

WINTER 2009

Friends

THE NEWSLETTER OF

Friends OF THE
Center
FOR THE
Arts

Cirque Eloize's Trilogy Finale

Quebec-based Cirque Eloize (pronounced EL-WAZ) returns to the Concert Hall stage in February 2009 to perform the third and final show of the Sky Trilogy, "Nebbia." The first show, "Nomade," was a great success here in May 2004, followed by the second sold out show, "Rain," performed here in February 2007. Nebbia, which means "fog" in Italian, was created as a joint production with Teatro Sunil, a Lugano, Switzerland, company founded by the trilogy director, Daniele Finzi Pasca. The world premiere occurred in Geneva in December 2007 to critical acclaim. Since then it has been on tour, already logging over 120 performances in many countries, including Switzerland, Slovenia, Italy, Colombia, Mexico, Canada and Korea. The U.S. tour began in January and is scheduled for 23 cities before visiting

Germany and Russia. This two-hour production showcases 11 performers from seven different nationalities, all of whom express themselves in their native tongues.

The curtain opens on three men who are lost in a fog. They embark on an adventure into a world where circus acts are interwoven with dramatic performances. The artists on stage are quite versatile, as they move from floor acrobatics to the trapeze, even including a trampoline act as a part of youth rediscovered. In the words of Pasca as reported in *La Presse* (Montreal) in August 2008, "Nebbia tells the story of what happens when the sky falls and we lose sight of the horizon. It's a story told through the eyes of those who are entering the final years of their lives – the elderly." Audience members of all ages will be enthralled by the performers who are both actors and acrobats.

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The Queen of Fado

Fadista sensation Mariza will be making her first ever appearance in the Concert Hall on March 6, 2009. In October 2005 she gave a concert in George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium and returned to the Washington, DC, area with a sold out Kennedy Center appearance in March 2007. She will be performing songs from her fourth album "Terra," which was nominated for a Latin Grammy Award in 2008 in the category "Best Folk Album." Her previous album "Concerto Em Lisboa" was also nominated in 2007 for the same award.

Fado music is the heart of the Portuguese soul, and a "fadista" is a singer and interpreter of fado. Dating back to the nineteenth century, fado's themes of destiny, betrayal in love, death, and despair have remained constant. The essential element of this music is "saudade," a Portuguese word that roughly means longing, or nostalgia, for unrealized dreams. Like

other forms of folk music, fado cannot be explained; it must be felt and experienced. During many performances, people have been seen crying because of the emotional feeling that Mariza puts into every song she sings.

Mariza is the acknowledged queen of fado. She is an arresting figure, six feet tall and slender, with a shock of short silver hair, piercing dark eyes, and a voice that is drawing sold-out performances wherever she appears. Critics and audiences have characterized her voice as a "voice to die for." Mariza's accompaniment during her concert here will consist of a violin, Portuguese guitar, classic guitar (called a viola in Portugal), cello, bass, and percussion.



<http://fcfa.gmu.edu>

Notice to Great Performances patrons: Free parking is available in **Lot K** during any public performance or event at the Center for the Arts (includes Great Performances, Pre-performance Discussions, Friends Events, Vision Series and Student/Faculty performances). **You risk a parking fine and/or towing if you park in any other lot on campus.**

Please note that Lot K is restricted to permit holders at all times except for the events mentioned above. If you are visiting campus for a meeting or other reason, please use the visitors parking deck adjacent to the Center for the Arts, Concert Hall.

Arts Advocates Speak of Influences

What inspired you to become a Friend of the Center for the Arts? The reasons are as varied as the individuals who are members. We have asked some current Board members for their thoughts on why they have chosen to support the Center and hope to expand this feature in subsequent issues.

Bob Warakomsky became a member so he could participate in an organization whose purpose is to promote the performing arts and provide members with occasional meetings and discussions with artists. With his violinist father as an influence, he played violin, viola, and guitar. His daughter is currently a principal dancer with the Texas Ballet Theater Dance School. Al Sims' musically talented family includes a father who was a concert pianist and three uncles who were famous musicians. He and his wife, Mindy, a lover of opera and classical music, enjoy both the quality of the performances and the proximity of Mason to their home.

Gordon Canyock cites not only his personal background singing in choirs, acting in plays and playing the guitar in his youth, but most importantly the Center for the Arts

as a place where he can share his interest in the arts with some truly remarkable people. A background in all aspects of the arts, and especially a school trip at the age of thirteen to hear the Baltimore Symphony, mesmerized Kay Rongley and contributed to her lifelong love of music, dance, and theater. As a new resident of Fairfax, Carol Robinson knew that the Center for the Arts would be an important part of her life. She has been a professional opera and oratorio performer and appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Mason arts community, as does Jane Tombes, whose sister is a conservatory graduate and concert pianist. Her brother has sung tenor with Robert Shaw, and Jane sang in choruses and played the oboe with the Richmond Symphony. Additionally, she had extensive theater experiences from a very early age and studied modern dance in college.

If you would like to be included in this ongoing discussion of why you chose to become a Friend, please contact us through a Board member, or send your comments to the newsletter staff through Jane Tombes (atombes@cox.net).

Visiting Artists Benefit CVPA Students

FCFA support of the Great Performances Series also impacts the Arts at Mason community at large. For example, we support visiting artists who give master classes for Mason students in dance, music, and theater, and a few occasionally stay on as "artists in residence," offering workshops as arranged by the individual academic departments.

In a typical master class, select students perform a work that they have prepared and the "master" gives them advice on their performance and demonstrates alternative methods. The student then performs the work again, seeking to incorporate the master's suggestions. The performers as well as students in the audience benefit from the master's comments and have the opportunity to participate in a question and answer period.

Rachael Patton, who earned her M.A. in Arts Management at Mason, is responsible for both artist services and outreach programs.

She coordinates with the managers of visiting artists to see if they are available before or after the performance to meet with Mason students. Some groups are only in the area for the few hours of the performance; others -- particularly dance and theater -- have their own educational outreach programs and are eager to participate.

Recently the Aquila Theatre Company held a master class in stage movement and the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago gave one in dance. The Mason Chorus had the thrill of backing up Barbara Cook on stage during *Arts by George* in 2007. Artistic Director Peter Mark of the Virginia Opera often holds master classes for student singers on the Thursday before their performances at CFA, and a Mark Morris cast member can also be counted on to give a master class to dance students. These are memorable opportunities for CVPA students to meet and learn from the stars, brought here by the Great Performances Series.

Coming Attractions



Virginia Opera, *Tosca*

Our first Friends event of the New Year will be the annual opera brunch on Saturday, February 14, between the Friday and Sunday performances of Puccini's *Tosca*. The event will begin with a talk by the Virginia Opera's Artistic Director Peter Mark, followed by a backstage tour and then a splendid Valentine's Day brunch in the Center's grand foyer. Tickets are \$45 for Friends and \$50 for non-members. Paulette Miller and Bert Boyd are organizing this year's event and advise everyone to sign up as soon as they receive the invitations as the event sells out quickly.

The next Discussion Series evening will be Thursday, February 19, and is intended to provide insight into the performance of *The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial* by the L.A. Theatre Works the following evening. This special free event, which is open to FCFA members only, will be hosted by Eileen and Charles Duggan in their lovely McLean home.

Then on Saturday, March 21, Judy and Gordon Canyock are organizing a post-performance cocktail party featuring Russian-style refreshments, as well as Russian decorations from their private collection, in honor of the Russia National Ballet Theatre's performance of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* that evening and Prokofiev's *Cinderella* the night before. Tickets are \$20 for Friends, \$25 for non-members.



L.A. Theatre Works, *The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial*

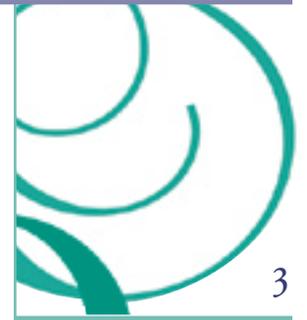


Russian National Ballet



Reminder about Pre-performance Discussions

Pre-performance discussions, funded by Friends contributions, are held 45 minutes before every performance during the season on Grand Tier III. Because these talks are very popular with patrons, it is important to get there a little early in order to ensure a seat. No standing room is allowed. The elevator on the left side of the lobby is available to take you up to the third floor, or you can walk up the steps. However, you will need to show your ticket first. Those members at the Donor level (\$250 +) receive reserved seats at these lectures as a benefit. Think about upgrading today!





Pre-performance Discussion, *Aquila Theatre*, November 7



Dinner with Friends after the *Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman* performance, November 23



Coffee time with Friends at intermission



John Tewksbury and Melinda Bloom



Michael and Janet Emsley

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

The Friends of the Center for the Arts would like to use electronic communications more frequently in order to make better use of your contributions. Next time you are at the Friends refreshment area, please check the binder to see if we have your correct email address or you can send your current email to dpaez@gmu.edu. We do not share email addresses.

The Hylton Performing Arts Center to Spotlight Regional Talent



Have you heard the buzz about the new Hylton Performing Arts Center, scheduled to open in the spring of 2010 on George Mason's Prince William Campus? You may be wondering what this new Center may offer you as a supporter of the performing arts, or what it means for the Great Performances at Mason series that we enjoy here at the Center for the Arts (CFA) in Fairfax.

You should be delighted to hear that the Hylton Center will be a wonderful

complement to the CFA and will offer even greater programming

diversity. The Center aims to be a true "community performing arts center," offering world-class facilities and other resources for local/regional community-based arts groups and students. It will also provide residents of the region with high quality music, dance, choral and theater performances by these groups. In addition, internationally known touring artists will round out the programming schedule.

When completed, the 86,000 square-foot Hylton Performing Arts Center complex will encompass two major state-of-the-art performance/rehearsal venues, incomparable support facilities, banquet/meeting spaces, and a visual arts gallery. The Center will not just attract regional arts patrons; it is sure to draw architecture buffs as well.

Designed by Holzman Moss Architecture of New York, one of the country's top architectural firms that specializes in multi-use performing arts venues, the Hylton Center's unique and exciting design emphasizes the use of natural materials and open space. The 1,166-seat main performance hall, to be named Merchant Hall in honor of Manassas native Carol Merchant Kirby, is modeled on classic 19th century European opera houses, with elevated box seats on three levels. The 300-seat Gregory Family Theater is a highly adaptable venue that can be arranged for virtually any type of performance. The vision for the 10,000-square foot, two story Didlake Grand Foyer is that it will serve as the Center's "town square" with space for a 600-person reception, a 300-person seated dinner, or other business functions. The Buchanan Partners Gallery, to be located on the second story of the Grand Foyer, will showcase visual arts exhibits by local and regional artists. The Center will also contain state-of-the-art rehearsal and support facilities in which regional and student organizations can learn, train, and grow.

Because of its community focus, the smaller nature of its performance venues, and its regional audience, the Hylton Center programming will differ from that of the Great Performances at Mason series that we support as Friends of the Center for the Arts. At the Hylton Center, local performing arts groups will take center stage, including the Prince William Symphony, the Manassas Ballet Theatre, and George Mason University choral, symphonic, dance, and theater groups. Bluegrass groups, solo acts, family-oriented performers, and other artists drawn to the intimate setting of the center are certain to make appearances.

Brian Marcus, Director of the Hylton Center Campaign, states: "The opening of the Hylton Center is a very important way for George Mason University to serve new communities just as we have served the Fairfax community. We look forward to serving Prince William, Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper counties and beyond. We hope that you as Friends will support the Hylton Center and welcome it into the Mason arts community."



Merchant Hall



Gregory Family Theater

The Center is a partnership of Prince William County, the City of Manassas, and George Mason University, with additional financial support from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the private sector. The Cecil and Irene Hylton Foundation of Dale City, Virginia, has provided the lead naming gift. Carol Merchant Kirby, a native of Manassas, and Peter Kirby; along with John O. Gregory, in memory of his wife, Angela, and son, Scott and the Didlake Foundation have made leadership gifts to the Center.

For additional information, see <http://www.communityperformingartscenter.com>



Friends OF THE Center FOR THE Arts

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GREAT PERFORMANCES AT MASON

January | February | March

Sunday, January 25 at 7 pm: **Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel, *The Longevity of the Short Piece!***

Saturday, January 31 at 8 pm: **Philadanco**

Friday, February 6 at 8 pm: ***Dublin Philharmonic Orchestra** **(Please note, this performance will be held at Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center - Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus)*

Saturday, February 7 at 8 pm & Sunday, February 8 at 2 pm and 8 pm: **Cirque Éloize, *Nebbia***

Friday, February 13 at 8 pm & Sunday, February 15 at 2 pm: **Virginia Opera, *Tosca***

Friday, February 20 at 8 pm: **L.A. Theatre Works, *The Great Tennessee Monkey Trial***

Saturday, February 21 at 8 pm: **Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra**

Sunday, February 22 at 7 pm: **DRUMLine Live**

Saturday, February 28 at 8 pm: **Parsons Dance**

Friday, March 6 at 8 pm: **Mariza**

Sunday, March 15 at 7 pm: **Trinity Academy of Irish Dance**

Friday, March 20 at 8 pm: **Russian National Ballet Theatre, *Cinderella***

Sunday, March 22 at 4 pm: **Academy of Ancient Music, *Brandenburg Concertos***

2008-2009

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