



Contact: Stacey Ryan
StaceyVSA@gmail.com 970-250-2440
PO Box 3144, Montrose, CO 81402
ValleySymphony.net

May 19, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bringing Classical Music to Life: VSA Announces New Music Director

Montrose, CO – After an intensive year-long search process, the Valley Symphony Association Board of Directors has approved the search committee's recommendation and is delighted to announce Troy Raper of Grand Junction as their new music director and orchestra conductor. As such, he is the artistic supervisor of the VSA.

Musician, educator, and Colorado native Raper began his teaching career in 1988 from District #51 and retired in 2022 after 31 years in education. He holds a bachelor's in music education from the University of Northern Colorado, where he graduated with honors, and a master's degree in education from Lesley University with an emphasis in educational technology. As an active advocate in Colorado for teaching, Raper spent 10 years as chair/board member for the Colorado All State Orchestra Governing Board. He has also served as a board member of the Colorado Chapter of the American String Teachers Association, and as a member of the Colorado Music Educators Association state board.

As an accomplished musician with broad performing experience, Raper has played with orchestras and for festivals all over the west, sits as principal bassist for the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra, and performs regularly in various jazz bands, recording studios, and as a concert soloist.

"I am very excited to be joining the VSA family," Raper said. "During my guest conductor experience for the December Christmas by Candlelight concerts, I was impressed with the community support for the VSA and warm welcome I received. The musicians are quite extraordinary, and, most importantly, they care enormously about the future of the VSA. All these aspects are a great base to begin our journey, and I feel that we have no limits on how much we can achieve together in bringing classical music to life."

Since 1970, the Valley Symphony Association has culturally enriched the regional community and its members by bringing together some of the best volunteer musicians of all ages from the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Grand Valleys to discover and present works of great composers, past and present.

As a long-time member of the musical community on the Western Slope, Raper has spent countless hours developing and nurturing a community of former students, colleagues, and professional relationships. He believes in the accessibility of music to everyone. "From the youngest students to professionals, there is a place for everyone in the arts," he said. "During my years as a conductor in the Grand Valley, I have had many students, young and old, perform in the VSA Orchestra. Being selected to lead this outstanding music organization is a tremendous honor and holds a great deal of meaning to me as a Western Slope musician."

The search committee was made up of VSA musicians and board members and chaired by Charles Latshaw, music director of the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra and Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra. Latshaw has helped other organizations facilitate conductor searches and guided the VSA during the exhaustive process that considered three finalists who each conducted a concert and got to know the musicians and community.

Latshaw explained that the transition from one conductor to another is a great opportunity for the regional community to evaluate its musical priorities and choose the person to best take the organization from where it is to where it wants to be in the future. He said that the VSA Search Committee, "...went over and above in their commitment to finding the right conductor. They quite properly gave a great deal of weight to the feedback collected throughout the season while equally showing a very deep interest in the off-the-podium part of the job of a modern music director."

The committee gathered extensive surveys from musicians, audiences, organizational advisors, and other relevant music and organizational sources. VSA Board Member and Search Committee Member Stephanie Helleckson said, "While distilling that information was challenging and thought-provoking, the committee feels that we fully considered all three final candidates and unanimously agree that Troy will provide the leadership the VSA needs for the future, both on the podium and in the community."

VSA Board President Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., who also served on the search committee, echoed Helleckson's assessment of the process. "The committee believes we have found in Troy a perfect blend of high artistic standards, dynamic podium skills, combined with a friendly, approachable manner that exudes an infectious passion for classical music. It is absolutely thrilling to have Troy lead the VSA into the 52nd season and beyond."

J. Cameron Law, past president of the Colorado American String Teachers Association and member of the Colorado Music Educators Association Hall of Fame, had this to say about Raper: "Troy Raper is a musician of the community. Few musicians on the Western Slope have done as much as Troy to bring people and music together."

Raper's first official performance will be at the season 52 opener on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at the VSA's annual "Pops in the Park" concert at the Montrose Amphitheater.

Season and individual tickets are now available for the VSA's 52nd season. For information, upcoming concerts, tickets, and the audition process, visit the VSA on Facebook @ValleySymphonyAssociation and online at ValleySymphony.net. Tickets are also available in Delta at Clubb's (502 Main St), in Montrose at Colorado Smiles (601 S 3rd St) and at season partner Cimarron Wealth Management (1731 E Niagara Rd), and at the door on event days. Other inquiries may be directed to 970-765-8323 or info@ValleySymphony.net.

###

Photos

Photo 1: COURTESY PHOTO

Troy Raper - Headshot – VSA Music Director and Orchestra Conductor

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4snovxzz5bj00hu/Troy%20Raper%20-%20VSA%20Music%20Director%20%26%20Orchestra%20Conductor%20-%20Season%2052%20Headshot.jpg?dl=0>

Photo 2: PHOTO CREDIT: Katie Griffith/Bubbles Photography
Valley Symphony Association Orchestra & Chorus (2022-2023 – Season 51)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ctkm1o4zxiujw6w/Season%2051%20-%20VSA%20Orchestra%20%26%20Chorus%20-%20Official%20Group%20Photo.jpg?dl=0>

About the Valley Symphony Association

Since 1970, the Valley Symphony Association has culturally enriched the community and its members by bringing together some of the best volunteer musicians from the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Grand

Valleys to discover and present works of great composers, past and present. Performances range from classical orchestral to upbeat pop, from purely instrumental to purely choral, to a combination of both.

Our goal is to ensure that future generations will enjoy the legacy of live orchestral and choral music that so magnificently celebrates the human spirit.

About Season Co-Partner Cimarron Wealth Management

We strive to simplify your financial life and give you confidence about your future so you can focus on your passions. It starts with the foundation of investment, estate and tax planning discussions, but our passion is honest conversations about purpose, legacy and generosity.

About Season Co-Partner The David Mize Family

The David Mize Family joins Cimarron Wealth Management to support the VSA at the co-season partner level. We thank them for their generous and long-time support of the VSA.