

VALDOSTA
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA





A Word From David Cummings




Dear Patron of the Arts,

The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra begins its 36th season this fall on September 27. Our music director, Dr. Howard Hsu, has an exciting year planned, with something for everyone. As our nation prepares for its 250th birthday on July 4, 2026, each VSO concert will include music that reflects American traditions. In addition to our five regular season concerts, we have added a special orchestra performance celebrating our Independence, on Friday, July 3, 2026 in Unity Park, downtown Valdosta. It's going to be a great season.

The VSO positively impacts our region by bringing excellent orchestral music to the Valdosta community and works hand in hand with the Valdosta State University to serve its academic mission by bringing a high standard of performance to the stage.

Additionally, the VSO has music outreach programs to further promote exposure to symphonic music. The VSO hosts Youth Concerts to introduce hundreds of local and area high school students to symphonic music. The VSO also helps provide musical instruments for the South Georgia String Project, allowing children and young people, who cannot afford to purchase their own instruments, the opportunity to learn and play. The Tunes for Tots, Wisenbaker, and LARC concerts bring joyful musical experiences to children and people with special needs. These and other music education programs are part of the VSO's efforts to help enrich the cultural life of Valdosta and South Georgia/North Florida.

Without the sale of season tickets and the financial backing of our patrons and sponsors, none of these programs would be possible. We invite you to take part in this ongoing musical endeavor by becoming a subscriber, patron, or corporate sponsor. Please

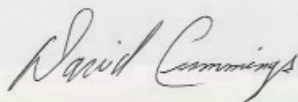


consider joining us at some level of support. A tax-deductible gift of any amount will help us reach more and more lives with classical music performance and education.

If you are already supporting the symphony, would you consider increasing that patronage to the next level? Below in this brochure is the explanation of how you may become involved financially with the continued success of the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra. I encourage you to support our local symphony.

Finally, help spread the word! Not everyone knows about the VSO. This coming season promises to be another in a long line of wonderful concert series. Invite your family, friends and coworkers, and make plans to join us on September 27th!

We, the VSO Board, thank the Valdosta Symphony Guild, our sponsors, patrons, donors and the VSU Administration, Foundation, College of the Arts, faculty and students for their strong commitment to the excellence of the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra and its music outreach programs. And thank you for supporting the arts and classical music!



Chairman,
Valdosta Symphony Orchestra Board

REASONS TO SUPPORT THE VALDOSTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

1. "Where words fail, music speaks"
-Hans Christian Andersen
2. Brings the musical adventure of symphonic music to the children of South Georgia and North Florida early in their development. The "Tunes for Tots" and "South Georgia String Project" (SGSP) are all part of the teaching, development and performance for young people that are a result of the Symphony outreach programs.
3. Patrons can endow a chair for one of our Principals in the Orchestra. A wall plaque will recognize donors at \$100,000 or more. The Plaque will be displayed outside Whitehead Auditorium in the lobby.
4. Your name, chosen names or anonymous donation will receive digital and print recognition on a regular season basis.
5. The big picture of substantial community donations by individuals and/or corporations demonstrates to the world that classical symphonic music and the arts are one of the foundations of a humane society that receives and shares the spirit of caring. It is a gift that keeps on giving.

VALDOSTA
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



Dear Friends,

As I write this I am still fondly remembering the VSO's previous season. Time flies by so quickly! We are already planning more incredible experiences that we can't wait to share with you this season.

Here are a few highlights:

❑ After unsuccessfully trying to schedule a concert with Van Cliburn Piano Competition medalist Joyce Yang for last five years, we finally have her coming to perform Jonathan Leshnoff's Rhapsody on *America* in honor of America's 250th anniversary.

❑ Peter Steiner (former Principal Trombone of the Vienna Philharmonic) and pianist Constanze Hochwartner are the soloists for Kevin Day's *DEPARTURES*. This might appear to be an unlikely instrumental duo, but you will be amazed by what the trombone and piano can do.

❑ Dvořák's "New World" Symphony is regularly ranked near the top of "Favorite Symphony" surveys. The symphony is full of enchanting melodies (including the haunting melody that was later arranged as "Goin' Home") and pulse-pounding rhythms inspired by folk music, so it's easy to see why. Dvořák composed it when he worked in the U.S., so it's truly "Made in America."



❑ VSO Principal Flute Sarah Jane Young makes her VSO solo debut on Lowell Liebermann's Flute Concerto No. 1. She has already demonstrated excellence in her first season as our Principal Flute, so I can't wait for her to take center stage where everyone can hear what incredible musicians we have in the VSO.

❑ Soprano Maria Valdes, a Marietta native who has sung with San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Atlanta Opera, makes her VSO debut as soloist to perform Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. You will be transported to an idealized summer evening as described by a child. Valdes will also perform several of Copland's *Old American Songs* including the charming Shaker song "Simple Gifts," which has entered popular culture through its use in movies and the media.

❑ Mezzo soprano Lynnette Chambers and tenor Samuel Cook will join VSU faculty members Susan Boddie (soprano) and Bradley Sowell (baritone) as soloists for Handel's *Messiah*. Christmas season performances of Handel's monumental oratorio have become a beloved American tradition. I am looking forward to seeing my colleague Clell Wright lead the combined forces of the VSO and multiple VSU choral ensembles in what promises to be a stirring concert, especially when the beloved "Hallelujah" chorus rings through Whitehead Auditorium.

❑ Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra was also "Made in America." After emigrating to America to escape the rise of the Nazis in World War II Europe, Bartók was poor, discouraged, and hospitalized with an illness when he was commissioned to compose a new work. He wrote the Concerto for Orchestra, which became a modern classic due to its rousing ability to showcase every section of the orchestra. Hearing this work performed "live" in a concert hall is an exhilarating season-closing experience that you won't want to miss.

❑ The VSO will perform a free outdoor summer concert at Unity Park – my first outdoor concert with the VSO!

We thank you for your continued support, and invite you back for more incredible experiences that only live orchestral music can provide!

Cordially,



Howard Hsu
Music Director

ONE

subscription concert

September 27, 2025 • 7 pm

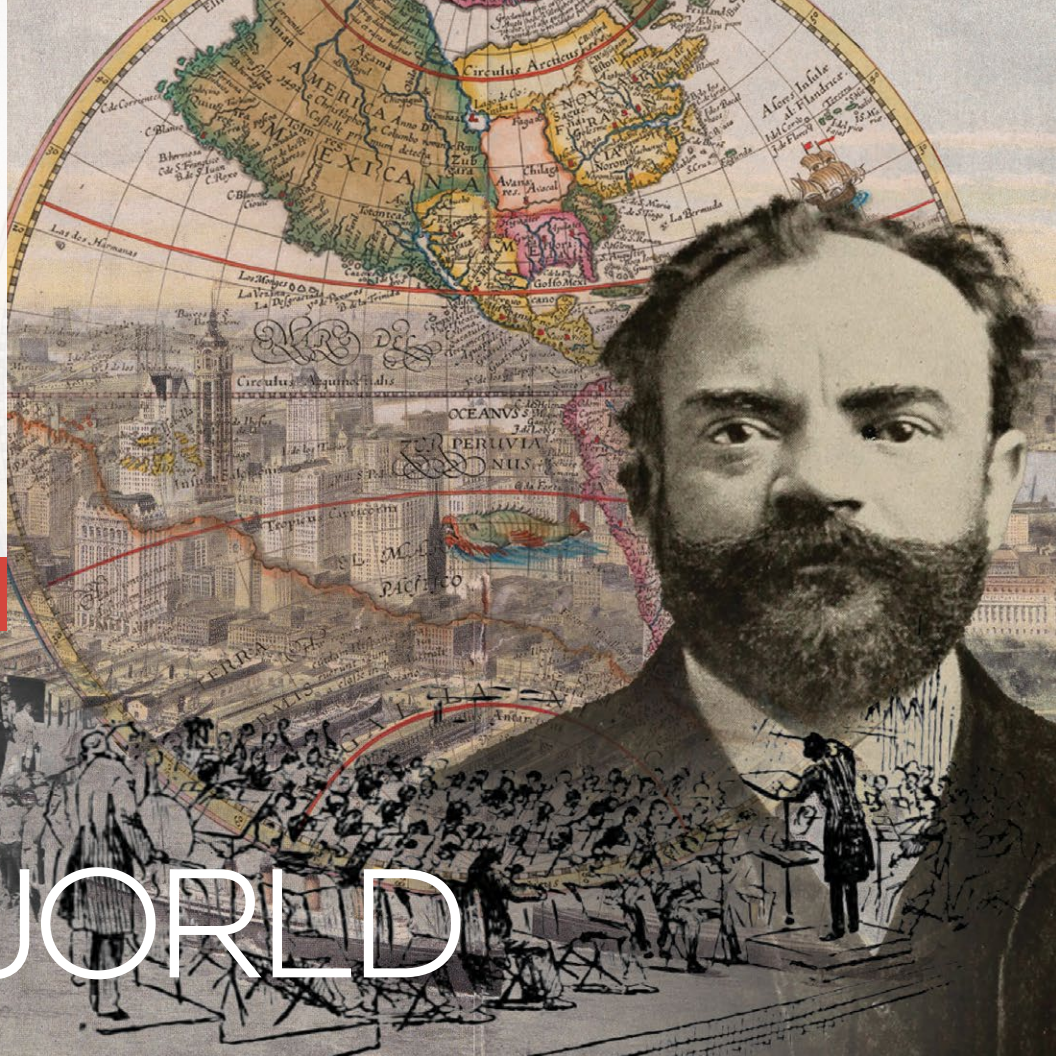
Jessie Montgomery *Soul Force*

Liebermann Concerto No. 1 for Flute and
Orchestra, Op. 39

Sarah Jane Young, flute

Dvořák Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95
“From the New World”

PRECONCERT CHAT: 6:15 p.m.



IN THE NEW WORLD



- * Dvořák composed his “New World” Symphony while working in New York City
- * During his stay in New York, Dvořák enjoyed trainspotting, watching ocean liners, and feeding pigeons
- * The haunting spiritual “Goin’ Home” was adapted from the “New World” Symphony’s melancholy English horn solo in the 2nd movement
- * The Liebermann Flute Concerto was originally commissioned by legendary flutist Sir James Galway, and remains a favorite as a showcase for flute virtuosity

*“ I would give all my symphonies
for inventing the locomotive. ”*

- Antonin Dvořák

Concert Sponsor



Whitehead Auditorium | **Reservations Required**

Tickets \$34/\$31/\$24 each | www.valdostasymphony.org or call (229) 333-2150

TWO

subscription concert

November 15, 2025 • 7 pm

Assad *Circus Fantasia*

Barber *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Op. 24

Copland *Old American Songs*

Long Time Ago

Simple Gifts

I Bought Me a Cat

Maria Valdes, soprano

Barber Adagio for Strings

Gershwin *Catfish Row*: Symphonic Suite
from "Porgy and Bess"

PRECONCERT CHAT: 6:15 p.m.

SCENES OF LIFE



- * Considered by many to be the great American opera, *Porgy and Bess* combines folk, jazz, blues, and spirituals
- * The *Catfish Row* Suite contains the melodies to beloved songs such as “Summertime,” “Bess You is My Woman,” and “Oh Lawd, I’m On My Way”
- * Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is set to James Agee’s nostalgic text capturing a young child’s idyllic memories of a summer evening
- * Soprano Maria Valdes, a Marietta native, has been praised by Jordan Owen of ArtsATL for “...a disarmingly robust tone that seems to come from some outer dimension...”

“ *I think the music is so marvelous,
I don’t believe I wrote it.* ”

- George Gershwin,
after completing *Porgy and Bess*

Concert Sponsor

STIFEL

Whitehead Auditorium | **Reservations Required**

Tickets \$34/\$31/\$24 each | www.valdostasympphony.org or call (229) 333-2150

THREE

subscription concert

February 14, 2026 • 7 pm

Handel *Messiah*, HWV 56

Susan Boddie, soprano

Lynnette Chambers, mezzo-soprano

Samuel Cook, tenor

Bradley Sowell, baritone

Valdosta State University Concert Choir

Valdosta State University Chamber Singers

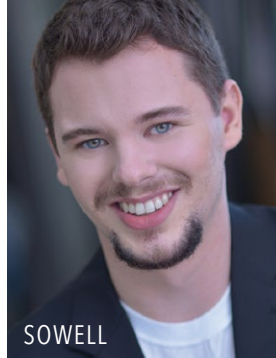
Valdosta State University Musical Union

Clell Wright, conductor

PRECONCERT CHAT: 6:15 p.m.



TRADITIONS



SOWELL



COOK



BODDIE



CHAMBERS



WRIGHT

* Attending a *Messiah* performance during the Christmas season has become a popular tradition in America, but Handel initially intended to have it performed around Easter

* The tradition of standing during the “Hallelujah” chorus comes from the unproven legend that King George II was so moved during a performance that he stood and the audience followed him. For the VSO’s concert, it’s your choice!

“ *I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God Himself.* ”

- attributed to Handel upon completing the “Hallelujah” chorus

Can you picture yourself singing in the chorus for the *Messiah* with the VSO? We invite you (choirs and individuals) to apply! Please contact Dr. Clell Wright at clellwright@valdosta.edu for more information.



Concert Sponsor

**Houston and
Tittle Family**

Whitehead Auditorium | **Reservations Required**

Tickets \$34/\$31/\$24 each | www.valdostasymphony.org or call (229) 333-2150

FOUR

subscription concert

March 28, 2026 • 7 pm

Higdon *City Scope: Peachtree Street*

Kevin Day *DEPARTURES*: Double Concerto
for Trombone, Piano, & Orchestra
(Georgia premiere)

Constanze Hochwartner, piano
Peter Steiner, trombone

Gershwin *An American in Paris*

Bernstein *Symphonic Dances* from
West Side Story

PRECONCERT CHAT: 6:15 p.m.

PROGRESSION





- * *West Side Story* was originally conceived as “East Side Story” with a romance between a Catholic boy and Jewish girl. When gang violence hit the news, the location shifted to the more rundown West Side
- * Audrey Hepburn turned down the role of Maria for the film adaptation – the role later went to Natalie Wood
- * Composer Kevin Day wrote that his work *DEPARTURES* “...is about embarking on new paths forward, leaving behind the person I was and embracing the newness of where life has taken me now.”
- * Gershwin was inspired to compose *An American in Paris* after he visited Paris to ask famed teacher Nadia Boulanger for lessons

“ There are so many highlights in Steiner’s trombone playing...that it seems a shame to single out anything in particular...Steiner has excellent assistance from Hochwartner, who is especially impressive in her sensitive and sometimes poised manipulation of atmosphere...”

- Mike Lomas, trombone.org

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Whitehead Auditorium | **Reservations Required**

Tickets \$34/\$31/\$24 each | www.valdostasympphony.org or call (229) 333-2150

FIVE

subscription concert

May 2, 2026 • 7 pm

Zwiliach *Jubilation*

Leshnoff Rhapsody on *America**
(Georgia premiere)

Joyce Yang, piano

Bartók Concerto for Orchestra

* Joyce Yang premieres Rhapsody on *America* in honor of America's 250th anniversary with the commissioning consortium of the Orchestra Lumos, Pasadena, Valdosta and San Jose Orchestras

Written for the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in memory of Mrs. Natalie Koussevitzky

PRECONCERT CHAT: 6:15 p.m.



MADE IN AMERICA



- * Bartók received the commission to compose the Concerto for Orchestra after he and his wife had left Europe for America during World War II
- * Bartók was one of the pioneers of Ethnomusicology. He and composer Zoltán Kodály traveled the Hungarian countryside, visiting numerous groups of people and recording performances of their folk songs on the phonograph. These recordings can still be heard today on Youtube
- * The folk music Bartók collected greatly influenced his own music, utilizing elements such as irregular patterns and rhythms, and exotic scales
- * Joyce Yang was 19 when she won the silver medal at the Van Cliburn Piano Competition

“ [Joyce Yang’s] attention to detail and clarity is as impressive as her agility, balance and velocity. ”

- Joan Rheinthaler, Washington Post

Concert Sponsor



Whitehead Auditorium | **Reservations Required**

Tickets \$34/\$31/\$24 each | www.valdostasymphony.org or call (229) 333-2150

Summer Concert Celebration

July 3, 2026

Outdoor Celebration Concert

Unity Park Amphitheater | 301 E. Central Ave., Valdosta

FREE ADMISSION

See the VSO in the summer as they perform a free outdoor concert at Valdosta's Unity Park Amphitheater! We will celebrate America's 250th Anniversary of Independence and the July 4th weekend with a spectacular program featuring works by John Williams and Tchaikovsky followed by a dazzling drone show that will light up the night!



www.valdostasymphony.org
or call (229) 333-2150

Youth 2025-2026

CONCERT SERIES

The mission of the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra includes providing the youth of our region with significant cultural opportunities.

Teachers may reserve free seats for any program by contacting Outreach Office at (229) 333-2150. Seating is limited – please reserve early!

Dr. Chris Dillon
Educational Coordinator

Whitehead Auditorium at VSU

1. IN THE NEW WORLD

September 26, 2025 • 10 a.m.

Featuring Sarah Jane Young, flute
Selections by Montgomery, Liebermann,
and Dvořák

2. SCENES OF LIFE

November 14, 2025 • 10 a.m.

Featuring Maria Valdes, soprano
Selections by Assad, Barber, Copland,
and Gershwin

3. TRADITIONS

February 13, 2026 • 10 a.m.

Featuring Susan Boddie, soprano
Lynnette Chambers, mezzo-soprano
Samuel Cook, tenor
Bradley Sowell, baritone
Selections from Handel's *Messiah*

Valdosta Symphony Orchestra

Education Programs

Tunes for Tots

Introduces the instruments and the orchestra to younger children.
January 24, 2026 in Whitehead Auditorium, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The South Georgia String Project (SGSP)

Provides exploratory experience of string instruments to children in Magnet Strings classes. Many children continue to perform and take lessons.

Youth Concerts

Provides free concerts to young students in the South Georgia region.

Concerto Competition

Provides outstanding performers at VSU with audition/competition experience and the opportunity to solo with the VSO at a Youth Concert.

VSO Honors Recital

February 1, 2026 in Powell Hall, 7 p.m.



PHOTOS COURTESY: LAUREL YU

High School Honors Program

Provides tickets for selected High School students with recommendation of Band Director.

Music Major Rush Ticket Program

Provides university music majors rush tickets for subscription concerts. The program is designed to support students' studies in music literature.



VSO Graduate Performance Assistantship

Supported by the VSO, provides for advanced studies in strings and orchestra for a select graduate student. The graduate student also serves a key staff position in the orchestra.

Music Enrichment Grant (MEG)

Grant provided by the Valdosta Symphony Guild to fund special music projects by students in the VSO.

Season Tickets

A VSO Season Ticket includes a single admission to each of the 5 subscription concerts. Other subscriber benefits include the opportunity to renew your seats before tickets go on sale to the general public, invitations to pre-concert buffets, and other VSO events. **Gold/Platinum/Diamond levels will receive free beer/wine prior to each concert.**

- ☑ Returning season ticket holders
subscription renewal date July 21, 2025.
- ☑ New season and single ticket holders
purchasing date August 4, 2025.

Outreach Office
Amber Porter, (229) 333-2150

To order tickets, contact our ticket office:
(229) 333-2150 or visit www.valdostasympphony.org.
All online sales open August 4, 2025.

T	29w	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15
S		28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15
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Q		42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29
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M		42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29
L		42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29
K			41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29
J			40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28
I			40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28
H				39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28
G					38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28
F						36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27
E							34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26
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C									30	29	28	27	26	25	24
B										28	27	26	25	24	23
A											24w	24	23	22	21



Tier 1 (Premium)



Tier 2 (Standard)



Tier 3 (Discount)



Tier 2 (Standard)

Discounted ticket(s) do not apply to Tier 1 Premium seating.
All Tier 1 Premium seating must pay full price.




Discounted ticket(s) for faculty/staff/military or seniors only
applies to Tier 2 Standard seating and Tier 3 Discount seating.

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Patron Packages

PATRON One Season Ticket










-  \$170 (tax deductible gift optional)
-  \$155 (tax deductible gift optional)
-  \$120 (tax deductible gift optional)

PATRON Two Season Tickets










-   \$340 (tax deductible gift optional)
-   \$310 (tax deductible gift optional)
-   \$240 (tax deductible gift optional)

GUILD MEMBER/BRONZE







One-Two Season Tickets







-  \$370 (tax deductible gift of \$210)
-  \$340 (tax deductible gift of \$195)
-  \$285 (tax deductible gift of \$175)
-   \$370 (tax deductible gift of \$50)
-   \$340 (tax deductible gift of \$50)
-   \$285 (tax deductible gift of \$65)

BRONZE One-Two Season Tickets













-  \$390 (tax deductible gift of \$220)
-  \$360 (tax deductible gift of \$205)
-  \$305 (tax deductible gift of \$185)
-   \$390 (tax deductible gift of \$50)
-   \$360 (tax deductible gift of \$50)
-   \$305 (tax deductible gift of \$65)

SILVER Two-Four Season Tickets

-   \$680 (tax deductible gift of \$340)
-   \$620 (tax deductible gift of \$310)
-   \$480 (tax deductible gift of \$240)

-   \$680 (tax deductible gift optional)
-   \$620 (tax deductible gift optional)
-   \$480 (tax deductible gift optional)







GOLD Two-Four Season Tickets







-   \$930 (tax deductible gift of \$590)
-   \$870 (tax deductible gift of \$560)
-   \$760 (tax deductible gift of \$520)
-   \$930 (tax deductible gift of \$250)
-   \$870 (tax deductible gift of \$250)
-   \$760 (tax deductible gift of \$280)

**Patron Packages include taxes and fees.
Additional donations are welcome.
Pay by cash, check, or credit card.**
















Call ticket office for more information.

PLATINUM Two-Four Season Tickets

-   \$1,180 (tax deductible gift of \$840)
-   \$1,120 (tax deductible gift of \$810)
-   \$1,010 (tax deductible gift of \$770)

-   \$1,180 (tax deductible gift of \$500)
-   \$1,120 (tax deductible gift of \$500)
-   \$1,010 (tax deductible gift of \$530)

DIAMOND Four-Six Season Tickets

-   \$1,770 (tax deductible gift of \$1,090)
-   \$1,680 (tax deductible gift of \$1,060)
-   \$1,500 (tax deductible gift of \$1,020)
-    \$1,770 (tax deductible gift of \$750)
-    \$1,680 (tax deductible gift of \$750)
-    \$1,500 (tax deductible gift of \$780)



Support the VSO through the endowment program.

1. Gifts can be spread over a five-year, equal gift amount.
2. Ten chairs are already endowed, ten remain.
3. A gift to the symphony through the VSU Foundation is a 501-[C][3] charitable non-profit organization recipient.
4. Contact David Cummings or call Amber Porter at 229-333-2150 for more giving opportunities..

****Always check with a financial advisor first.***



PHOTOS COURTESY: PAUL LEVY



Department of Music

Valdosta State University
1500 N. Patterson St.
Valdosta, GA 31698-0115

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