GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY’S CENTER FOR THE ARTS ANNOUNCES 2017-2018 SEASON OF GREAT PERFORMANCES AT MASON

(FAIRFAX) — George Mason University’s Center for the Arts announced today its 2017-2018 season of Great Performances at Mason, the venue’s crowning series that features leading national and international performers across genres. The lineup showcases more than 50 performances by both new and returning artists. Highlights of the 2017-2018 season include: a special evening with Broadway star Kelli O’Hara; a contemporary dance performance by the ever-popular Pilobolus; a mash-up of classical ballet and comedy by Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo; a new play by L.A. Theatre Works commemorating the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; a program by pianist Jeffrey Siegel honoring Leonard Bernstein’s 100th birthday; and four full-scale productions by Virginia Opera, among others.

“I am so pleased that we are able to continue to bring the best of the performing arts to the Northern Virginia community through our Great Performances at Mason,” stated Thomas Reynolds, Director of Artistic Programming at the Center for the Arts. “We strive to offer the gamut of genres appealing to the diverse tastes of our audiences. I believe that we have accomplished that goal with our extraordinary 2017-2018 season offerings.”

Season subscriptions are currently on sale to Friends of the Center for the Arts at cfa.gmu.edu/preview or by phone at 703-993-2787. Season subscriptions go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, April 19. Tickets to individual performances go on sale to the general public on Tuesday, August 1 at cfa.gmu.edu.
ANNUAL GALA: 2017 ARTS BY GEORGE!

One of the most popular events in the greater D.C.-area, ARTS By George! is the annual benefit event that garners support for students and programs at George Mason University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) and Center for the Arts. Members of the community and arts lovers are welcomed on campus to experience first-hand the groundbreaking and meaningful work that is being produced by CVPA students and faculty. Attendees also have the opportunity to meet and interact with this next generation of artists.

Each year, ARTS By George! culminates with a performance that features a renowned artist in the Center for the Arts’ Concert Hall. This September, Tony Award® winner and Broadway star Kelli O’Hara will hold that spot, offering a full program of Broadway favorites, pop classics, and great American standards. In addition, Ms. O’Hara will perform one dynamic number alongside student musicians from Mason’s School of Music.

Since 2006, the University’s dedicated arts patrons have contributed $1.3 million toward student scholarships in the areas of dance, music, theater, visual arts, film and video studies, computer game design, and arts management. These donations have also supported the programs at the Center for the Arts, including the Great Performances at Mason season.

DYNAMIC DANCE: BALLET, MODERN DANCE, AND CROSS-GENRE EXPLORATIONS

The 2017-2018 dance offerings highlight extraordinary variety and unparalleled talent. In the realm of classical ballet, the upcoming season features the beauty and opulence of Moscow Festival Ballet in two productions, and the contemporary hilarity of the all-male company Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. Modern dance is well represented throughout the season with appearances by: Pilobolus, in a new work that features the imaginative use of shadow; RIOULT Dance NY in From Purple to Pärt, a two-part dance program choreographed by Pascal Rioult; Doug Varone and Dancers, performing a new piece that incorporates the Mason Dance Company; and Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, showcasing a blend of Qigong, martial arts, modern dance, and ballet.
MAGNIFICENT MUSIC: CLASSICAL SOUNDS FROM EUROPE

Over the course of the 2017-2018 season, two internationally acclaimed orchestras will appear in the Concert Hall. These ensembles are: the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, one of Sweden’s oldest, with a program of renowned pieces by Smetana, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky; and the highly virtuosic Russian String Orchestra, offering a varied repertoire that includes compositions by Strauss, Bekmambetov, Schnauber, and Mendelssohn.

GLOBAL VIEW: PERFORMING ARTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The upcoming season will present audiences with multiple opportunities to experience dance, music, and multidisciplinary performances from a wide array of countries such as Argentina, China, Ireland, Japan, and South Africa. These diverse arts experiences include: Festival of South African Dance, a rhythm-filled performance of urban street dance by two acclaimed dance companies—Gumboots and Pantsula; Tango Buenos Aires, an evening of authentic tango dance, music, and storytelling; The Martial Artists and Acrobats of Tianjin, a spectacle of acrobatic, circus, and Kung fu acts set to traditional Chinese music; TAO, a heart-pumping performance of taiko drumming; the dynamic Canadian duo of Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy, in a festive holiday program of Celtic fiddling; and Dublin Irish Dance, showcasing fast and fiery footwork reminiscent of Riverdance and Lord of the Dance.

AMERICAN ECHOES: JAZZ AND POPS FAVORITES

The season will also honor musical gems from America through a number of jazz performances and pops shows, such as: The Birdland All-Stars, bringing their blend of jazz, funk, Brazilian, and Latin music to the Concert Hall; acclaimed clarinetist David Krakauer and The 35 mm Orchestra, offering a unique concert experience that features music from familiar Hollywood scores while new animated film images are projected behind the artists; The Hot Sardines, performing electrifying New Orleans jazz and cabaret tunes; Mason’s American Festival Pops Orchestra with their annual holiday concert; and the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra alongside the jazz world’s hottest young jazz singer and trumpet player, Bria Skonberg.
ENTHRALLING THEATER: CLASSICS AND COMEDIES ABOUND

Three companies that are well known to Center for the Arts’ audiences are returning to offer a full season of compelling, challenging, and relevant theatrical works: L.A. Theatre Works will present the Olivier Award-winning play The Mountaintop, a fictional depiction of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s last night on Earth; Aquila Theatre will reinvent Jane Austen’s beloved tale Sense & Sensibility and William Shakespeare’s tragic play Hamlet; Walnut Street Theatre, America’s oldest theater, will perform Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery, a comedic adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Hound of the Baskervilles.

VIRGINIA OPERA: 26th SEASON IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

The Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia returns to the Center for the Arts with a new series of masterful productions, featuring some of the nation’s most talented creatives and fast-rising young singers. The four opera masterpieces that will be presented throughout the 2017-2018 are: Camille Saint-Saëns’s grand opera Samson and Delilah; Giacomo Puccini’s high-class spaghetti Western The Girl of the Golden West; Benjamin Britten’s contemporary reimagining of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream; and Gaetano Donizetti’s Lucia di Lammermoor, the most famous of all bel canto operas.

KEYBOARD CONVERSATIONS® WITH JEFFREY SIEGEL

Pianist Jeffrey Siegel also returns in 2017-2018 with four new Keyboard Conversations® programs, which appeal to classical music aficionados and newcomers alike. The upcoming series includes the following solo concerts with spoken insight: A Bernstein Birthday Bash, a celebration of Leonard Bernstein’s 100th birthday through his music and that of composers who were influenced by him; A French Musical Feast, featuring music by Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré, as well as a discussion about these composers; Virtuoso Variations, which will highlight Beethoven’s Variations on God Save the King, Mendelssohn’s Variations, Op. 54, and Chopin’s take on the popular melody “La ci darem la mano” from Mozart's Don Giovanni; and finally, Bach and Chopin – A Musical Kinship, where Siegel will lead a fascinating exploration of the influence that Bach had on Chopin.
HOLIDAYS AT THE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The holiday season at the Center for the Arts is always full of warmth, joy, and music! The 2017-2018 follows in that tradition with four performances that will ring in the festivities, featuring: the all-male a cappella ensemble Chanticleer; the American Festival Pops Orchestra and conductor Anthony Maiello; fiddle and step-dancing masters Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy; and the angelic voices of the Vienna Boys Choir.

A full listing of Great Performances at Mason is below. All performances will take place in the Center for the Arts’ Concert Hall located at 4373 Mason Pond Drive in Fairfax, Virginia. Season subscriptions are currently on sale to Friends of the Center for the Arts at cfa.gmu.edu/preview or by phone at 703-993-2787. Season subscriptions go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, April 19. Tickets for individual performances go on sale to the general public on Tuesday, August 1 at the Center for the Arts’ Ticket Office (open Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.), by phone at 888-945-2468, or through the Center for the Arts’ website at cfa.gmu.edu.

2017-2018 GREAT PERFORMANCES AT MASON

Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel
A Bernstein Birthday Bash
Sunday, September 17 at 7 p.m.

Piano virtuoso and exceptional storyteller Jeffrey Siegel celebrates Leonard Bernstein’s 100th birthday with piano transcriptions of famous songs from West Side Story, his intimate Anniversaries, and music of two composers who most influenced him, Gershwin (Rhapsody in Blue) and Copland (El Salon Mexico). A perennial favorite at the Center for the Arts, Jeffrey Siegel makes newcomers feel welcomed while enhancing the enjoyment of seasoned classical music lovers. “Jeffrey Siegel has everything: massive technique, musical sensitivity and character, wide tonal resources, immense reserves of power, and the ability to communicate” (Los Angeles Times). An interactive Q & A will conclude this program.

Tickets: $42, $36, $25
ARTS By George!

Kelli O’Hara
Saturday, September 23 at 8 p.m.

Tony Award® winner and Broadway star Kelli O’Hara performs a radiant concert of Broadway favorites, pop classics, and great American standards. O’Hara, who was named “Broadway’s golden girl and luminous star” by The New York Times, has unequivocally established herself as one of the great leading ladies, starring in The King and I, The Light in the Piazza, South Pacific, and The Pajama Game. A trained opera singer, she has also appeared on the Metropolitan Opera House stage and in a recent performance of Purcell’s opera Dido and Aeneas, The New York Times praised her “gleaming voice” and “majestic clarity.” Talented student musicians from Mason’s School of Music will perform alongside O’Hara for one number. Don’t miss this dynamic entertainer who will perform melodies from your favorite Broadway musicals with her signature “angelic vocals” (The Daily Free Press).

This performance is part of the ARTS by George! benefit.

Tickets: $100, $85, $60

Festival of South African Dance
Featuring the Gumboots and Pantsula Dance Companies
Saturday, September 30 at 8 p.m.

Direct from Johannesburg, South Africa, two dynamic dance companies share the stage for a pulsating, rhythm-filled evening of urban street dance. Featuring 20 dancers with live musicians, the Gumboots and Pantsula Dance Companies use dance to respond to cultural and political issues in their communities by conveying real-life stories of hard work, human struggles, and longing for a better life. Wearing Wellington boots, Gumboots dancers urgently pound the floor in a popular dance originally conceived by South African miners who used foot tapping to communicate underground when talking wasn’t allowed. Pantsula is rooted in urban street culture and uses the sounds of busy city life, house music, and technical dance moves akin to hip-hop and breakdancing to express social problems in hopes of spearheading change.

Tickets: $50, $43, $30

Aquila Theatre
Sense & Sensibility
by Jane Austen
Sunday, October 1 at 4 p.m.

Jane Austen’s beloved novel about the two Dashwood sisters is brought to life by one of the foremost producers of classical theater. Set in the English countryside at the close of the 18th century, Sense & Sensibility revolves around the lives of the levelheaded Elinor and the hopelessly romantic Marianne. Following the unexpected death of their father, the sisters and
their widowed mother must leave their comfortable family estate, which has been left to their half-brother, and move into a modest cottage. In a time when options for women are limited, the only hope for these two sisters is a profitable marriage. Austen’s classic tale—in which seduction, courtship, love, and heartbreak abound—is brought to life by the signature boldness and spirit of this esteemed company.

Tickets: $44, $37, $26

Virginia Opera
Samson and Delilah
Saturday, October 7 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, October 8 at 2 p.m.

Virginia Opera opens its 26th season with the epic French opera Samson and Delilah by Camille Saint-Saëns, dramatizing the well-known Biblical story of a legendary Israelite warrior (Samson) who is seduced and then betrayed by a Philistine woman (Delilah). The final act features the famous “Bacchanale,” a showpiece where the pleasure-seeking Delilah leads a feverish dance to tempt Samson. Paul Curran masterfully stages this passionate opera featuring acclaimed tenor Derek Taylor (Samson) and talented mezzo-soprano Katharine Goeldner (Delilah). Though it was not performed for 15 years after it was composed due to its sensual subject matter, Samson and Delilah is one of the most frequently performed French operas today.

Sung in French with English supertitles.

Tickets: $110, $90, $54

Pilobolus
Shadowland
Friday, October 13 at 8 p.m.

Pilobolus returns with an exhilarating new evening-length work—a narrative that depicts the surreal dream world of a young girl on the verge of self-discovery. Combining an ingenious use of multimedia, projected shadow play, and dance on the verge of acrobatics, this theatrical event follows a teenage girl who longs for independence as she falls asleep and journeys into the land of shadows. Shadowland was conceived in collaboration with Steven Banks, lead writer for the popular animated series SpongeBob SquarePants, and it is set to rhythmic original music by musician/composer David Poe. This award-winning company continues to break down barriers between different creative disciplines through its collaborations as it explores ways of using the body as a graphic and expressive medium. The company has toured the world extensively and has appeared on countless television shows including Oprah, Late Night with Conan O’Brien, the Academy Awards, and 60 Minutes. “Grace meets physical agility to create movement that is as lyrical as it is astonishing,” says the Sunday Oregonian.

Tickets: $48, $41, $29
**Tango Buenos Aires**

*The Spirit of Argentina*

Saturday, October 14 at 8 p.m.

Take a journey to this South American country through the passion-filled dance and music that embody *The Spirit of Argentina*. One of Argentina’s greatest cultural exports, Tango Buenos Aires is considered the most authentic tango ensemble performing today. The dancers dazzle with sensual moves and playful drama, while the musicians entice with melodies of romance and nostalgia. This program traces the evolution of tango through the classic music compositions of Carlos Gardel, a central figure in the history of tango, and his collaborations with composer Astor Piazzolla. *The Spirit of Argentina* showcases the breadth of styles and gamut of emotions that have made tango the cultural phenomenon that it is. “Crafted swirling, fast-paced tapestries of movement, laced with proud postures and sensual couplings” (*The Washington Post*).

Tickets: $50, $43, $30

**Direct from the People’s Republic of China**

**The Martial Artists and Acrobats of Tianjin**

*China Soul*

Friday, November 3 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, November 4 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

One of China’s finest troupes of its kind, these talented artists show off their superior skills in acrobatics, circus acts, illusions, and martial arts! Accompanied by traditional Chinese music, more than one-hundred performers take the stage in a spectacle of acrobatic stunts, feats of balance, juggling acts, contortion tricks, and martial arts that are guaranteed to dazzle and delight audiences. The Martial Artists and Acrobats of Tianjin is a favorite of audiences throughout the world, has won numerous awards including the Silver Clown Award, and several of its acts also perform with some of the most renowned circuses in the western world. Perfect for the whole family!

Tickets: $50, $43, $30

**Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel**

*A French Musical Feast!*

Sunday, November 5 at 7 p.m.

In his second concert of the season, Jeffrey Siegel plays a delicious musical feast for the ears—gorgeous music of Debussy including the ever-popular *Clair de lune* and sensuous *Isle of Joy*, Ravel’s beloved *Pavane for a Dead Princess* and dazzling *The Fountain*, as well as Fauré’s enthralling *Improvisato*. For more than four decades, this brilliant pianist has earned accolades for enchanting audiences with his artistry, wit, and insight and this Keyboard Conversations® program of distinctively French musical delights is no exception. “...a pianist
with a bravura technique and a big, gorgeous sound...and when the artist himself offers the inside scoop, the musical experience becomes vastly more personal" (The Denver Post). An interactive Q & A will conclude this program.

Tickets: $42, $36, $25

Aquila Theatre

Hamlet
by William Shakespeare
Sunday, November 12 at 7 p.m.

Aquila Theatre sheds new light on this tragic story by William Shakespeare. Recognized by many as his greatest and most popular play, Hamlet is a compelling tale of familial conflict, personal ambition, love, and revenge. Set in the Kingdom of Denmark, the play centers on Prince Hamlet and his pursuit for vengeance against his uncle, Claudius, who murdered his own brother—Hamlet’s father, King Hamlet. Claudius seized the throne and married King Hamlet’s widow. Guided by his father’s ghost, Prince Hamlet is driven to avenge this treason and from there ensues an epic drama replete with deceit, mistrust, and schemes. Four centuries after its premiere, Hamlet remains one of the classics of the world stage and Aquila Theatre’s signature physical style honors this masterpiece with a stellar production that is “beautifully spoken, dramatically revealing and crystalline in effect” (The New Yorker).

Tickets: $44, $37, $26

Doug Varone and Dancers
in the shelter of the fold
featuring Mason Dance Company
Saturday, November 18 at 8 p.m.

This award-winning contemporary dance company makes its first appearance at the Center in more than a decade in a performance that showcases daring physicality, impeccable choreography, and expansive artistry. The New York-based Doug Varone and Dancers is universally praised for “thrilling, mesmerizing work” (The Village Voice). This performance includes Varone’s latest piece, in the shelter of the fold, which contemplates faith and belief as well as coping, realization, and choice. This 40-minute work comprises episodic, stand-alone vignettes, one of which features the remarkable dancers from Mason’s School of Dance. Founded in 1986, the company has been awarded an impressive 11 Bessies (New York Dance and Performance Awards) while amassing an impressive body of work, which includes collaborations in theater, opera, and film, making it one of the most respected dance companies working today. “If this work and these dancers can’t move you, I don’t know what would” (Dance Magazine).

Tickets: $48, $41, $29
Chanticleer
*Chanticleer Christmas*
Saturday, November 25 at 8 p.m.

“The world’s reigning male chorus” (*The New Yorker*) kicks off the holiday season at the Center for the Arts with a beautiful concert of a cappella music that includes gorgeous seasonal classical pieces as well as holiday favorites. Chanticleer is renowned for the seamless blend of 12 male voices ranging from countertenor to bass with their superior technique, sublime tone, and unparalleled musicality. Their original interpretations span period and genre—from Gregorian chant to jazz, popular, and contemporary music. The group, which has been praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for its “tonal luxuriance and crisply etched clarity,” has a long list of impressive achievements: sales of more than a million albums, two Grammy® Awards, being named Ensemble of the Year by Musical America in 2008, and induction in the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. Begin the Christmas season with this beautiful holiday concert.

Tickets: $55, $47, $33

Virginia Opera
*The Girl of the Golden West*
Saturday, December 2 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 3 at 2 p.m.

Virginia Opera continues its season with Giacomo Puccini’s magnum opus, *The Girl of the Golden West* (*La fanciulla del West*), considered the first “spaghetti western.” Set during the California Gold Rush of 1849, this Italian opera is Puccini’s take on the rough and tough Wild West and features familiar themes of unrequited love, jealousy, betrayal, redemption, and changing fate. The story follows Minnie, a gun toting saloon owner of the Polka Saloon. Minnie is the object of desire for all of the whiskey-guzzling and card-playing patrons of her establishment, but Minnie rebuffs the cowboys and gold-diggers and instead falls head over heels for a mysterious stranger who might just be a wanted highway bandit in disguise. This thrilling Western melodrama is vividly brought to life under the direction of Virginia Opera’s beloved Lillian Groag. Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

Tickets: $110, $90, $54

**Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy**
*A Celtic Family Christmas*
Friday, December 8 at 8 p.m.

Two of Canada’s brightest stars, Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy, marry their exceptional talents in this festive evening of lightning-fast fiddling and lively step-dancing. This husband and wife duo captivates the audience with their unmistakable chemistry as they perform foot-tapping rave-ups, heartfelt ballads, and remarkable step dancing. In their newest program, *A Celtic Family Christmas*, they are joined onstage by talented musicians and their whole family to recreate all of the warmth and joys of a typical Christmas in their home on Cape Breton Island.
“Dual fiddle wizardry...amazing synergy,” raves the Intelligencer Journal. Celebrate the holidays as they share their traditions in song, dance, and stories by the fire.

Tickets: $55, $47, $33

American Festival Pops Orchestra
Holiday Pops: Songs of the Season
Saturday, December 9 at 8 p.m.

Celebrate the Christmas season with Northern Virginia’s very own pops orchestra in its annual family concert of cheerful carols and cherished holiday tunes. This jovial evening includes a program of sentimental favorites including Leroy Anderson's festive "Sleigh Ride," and culminates in a rousing sing-a-long in which the audience gets a chance to share in the experience. Under the baton of founder and artistic director Anthony Maiello, these talented musicians from the greater D.C. area perform favorites that are guaranteed to fill you and your family with holiday warmth and merriment.

Tickets: $55, $47, $33

Vienna Boys Choir
Christmas in Vienna
Sunday, December 17 at 2 p.m.

One of the finest choral ensembles in the world makes its traditional visit to the Center for its glorious vocal celebration of Christmas. Always a highlight of the Center’s holiday season, this concert features cherished carols, pop favorites, and sacred hymns sung with the purity and excellence of these talented young boys—all between the ages of 10 and 14. This internationally renowned choir has stood the test of time since its founding in 1498 and continues to share its “bright, light voices through the centuries” (The New York Times) with the world. Don’t miss this heartwarming concert, perfect for the holiday season!

Tickets: $55, $47, $33

Dublin Irish Dance
Stepping Out
Saturday, January 27 at 8 p.m.

Follow the evolution of Celtic culture in Stepping Out, a high-energy extravaganza of sights and sounds presented by Dublin Irish Dance. These accomplished Irish step-dancers and musicians take us on a journey, exploring the history of the Celtic cultural experience through song and dance. This entertaining production reveals influences that have shaped Irish music and dance throughout history: from the farms of rural Ireland in the 1800s, to the Great Famine and the mass migration to New York, where Irish and American cultures blended and influenced each other. This production features the fast footwork of talented Irish step-dancers, an eight-
member traditional Irish band, and a vocalist—many of whom have performed with internationally famous Irish ensembles like Riverdance, Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance, and Celtic Woman.

Tickets: $50, $43, $30

The Birdland All-Stars
Featuring Tommy Igoe
Sunday, January 28 at 7 p.m.

Direct from New York’s legendary Birdland, this extraordinary band brings a fine mix of jazz, funk, Brazilian, Latin, and world music together. Featuring the city’s finest musicians and led by drumming sensation Tommy Igoe, the Birdland All-Stars have been packing the house every Friday night at “The Jazz Corner of the World” for the past 10 years. For this tour, they have created new arrangements featuring music of David Bowie, The Police, and Steely Dan, as well as fresh interpretations of iconic works by Charlie Parker, Chick Corea, and Herbie Hancock. Tommy Igoe is one of today’s most successful and diverse drummers, having performed with Blood, Sweat and Tears, Art Garfunkel, New York Voices, and Stanley Jordan. He also helped create the drum set book for Broadway’s The Lion King. Don’t miss this “completely unique experience... there isn’t another band like this anywhere” (Time Out New York).

Tickets: $48, $41, $29

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
Friday, February 2 at 8 p.m.

Muscular men wearing tutus and dancing en pointe with flawless technique? It must be the worldwide dance phenomenon, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. The world’s foremost all-male comic ballet company, affectionately known as the “Trocks,” performs a full range of ballet and modern dance repertoire in faithful renditions as you’ve never seen it before. Portraying both male and female roles, these highly trained dancers are delightfully earnest in their efforts, complete with the humor of intentional foibles and accidents that keep audiences rolling in the aisles. This company was founded in New York in 1974 by a small group of ballet enthusiasts as a playful parody of traditional ballet. They immediately attracted the attention of the press and the Trocks were off and pirouetting. Whether this is your first time at a dance performance or your 1000th time, you will be delighted and entertained.

Tickets: $50, $43, $30
**Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra**
Friday, February 9 at 8 p.m.
Stefan Solyom, conductor
Nareh Arghamanyan, piano

Smetana: “Šárka” from *Má Vlast* (My homeland)
Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

One of Sweden’s oldest orchestras, the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra (HSO) presents a dynamic concert of cherished orchestral works. Under the direction of Stefan Solyom, the orchestra performs a thrilling concert featuring works by Smetana, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky. World renown Armenian pianist Nareh Arghamanyan joins the orchestra to perform Rachmaninoff’s second piano concerto. The HSO has performed at many prominent European venues, including three recent sold-out performances at the Great Festival Hall in Salzburg and in Vienna.

Tickets: $60, $51, $36

**TAO**
*Drum Heart*
Saturday, February 10 at 8 p.m.

*Drum Heart*, TAO’s newest production of taiko drumming, is a heart-pounding experience like no other that is guaranteed to thrill the whole family. The thunderous sights and sounds of powerful, athletic performers dressed in stunning costumes playing instruments and fiercely striking drums is a spectacle to behold. TAO is celebrated for its precise choreography filled with energy and stamina, and is the first professional taiko company to include female performers in this traditionally male-dominated art form. Critics describe the company members as “extraordinarily talented percussion artists, and they’re seductive, alluring performers” (*Chicago Tribune*).

Tickets: $50, $43, $30

**Virginia Opera**
*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*
Saturday, February 17 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, February 18 at 2 p.m.

William Shakespeare’s iconic 15th century language meets Benjamin Britten’s 20th century inventive and enchanting music in this delightful opera about love, forgiveness, and the power of dreams. A domestic dispute between the king and queen of fairies spills into the human realm, creating chaos as the stories of three couples and a troupe of amateur actors collide with hilarious results. Nothing is what it seems as fairies, “rude mechanicals,” and moonstruck
young lovers spend a single, magical night in the forest. Adam Turner conducts this opera’s lush dynamic score while many Virginia Opera favorites—soprano Heather Buck (Titania), baritone Matthew Burns (Bottom), and tenor David Blalock (Lysander)—return to perform in this comic tour de force. Sung in English with English supertitles.

Tickets: $110, $90, $54

RIOULT Dance NY
From Purple to Pärt
Saturday, February 24 at 8 p.m.

The sensual, articulate, and exquisitely musical work of acclaimed modern choreographer and former Martha Graham principal dancer Pascal Rioult returns to the Center for the Arts with his company, RIOULT Dance NY, in a two-part dance program titled From Purple to Pärt. Te Deum, set to the music of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, is a reimagining of one of Pascal’s earliest works. The newly-premiered Fire in the Sky is inspired by club dancing from Rioult’s youth and the music of Deep Purple, the famed British rock band whose sound flourished through the '70s and '80s. Founded in 1994, the daring and imaginative RIOULT Dance NY company continues to deliver “powerful, emotionally moving” (Durham Herald Sun) performances and has received accolades from around the world.

“Musically astute, visually arresting and kinetically exciting...Rioult and company are undeniable champs of modern dance” (The Daily Gazette, Schenectady).

Tickets: $48, $41, $29

The Big Picture
David Krakauer and The 35mm Orchestra
Friday, March 2 at 8 p.m.

Step into a musical and cinematic voyage as this renowned clarinetist along with this jazz-inspired orchestra explores themes of identity, place, and resilience. Celebrated clarinetist David Krakauer and The 35mm Orchestra reimagine the music and visuals of some of the most important films in history, featuring scores by Academy Award and Grammy®-winning composers such as John Williams, Marvin Hamlisch, Randy Newman, and Mel Brooks. While these groundbreaking music arrangements are playing, a series of new animated films created by the New York video company Light of Day is projected on a screen behind the performers. Don’t miss an evening of “enlivening panoramas with emotive exuberance” (All About Jazz).

Tickets: $44, $37, $26

Walnut Street Theatre
Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery
Saturday, March 3 at 8 p.m.
Madcap mastermind, Ken Ludwig (Lend Me a Tenor and Moon Over Buffalo), reinvents Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1902 classic mystery into a hilarious romp about everyone’s favorite detective and his most infamous case. The male heirs of the Baskerville line are being murdered one by one, and Sherlock Holmes, along with his trusted sidekick Dr. Watson, must work feverishly to crack the mystery of the curse before it dooms the newest heir. With only five energetic actors playing the roles of more than 40 quirky characters, this production from America’s oldest theater takes the audience on a sidesplitting caper through the Devonshire moors, crowded railway stations, foggy London streets, and gloomy baronial mansions where the duo searches for clues, runs into dead ends, and puzzles out the truth for the shockingly funny conclusion.

Tickets: $44, $37, $26

Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel
Virtuoso Variations
Sunday, March 4 at 7 p.m.

Explore the virtuoso Variations of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Chopin in Jeffrey Siegel’s third mesmerizing performance of the season. Listen to Beethoven's humorous Variations on God Save the King, Mendelssohn's deeply affecting Variations, Op. 54, and the 17 year old Chopin’s imaginative flourishes on the popular melody “La ci darem la mano” from Mozart’s Don Giovanni while learning more about these 18th and 19th century musical masters. “His performances were expressive and full of passion...This is an artist who means every note he plays” (The New York Times). An interactive Q & A will conclude this program.

Tickets $42, $36, $25

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan
Formosa
Friday, March 9 at 8 p.m.

“Formosa!” 16th century Portuguese sailors exclaimed when they saw a verdant island, thick with mountains and trees, rising out from the sea off the coast of China. Formosa, or Beautiful Island, was later renamed Taiwan. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, led by pioneering choreographer Lin Hwai-min, uses this legend as inspiration for its latest evening-length work. Using luminous projected images of Chinese characters as a visual backdrop and music by award-winning indigenous singer Sangpuy, dancers move with unparalleled grace to share the story of abstract beauty born of land and lore. For more than forty years, the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan company has thrilled audiences with its inventive blend of Qigong, martial arts, modern dance, and ballet to celebrate Asian culture and aesthetics. “No company in the world dances like Cloud Gate. It presents a distinct and mature Chinese choreographic language” (Dance Europe).
Tickets: $50, $43, $30

This tour is made possible by the grants from the Ministry of Culture, Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan).

**Russian String Orchestra**
Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m.
Misha Rachlevsky, conductor

- Bekmambetov: *For Misha’s Gang – Suite for small, regular, large and extra-large fiddles*
- Schnauber: *In Memory of Henri Temianka*
- Mendelssohn: Octet for Strings

Russia’s finest young string ensemble, the Russian String Orchestra returns to the Center with its acclaimed virtuosity, high energy, and warmth. Under the baton of founder and music director, Misha Rachlevsky, the ensemble is recognized internationally for its quality, depth, and the variety of its repertoire. This program exemplifies the ensemble’s versatility by playing works ranging from Mendelssohn’s popular Octet for Strings to works by contemporary composers. The Russian String Orchestra has met critical acclaim including the Critics Choice in London’s Gramophone and Critics Choice in *The New York Times*.

Tickets: $50, $43, $30

**Moscow Festival Ballet**

*Swan Lake*
Saturday, March 17 at 8 p.m.

The exquisite dancers of the Moscow Festival Ballet showcase the traditions of Russian grand ballet in this performance of Tchaikovsky’s beloved masterpiece. Inspired by a fairy tale, *Swan Lake* follows the story of Odette, a beautiful princess who falls victim to a spell cast by an evil sorcerer. Celebrated for its stunning choreography by Petipa and Ivanov and, of course, its sublime score, this crown jewel of classical ballet continues to earn adulation from audiences worldwide. The esteemed Moscow Festival Ballet Company, founded in 1989 by legendary principal dancer of the Bolshoi Ballet Sergei Radchenko brings together the best of Russian ballet. “The dancers of the Moscow Festival Ballet spoke to the soul through the body” (*Post and Courier*). The whole family will enjoy this stunning full-scale production complete with elaborate sets and beautiful costumes.

Tickets: $56, $48, $34
Moscow Festival Ballet

**Cinderella**
Sunday, March 18 at 2 p.m.

Fifty graceful dancers from this world-renowned ensemble perform a ballet for the whole family. *Cinderella* is based on the well-known fairy tale about the kind but mistreated step-daughter and step-sister who is forbidden to attend the royal ball. When her fairy godmother magically appears, Cinderella’s fate is wondrously transformed. With enchanted melodies, opulent costumes, lavish scenery, hilarious physical comedy, and highly-skilled dancers, this performance is a family friendly treat for all to enjoy.

Tickets: $56, $48, $34

**Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra**
Bria Skonberg, trumpet/singer
Saturday, March 31 at 8 p.m.

Named as a Millennial “Shaking Up the Jazz World” by *Vanity Fair*, Canadian singer, trumpeter, and songwriter Bria Skonberg joins Mason’s own Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra in a swinging evening of fresh beats and brassy standards. Music Director and alto sax virtuoso Jim Carroll leads this distinguished ensemble comprising some of the metro area’s finest jazz musicians in this sensational concert. The orchestra is joined by the multitalented Skonberg whose soulful, sultry voice and impressive trumpet dexterity fuses modern pop with jazz. In 2016, she released a debut LP of original compositions titled *BRIA* showcasing her extensive range from the bluesy instrumental “Down the Deep” to the Brazilian-flavored “How Can It Be.” *The Wall Street Journal* called Skonberg one of the “most versatile and imposing musicians of her generation,” and she was recognized in 2016 as one of “25 for the Future” by *DownBeat* magazine.

Tickets: $46, $39, $28

**Virginia Opera**

**Lucia di Lammermoor**
Saturday, April 7 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, April 8 at 2 p.m.

The Virginia Opera concludes its season with the most famous of all *bel canto* operas, Gaetano Donizetti’s tragic *Lucia di Lammermoor*. This intense tale of star-crossed lovers revolves around two feuding Scottish families, the Ravenswoods and the Lammermoors. Lucia di Lammermoor loves Edgardo Ravenswood, but when her brother’s political activity put him at odds with the king, he decides to reestablish his family’s status by forcing Lucia into an arranged marriage that culminates in the most spectacular mad scene in all of opera. Metropolitan Opera soprano Rachele Gilmore makes her Virginia Opera debut in the title role of Lucia, a woman at her emotional breaking point. Complementing her as Edgardo is tenor Joseph Dennis, also in his
Virginia Opera debut. Don’t miss this dramatic masterpiece of thwarted love and dashed expectations. Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

Tickets: $110, $90, $54

**L.A. Theatre Works**  
_The Mountaintop_  
Saturday, April 14 at 8 p.m.

Fifty years ago, on April 3, 1968, after delivering his famously prescient speech, punctuated by the immortal line, “I’ve been to the mountaintop,” an exhausted Martin Luther King Jr. retires to his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. By the following evening, Dr. King had been assassinated. In her provocative play, _The Mountaintop_, Katori Hall imagines what may have transpired between the legendary civil rights leader and a seemingly inconsequential hotel maid on the eve of his assassination when a storm rages outside. Winner of the prestigious Olivier Award for Best New Play, L.A. Theatre Works applies its signature style, complete with sound effects made the “old-fashioned” way on stage, to this acclaimed and gripping play rife with humor, political jabs, and an intimate glimpse at Dr. King’s hopes, regrets, and fears. On this solemn anniversary, don’t miss this radio-style production of a contemporary play about this great man.

The Mountaintop contains mature language.

Tickets: $44, $37, $26

**The King’s Singers**  
_50th Anniversary Tour_  
Friday, April 20 at 8 p.m.

This acclaimed a cappella sextet offers a sublime performance of diverse and compelling vocal works. From Renaissance madrigals to contemporary, popular music, The King’s Singers is known for its extensive repertoire and strong command of varied styles. Consummate entertainers, the singers’ renditions are marked by immaculate intonation, vocal blend, diction, and incisive timing. At a recent concert, _The Washington Post_ affirmed, “Their vocal production was effortless, stylistically varied and beautifully blended, even in the most complex polyphony.” Over the past fifty years, The King’s Singers has secured its place as “the superlative vocal sextet” (_The Times_, London).

Tickets: $50, $43, $30
The Hot Sardines
Sunday, April 22 at 7 p.m.

“One of the best jazz bands in New York today” (Forbes) makes its debut at the Center where they transport the audience to New York speakeasies, Parisian jazz cabarets, and New Orleans jazz clubs. Acclaimed for their brassy arrangements, rollicking piano melodies, and smoky vocals, The Hot Sardines stand apart for the innovation, verve, and sheer joy they bring to music, both old and new. Pianist Evan “Bibs” Palazzo and singer “Miz Elizabeth” Bougerol, met in 2007 at a jazz jam session and bonded over their love for Fats Waller. Also influenced by such greats as Dinah Washington, Louis Armstrong, and Billie Holiday, they began playing small gigs, and by 2011, they were headlining Midsummer Night Swing at New York’s Lincoln Center. Recently, they have been featured at the Newport Jazz Festival and Montreal Jazz Festival, have sold out top NYC venues, toured from Chicago to London, and have released two critically acclaimed albums.

Tickets: $48, $41, $29

Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel
Bach and Chopin – A Musical Kinship
Sunday, April 29 at 7 p.m.

Did you know that Bach was Chopin's favorite composer? Become a classical music insider when virtuoso pianist and entertaining storyteller Jeffrey Siegel returns to our stage with a program exploring Bach’s influence on Chopin. Hear vivacious dances, dramatic Preludes, and romantic, improvisational Fantasies by both composers. Popular with classical music aficionados and novices alike, Siegel’s unique “concerts with commentary” format tells the story behind the music. “A first-class musician who can sketch and color with greatness” (The London Times). An interactive Q & A concludes this program.

Tickets: $42, $36, $25

About Great Performances at Mason

Great Performances at Mason is a program of George Mason University’s Center for the Arts, the professional presentation and production arm of the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA). CVPA provides an academic environment in which the arts are explored as individual disciplines and interdisciplinary forms that strengthen one another. The college prepares students for careers as creators, performers, teachers, scholars, arts leaders and arts entrepreneurs. Understanding that an education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists, the Center for the Arts, the professional presentation and production arm of the college, welcomes a variety of professional and world-renowned artists, musicians and actors to its stage. Students have the opportunity to perform, create and exhibit their work in a wide variety of public venues including a 2,000-seat Concert Hall. CVPA is home to the Schools of Music, Dance, Art and Theater, as well as the Computer Game Design, Arts Management and Film and Video Studies programs.
About George Mason University
George Mason University is Virginia’s largest public research university. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls 35,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half-century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity and commitment to accessibility.

For more information, please visit:

George Mason University’s Center for the Arts

#MasonArts

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