

The Coastal Symphony of Georgia 2024-2025 Concert Season

Monday, November 11, 2024

Wesley Church at Frederica, St. Simons Island

7:30 PM

Michelle Merrill, Conductor

Emotions

Program

Anton Webern

Langsamer Satz

Johann S. Bach

Oboe d'amore Concerto in A Major

Daniel Rios, Soloist

Quinn Mason

Princesa de la Luna

Dmitri Shostakovich

Chamber Symphony Op 110a



The concert opens with 20th Century Austrian composer, Anton Webern's *Langsamer Satz*, a work inspired by a hiking trip in Lower Austria. A luscious work for strings, it expresses a plethora of emotions from yearning to dramatic turmoil to a tranquil peaceful denouement.

Next, Johan Bach transports us back to a Baroque salon with his *Oboe d'amore Concerto*. It has been called a cheerful, enticing work that makes happy and heals the heart. Reworked from a concerto for harpsichord into an oboe concerto with strings, the work shows Bach's mastery in incorporating the oboe into his compositions.

Daniel Rios is the CSG Clarence Heagy Principal Oboe Chair, and he plays oboe and English Horn with the Jacksonville Symphony. He has been a member of the San Antonio and Wichita Symphonies, the Tulsa Opera, and the Boston Philharmonic and played with orchestras nationwide.

Current American composer Quinn Mason's shimmering *Princesa de la Luna* for harp and strings will enchant us. It is full of imagery of moonlit nights, celestial elegance, perhaps a touch of magic all of which Mason contrasts with a strong, modern feel in a blend of tradition and innovation.

The concert will close with 20th Century composer Dimitri Shostakovich's powerful and deeply personal Chamber Symphony. It was written for quartet in three days after he reluctantly joined the communist party and later transcribed for chamber orchestra. There is a sense of urgency throughout the symphony performed in five interconnected movements, suggesting Shostakovich's internal struggle with the political realities surrounding him.

Monday, February 3, 2025
Wesley Church at Frederica, St. Simons Island
7:30 PM

Michelle Merrill, Conductor

Genius

Program

Alma Deutscher	<i>Cinderella</i> Overture
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Symphony No. 36, <i>Linz</i>
Pyotr Tchaikovsky	Violin Concerto in D Major
Alexander Sitkovetsky, Soloist	

When current British composer, **Alma Deutscher** was ten years old, she wrote her first opera- *Cinderella*. But this was no ordinary Cinderella. Reimagining the fairy tale, Deutscher makes the character a composer and the prince a poet who falls for her because of her talent. The overture is full of enchanting melodies and harmonies that create a time of pure imagination. Now in her teens, Deutscher has moved from child prodigy to one of the most important living composers

Mozart's *Linz Symphony* was written when the composer was in a bit of a hurry. In Mozart's case, he arrived in the Austrian town of Linz for a visit to discover a local court had announced a concert. So, he wrote his symphony, which is considered a masterpiece of Viennese classical symphonic music, in four days! Such swift composition and exceptional quality attest to his remarkable talent.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky's only violin concerto was composed in Clarens, Switzerland when the composer was recovering from depression and the end of his ill-fated marriage. It would become one of the most beloved and challenging works for violin and orchestra with its lyrical melodies, virtuosic passage, and folk-inspired themes.



Russian-born soloist, **Alexander Sitkovetsky** will perform the concerto with the orchestra. He played his first concerto at age 8, and later moved to the United Kingdom to study at the Menuhin School for musically gifted children from around the world. His mentor was Yehudi Menuhin, world renowned violinist and conductor. The concerto will showcase the virtuosity of this truly engaging artist who will play it on the 1679 "Parera" Antonio Stradivari violin, loaned to him through the Beare's International Violin Society.


Monday, March 24, 2025
Brunswick High School
7:30 PM

Michelle Merrill, Conductor

Impressions

Program

Jessie Montgomery	<i>Transfigure to Grace</i>
Claude Debussy	<i>La Mer</i>
Charles T. Griffes	<i>The White Peacock</i>
Igor Stravinsky	<i>The Firebird Suite</i> (1919)

A portrait of Jessie Montgomery, an African American woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark top and a green necklace. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

Our final season concert opens with American composer **Jessie Montgomery's** *Transfigure to Grace*. Taken from her ballet written in 2019 for the 1619 project, it is best described in the composer's own words: "This episodic suite recalls some of the essential themes of water and transformation from the ballet, with the French horn playing a primary role as it leads the major transitions between sections of the suite. The music begins with vivid imagery of water evolving into a dynamic surge; it is meant to evoke an unfinished chapter in our journey toward equality and grace of humankind."

The captivating orchestral masterpiece, *La Mer* follows, evoking ever-changing moods of the sea. French composer Claude Debussy called it a set of "symphonic sketches," not a symphony, and it would become one of his most admired works. There is a shimmering interplay of colors between instruments, and *La Mer* is considered an Impressionistic Milestone.

Following intermission, we will meet a white peacock and a firebird! American composer, Charles Griffes' *The White Peacock* evokes a sense of beauty, mysticism, and elegance, capturing the grace and allure of this magnificent bird. Inspired by a poem, the music is characterized by lush harmonies, impressionistic textures, and evocative melodies.

Finally Russian composer Igo Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite* closes the concert with full use of a large orchestra. Winds, brass, strings, percussion all provide special effects, and the musicians create characters from the Russian fairy tales of the Firebird's blessing and curse. The ballet from which it derives was written in 1910; the suite was orchestrated in 1919. Stravinsky is widely considered one of the most important and influential composers of the 20th Century and a pivotal figure in modernist music.

FINALE NIGHT

Monday, June 2, 2025

**Brunswick High School Auditorium
7:30 PM**

Michelle Merrill, Conductor

Homelands

Program

Mikhail Glinka	<i>Ruslan and Ludmila Overture</i>
Brian Raphael Nabors	<i>Of Earth and Sky: Tales from the Motherland</i>
Modest Mussorgsky/Maurice Ravel	<i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i>

Opening Night begins with the rollicking overture from 19th Century Russian composer **Mikhail Glinka's** opera, *Ruslan & Lyudmila*. It has been described as a workout for violinists and a nightmare for bassoonists! Glinka was the first Russian composer to gain wide recognition within his own country, and he is often regarded as the fountainhead of Russian classical music.



Current American composer **Brian Raphael Nabors' *Of Earth and Sky: Tales from the Motherland*** is a celebration of the African spirit. Nabors creates a symphonic tapestry of music based on tales from Africa and the Caribbean. His music draws from combinations of Jazz, Funk, R&B, and Gospel with the modern flair of contemporary classical music.

The evening closes with 19th Century Russian composer, Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* in an orchestration adapted by French composer, **Maurice Ravel**. Ravel's adaptation has become the most recorded and performed version of the work. The music is at times lyrical, sprightly, folksy, eerie, and majestic as it takes the listener through an exhibition of paintings by artist, Viktor Harman who was a close friend of Mussorgsky.

