

**FOR IMMEDIATE
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Virginia Arts Festival and Virginia Symphony Orchestra
Present

Leonard Bernstein's *MASS*
A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers

April 23 and 24 at 8 PM
Chrysler Hall, Norfolk, Virginia

The Virginia Arts Festival and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra will stage a spectacular new production of **Leonard Bernstein's *MASS: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers***, Friday, April 23 and Saturday, April 24, at 8 PM in Norfolk Virginia's Chrysler Hall, featuring more than 200 performers including the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Todd Rosenlieb Dancers, the Virginia Symphony Chorus, the Virginia Children's Chorus, and operatic tenor John McVeigh in the lead soloist role as the Celebrant.

The largest and most theatrical of the great composer/conductor's works, *MASS* was a labor of love for Leonard Bernstein, commissioned for the opening of the Kennedy Center in 1971. Bernstein wrote the work at the request of President Kennedy's widow, Jacqueline, and dedicated it "to the beloved memory of John F. Kennedy." A prolific composer for the concert hall and creator of such musical theater classics as *West Side Story*, *Candide*, and *On the Town*, Bernstein penned the soaring score, and collaborated on the lyrics with Broadway composer/librettist Stephen Schwartz (*Pippin*, *Godspell*, *Wicked*) and pop icon Paul Simon.

Uniquely blending the form of a Roman Catholic Mass with the structure of a Broadway musical, musical styles that borrow from Jewish tradition, rock, jazz, and blues, and a political sensibility that resonates with the passions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bernstein's *MASS* is a towering masterwork that explores a crisis of faith and ends in the audience joining the performers in a jubilant reaffirmation of hope.

Producer **Robert Cross**, director of the Virginia Arts Festival, notes: "Bernstein's *MASS* is one of the most affecting works of music, and musical theater, ever written. Audiences have rediscovered this masterwork in performances by the Baltimore Symphony with Marin Alsop conducting, and the Utah Symphony with Keith Lockhart conducting. The Virginia Arts Festival and the Virginia Symphony are proud to bring Bernstein's *MASS* to Virginia audiences for the first time."

Virginia Symphony Conductor and music director **JoAnn Falletta** calls *MASS* "theatrical, kaleidoscopic, astonishing.... With angst, irreverence, tenderness, awe and amazing creativity, Bernstein crafted an unforgettable work that was at once both intensely personal and a riveting portrait of the complex world of 1971."

Tickets for Leonard Bernstein's *MASS* and all 2010 Virginia Arts Festival performances may be purchased online at vafest.org, by phone at **757-282-2822**, or in person at the Festival Box Office at MacArthur Center, 300 Monticello Avenue, Norfolk. Tickets may also be purchased from the Virginia Symphony by phone 757-892-6366 and from TicketMaster, 1-800-982-2787. Groups of 15 or more may call Dianna Starkey 757-282-2819 for priority seating and assistance with travel and accommodations.

Associated Events

Each performance of Bernstein's *MASS* will be preceded by a 7 PM **Pre-Performance Conversation** with Leonard Bernstein's daughter, **Jamie Bernstein**, director **Pamela Berlin**, Virginia Arts Festival Director **Robert Cross**, and Virginia Symphony Music Director and Conductor **JoAnn Falletta**, who will discuss Bernstein's creation of the work and the making of this spectacular new production. The Pre-Performance Conversations will take place in the Chrysler Hall Dress Circle.

The Virginia Arts Festival, in partnership with Norfolk State University Honors College and Virginia Wesleyan College Center for the Study of Religious Freedom, will present a **Symposium for Educators** focusing on "**Leonard Bernstein's *MASS: Religious Tolerance and the Arts***" on Sunday, April 24, from 12 PM. to 4:30 PM. in Chrysler Hall Dress Circle. The Symposium will offer panel discussions featuring Music Director JoAnn Falletta, Choreographer Todd Rosenlieb, and Director Pam Berlin, along with Dr. Page Laws, Director of the Honors Program at Norfolk State University, Paul Rasor, Director of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan College, and Rabbi Lawrence Foreman of Old Dominion University.

About the Organizations, Producers, and Directors

Virginia Arts Festival

Virginia Symphony Orchestra

JoAnn Falletta, Music Director and Conductor

Pamela Berlin, Director

Todd Rosenlieb, Choreographer

Robert Shoup, Virginia Symphony Chorus Master

Carol Thomas Downing, Virginia Children's Chorus Director

Jamie Bernstein, Pre-Performance Panelist

Robert Cross, Producer

Since 1997, the **Virginia Arts Festival** has transformed the cultural scene in southeastern Virginia, presenting great performers from around the world to local audiences and making this historic, recreation-rich region a cultural destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world. In its 14th season, the Virginia Arts Festival will bring dozens of performances to Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, and surrounding communities, April 15-May 30, 2010.

Recognized as one of the nation's leading regional symphony orchestras, the **Virginia Symphony** has enriched the cultural life of the Hampton Roads community for more than nine decades. Recent achievements include five compact disc recordings for national release, a performance of *Peter and the Wolf* which was aired on National Public Radio, and groundbreaking performances at the Kennedy Center and New York's Carnegie Hall.

Acclaimed by *The New York Times* as “one of the finest conductors of her generation,” **JoAnn Falletta** serves as Music Director of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. An effervescent and exuberant figure on the podium, she has been praised by *The Washington Post* as having “Toscanini’s tight control over ensemble, Walter’s affectionate balancing of inner voices, Stokowski’s gutsy showmanship, and a controlled frenzy worthy of Bernstein.”

Pamela Berlin is an acclaimed director of theater and opera, whose New York credits include *Steel Magnolias*, *The Cemetery Club*, *Vita and Virginia*, and many more shows. Regionally, she has directed *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Copenhagen*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, among others, at such theaters as the Kennedy Center, Seattle Rep, Long Wharf, Huntington, Pittsburgh Public, Pasadena Playhouse, and Portland Stage. Her opera credits include such classics as *Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, and *Madame Butterfly*, as well as the world premiere of the Virginia Arts Festival’s *Pocahontas*.

Todd Rosenlieb Dance is known for its original modern dance repertoire that blends classical modern forms, the “downtown” spirit, hints of pop culture, and a keen sense of musicality. The company has won acclaim in its own performances as well as collaborations with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, the Virginia Chorale, the Virginia Stage Company, and the Virginia Arts Festival.

Choreographer **Todd Rosenlieb** danced with the Erick Hawkins Company and Mikhail Baryshnikov’s White Oak Project, and has created dance for his own company as well as the Richmond Ballet, the Nashville Ballet, Ballet de San Juan, Virginia Ballet Theatre, the Virginia Symphony, and the Indianapolis Symphony.

The **Virginia Symphony Orchestra Chorus** has performed to remarkable acclaim in Europe, and in halls across the United States including the Kennedy Center in Washington DC and the Breckenridge Music Festival at Breckenridge Colorado. Chorus Master **Robert Shoup** has led the Chorus for 11 seasons, in performances hailed by critics as “enthraling” and “totally mesmerizing.” Mr. Shoup has conducted the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Breckenridge Music Festival Orchestra, and the Czech State Philharmonic Orchestra and worked with choruses around the United States.

Since 1992, the **Virginia Children’s Chorus** has been teaching children of all backgrounds to “sing with joy!” Recognized as “Hampton Roads’ premiere children’s chorus,” the VCC is a choir school committed to training the voice as well as offering extraordinary concert opportunities. VCC singers, ages 6-18, hail from every corner of Hampton Roads. Founder/Artistic Director **Carol Thomas Downing** is an experienced singer, violinist, and children’s choral director who has trained young musicians from preschool through the university level.

Cast Biographies

John McVeigh (Celebrant)

Lauded for his “rich lyrical tenor, fabulous top notes, and striking good looks” (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*), John McVeigh has performed with some of the world’s great opera companies including the Metropolitan Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and many more. He reprises his performance as the Celebrant, after a triumphant debut in the Utah Symphony’s 2008 production of Bernstein’s *MASS*.

His recent engagements include performances worldwide including at the Metropolitan Opera (**Susannah**, **Turandot**, **Falstaff**, **Il tabarro**); Chatelet (Monteverdi's **Vespers**); Calgary Symphony (Mendelssohn's **Elijah**); Utah Symphony (Bernstein's **Mass**); Teatro Real, Liceu (**L'arbore di Diana**); Liceu, Vlaamse Oper, Houston (**Billy Budd**); and Atlanta, Houston, Utah, San Diego, Austin (**Cold Sassy Tree**). Coming seasons will see his performances of Handel's **L'allegro** (Mostly Mozart Festival), Beethoven's **Symphony No. 9** (Pacific Symphony), Haydn's **Creation** (Berkshire Choral Festival, Winston-Salem), and Handel's **Messiah** (Philharmonia Baroque, Winston-Salem). His discography includes recordings of Floyd's **Cold Sassy Tree**, Handel's **Partenope**, and Doherty's **Jackie O**. John and partner James recently opened Compositions: jewelry, floral design and accents in Portland, Maine. www.compositionsinmaine.com

Jon Michael Paul (Boy Soloist) was born to a Navy family in Honolulu, Hawaii, third of three brothers. The Pauls transferred to Norfolk, where Master Paul has attended Granby Elementary and Ruffner Middle Schools. In the Young Scholars Program, he is an accomplished scholar-athlete; Future Problem Solvers state team finalist and bronze medalist in District Championship Wrestling. He works and plays on his grandparents' ranch in Montana each summer.

Master Paul has sung as a student of Carol Thomas Downing in the Virginia Children's Chorus for five years and is in his sixth year of piano study with Charlene Dismaya in the Academy of Music. He is a Second Class Scout in Boy Scout Troop 24. Fascinated by the potential of alternative energy sources, he aspires to study nuclear engineering. Master Paul was most recently heard as the boy soprano in Britten's *St. Nicolas* as a special guest of The Cantata Chorus.

Sarah Haigh (Boy Soloist cover) has been singing soprano with the Virginia Children's Chorus for the past 6 ½ years. She is currently a member of their Concert Choir and was recently featured as one of the soloists in the Virginia Symphony's world premier of "Gift of the Magi." Sarah resides in Carrollton, Virginia, and attends Smithfield High School where she is an active participant in the choral department. She recently performed as Sarah in "Guys and Dolls."

Street Chorus

Hailed by *The Washington Post* as "simply a marvel," and as an "extraordinarily charismatic performer," **Matt Boehler** has been lauded for both his dramatic skill and his "supple, clarion bass."

Equally at home on the stage as well as the concert platform, he has been engaged by The Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Minnesota Opera and Chicago Opera Theater. Some highlights include performances of *The Mikado* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, *Sweeney Todd* with Wolf Trap Opera, Bach's *Magnificat* with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, *365 Plays/365 Days* with The Public Theater and the world premieres of *Bastianello* and *Lucrezia* with New York Festival of Song. He holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Viterbo University. www.mattboehler.com

Vivienne Cleary, mezzo-soprano, is very excited to be performing in the Virginia Arts Festival. Some of Vivienne's recent and favorite roles include Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* at The Players Theatre in NYC, Shlomzion in *Peace Warriors* in Washington DC and NYC, Rosemary in *The Giver* in the CAP21 Reading Series, Jane in *Jane Eyre*, Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Lucy u/s *Jekyll & Hyde* and Mistress Hibbins in *The Scarlet Letter: the musical* which she performed in Edinburgh and NYC and also reprised for the world premiere cast recording. Vivienne studied theatre performance at Wagner College. She thanks her family and friends for their unending love and support.

Alexander Elisa, baritone, is a native of New York City and a graduate of Oberlin College. He has been seen in numerous incarnations of *Smokey Joe's Café* throughout the Atlantic coast. His favorite undertakings include: Bernardo in *West Side Story*, Curtis in *Dreamgirls*, the Beast in *Disney's Beauty & the Beast* and Othello. He has been featured in operettas including *The Student Prince* and *Yeomen of the Guard* and concerts including the "Walk Tall" tour in Germany. He played LJ on PBS' "Kid Fitness" and had a walk on role in the film "Friends (with Benefits)". He is the resident bass vocalist in the a cappella show *Voices* and is lending his voice to a new animated feature film, entitled "The Champion".

Lisa Hopkins Seegmiller, soprano, is a Tony award-winner for Mimi in Baz Luhrmann's production of *La Bohème* on Broadway. Recent engagements include performances of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at the Prague National Theatre, Sofia Il signor Bruschino with the Gotham Chamber Opera, and Corvina in Musto's *Volpone* with Wolf Trap Opera, the recording of which was recently nominated for a Grammy award. Other roles include Elle in *La Voix Humaine*, Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare*, Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera*, and Casilda in *The Gondoliers* and she has joined the Utah Symphony for Bernstein's *MASS* and Mozart's *Requiem* and *Exsultate* motet. Lisa lives in Washington D.C. with her husband and daughter.

Stephanie Joiner, soprano, is a Vocal Performance graduate of Oklahoma City University. Most recently, she was seen as Becky in the original play, *Wings of Fire*, at Manhattan Repertory Theatre's Winterfest 2010. Other favorite roles include *Kelsi* in *High School Musical* (Fireside and Beef and Boards), Laurey in *Oklahoma!* (Festival 56), Shy in *Whorehouse* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma), Musetta in *La Bohème* (OCU) and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* (OCU).

Praised by Opera News as "a clear stand-out, possessing a forceful and well-developed voice", baritone **David Krohn** enjoys his career both as opera singer and recitalist, where this season his calendar takes him across Europe, Canada and the United States. Recent performances include his New York Philharmonic debut as a soloist last November at Carnegie Hall with Alan Gilbert conducting Bernstein's *West Side Story Suites*, Virginia Opera debut as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, Brahms Requiem with Chicago DePaul Symphony, Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Aspen Opera, Il Conte in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Carl-Magnus Malcom in *A Little Night Music*, along with concert performances with the Canadian National Symphony and Baltimore Symphony. Upcoming performances include Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* with Aspen Opera and the title role of *Don Giovanni* with the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program. Mr. Krohn holds a Masters Degree from The Juilliard School and a Bachelor's Degree from Peabody Conservatory.

Ann McMahon Quintero's, mezzo-soprano, recent engagements include La Haine in Gluck's *Armide*, Marquise Melibea in *Il viaggio a Reims* (New Israeli Opera); Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* (Angers Nantes Opera); Auntie in Peter Grimes, *Tisbe in La cenerentola*, Dritte Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* (Washington National Opera); and Dame Quickly in excerpts of *Falstaff* at the NEA Opera Honors Inaugural Awards Concert at the Kennedy Center. On the concert stage, she has sung Handel's *Messiah* (Boston Baroque, Alabama, Charlotte, National Philharmonic), the title role in Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans* and Michael Hadyn's *Requiem in c minor* (Boston Baroque), Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Columbus), and Verdi's *Requiem* (Cathedral Choral Society).

Shelly Milam, soprano, finished her degree in Vocal Performance at James Madison University. While at JMU, Shelly had the opportunity to perform the title role of *Suor Angelica*, as well as the roles of *Street Scene's* Rose Maurant, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood's* Rosa Bud. Following graduation, Shelly played various roles in Virginia Arts Festival's world premiere of the opera *Pocahontas*. She has performed with the Virginia Opera Chorus as well as a soloist at Virginia Opera Guild events. Shelly will be attending the Opera Program at AIMS in Graz, Austria over the summer and pursuing her graduate degree in the fall.

Matt Morgan is establishing himself as a tenor to watch. His New York debut came as Don Gomez in Weber's *Die drei Pintos* with the American Symphony Orchestra. That season also saw his New York City Opera debut in the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and his debut with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall as the tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah*. 2009-2010 brings his debut in the title role of Faust with Opera Idaho, Hamlet in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* with AOP and the Mark Morris Dance Company and a return to New York City Opera as Tapioca in *L'etoile*.

Derrick Parker, baritone, has sung Alidoro in *La cenerentola* (Fort Worth, Utah, Portland), Crown in *Porgy and Bess* (Cape Town Opera); Colline in *La bohème* (Kansas City, Fort Worth); Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Lucifer in *La Resurrezione*, Claudio in *Agrippina*, and Polyphemus in *Acis and Galatea* (Chicago Opera Theater), Escamillio in *Carmen* (Santa Barbara, Chautauqua); Masetto in *Don Giovanni* (Houston, New Orleans); and Mel in Tippet's *The Knot Garden* (Scottish Opera). Concert engagements include Bernstein's *MASS* and Mozart's *Requiem* (Utah); Handel's *Messiah* (San Francisco, Houston); Haydn's *Creation* (Atlanta); Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Dallas, Pacific Symphony); and Tippet's *A Child of Our Time* (Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa).

Max Perlman, tenor, was recently featured in Bernstein's *MASS* (Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center) with The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. On film and television he appeared in *Junkyard Dog* ('09 release!) and guest starred on *Monk*. Max appeared on Broadway in *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, and *Chess* in concert. He also toured the country in *Jekyll & Hyde* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Internationally he was seen in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (directed by Baayork Lee). Regional credits include work at The Guthrie, Arena Stage, Bay Street, Paper Mill Playhouse, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, New York Stage And Film and New York Music Theater Festival.

Justin Senense, tenor, is excited to be back home in Virginia performing in Bernstein's *MASS*. A graduate of Princess Anne High School and James Madison University, his past credits include: Off-Broadway: *Chuckleball*; National/ International Tours: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Benjamin), *HAIR* (Tribe); Regional: *Miss Saigon* (Merry-Go-Round Playhouse); Theme Parks: *High School Musical 3* (Walt Disney World), *The Milkmen* (Hershey Park).

Sarah Statler, mezzo-soprano, graduated from the Manhattan School of Music with a BM in voice. During her time there, she was a recipient of the ASCAP Foundation's Fran Morgenstern Davis Scholarship. She was most recently seen in *The Dome* with Prospect Theater Company. Before that, Sarah was a part of The Ensemble Studio Theatre's workshop performances of *Ada*, a new chamber opera. She has been seen in other workshops and concerts with New York Theatre Barn, The Duplex Cabaret Theatre, and A Broken Umbrella Theatre. Favorite roles: Daisy in *Side Show* and the The Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

Scott Williamson, tenor, is the winner of the 2005 International Opera Singers Competition, and appeared in recital at Weill Recital Hall in 2007. A regular guest at the Bard Festival of Music, he recently appeared with the American Symphony Orchestra in Dallapiccola's *Volo di Notte*. Current engagements include debuts with the Virginia Symphony, the Virginia Arts Festival and DC's Mousetrap Recital Series. He has appeared with Tulsa Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lake George Opera, Bronx Opera, and Opera Camerata of Washington. International stage credits include Iro in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria* at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Snape Proms, and Agenore in Mozart's *Il Re Pastore* with New Kent Opera. His performances have been praised by the *New York Times* and *Sun*, *Opera News*, the *Times* of London, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Washington Post*. An acclaimed conductor, he is the Artistic Director of the Virginia Chorale and Associate Conductor of Opera Roanoke.

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