



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Richmond Symphony Altria Masterworks and Casual Fridays Concerts

Mason Bates' World Première: Children of Adam

Friday, May 11 at 6:30pm

Saturday, May 12 at 8:00pm

Carpenter Theatre, Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts

April 19, 2018 – Richmond Virginia – Music Director Steven Smith will lead the Richmond Symphony in the Altria Masterworks performance of Mason Bates' World Première: *Children of Adam* on Saturday, May 12 at 8pm. The World Première will also take place on Friday, May 11th at 6:30pm during our Dominion Energy Casual Fridays concert. Musical America's 2018 Composer of the Year, Mason Bates, will be joining the Richmond Symphony on stage as it performs his original work commissioned by the Symphony, *Children of Adam*. The Saturday evening program also includes Honegger's *Pacific 231*, *Mouvement symphonique No. 1*, Tobias Picker's *Old and Lost Rivers*, and Debussy's *La mer*. Both concerts will be held in the Dominion Energy Center's Carpenter Theatre.

A Richmond native, Mason Bates was commissioned by the Richmond Symphony to compose a work to celebrate their 60th anniversary season. Mason Bates has been named the most-performed composer of his generation and was just recently named the 2018 Composer of the Year by Musical America. Bates is widely acclaimed for combining symphonic music and electronic sounds. Working as a composer, DJ, and curator, Bates' main mission is to bring orchestral music to new audiences and new spaces. He often performs in club settings under the name "DJ Masonic," and has created a post-classical rave that attracts crowds around the country. Bates is a truly gifted artist who is invested in exploring how classical music can infiltrate contemporary culture.

Taking its name from a Walt Whitman poem, Mason Bates' *Children of Adam* tells the story of creation from diverse perspectives. Bates chose to take inspiration from both the secular and the sacred to celebrate the body and soul in this piece, his first work for both chorus and orchestra. Bates uses a structure of "fanfare intermezzos" placed between each movement, and each movement offers a

different viewpoint of creation. The combination of Biblical excerpts, secular poems by Carl Sandberg, and sacred texts from the Mattaponi Indians offers rich, colorful imagery and is thoughtfully paired with instruments in the orchestra to tell their respective tales. Bates has said that exploring sacred texts from the Mattaponi Indians was especially moving for him, as their reservation is close to his family's farm in King & Queen County. The text itself was originally sung to Bates by Sharon Sun Eagle in native East Coast Algonquian on the Mattaponi reservation. He visited the reservation with his chorus teacher from St. Christopher's School, Hope Armstrong Erb, who continues to mentor him to this day. Bates dedicates *Children of Adam* to Ms. Erb, as she has been a leading source of inspiration on his musical journey.

In the 1920s, while part of a group of renegade composers in Paris, Arthur Honegger wrote several short orchestral pieces of music that he called *Mouvements symphonique*. He claimed to be intrigued by locomotives moving at high speeds. After finishing his series of three movements, he called the piece *Pacific 231*, which served to confuse audiences. Concert-goers associated his piece with the sea and open ocean until the press stepped in to help clarify that the piece was inspired by Honegger's ideas about trains and machinery.

Tobias Picker was an incredibly gifted young composer who suffered from Tourette's. He used music to control his impulses and harnessed his energy into creating incredibly emotional compositions. His work *Old and Lost Rivers* tells the story of bayous that fill with water and begin to flow; the piece concludes with the rivers evaporating and under the sunlight.

Claude Debussy is remembered as one of the most revolutionary composers of the nineteenth century, opening the doors for more experimental composers. Though Debussy's music is known for being beautiful, it is rare that today's audiences realize that he was breaking years of tradition with every composition. With *La mer*, each movement paints a picture that feels like staring at an impressionist painting. The first movement begins with a serene stillness and builds until the stormy representation of the final movement.

Join us for both concerts and experience a weekend of innovation and inspiration!

Adult and college student tickets for Altria Masterworks performances start at \$10, and child tickets are free for ages 18 and under. Adult tickets for Casual Fridays performances start at \$15, College student single tickets are \$5, and Child tickets are free for ages 18 and under. The audience is invited to mingle with Symphony Musicians at Vagabond (700 E. Broad St.) following the Casual Fridays performance.

Purchase tickets online at richmondsymphony.com, by calling 1.800.514.ETIX, or in person at the Carpenter Theatre box office.

The Masterworks series sponsor is Altria. The guest artist sponsor is Markel. The media sponsor is Richmond Times-Dispatch.

The Casual Fridays series sponsor is Dominion Energy. The guest artist sponsor is Markel. The After-Party partner is Vagabond.

Mason Bates' World Première commissioned piece is made possible through a grant from the Slatten-MacDonald Fund of The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia and through partnership with the 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™.

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Saturday, May 12, 2018 at 8:00 PM

RICHMOND SYMPHONY

Masterworks 8 Program

Steven Smith, conductor

Mason Bates, composer

Richmond Symphony Chorus

Erin R. Freeman, Director of the Richmond Symphony Chorus and James Erb Choral Chair

HONEGGER *Pacific 231, Mouvement symphonique No. 1*

MASON BATES *Children of Adam, songs of creation for chorus and orchestra*
(World Premiere)

I. From Pent-Up Aching Rivers

II. Psalms 144 & 128

III. I Sing the Body Electric

IV. Tolepe Menenak

V. Prayers of Steel

VI. The Book of Genesis

VII. To the Garden, the World

Richmond Symphony Chorus

Commissioned by the Richmond Symphony

INTERMISSION

TOBIAS PICKER *Old and Lost Rivers*

DEBUSSY *La mer*

I. De l'aube à midi sur la mer [From Dawn to Noon on
the
Sea]

II. Jeux des vagues [Play of the Waves]

III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer [Dialogue of Wind
and
Sea]

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About the Richmond Symphony (www.richmondsymphony.com):

Celebrating its 60th Anniversary Season in 2017/18, the Richmond Symphony is the largest performing arts organization in Central Virginia, and its reach extends throughout the Metro Richmond region and across the Commonwealth from its home downtown in the Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts. The organization includes an orchestra of more than 70 professional musicians, the 150-voice Richmond Symphony Chorus and over 260 students in the four ensembles in the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Program. Each season, more than 200,000 people enjoy its live concerts

and radio broadcasts. The Richmond Symphony also provides inspirational and immersive educational programming for over 55,000 students and teachers each year.

Its 40-week season (from September through June, plus an annual July 4th concert and summer concert series) includes the following series and programs under the headings of Classics, Currents and Community: Masterworks, Pops, Metro Collection, Casual Fridays, LolliPops, Rush Hour, Discovery, Come & Play, Messiah, Big Tent community festivals, and annual contracts with Richmond Ballet and Virginia Opera. The Richmond Symphony was recently named as one of 21 American orchestras selected as a leader in orchestra innovation by the League of American Orchestras through its Futures Fund Initiative. The Richmond Symphony is partially funded by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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