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ORCHESTRA & CHORUS

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Season 53
2024-2025

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Troy Raper - Artistic Director & Orchestra Conductor
Katy Kristoffersen - Chorus Conductor

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| Rehearsal Space: | Budget Blinds |
| Caterer: | The Stonehouse |



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Season 53! We are so excited that you've joined us for this season's playful, fun concerts.

The past few years have been marked by a great deal of change for the Valley Symphony Association. The 2020 pandemic changed how we think about and value live music experiences and interrupted our 50th season, deferring most of it by a year and relegating us to backyard jam sessions and masked-up chamber music. During our first hesitant season back, we said hello to our energetic new Chorus Conductor Katy Kristoffersen and promoted Stacey Ryan as our Communications and Development Director. We also said farewell to both our beloved conductor of over 25 years, Mike Kern, and our fearless concertmaster of over 10 years, Debra TenNapel.

As we undertook our artistic director search during Season 51, the orchestra and chorus both worked under four different guest conductors, which taught us a great deal about our organizational identity and what the future of the VSA could look like. This unexpected gift of perspective initiated a period of deep reflection on what makes us essential to our musicians and audiences. Coming out of this transitional year, we decided to lean into our roots as a locally-focused, multi-community, grassroots organization and concentrate on building the infrastructure needed to sustain our programs and express our love for the music we share for generations to come.

Last season, we welcomed Mr. Troy Raper as our new artistic director and orchestra conductor, whose artistic vision has given us the joyful, exuberant themes for this season's concerts. We also bade farewell to the two longest-standing board members in our history, Priscilla Fry and Hartland Clubb, and welcomed five new board members to the fold: Cheryl Zahniser, Cathy Hoffman, Nona Mayberry, Anne Harper, and Glen Justis. Over the summer, while our musicians took a break, our board hired our first executive director in many years (yours truly) and held our first ever day-long board retreat to determine the direction of the VSA for the next five years.

We're extremely excited to share with you our new mission and vision statements, as well as our inspiring artistic vision and strategic plan for the next five years. Group music-making, like the performance you are watching today, has a unique ability to create community and connect people across all kinds of differences and boundaries. The VSA has been blessed with the opportunity to bring people together like this in our community for over 50 years, and we can't wait to do it for 50 more!

The musicians you see on stage tonight are the core of our community. Our musicians come from over a dozen different communities on the Western

VSA FOUNDERS

Ted & Tricia Dickinson
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Robert Phillips &
Joan Fetters Meikle
Robert & Norma Vold

Slope of Colorado, and they are all volunteers. For each concert, the collective time spent practicing, rehearsing, assisting with logistics, and performing by all members of each ensemble represents over 2,000 volunteer hours. For performances where both ensembles are performing, that number doubles for a staggering 4,000+ human hours to create the performance you are seeing onstage. For the roughly 120 people who participate in our chorus and orchestra, our music and community are a significant part of their lives. Their individual, personal investment in community music-making is the reason the VSA exists.

But they can't do it alone. Without music stands, chairs, sheet music, risers, practice space, marketing, pay for our conductors and staff, ticketing software, a website, and many other elements, the best we'd be able to do is go back to those Covid-era jam sessions in someone's backyard. Creating large performances in beautiful spaces costs time and money outside of our musicians' dedicated volunteer hours. That's where our wonderful board members, staff, donors, sponsors, underwriters, partners, and non-musician volunteers step in to support our community. As you look through this program, take note of the myriad of businesses, individuals, and organizations who enthusiastically support the VSA, and see if you can support any of them in turn. If you are interested in supporting us as a board member, musician, volunteer, committee member, sponsor, underwriter, or partner, please reach out! It takes a village, and we are lucky to have a very large, supportive, enthusiastic village here on the Western Slope.

And lastly, none of this would have any meaning without you, our audience. Performances differ from rehearsals in that they create a loop of excitement and connection between the composers, the musicians on stage, and the observers in the audience that unifies us all in a timeless expression of the human experience. All of those volunteer hours and resources are going towards creating a moment in time that is meant to be shared. Whether you came tonight to support a friend onstage, listen to a composer or song that you love, create a memory with your family, or just be in this space and experience human connection on a grand scale, you are an essential part of our mission and our community. Thank you for being here and undertaking this journey with us!

Stephanie Helleckson
Executive Director

Mission

The Valley Symphony Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit volunteer orchestra and chorus serving Colorado's Western Slope through connective live music experiences for all generations of musicians and audiences.

Vision

Connecting our communities through transformative live, musical experiences.

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SERENE HORIZONS

SEASON 46 | 2024-2025



POPS 1

HOLIDAY HORIZONS POPS *SHAPING A MUSICAL HOLIDAY*

Saturday | Dec 14, 2024 | 7:30 pm
Sunday | Dec 15, 2024 | 3:00 pm
New CMU Asteria Theatre

Get in the festive spirit with classic carols and holiday favorites from the full orchestra and Western Colorado Chorale.

POPS 2

SUPERHERO SCORES *HARNESS SUPERHUMAN MUSICALITY*

Saturday | Jan 18, 2025 | 7:30 pm
Sunday | Jan 19, 2025 | 3:00 pm
The Avalon Theatre

The heroic music from blockbuster films brought to life by the full symphony!



CLASSICS 3

MARIMBA REFLECTIONS *ENJOY THE CALM & UNWIND*

Saturday | February 8, 2025 | 7:30pm
Sunday | February 9, 2025 | 1:00pm
(Early Start for Super Bowl)
NEW CMU Asteria Theatre

Sit back, relax and enjoy the most Serene Concert of the Season. We've nestled a rare Marimba concerto between two masterpieces.



CLASSICS 4

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION *VISUALIZE, THE COLLISION OF ART AND MUSIC*

Saturday | March 8, 2025 | 7:30pm
Sunday | March 9, 2025 | 3:00pm
The Avalon Theatre

A collision of art and music featuring Mussorgsky's famed "Pictures at an Exhibition" and Shostakovich's brilliant Violin Concerto No. 1.



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STAFF DIRECTORS



*Stephanie
Helleckson*

STEPHANIE HELLECKSON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stephanie took her first violin lesson in 1997 at age 5 from former VSA Concertmaster Lu Vorys and has loved music ever since. In 1998, Stephanie joined what would become the Valley Youth Orchestra, playing chamber music in a dirt-floor cabin in Paonia. She consistently performed with the VYO and VSA until graduating from high school in 2010, after which she earned two bachelors degrees, one in music and one in anthropology, from the University of Colorado Boulder. In 2019, she also earned a masters in arts

administration from Florida State University, where she studied under internationally recognized conductor André Thomas and Met Opera Soprano Marcy Stonikas. Her entire family regularly sings together, and her father and brother both play cello in the VSA Orchestra.

Among other adventures, Stephanie has founded the North Fork Community Choir, published original research on the acoustics of kivas at Mesa Verde National Park, worked at a humane society on Maui, and ran lighting and sound at the Sitka Music Festival in Alaska. She has served on three nonprofit boards, founded four organizations, and worked with more than a dozen nonprofits in positions ranging from intern to executive director.

Currently, Stephanie is the Program Manager for Performing and Literary Arts in Crested Butte, CO. She also teaches the strings program at Western Colorado University, directs the North Fork Community Choir, and maintains a small studio of string and piano students.

When not working or making music with family, Stephanie can be found kayaking down the Gunnison, exploring new flavors in the kitchen, or brushing up on her Hawaiian. Please find her after a concert and say hello!



Stacey Ryan

STACEY RYAN DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT

Stacey holds a bachelor of arts degree from UCLA and a graduate certificate in computer programming from the University of Denver. A dedicated volunteer musician with the VSA Orchestra since 2010, Stacey's commitment and passion were recognized in 2018 when the VSA Board

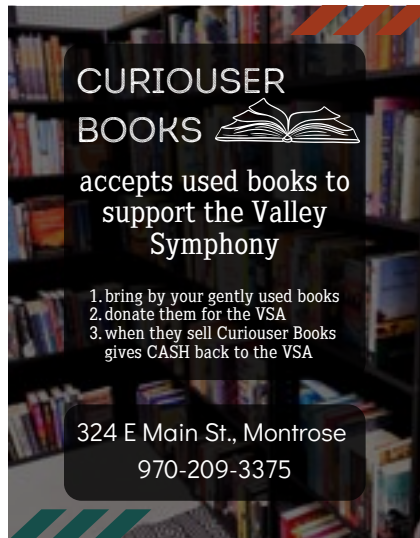
enlisted her for freelance marketing duties.

STAFF DIRECTORS CONT...

Her flair for fundraising, expertise in communications, and extensive knowledge in strategic management quickly became evident. Stacey's background in nonprofits, municipalities, and small businesses, combined with her personal and professional connections in the region, led to a significant expansion of her role. Her proficiency and versatility have since elevated her to the position of director of communications and development.

In this role, Stacey plays a pivotal part in achieving the VSA's goals of financial sustainability and fostering strong community relationships. Her responsibilities encompass marketing outreach, which attracts diverse audiences; fundraising, which engages and invites supporters to contribute to the organization's mission; and development, which builds and maintains strategic, long-term partnerships.

Stacey has been instrumental in transforming the organization's financial landscape, growing its budget from \$4,000 to \$150,000 in just six years. Her success in this role is marked by her ability to build, cultivate, and solidify meaningful partnerships. She excels in spreading the VSA's message, identifying potential collaborators, and inspiring joint efforts that support both immediate and long-term goals. Through her efforts, Stacey upholds the VSA's organizational culture of bringing to the Western Slope *music you love by musicians you know*.



TROY RAPER

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

Biography on page 14

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Katy Kristoffersen, Chorus Conductor (biography on page 18)

Wendy Neill, Webmaster

Christian Pfretzschner, Stage Manager

Dave Reddish, Production Manager

Kim Sloan, Ad Sales Representative

Sandra Sundstrom, Concertmaster (biography on page 21)

Jen Wolfe, Graphic Designer



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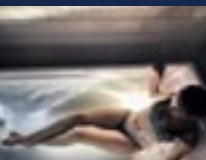


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- John Wanamaker, Early 1900’s American Merchant

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you can know that 100% of it does.**



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TODAY**





Troy Raper

TROY RAPER

Artistic Director and Orchestra Conductor


Musician, educator, and Colorado native Troy Raper began his teaching career in 1988 and retired from Mesa County Valley School District #51 in 2022 after 31 years in education. He holds a bachelor's degree 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.

During his long career, Troy's school orchestras were consistently awarded superior ratings at music festivals from Palisade to Disneyland. Many former students are now accomplished professional teachers and performers around the country.

As an active advocate in Colorado for teaching, Troy spent 10 years as chair/board member for the Colorado All State Orchestra Governing Board, helping to create a new charter and direction for the organization. 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. He currently serves as production manager and librarian to the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra (GJSO).

Troy is an accomplished musician with broad performing experience. He has played with the Greeley, Ft. Collins, Cheyenne, Durango, and Crested Butte festival orchestras and sits as principal bassist for the GJSO. He performs regularly in various jazz bands, recording studios, and as a concert soloist.

His hobbies and personal interests include spending time with his family. His wife, Lori, is an accomplished professional artist and teacher, and their adult daughters, Mandolyn and Melody, both work in careers in music and teaching. He enjoys arranging music for strings, computer games, mountain biking, riding his motorcycle, and remodeling projects in his new home.



VSA Orchestra Conductors

Walter Birkedahl	1970-1980	Season 1 - 9
Antonia Brico *	11/1978	Season 8
Rodney Ash *	2/1979	Season 8
Rodney Ash	1980-1985	Season 10 - 14
Keith Cochrane	1985-1989	Season 15 - 18
Dr. James Horton	1989-1993	Season 19 - 22
Michael J. Kern	1993-2022	Season 23 - 50
Scott Betts *	9/2022	Season 51
Troy Raper *	12/2022	Season 51
Charlotte Ruth Harrison *	2/2023	Season 51
Steven Aguiló-Arbues *	4/2023	Season 51
Troy Raper	2023	Season 52

* *guest conductors* *Note: Seasons run from fall through spring*

SEASON 53 ORCHESTRA ROSTER

Troy Raper (Grand Junction), Artistic Director and Orchestra Conductor

Violin

Sandra Sundstrom (Grand Junction),
Concertmaster

Rachael King (Austin), Principal
2nd Violin

Dorcha Boisen (Montrose)

Maggie Cline (Olathe)

Aaron Clubb (Delta)

Talitha Costello (Grand Junction)

Lois Drysdale (Delta)

Vince Farnsworth (Montrose)

Laurie Fowler (Ridgway)

Stephanie Helleckson (Crested Butte)

Chase Houck (Grand Junction)

Faith Lorenz (Delta)

D.Jo Lowell (Grand Junction) *

Julie Martensen (Montrose)

Chris O'Leary (Ouray)

Tasha Pratt (Montrose)

Maya Varela (Olathe)

Hannah Wieder (Montrose)

Viola

Julie Appelhanz (Montrose), Principal

John Fuerst (Grand Junction)

Dan Lamar (Montrose)

Carly Willey (Montrose)

Cello

Esther Alsum (Paonia), Principal

Brent Helleckson (Paonia)

Jacob Helleckson (Paonia)

Tim Larson (Montrose)

Mary Novak (Grand Junction)

Beth Pertz (Delta)

Bass

Laura Payne (Montrose), Principal

Richard Hansen (Delta)

Phin Howe (Montrose)

Erik Olori (Grand Junction)

Melody Raper (Durango)

Charlotte Simkins (Montrose)

Check the concert slideshow for individual and section underwriters for both the orchestra and chorus

To learn more about joining the orchestra or chorus, go to page 21 for details

* Charter Member

Oboe

Sammie Alteri (Montrose)

Flute/Piccolo

Edie Burgess (Eckert), Principal

Desirée Simler (Delta)

Rosalind Greisz (Ouray)

Clarinet

Holly Burgess (Montrose), Principal

Stacey Ryan (Montrose)

Reyna Carroll (Olathe)

Bass Clarinet

Karla Miller (Palisade), Principal

Bassoon

Carol Franklin (Grand Junction), Principal

Toru Arisawa (Grand Junction)

Alto Sax

Jordan Carls (Montrose)

Toby King (Austin)

French Horn

Sheri Williams (Cedaredge), Principal

Susan Conrad (Ouray)

Clint Miller (Palisade)

Jeff Williams (Cedaredge)

Jake Miller (Palisade)

Stephanie Brauns (Palisade)

Trumpet

Kendra Sitton (Montrose), Principal

Brian Jess (Grand Junction)

Dave Reddish (Montrose)

Trombone

Cindy Swanson (Montrose), Principal

Bruce Mixer (Cedaredge)

Don Mort (Ouray)

Christian Pfretzschner (Grand Junction)

Tuba

Gary Miller (Ouray), Principal

Piano/Keyboard

Anne Koehler (Montrose)

Percussion/Timpani

Andrew Bruington (Olathe), Principal

Anne Clayton (Delta)

Chad Huffman (Montrose)

Pat Olsen (Grand Junction)



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Katy Kristoffersen

KATY KRISTOFFERSEN

Chorus Conductor

Katy Kristoffersen’s 20 years of experience in coaching, accompanying, conducting, and teaching are backed by undergraduate degrees in music and psychology (Miami University, OH) and a master’s in music education (College of Mount St. Joseph).

Enamored of music from the start, at 2 she was reaching for the piano to emulate her talented older siblings. She started composing piano pieces at 4 and accompanying church choirs by 12.

As an undergrad, Katy had the great privilege of studying with Dr. Ethan Sperry, a world-renowned name in the choral and world-music spheres. He helped to draw out her confidence as an arranger and composer. Katy dated Mike Kristoffersen (bass) throughout college, which led to her accompanying every single string bass player in the university. She also caught the eye of bass professor, Dr. Steve Ullery, who requested that she accompany his recital as well as the great Edgar Meyer when he visited to teach a master class.

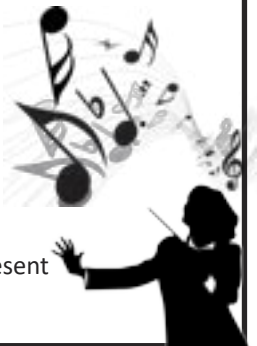
“Accompanist” is a good metaphor for Katy's skill set, although “joyful fork-lift” is apt, too. Katy thrives when in service of elevating people around her. This energy has drawn her to stretch her skills outward in several directions: through the lens of music (choral director, music director, private teacher, music educator, accompanist), and through the lens of mindfulness (teaching her original curriculum to corporate and government agencies, private coaching, and starting her own mindfulness course with Mike).

When not hopping from one responsibility to the next, you might find Katy and Mike trail running near their Ridgway home, hiking with their kids, or just sitting outside in the awe and beauty that drew them here in the first place.

VSA Chorus Conductors

Kelly Neill	2002-2004	Season 31 - 33
Chris Davis	12/2004	Season 34
Aleta Jupille	03/2005	Season 34
Chris Davis	2005-2007	Season 35 - 36
Bethany Ward	12/2007	Season 37
Mary Anne Rathburn	4/2008	Season 37
Bethany Ward	2008-2010	Season 38 - 39
Lenore Hample	2010-2013	Season 40 - 42
Jan Tuin	2013-2017	Season 43 - 46
Allyson Connelly	2017-2019	Season 47 - 49
Katy Kristoffersen	2021-present	Season 50 - present

Note: Seasons run from fall through spring



SEASON 53 CHORUS ROSTER

Katy Kristoffersen (Ridgway), Conductor

Soprano 1

Diane Balk (Montrose)
Heidi Blair (Ridgway)
Charlotte Heath (Montrose)
Katie Hurford (Montrose)
Julie Laube (Montrose)
Carol Mulvaney (Montrose)
Mary Redmond (Montrose)
Luanne Svaldi (Montrose)

Soprano 2

Christy Bloss (Montrose)
Kathy Foglesong (Montrose)
Cathy Hoffman (Montrose)
Ann Holmes (Montrose)
Barb Krebs (Montrose) *
Sarah Morales (Montrose)
Amiee Rawlings (Montrose)
Demeris York (Delta)

Alto 1

Brenda Anderson (Cedaredge) *
Haley Benson (Cedaredge)
Sue Conrad (Ouray)
Jennifer Gilmore (Delta)
Anne Harper (Montrose)
Cheryl Harshman (Montrose)
Mary McCarthy (Montrose)
Sara Schifino (Montrose)
Philis Schuhmann (Cedaredge)
Sue Warren (Montrose)

Alto 2

Lois Berg-Craig (Montrose)
Sue Decker (Montrose)
Dianne McCully (Cedaredge)
Chris Munday (Montrose)
Liz Soler (Montrose)
Anna Strong (Montrose)
Marka Wellington (Cedaredge)

Tenor 1

Vic Franks (Paonia) *
Deborah Gordon (Montrose)
Sam Kevan (Austin) *
Bonnie Koehler (Delta) *
Kevin Pulsipher (Delta)

Tenor 2

Mike Edwards (Ridgway)
Jonathan Heath (Montrose)
Jim Hoffman (Montrose)
Nathan Howe (Montrose)
Judy Lokey (Montrose) *
Erv Rawlings (Montrose)
Vince Snowbarger (Ridgway)
Tim Spangler (Ridgway)

Bass 1

Dave Conrad (Ouray)
Steve DeGolier (Montrose)
Ray Gilbert (Cedaredge)
Mike Kristoffersen (Ridgway)
Keith Laube (Montrose)
Bob McCormac (Cedaredge)
Van Tuin (Paonia)

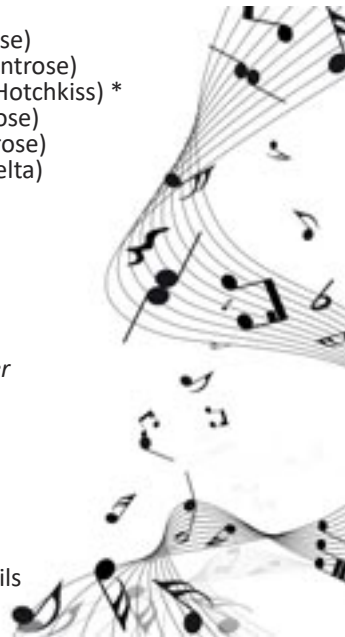
Bass 2

Ted Cole (Montrose)
Rod Bunyard (Montrose)
Robin Nicholoff (Hotchkiss) *
Jim Parks (Montrose)
Seth Ryan (Montrose)
John Thrasher (Delta)

* *Charter Member*

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Sandra Sundstrom

SANDRA SUNDSTROM

Concertmaster

Sandy grew up in Colorado Springs, CO, in a family of musicians. She was involved in orchestras, choirs, and bands throughout her youth, and earned her bachelor of music in education with an instrumental major and choral minor from Arizona State University. Sandy has taught band, choir, and orchestra in all levels of education, elementary through college.

In 2010, she and her family moved to Grand Junction, and she is the Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra (GJSO) Principal Second Violinist. She also plays with

High Desert Opera and Rockestra. She has an active private studio teaching violin, viola, and cello, and her quartet performs in churches and for area events. She plays in regional gigs, performs regularly in Aspen for summer weddings, and is a recurring violin coach for Camp Con Brio. Sandy has adjudicated for the District 51 (D51) Solo/Ensemble, and local auditions, and judged the Colorado West Invitational Music Festival in 2013. She was an active member of the GJSO Board for many years and served on their music director search committee.

In 2013, she started as a paraprofessional in Mesa County School District. Sandy has assisted orchestras at several middle schools, and in 2014, she was a long-term sub for choirs at a local high school. She retired from D51 in the fall of 2023. Sandy and her husband, Dan, have two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren. They absolutely love living in Grand Junction: the people, surrounding views, and connections they've made.

What is a concertmaster? The concertmaster is the principal or “first chair” violinist who leads the orchestra in its tuning prior to the concert and customarily plays all violin solos within pieces. As the leader of the entire string section, the concertmaster also marks the orchestra’s scores with the appropriate bowings to ensure all the strings are moving and playing in unison, and translates instructions from the conductor into specific technical language for strings.



Become a VSA Musician or Chorister!



The VSA Orchestra is seeking percussionists, string players, and substitute players for all wind sections, and the VSA Chorus is looking for voices from soprano to bass. If you're passionate about music and can commit to the performances you're available for, we'd love to hear from you!

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WELCOME!

Hello and welcome to the Valley Symphony Association's Season 53! The VSA Orchestra and Chorus are thrilled to have you with us.

As I begin my second season with the VSA, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your support,

Joy

encouragement, and presence at our performances. Your commitment to volunteer music on the Western Slope is what makes this organization thrive. Whether you attend our concerts, volunteer your time, invite others to join us, or donate your hard-earned money, you are the reason we can continue to grow and share our love of music. Thank you.

This season is all about **PLAY!** We are a volunteer organization of musicians who love to play—whether it's an instrument, singing, or simply enjoying the creative process. Play is at the heart of why we all started our musical journeys. For me, music is the ultimate form of play—it's where I find joy, creativity, and expression. This season, we aim to share that joy with you, reminding us all of why we do what we do.

Creativity

Expression

To truly entertain ourselves and our audience, we need to play music that is fun to perform and enjoyable to listen to—engaging and, in many cases, wonderfully recognizable.

I hope you enjoy this season as much as I've enjoyed planning it. I am excited to spend this year *playing* for you in our season of **PLAY!** Thank you for being part of this journey.

Troy Raper

VSA Artistic Director & Orchestra Conductor



FREE

Celebrate!

Sounds of Summer



*Celebrating summer in America with
uplifting, toe-tapping tunes*
Orchestra - Sep 7 & 8 | Chorus Sep 14 & 15

The VSA is honored to bring our summer concert series to the Western Slope community. We believe in the power of music to connect people, enrich lives, and strengthen community bonds. This belief drives our commitment to offering performances beyond Montrose, ensuring that the joy of live orchestral and choral music reaches all who support us and the broader region our musicians call home.

Sounds

Our *CELEBRATE! Sounds of Summer* orchestra performances featured a vibrant mix of concert classics, including **Sousa's** *El Capitan March* and the **Rossini's** *William Tell Overture*. We celebrated the season opener with toe-tapping tunes like Gloria Estefan's *Let's Get Loud* and *The Theme from Halo*, and a rousing salute to our military and veterans. With *The Star-Spangled Banner* and *Stars and Stripes Forever* ringing in our ears, we are excited to embark on another season with the VSA.

Summer

The VSA Chorus delighted audiences with selections that capture the wonder of summer, exploring the musings of our summer minds with **Simon and Garfunkel's** "El Condor Pasa," the **Wood Brothers'** "Sing About It," and **Harry Connick Jr.'s** "With Imagination (I'll Get There)."

Celebrate!

Sounds of Summer

We expressed the literal sounds of summer in the **Wailin' Jennys** "Bird Song" and **Louis Armstrong's** "What a Wonderful World." And of course we just had to throw in a few favorites from Season 52's *Heaven and Bluegrass* concert. It's all fun and *PLAY* in the VSA!

This year, the VSA grew our summer concert series offerings by returning to Cedaredge and expanding into Ridgway, plus playing two performances in Montrose. By increasing our reach, we connected with more music lovers, sharing the unique experience of live symphonic and choral music in some of the most beautiful settings the Western Slope offers.

The September concerts are gifts to our communities!

Our community means everything to us, inspiring us to continue offering free concerts at the start of each season. These concerts are our way of giving back to the regional community that has supported us so generously for so long. We hope you'll join us for our Season 53 concert series at the Montrose Pavilion. We look forward to many more seasons of sharing our music and extending our reach to create a more inclusive and connected cultural landscape across the Western Slope.

Troy Raper

VSA Artistic Director & Orchestra Conductor



VSA Orchestra and VSA Chorus at the September Concert

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WHO ARE OUR VSA MUSICIANS?

They live and work in our midst and represent over a dozen Western Slope communities. Our musicians are teachers, parents, neighbors, students. They have jobs. They have children. They have homes and schedules and commitments. They teach at local colleges, high schools, middle and elementary schools. They work in business, the arts, health care, government, agriculture, law enforcement, and as entrepreneurs. Some are military veterans. Some are retired. Some are teenagers. Some are snowbirds. And they are all *musicians you know*.

Learn more about VSA musicians at ValleySymphony.net/AboutUs.



PHIL THE CELLO FUNDRAISER

Artistic Director and Orchestra Conductor Troy Raper has launched a creative fundraising effort with “Phil the Cello,” a unique donation box made from a cherished cello he used during his high-school teaching days. Named “Phil” to play on both “philharmonic” and the idea of filling this unique donation box, this initiative invites concertgoers to contribute and guess the total amount collected.



The final amount will be revealed at the March concert, with a family season pass for next year awarded to those who guess closest.

Join us in filling Phil the Cello and supporting our mission to connect communities through live music!

VSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Laugh!

Saturday Morning Soundtracks



Carefree fun for all ages, from classic cartoon themes to video game soundtracks
Orchestra - Oct 26 & 27

Join us for an extraordinary evening of music that promises to be a highlight of the season! Reflecting on my college days, I was fortunate to work with the Carl Stalling Project, performing many of the legendary scores that have become synonymous with the golden age of cartoons. Among these were **Stalling's** brilliant arrangements, which masterfully blended classical symphonic works with the whimsical world of animation. Since that time, the cartoon industry has undergone significant evolution. The music, once heavily reliant on classical themes, is now often composed specifically for individual animated shorts, creating a unique auditory experience for each piece of content.

Saturday

In recent years, the realms of video games and cartoons have merged musically, with composers drawing from symphonic traditions to craft new, exhilarating soundtracks. This fusion has elevated the role of music in both mediums, making it central to the emotional impact and overall experience. Hearing just a snippet of these compositions can transport you back to the nostalgia of Saturday mornings spent watching your favorite cartoons or the thrill of immersing yourself in a video game for the first time, with the volume cranked up and the soundtrack providing a rush of energy.

Our concert will open with one of the most iconic pieces in the history of animation, a work that holds a special place in the hearts of symphony

Laugh!

CONCERT NOTES



musicians and fans alike: *The Rabbit of Seville* (1950), directed by **Chuck Jones**. This timeless classic is set to the Overture to *The Barber of Seville*, which we will perform in its original form. Will Bugs Bunny make an appearance during our performance? There's only one way to find out—by joining us for the show!

We are also excited to present a first for the VSA: a performance of the *Video Games Live!* suite. This groundbreaking concert series has

been a sensation across America since

its debut in 2005, bringing the music of video games to a broader audience and highlighting its significance as a legitimate and important art form. Our performance will feature selections from this suite, along with a few extra surprises for the audience to enjoy.

Morning

Video Games Live! has been instrumental in elevating the status of video game composers, showcasing their work in a concert setting that rivals the grandeur of classical music

performances. This concert series has introduced video game music to new audiences, helping it gain recognition within the broader music industry. The influence of these soundtracks extends beyond the games themselves, as they often play a critical role in shaping the player's emotional experience.

As we delve into the music of television production and video games, it's important to acknowledge the power of this music as a standalone art form. Even when separated from the visual content, the music remains compelling and evocative. Conversely, removing the music from a production can drastically alter the emotional response, sometimes to the point of distorting the intended impact. **Stalling**, one of the pioneers of this approach, was a

Laugh!

CONCERT NOTES

master at aligning music with on-screen action. He famously said, "I fit the music to the action. I watched the action of the cartoons and tried to make the music express what was happening. I always tried to use music as a sound effect as much as a score. The music could help underscore a joke, or even be the joke itself."

Soundtracks

To complete our evening's program, we will perform the iconic *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* by **Franz Liszt**, famously featured in *The Cat Concerto* (1946) by MGM. This piece is celebrated for its flawless synchronization between the music and the animation. The timing of every beat and flourish of the *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* with the movements of Tom and Jerry is a testament to the animators' and musicians' technical expertise. For this special performance, we will accompany the music with the original video, creating a unique and immersive experience for our audience.

We invite you to join us for a memorable evening of music, laughter, and nostalgia as we celebrate the 53rd season of the VSA with *Laugh! Saturday Morning Soundtracks*. This event is sure to be a delightful journey through the music that has shaped the worlds of cartoons and video games, offering something for everyone to enjoy.



That's all folks!



Troy Raper

VSA Artistic Director & Orchestra Conductor

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but when you need more than that

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TO HELP!**



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Snow!

A Winter Wonderland



**The VSA is in a flurry! Join us for a blizzard of carols and holiday cheer
Orchestra and Chorus - Dec 7**

Hi! It is my great pleasure to introduce a new offering this season. Our beloved VSA Orchestra and Chorus are excited to present the *Snow! A Winter Wonderland* concert in an accessible, special, family-friendly format this year.

We know our littlest audience members prefer exciting music, interactive musical experiences, holiday cheer—along with earlier bedtimes and shorter performances due to spontaneous wiggling! We get it, kiddos, we get it.

Family

Our first-ever family matinee concert will begin at 1pm, last no more than 45 minutes, and offer the best, most joyful musical selections from our full winter concerts. Troy and I have curated musical selections that are perfect for families who need to feel the magic and spirit of this season's music. Our mission here is to speak directly to our younger audience with our words, our music, and our intentions.

Matinee

Wear your favorite pajamas OR your fanciest holiday clothes—you choose!—and buckle-up for some unexpected surprises! It is our delight to delight you.

Katy Kristoffersen
Chorus Conductor

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**The VSA is in a flurry! Join us for a blizzard
of carols and holiday cheer
Orchestra and Chorus - Dec 7 & 8**

Symphonic Christmas concerts have long been a cherished tradition, seamlessly blending the rich history of classical music with the festive spirit that defines the holiday season. As classical music evolved, composers began to craft elaborate works specifically intended for Christmas, weaving together sacred and secular themes to celebrate this special time of year. One of the most enduring examples of this tradition is **George Frideric**

Handel's *Messiah*, composed in 1741. Although *Messiah* is not solely a Christmas piece, its "Hallelujah Chorus" and other segments have become iconic symbols of the holiday, performed by choirs and orchestras around the world during the Christmas season.

Winter

The tradition of symphonic Christmas concerts grew exponentially in the 20th century, with a notable surge in orchestral arrangements of traditional Christmas carols and popular songs. Composers and arrangers, such as **Leroy Anderson**, played a pivotal role in shaping this tradition. **Anderson's *Sleigh***

Wonderland

Ride (1948) is a quintessential example, embodying the joyful, light-hearted spirit of the holidays and becoming a staple in Christmas concert repertoires. This piece, with its playful rhythms and evocative use of orchestral colors, captures the essence of a wintry sleigh ride, complete with the sound of jingling sleigh bells and the crisp crack of a whip.

Snow!

CONCERT NOTES



In addition to *Sleigh Ride*, **Anderson** contributed another significant work to the Christmas concert tradition with his *A Christmas Festival*.

Commissioned by **Arthur Fiedler** for the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1950, this medley was designed to serve as a grand and festive overture for the orchestra's Christmas concerts.

Fiedler, known for his ability to bridge the gap between popular and classical music, wanted a piece that

would encapsulate the joy and warmth of the season, while also providing a sense of nostalgia through familiar carols. **Anderson's** *A Christmas Festival* achieved this beautifully, seamlessly blending well-known Christmas carols such as "Joy to the World," "Deck the Halls," and "Silent Night" into a cohesive and uplifting orchestral work. Over the years, it has become one of **Anderson's** most famous and enduring compositions, performed by orchestras around the globe during the holiday season.

This year, the VSA is thrilled to expand on this rich tradition with a special Saturday family matinee performance designed specifically for kids and families. This new performance will feature a shorter program tailored to younger audiences, along with interactive activities and special events for children. It's an opportunity for families to join in the VSA holiday tradition, making memories that will last a lifetime. In addition to this family-focused event, the VSA will also hold its traditional performances that evening and on Sunday, allowing audiences of all ages to experience the magic of symphonic Christmas music.

We are especially excited to return to our normal schedule this year, coinciding with the City of Montrose Parade of Lights. This annual event brings the community together, and our *SNOW! A Winter Wonderland* concerts on December 7th and 8th will be the perfect complement to the festive atmosphere. The VSA will bring a flurry of carols to this celebration of the season, with the VSA Orchestra and Chorus joining forces to kick off the holiday season in grand style.

Snow!

CONCERT NOTES

Our program will include many of the traditional works you've come to love at our holiday concerts. In addition to **Leroy Anderson's** *Sleigh Ride* and *A Christmas Festival*, the chorus will present a selection of beloved carols, including **Adolphe Adam's** *O Holy Night* (1847) and the "Wexford Carol," as we journey through a wintry wonderland of music.

A highlight of this year's performance will be the inclusion of music from **John Williams'** iconic soundtrack to the holiday classic *Home Alone*. The orchestra and chorus will perform "Somewhere in My Memory" and "The Christmas Song," bringing the magic of this beloved film to life. We are fortunate to have access to the signature **John Williams** score for this performance, and we are eager to share this movie music with our audience, adding an extra layer of holiday cheer to our concert.



Please join us for *SNOW! A Winter Wonderland* as we celebrate the VSA's 53rd season holiday performances. Whether you're a longtime fan of our holiday concerts or a newcomer to the tradition, this year's performances promise to be a joyous and festive experience for all. We look forward to playing in the snow with you as we usher in the holiday season with music, laughter, and community spirit.

Troy Raper

VSA Artistic Director & Orchestra Conductor

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Presenting beloved masterworks in
monumental proportions
Orchestra and Chorus - Feb 22 & 23

The performance of great classical literature has been the cornerstone of symphonic music organizations for centuries, serving as the foundation upon which these institutions build their artistic identity. But what exactly defines a piece of music as a "masterwork"? What allows certain compositions to resonate so deeply with audiences, transcending time and cultural shifts to maintain their relevance and popularity? These are questions that conductors, musicians, and listeners alike have pondered for generations.

Epics

The greatest works of the symphonic repertoire have managed to maintain their popularity over the years because they offer something for everyone.

Idols

They can be appreciated on multiple levels—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Whether you're a seasoned concertgoer who analyzes every note or someone who simply enjoys the beauty of the music, these masterworks have a way of speaking to each individual in a unique way. This enduring appeal is why audiences continue to return to these pieces, year after year, generation after generation.

We will begin the evening with what is arguably the most recognizable and iconic work in the entire symphonic repertoire: the opening movement of **Beethoven's** 5th Symphony. This piece is not just a cornerstone of classical music: it is a cultural touchstone that has transcended time and genre to

Sing!

CONCERT NOTES

become a symbol of triumph, resilience, and the indomitable human spirit.

From the very first notes of this powerful movement—those famous four notes, "da-da-da-dum"—listeners are instantly drawn into a world of intensity and drama. These notes, often referred to as "Fate knocking at the door," are perhaps the most famous in all of music. They set the stage for a movement that is both exhilarating and profound, capturing the listener's attention from the outset and holding it with an iron grip through to the final chord. As we open the evening with these legendary notes, prepare yourself for an experience that is not just about listening to music but about feeling its power and presence in the moment.

This performance will also feature a special treat. We are thrilled to welcome the talented Mandolyn Raper to our ranks for this performance. Mandolyn, with her captivating voice and dynamic stage presence, will bring a new level of artistry and emotion to our concert as she joins the chorus to perform several iconic works from the operatic repertoire.

Icons

One of the highlights of the evening will be her rendition of the famous *Flower Duet* from **Léo Delibes'** opera *Lakmé*. This duet, known for its ethereal beauty and delicate harmonies, is one of the most beloved pieces in all of opera. Mandolyn will also lend her voice to the delightful *Una Voce Poco Fa* from **Gioachino Rossini's** *The Barber of Seville*. This aria is one of the most charming and spirited pieces in the operatic canon, known for its playful energy and vocal dexterity.

Another eagerly anticipated moment of the evening will be Mandolyn's performance of the *Habanera* from **Georges Bizet's** *Carmen*. This aria is one of the most iconic and recognizable in all of opera, encapsulating the fiery and seductive nature of the character Carmen. And lastly, with the help of the VSA Chorus, we are excited to bring a lively and spirited atmosphere to the stage as we perform "*Libiamo ne' lieti calici*," the famous drinking song from **Giuseppe Verdi's** opera *La Traviata*.

As part of this extraordinary evening of music, we are honored to present two movements from **Gabriel Fauré's** *Requiem*, a work that stands as one of the most deeply moving and beautifully crafted pieces in the choral and

Sing!

CONCERT NOTES

orchestral repertoire. The chorus will perform two of the most poignant and expressive movements from the *Requiem*: the *Agnus Dei* and the *Sanctus*. These movements, performed in conjunction with the orchestra, will bring to life the profound emotional depth and spiritual serenity that **Fauré** imbued in this masterpiece.

Rounding out our evening's performance will be the powerful and unforgettable "*O Fortuna*" from **Carl Orff's** *Carmina Burana*. This iconic piece is one of the most recognized and frequently performed choral works in the world, known for its dramatic intensity and overwhelming emotional impact. "*O Fortuna*" serves as both the opening and closing movement of **Orff's** *Carmina Burana*, bookending the work with its thunderous energy and compelling message about the capricious nature of fate.

As the final notes of "*O Fortuna*" reverberate through the concert hall, we invite you to reflect on the journey we've taken together through some of the most profound and stirring works in the symphonic and choral repertoire.

Troy Raper

**VSA Artistic Director
& Orchestra Conductor**



Mandolyn Raper

MANDOLYN RAPER **Lyric Mezzo-Soprano** **Soloist**

Mandolyn Raper has been performing on stage since she was three years old. She developed a deep love for opera and classical music from a young age and made her operatic debut at the age of 10 with the Crested Butte Music Festival. Since then, she has performed numerous opera roles, from dramatic to comic, exploring delightful characters from Despina (*Così fan tutte*) to Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*) and "... all of the Ina's in between." She has a love for art song and orchestral works, but opera has always been a passion, as it is a perfect combination of vocal prowess, orchestral brilliance, and magnificent stage work. Mandolyn also has a devotion to helping her community through charity work and plans to start a nonprofit for music education in underfunded school districts. Mandolyn earned her bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Colorado Mesa University and her master's degree from the University of Northern Colorado. She would like to thank her parents for their unending support of her musical ambitions and her boyfriend for his love and inspiration.

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**Blending new and seasoned musicians in an
extravaganza of orchestral music
Orchestra - Mar 29 & 30
with the Valley Youth Chamber Orchestra**

For the first time since 2018, the VSA Orchestra and the Valley Youth Orchestra (VYO) are excited to present a dynamic and inspiring program and come together in a special shoulder-to-shoulder performance. The VYO has three ensembles. For these *Connect!* concerts, we will be sharing the stage with their advance ensemble: the VYO Chamber Orchestra. This unique concert celebrates musical collaboration and the blending of generations, as the VSA and VYO unite on stage in a powerful display of musical community and mentorship.

Past

At the heart of this concert is the VSA's commitment to fostering a love of music across all ages and skill levels. We believe in creating opportunities for young musicians to learn, grow, and perform alongside experienced amateurs and seasoned professionals. This shoulder-to-shoulder performance embodies that ideal, bringing together musicians of all generations to share their passion for music and inspire one another.

Present

One of the highlights of this concert will be the collaboration between the VYO and VSA string sections. Together, they will perform a variety of selections that showcase the pinnacle of string writing for youth ensembles. Among these is **Benjamin Britten's *Simple Symphony***, a cornerstone of the youth orchestra repertoire that has long been celebrated for its accessibility

Connect!

CONCERT NOTES

and artistic depth. As the young musicians of the VYO join forces with the experienced players of the VSA, they will bring **Britten's** music to life in a way that highlights the strengths of both groups, creating a performance greater than the sum of its parts.

By performing together, the young musicians of the VYO and the seasoned members of the VSA will create a living bridge between different musical eras and traditions, demonstrating that music is a universal language that transcends time. This concert is not just about playing notes on a page: it's about sharing knowledge, experience, and the sheer joy of making music with others.

The two organizations will unite their talents to present a performance of **Franz Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony***, one of the most revered and frequently performed works in the orchestral repertoire. Officially known as **Schubert's *Symphony No. 8 in B minor***, this masterpiece has captivated audiences and musicians alike since its creation. Shrouded in mystery, the *Unfinished Symphony* was left incomplete by **Schubert**, with only two movements fully orchestrated. The synergy of young, passionate musicians playing alongside seasoned musicians will add a unique energy and perspective to the performance, making it a truly memorable experience for all involved.

The concert will begin with **Beethoven's *Fidelio Overture***, a powerful and stirring work that sets the tone for the entire evening. As **Beethoven's** only opera, *Fidelio* tells the story of heroism, love, and the triumph of justice. The overture is a masterpiece in its own right, encapsulating the drama and emotion of the opera in just a few minutes of music. It immediately grabs the audience's attention with its bold, assertive opening, followed by passages of intense energy, lyrical beauty, and ultimate triumph.

Future

The VYO will also have the opportunity to shine on their own as they take the Pavilion stage to perform a selection of pieces that highlight their unique strengths and musical finesse. Among the works they will present is the enchanting and evocative *The Story of the Calendar Prince*,

Connect!

CONCERT NOTES

a mesmerizing movement extracted from **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's** famous orchestral suite, *Scheherazade*.

Ending our shoulder-to-shoulder concert on a high note, we will bring the evening to a thrilling conclusion with two of the most beloved and exhilarating movements from **Edvard Grieg's**

Peer Gynt Suite: Anitra's Dance and the iconic *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. These pieces are renowned for their captivating melodies and vibrant energy, making them the perfect showcase for the collaborative talents of both the VYO and the seasoned musicians of the VSA.

As the final notes of *In the Hall of the Mountain King* resonate through the concert hall, we invite the audience to reflect on the extraordinary musical journey they have witnessed. This ending not only highlights the brilliance of **Grieg's** composition but also underscores the importance of fostering the next generation of musicians through opportunities like this shoulder-to-shoulder concert. It's a fitting conclusion to an evening that celebrates the power of music to connect, inspire, and bring people together across generations.

We invite you to join us for *CONNECT! Past, Present, and Future* and experience the magic that happens when young talent meets seasoned artistry. This concert will be a memorable showcase of the incredible potential within our musical community and a shining example of how the VSA continues to fulfill its mission of inclusivity, education, and excellence in music.

Troy Raper

VSA Artistic Director & Orchestra Conductor





VALLEY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

The Valley Youth Orchestra (VYO) was founded in 1999 with a goal to bring orchestra music instruction and appreciation to Colorado's Western Slope. Since that time the VYO has served nearly 1,000 students under the leadership of five conductors: Tyme Mientka, Janice Walker, Kenneth Todd, Debra TenNapel, and Laura Payne. The VYO has an active board and volunteers who dedicate their passion and knowledge to increase the visibility and access to orchestra music in the region. The VYO offers three levels of ensembles for ages 7-19 and performs three major concerts a season. Young musicians come from Delta, Montrose, Ouray, and Mesa Counties. Educational outreach includes masterclasses and workshops, as well as Strings in Schools performances at area schools in December.

Visit ValleyYouthOrchestra.org, and see their ad on page 62.



Laura Payne

LAURA PAYNE VYO Music Director

Laura Payne joined the Valley Youth Orchestra in 2021 as manager and became music director in 2022. Laura moved to Colorado with 36 years of teaching orchestra in public and private schools. Over her teaching career, Laura created two successful school orchestra programs at Noblesville Schools and Heritage Christian School in the Indianapolis area. She earned her bachelors and masters of music education degree from Butler University (Indianapolis). Laura played string bass in the Carmel Symphony Orchestra for over 33 years, and held positions as education director, personnel manager, and librarian during her tenure. She currently plays string bass in the VSA. Laura has two adult daughters living in Denver, and enjoys spending time with them as well as traveling in her little RV. She is thankful for the opportunity to teach young orchestra musicians on Colorado's Western Slope and hopes to continue the tradition of musical excellence the VYO has experienced the past 25 years before her retirement in 2026.



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Chorus and Valley Youth Chorus - Apr 26 & 27

The VSA Chorus is the “voice” of the VSA. And with our voices, we have the ability to tell stories and share music in a powerful, human way. This concert is about using our voices to tell the story of **WATER!** Our story of water is one of healing, movement, inspiration, love, and time. Composers and poets have found inspiration from all forms of water, so I have tried to capture the breadth of what artists feel, see, and experience when they observe water.

Find

Our concert covers the mythology of water in “Song of the Sea” and the fun “Wellerman Sea Shanty.” We sing about the use of water as a medium for baptism, renewal, and healing in “Washing of the Water,” “Who Knows, Who Cares,” and “Wade in the Water.”

And of course, water is an integral part of our earth and a powerful expression of nature. Listen for rain storms in the Montrose Pavilion(!) in “Storms in Africa” and “La Lluvia.”

And we tell the story of water as love. **Eric Whitacre’s** “Water Night” is a world unto itself. Based on Octavio Paz’s poem, “Agua Nocturna,” **Whitacre** creates a gorgeous, immersive landscape of sound. He says, “As I read the poem...the music seemed to sing itself out into the air, as if it were a part of the poetry itself.” This poem has been read as an extended metaphor of water as love: cycles of love, love as a tool of transformation, love for the self

Water!

CONCERT NOTES

as nourishment like a “river...filling you from within,” and love as a ripple outward to the world around us. The music places me in that wonderfully liminal space that I loved as a child—still, underwater in a swimming pool, feeling only water and the odd silence of that suspension of time. This piece sounds like it is being performed underwater, which is magic. I invite you to immerse yourself in the sounds and words of love spoken to you, like warm ocean waves constantly calling you to your heart.

But for many of us, especially here on the Western Slope, water is about life, time, and season. This is why I felt strongly that we needed to sing stories of water from different seasons of life in the most literal way we can. You will see young singers (elementary and middle schoolers) share the stage with our adult choir members. And I am certain that you will feel the exuberant joy that youth offers—a reminder of the playfulness of water. You will also see high schoolers from the wider community join the VSA Chorus to perform “Water Night.” When we sing this piece together, we knit our seasons of life together. We work to build something beautiful and challenging, together. It is a shared song of journey and the love of music.

I am so swept up in the current of this chorus and what is possible in music. With a full heart, I am proud to present *WATER!*

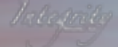
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DISCOVERING OUR ROOTS

Music You Love. Musicians You Know.

Volunteer orchestral and choral groups like the VSA are an outcropping from the concept of the American community band, which predates the Civil War. Immigrants brought the band tradition with them to the US, where thousands of ordinary citizens participated in these ensembles.

After the Civil War, census figures indicated that, across the country, there were about 10,000 community bands. Town bands were admired and provided townspeople with popular, light entertainment for concerts. While the quality of performance varied, the enjoyment and value to each town's social and cultural climate is undeniable.

Community bands experienced a great dying out after World War I, victims of a cultural shift to mass media, radio, and more, all which led to a rise in school music programs. The increased number of musicians who learned an instrument and played in high school and college bands but did not pursue music as a career also provided a rich pool of amateur talent seeking an outlet for their musical abilities. As a result—and ironically—there was once again a rise in participation in community bands.

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DISCOVERING OUR ROOTS cont...

While there will always be music teachers and professional musicians participating in volunteer music performance groups like the VSA, most members come from professions that are not related to music. Most are amateurs who enjoyed playing in school and missed the camaraderie and music-making. Others are students looking to gain more rehearsal time and learn from more experienced musicians.

These ensembles give everyone, regardless of their age or chosen career path, a place to play their instrument, contribute to their community, and most especially, to enjoy themselves while making music.



The purpose of Newcomers & Neighbors is to help you learn more about your hometown and the area and to meet other newcomers and neighbors!

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OUR HISTORY

Music You Love. Musicians You Know.

As a rare, regional, all-volunteer performing arts organization, the VSA takes pride in their long history of bringing *music you love by musicians you know* to the Western Slope. The VSA continues to grow in membership, musical ability, audience size, and program variety, and is thought

to be the only orchestra in Colorado that is not based in a town with a college community.

Today, the VSA's 120+ regional volunteer musicians and choristers—from teenagers to 90-somethings—come together from throughout the Grand, Uncompahgre, Gunnison, and North Fork Valleys to bring their skill, passion, and talent to the stage.

It all started in 1970, when a small group of classical musicians met in the parlor of Wilma and Charles Lowell's Eckert home. By October 1971, the Delta County Community Orchestra was under the baton of Walter Birkedahl of Mesa State College and first performed on March 2, 1972, at Cedaredge Hunsicker Elementary School. On March 16, 1978, the nonprofit known as the Valley Symphony Association was formed to support the orchestra. At that time, nearly 50 musicians from Montrose, Delta, Grand Junction, Ouray, Gunnison, Paonia, Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, and Eckert practiced once a week in Delta and performed four annual concerts.

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OUR HISTORY CONT...

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, numerous choirs, like the Grand Mesa Singers and the Christmas in the Valley chorus, were seasonal contributors to the orchestra, mainly at Christmas concerts. In 2002, these choral groups combined and came under the VSA umbrella to create the VSA Chorus.

Since its humble beginnings, the VSA has always believed in the power of music to connect our communities through transformative live musical experiences for all generations of musicians and audiences. Our diverse regional volunteer musicians of all ages treasure the opportunity to perform live to connect Western Slope audiences of all ages. The VSA's goal and purpose is to ensure that future generations will enjoy the legacy of live orchestral and choral music that so magnificently and timelessly celebrates the human spirit.



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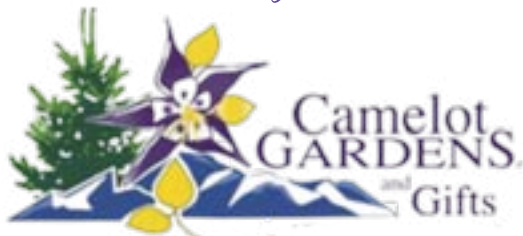


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