

# PETERSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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2023/24 SEASON

**NAIMA BURRS**  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

*Bringing the joy of music to our  
community for **46 years** and  
counting!*



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# ABOUT PSO

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The Petersburg Symphony Orchestra (PSO) is a diverse ensemble comprising over 50 volunteer and professional musicians, delighting audiences since its inception in 1978. This initiative, born from the vision of Dr. F. Nathaniel Gatlin, a renowned educator at Virginia State University, has evolved under the guidance of the current Music Director, Naima Burrs.

The PSO is a cherished community asset, showcasing the exceptional talents of musicians from the region and offering a wide array of musical genres. Our commitment lies in preserving, nurturing, educating, and delivering high-quality, diverse music experiences through customized performing arts programs for all age groups. We create music not only for the Tri-Cities region but also for audiences beyond.

The orchestra's inaugural performance, Concert Number One, occurred on Sunday, April 29, 1979, in the auditorium of Petersburg High School. For more than four decades, the PSO has provided a platform for orchestral instrument players, supported young musicians, introduced new compositions to the public, collaborated with fellow musical organizations, and made orchestra music accessible to individuals who might otherwise have missed out on this enriching experience.



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# A NOTE FROM OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 2023/24 season! I'm excited to invite you to join us for a musical journey filled with classical treasures and jazzy surprises, all brought to life by the remarkable members of our community.

Some exceptional guest artists will join us this season to enhance our performances, ensuring an unforgettable experience. Please follow us on social media to stay engaged with our events and fundraisers. Your support is invaluable, and I eagerly look forward to seeing your smiling faces in the audience sharing the joy of music!

Warm regards,

*Naima Burrs*

Music Director, PSO

# OUR MISSION

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## **ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE**

The Petersburg Symphony Orchestra is devoted to pursuing artistic excellence in orchestral music. We aim to captivate and inspire our audience through exceptional performances that showcase the depth and beauty of classical and contemporary compositions. Our commitment to musical mastery, innovation, and creative expression enriches the cultural fabric of our community and beyond.

## **MUSIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT**

The members of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra dedicate their time and talents to enriching lives through music education and community engagement. We strive to provide accessible, high-quality music education programs, fostering a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Through outreach initiatives and collaborative efforts, we endeavor to create a vibrant, interconnected community where music is a source of enlightenment and unity for all.

# OUR VALUES

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## **PRODUCTIVITY & SAFETY**

Our music enhances productivity and fosters a sense of safety within our community. By creating an atmosphere of harmony and inspiration, we contribute to improved well-being in workplaces, schools, and homes. We understand that a safe and productive environment is the cornerstone of a thriving society.

## **COMMUNITY VIBRANCY & MENTAL HEALTH**

Our music enriches the vibrancy of our community and positively impacts mental health. Through our performances and educational initiatives, we aim to cultivate a cultural tapestry that enhances the quality of life for individuals of all ages. Our music is a source of solace, joy, and connectivity, ultimately leading to a happier and healthier community.

# OUR GOALS

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## **EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Our primary goal is to provide engaging musical programming that fosters education for children and families. Through concerts, workshops, and interactive experiences like our “Storytime Live!” series, we aim to nurture a love for music in the hearts of young minds and create unforgettable family moments.

## **GLOBAL MUSICAL EXPLORATION**

We aspire to broaden horizons by exposing audiences to the rich tapestry of world music. Our performances will serve as a cultural bridge, connecting diverse musical traditions and allowing audiences to explore the global soundscape.

## **EQUITABLE ACCESS AND COMMUNITY INCLUSIVITY**

We are committed to ensuring that our music is accessible to all, regardless of background or circumstance. Through equitable admission policies and community partnerships, we aim to provide a welcoming space where everyone can enjoy the transformative power of music together.

## **HISTORICAL AND PURPOSEFUL ARTISTRY**

We will continue to weave history and purpose into our live musical performances. Our goal is to connect audiences with the heritage and significance of classical music while encouraging exploration and interpretation of familiar tunes, fostering a deeper appreciation for our musical heritage.

# MASTERWORKS SERIES SCHEDULE

**OCTOBER 22, 2023**

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

PETERSBURG HIGH SCHOOL  
AUDITORIUM

## “MOZART AND MORE!”

Fall performance featuring **LeTriel White**, clarinet soloist from Delaware State University. It features a clarinet concerto composed by African-American composer Edmund Thornton Jenkins. Our performance of this piece is Edmund Thornton Jenkins' Virginia premiere. Also featured in this performance will be Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Dvorak's Symphony #8. Special thanks to Virginia State University!

**DECEMBER 3, 2023**

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

PETERSBURG HIGH SCHOOL  
AUDITORIUM

## “A HOLIDAY CELEBRATION”

A jazzy holiday concert with everyone's favorite seasonal tunes featuring special guests saxophonist **James Gates**, songstress **Desirée Roots**, and pianist **Weldon Hill**.

**APRIL 21, 2024**

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

PETERSBURG HIGH SCHOOL  
AUDITORIUM

## “BEETHOVEN'S TRIPLE!”

Our spring concert will feature the monumental Triple Concerto by Beethoven in partnership with the University of Richmond. This concert will feature violinist **Anyango Yarbo-Davenport**, cellist **Christoph Wagner**, and pianist **Joanne Kong**. Special thanks to the University of Richmond!



# MEET OUR GUESTS

## **LeTriel White**

LeTriel Monique White, a full-time music faculty member at Delaware State University, is a versatile musician, excelling as a clarinetist in orchestral and chamber music while also showcasing her talents as a saxophonist and flutist in jazz, alternative rock, R&B, and rap genres. Based in Houston, TX, she has had an impressive performance history for the past decade, sharing the stage with renowned acts like The Temptations, The Joe Sample Jazz Orchestra, The Four Tops, and more. Beyond performing, Ms. White is dedicated to music education, teaching in school districts, serving as a D'Addario Reserve Method Clinician, and contributing to the music department at Texas Southern University. Currently pursuing her Doctorate in Musical Arts at Arizona State University, she's committed to nurturing the next generation of artists.



## **James Gates**

James "Saxsmo" Gates, a prominent musician in Richmond, VA, is known for his passionate saxophone performances that captivate jazz enthusiasts. A Richmond native, he earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Berklee College of Music in 1983 and a Masters in Jazz Studies from North Carolina Central University in 2011. Gates has an extensive history of performing with jazz legends and notable artists, including Joe Kennedy, Jr., Dizzy Gillespie, and Roberta Flack. He is also a dedicated jazz educator, serving as the Founder and Director of the Dr. Billy Taylor Jazz Studies Program at Virginia State University. Alongside his successful music career, Saxsmo has released multiple albums, with his latest, "Stepping Out," released in April 2020.



# MEET OUR GUESTS

## **Desirée Roots**



Desirée Roots is a multi-talented performer with over 30 years of acting, singing, and dancing acclaim. She made her stage debut at 13 as Dorothy in “The Wiz” and has since impressed in over 30 productions. Notable roles include Vera Charles in “Mame” and Effie White in “DREAMGIRLS.” She’s celebrated for her versatile 3 1/2 octave vocal range, performing jazz, gospel, opera, and more, and has shared the stage with music legends like Buddy Guy and BB King. In 2004, she received the Theresa Pollak Prize for Excellence in the Arts for “Best Vocalist in Virginia.” She is currently the Artistic Director of Community at Virginia Repertory Theatre.

## **Weldon Hill**



Weldon Hill is a versatile musician known as a professional pianist, composer, arranger, and musicologist. His extensive career has seen him perform alongside jazz luminaries such as Jon Faddis, Joe Williams, and Benny Carter and lead his own piano trio. Hill’s contributions to music extend to writing, recording, and scholarly work, with his dissertation on Duke Ellington’s Sacred Concerts considered a seminal work in musicology. He holds advanced music degrees and is actively involved in education and leadership roles at institutions like Virginia Union University and Virginia State University, where he has retired as Chair of Virginia State University School of Music.

# MEET OUR GUESTS

## **Anyango Yarbo-Davenport**

Anyango Yarbo-Davenport, a Munich, Germany native, is a distinguished violinist with a rich musical heritage. She has graced renowned venues like Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, showcasing her talent across the Americas, Europe, and Asia. Anyango's debut CD, "AMERICANA!" (2022), features contemporary American music and received acclaim. As an accomplished soloist and conductor, she leads the Colour of Music Festival Virtuosi, championing diversity in classical music. With a Doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music, she's also a devoted educator and professor, nurturing the next generation of musicians while researching musician health and promoting underrepresented composers. Anyango's artistry is matched by her dedication to teaching and performance excellence. She plays an 18th-century French violin and collaborates with artists worldwide.

## **Christoph Wagner**

Dr. Christoph Wagner is an accomplished cellist and dedicated educator on a mission to impact the world through music. He's earned numerous accolades, including first prizes in prestigious competitions and scholarships from organizations like the Richard Wagner Verband and the Lions Club. Wagner has graced renowned concert halls across Europe and four continents, collaborating with esteemed conductors and performing at festivals worldwide. Beyond his virtuoso performances, he's a passionate music ambassador, engaging in community outreach and research on musician injuries. He holds advanced music degrees, was an adjunct faculty member at Lone Star College in Houston, TX, from 2018-2023, recently started a position as Assistant Professor of Music at the University of New Mexico, and is a respected masterclass and lecture provider in the United States and South America.

## **Joanne Kong**

Joanne Kong, a groundbreaking keyboardist, captivates audiences with her vibrant and eloquent musical performances. She is the first artist to release a harpsichord-piano recording of Bach's Goldberg and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations. Additionally, she premiered Michael Colgrass's Pulitzer Prize-winning concerto "Side by Side," a unique work for a soloist performing as both pianist and harpsichordist. Kong's expertise extends to teaching master classes in keyboard and chamber performance and workshops on Performance Anxiety and Effective Practicing Techniques worldwide. Her illustrious career has earned her national and international honors, including fellowships from the American Academy of the Arts in Europe and the Bach Aria Festival, and top prizes in prestigious competitions. She is currently the Director of Accompaniment and Coordinator of Chamber Music Ensembles at the University of Richmond.







# GET IN TOUCH

As you can see, we are thrilled to welcome you to our upcoming symphony season, packed with a diverse range of events and musical experiences. From our captivating Masterworks Series to the enchanting "Storytime Live!" performances, we have something special for everyone. Join us for fundraisers where you can show your support for the arts and be part of our incredible community of patrons.



Purchasing tickets is easy, whether online through our website or at the door on concert days. Our Masterworks Series concerts will be held at Petersburg High School, providing a convenient and accessible location for your enjoyment. You can donate directly through our website if you want to contribute further.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support, and it's our privilege to bring this exciting new season to our wonderful community. Thank you for being a part of our musical journey, and we look forward to sharing unforgettable moments with you.

## **CONTACT US:**

-  804-732-0999
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## **FOLLOW US:**

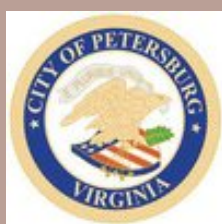
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-  @petersburgsymphony



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## PHOTO AND BIO CREDITS

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