



PEACOCKS
AND PARIS
AND POLKAS

by Linda Wright

Welcome to the Amazing 37th Season of The Coastal Symphony of Georgia

The kaleidoscope has been part of our cultural landscape since the early 1800s, when a Scottish inventor named his intriguing invention after Greek words meaning “beautiful form watcher.” Since then, this charming instrument of recreation has delighted children as a toy and adults as a uniquely crafted art form. The constant shifting patterns of jewel tone colors somehow challenge and yet satisfy our aesthetic appreciation of a continuing disparity that coalesces into infinite patterns of loveliness.

Michelle Merrill, Musical Director and Conductor of The Coastal Symphony of Georgia, obviously knows something about the delights of kaleidoscopic effect; her four 2019-20 concert season programs epitomize the technique of juxtaposing contrasting musical offerings to create a composite lyrical image, asking the audience to participate as beautiful form listeners.

And so, not surprisingly, the September 23 concert commences with contemporary composer Jared Miller and the “shiny, bejeweled colors and timbres” of *Luster*. Then with a twist of the evening progression, George Gershwin takes over the varying pattern with his lesser known *Lullaby* and then the iconic favorite, *An American in Paris*. Ravel’s lilting *La Valse* is next, followed by his *Mother Goose Suite*, concluding the program and delightfully preparing the audience for the next performance.

The December 2 concert picks up the thematic thread with just a slight turn, progressing from nursery rhyme to fairy tale: Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel* welcomes us with strong

melodic passages, including the beloved children’s prayer, “When at Night I Go to Sleep.” Hummel’s *Trumpet Concerto in D* changes the color dramatically, featuring soloist Tristan Clark’s virtuoso trumpet performance throughout the orchestral music. The high energy of Hummel then segues to the familiar holiday perennial, with selections from Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker Ballet*.

Haydn’s *Symphony No. 84 in E-flat Major* launches the March 2 program, setting up the inevitable tonal contrast of the next offering, Jessie Montgomery’s *Starburst*, a composition that blends classical chamber music with folk and spiritual motifs. Caroline Shaw, who won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013, acknowledges Haydn’s influence with a contemporary piece, *Entr’acte*, that captures mini-jeweled bits of Classical and Baroque. And then comes Mozart, re-coloring the program image and embracing the 18th Century with his *Symphony No. 39 in E-flat Major*.

The kaleidoscopic features of the Symphony’s 37th season resonate strongly and imaginatively in the final concert on April 13. The entire program is an eclectic banquet of astounding musical contrasts. C. T. Griffé’s *White Peacock* offers an impressionistic piece that prepares the way for the colorful

performance of viola soloist, Brett Deubner, in Joan Tower’s orchestral *Purple Rhapsody*; Deubner continues with Bruch’s *Romanze for Viola*. Ginaster’s dances from *Estancia* then send us off to the life of Argentinian gauchos. And as if that were not contrast enough, Stravinsky’s *Polka for a Young Elephant* and *The Firebird Suite* send us flying into musical colorations that end with an inspiring finale of celebration and triumph.

The best news of all? In addition to the 2019-20 concert season offerings, the Symphony’s musical kaleidoscope keeps on whirling and twirling this year, presenting additional events and venues with plentiful variety and instrumental excellence. Mark your calendars for Terry Readdick’s family friendly Holiday Piano Recital at Christ Church on the afternoon of December 8 and watch for continuing colorful SoundBites events at various locales throughout the Golden Isles. The Symphony’s website provides a reliable resource for admission to all calendar events.

This season’s kaleidoscope of artistic richness and color will both entertain and also remind audiences of the rewarding power of music in all its infinite expressions.

The mission of the Coastal Symphony of Georgia is to engage, enrich, and inspire the community through artistically vibrant musical performances. For more information, call 912.634.2006 or visit coastalsymphonyofgeorgia.org.

