



O' Passionate Voice

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

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World-Renowned Saxophonist Branford Marsalis Returns to ASO for "O' Lyric Voice" Featuring Heritage Signature Chorale and Metropolitan Chorus

Who: Alexandria Symphony Orchestra & Maestro **Kim Allen Kluge**
Heritage Signature Chorale & Maestro **Stanley J. Thurston**
Metropolitan Chorus & Maestro **Barry S. Hemphill**
Saxophonist **Branford Marsalis**

What: **Schubert** *Mass in Eb*, selections
Webber *Requiem*
With Branford Marsalis:
Bach *Aria*
Ibert *Concertino da camera*
Kluge *Vocalise for Branford*

When: Saturday, March 7, 2009 at 8:00pm
Sunday, March 8, 2009 at 3:00pm

Where: Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall & Arts Center
NOVA Community College, Alexandria Campus
3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311

Price: \$20-\$80. Sunday matinee youth tickets (ages 8-18) only \$5
Call **703-548-0885** or visit **www.alexsym.org** for tickets

Alexandria, VA, February 10, 2009 – The Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO) welcomes back world-renowned saxophonist Branford Marsalis for “O’ Lyric’ Voice” on Saturday, March 7 at 8:00pm and Sunday, March 8 at 3:00pm at the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center (NOVA Community College, Alexandria). Also featuring Heritage Signature Chorale and Metropolitan Chorus, the program includes Schubert’s *Mass in Eb*, selections; Webber’s *Requiem*; and 3 pieces with Branford Marsalis: Bach’s *Aria* (from *St. Matthew Passion*); Ibert’s *Concertino da camera*; and Maestro Kluge’s *Vocalise for Branford*. Tickets are \$20-\$80 with Sunday matinee youth tickets (ages 8-18) only \$5. Tickets can be purchased online (www.alexsym.org) or via telephone (703-548-0885).

Three-time Grammy Award winner Branford Marsalis brings his innovative spirit and broad musical scope to the Schlesinger stage for “O’ Lyric Voice,” a celebration of the inherent vocalicity of music. The New Orleans-born saxophonist has performed and recorded with a who’s-who of jazz giants including Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, and Sonny Rollins. He spent two years touring and recording with Sting, was the musical director of *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* for two years in the 1990s, and has nearly two dozen recordings to his name. Among the most socially conscious voices in the arts, Mr. Marsalis is the honorary chair of the New Orleans Habitat for Humanity effort to rebuild the city, and together with his friend Harry Connick, Jr. conceived the Habitat Musicians’ Village currently under construction in the city’s historic Ninth Ward. Mr. Marsalis is also bringing a new approach to jazz education to jazz students and jazz listeners in

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colleges and high schools through Marsalis Jams, an interactive program in which leading jazz ensembles present concert/jam sessions in mini-residencies that have visited campuses in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast and Southwest. He has continued to exercise and expand his skills as an instrumentalist, a composer, and the head of Marsalis Music, the label he founded in 2002 that has allowed him to produce both his own projects and those of the jazz world's most promising new and established artists.

Of the 3 pieces Mr. Marsalis will perform for "O' Lyric Voice," he begins with **Johann Sebastian Bach's *Aria from St. Matthew Passion***. Described by ASO concert lecturer Colleen Fay as a "musical monument," the piece sets chapters of the Gospel of Matthew to music with Mr. Marsalis playing the emotionally charged vocal line. The frenzied energy of **Jacques Ibert's *Concertino da camera*** follows with the premiere performance of **ASO Maestro Kim Allen Kluge's *Vocalise for Branford*** rounding out Mr. Marsalis' performance. Showcasing his ultra-vocal style, this last piece was written specifically for Mr. Marsalis and takes its name from a type of work in which a melody is sung without words, only sounds.

Serving to further illuminate the theme of the "lyric voice," the ASO is joined by two critically acclaimed choirs and their conductors. **Opening the program with selections from Franz Schubert's *Mass in Eb*, the Metropolitan Chorus and Heritage Signature Chorale** will showcase what Fay describes as the "soaring melodies and inventive harmonizations...that are pure Schubert from beginning to end." The program ends with **Andrew Lloyd Webber's Grammy-Award winning *Requiem***, highlighting the intersection between classical traditions and modern style. **Metropolitan Chorus' Music Director Barry S. Hemphill will lead the Schubert selections while Heritage Signature Chorale's founder Stanley J. Thurston will conduct the Webber.**

Established in 1966 and recently recognized in the U.S. Congressional Record, The 100-voice **Metropolitan Chorus** has been called "seductively beautiful" and "...a fine, balanced and amply rehearsed ensemble..." (*Washington Post*). Led by Music Director Barry S. Hemphill, its programs feature a strong emphasis on American composers. The Chorus regularly performs in venues around the D.C. area, including the Kennedy Center and Constitution Hall. Since its professional debut with the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra in May 2000, the **Heritage Signature Chorale** has become one of Washington's premier choruses. Under the musical direction of its founder, **Stanley J. Thurston**, the Chorale has won praise from critics and casual listeners alike for its "spectacular vocal polish" (*Washington Post*) and astute attention to technical nuance. While embracing a broad repertoire of music, the Chorale is committed to preserving the performance tradition of African-American music.

The ASO will conclude its 08-09 season with "O' Passionate Voice" in May featuring selections by Wagner, Rodgers, and Tchaikovsky. The Symphony returns in June for an adventure in music with its highly anticipated annual Children's Arts Festival. In addition to art activities and an instrument petting zoo, the event includes an ASO performance of music from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Lord of the Rings*, and the Looney Tunes classic, *What's Opera Doc?*

Founded in 1954, the ASO is Northern Virginia's premiere fully professional orchestra. The ASO exists to provide quality, affordable and accessible music in the greater Metropolitan area of Northern Virginia through its highly respected, innovative, professional performances and programming. To foster a life-long appreciation of symphonic music, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra is dedicated to strengthening arts education in schools.

Members of the press, please contact Tara Conte – alex@alexsym.org – for press tickets, photos.

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