 22, 2022

Mozart Sinfonia Concertante in E-Flat Major, K. 364

Kristin Pfeifer Yu, violin

Laurel Yu, viola

Mozart Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551 “Jupiter”

February 25, 2023

Awadagin Pratt, piano

Roomful of Teeth

March 25, 2023

Brahms *A German Requiem*, Op. 45

Tamara Hardesty, soprano

Nathan Stark, bass-baritone

April 29, 2023

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Geneva Lewis, violin

Mahler Symphony No. 1 in D Major “Titan”



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