

ARTS NOTES

# A variety of concerts will be music to the ears during coming weeks

By John Shulson  
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The 2023 arts season is moving into high gear with some mighty fine and quite diverse events taking place in January and early February.

### Open Door Concert Series

The Williamsburg Presbyterian Church's innovative 2022-23 Open Door Concert Series continues Jan. 29 with Alcee Chriss, who is considered one of the top-tier leading organists pretty much everywhere. When he's not performing around the world, he's the university organist and artist-in-residence at Wesleyan University. Known for his "grace, skill and abundant proficiency," he's got the goods and the church's magnificent three-manual Buzard organ to create substantial "wow." The program begins at 4 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

### Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra

The WSO's upcoming Masterworks Concert on Feb. 2 features not only Beethoven's Fifth Symphony but also two highly acclaimed string players who have been touring the country spreading exciting sounds. They are Xaviar Foley, dynamite double bassist and composer, and violinist Eunice Kim, who has been repeatedly called "just superb" and "a born performer" and has garnered impressive accolades internationally for her skill and presence in symphony halls and festivals. Foley is noted for virtuosity and passion as a player and composer. He has written extensively for Kim — his Curtis Institute classmate — works that explore the color of their individual string instruments.

For this upcoming program, the duo will perform Bottesini's "Grand Duo Concertante for Violin and Bass" and Foley's "For Justice and Peace." This work was written in 2019 to mark 400 years since the arrival of the White Lion, the ship that brought enslaved Africans to Jamestown.

Opening the program will be "Global Warming" by Oscar-winning Michael Abels. Written around the fall of the Berlin Wall and end of the Cold War, this musically colorful and interesting piece tends

to embrace folk music of myriad immigrant cultures and commonalities that are shared. Closing the fare will be the well-known Beethoven. Michael Butterman conducts. The Williamsburg Community Chapel program begins at 7:30 p.m. with a pre-concert chat at 6:30 p.m.

On Feb. 5, the WSO joins forces with members of the Williamsburg Youth Orchestra in a 4 p.m. program, also in the Chapel. This is a grand opportunity to share youthful ambition with seasoned talent that should be inspiring. For tickets and information about both of these events, visit: [www.williamsburgsymphony.org/concerts](http://www.williamsburgsymphony.org/concerts).

### Virginia Symphony Orchestra

The VSO shines its light on its own talent in its "Shining Stars" program on Feb. 9 in the Ferguson Center. The program features concertmaster Vahn Armstrong and principal oboe Sherie Aguirre in Bach's "Double Concerto in C Minor for Violin and Oboe." The Bach is pure listening pleasure, one of his most recognizable such works — a showcase of delicacy, technical know-how and wonderful sounds. From energetic to appealing tender to jovial, it's a delightful work. As a sad side note, Aguirre, who is extraordinarily talented and competitive with major players in major orchestras, is retiring at the end of the season.

The program also features Shostakovich's powerful Symphony No. 5 in D Minor. Overall, it's a very emotional and moving and stirring piece. Written to get back into or stay in the good graces of Stalin, it's a work of strength, rhythmic thrust, thoughtfulness and brass-inspired triumph. Its four movements are compelling and thrilling. Expect "big" here, all under the baton of Eric Jacobson. The concert starts at 7:30 p.m. For tickets and information, visit [www.virgiasymphony.org](http://www.virgiasymphony.org) or call 757-892-6366.

### Ewell Recital Series

W&M's Ewell Concert Series, directed by Victor Haskins, who also directs the jazz ensemble and is an instructor of jazz trumpet and improvisation, continues with what should be a pulsating program on Feb. 10 with Kadencia.

Playing in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theater, the Kadencia is a 13-piece



Kadencia brings its Afro-Puerto Rican sounds to the Williamsburg Library Theater on Feb. 10 as part of William & Mary's Ewell Concert Series. **ASHLEY TRAVIS**

Puerto Rican-founded (and now Richmond-based) orchestra comprised of professional musicians who have toured with some of the best local and internationally renowned bands in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Mid-Atlantic region.

Featuring bomba and plena, percussion-driven music, and salsa tossed into the mix, Kadencia's songs are narrative in nature and describe aspects of Puerto Rican society, culture and traditions. They've headlined numerous Virginia events such as Richmond's Latin Jazz and Salsa Festival, Dogwood Dell Festival of the Arts, Henrico Theater, Richmond Performing Art Alliance and Chesterfield County's Festival de Música. To say Kadencia's Afro-Puerto Rican music is moving literally describes the impact the sounds make on its listeners; there's sure to be lots of toe tapping, hand clapping, dancing-in-your-seat high energy grooving taking place.

The program starts at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) and is free and open to the public. No ticket required.

### Williamsburg Contemporary Art Center

WCAC is holding its 20th Annual High School Student Show, which runs through Feb. 10. It features works of students from Bruton, Jamestown, Lafayette and Warhill high schools. According to WCAC program chair Karen Schwartz, "there are so many talented students in this area and we are happy to have the opportunity to put their unique and creative artwork on display as part of our community outreach." June Skalak, a local artist and teacher, judged the show.

WCAC is also featuring new artwork of the 2022 Members' Show winners in the Fireside Gallery, along with new works in the Artisan Corner. Hours at the Westover Avenue location are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

### Chamber Music Society of Williamsburg

The Chamber Music Society continues its offerings of first-class music Feb. 14 with the internationally-acclaimed Verona Quartet. The highly distinguished ensemble is known for its championing of contemporary music and its dedication to time-honored works.

The program will include Beethoven's emotional and sweeping String Quartet No. 1 in F Major, Opus 18 and his expressive and melodic String Quartet No. 7 in F Major, Opus 59 and 20th century Polish violinist-composer Grazyna Bacewicz's String Quartet No. 4. The latter is probably an unknown name to many (it was to me). Her quartet, considered one of her most engaging, references Polish folk songs with some Spanish thrown into the mix. Some references suggest an influence of Beethoven, making it an interesting companion to the bookends of this event.

The program begins at 7:30 p.m. in the Williamsburg Regional Library Theater. For those without season tickets but wanting to get on a standby listing (usually there's room), visit [www.chambermusicwilliamsburg.org/tickets](http://www.chambermusicwilliamsburg.org/tickets).

*Have information about arts in the Historic Triangle? Contact John Shulson at [johnshulson@gmail.com](mailto:johnshulson@gmail.com).*



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