



40TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

APRIL 2023

PRINCIPAL FLUTE, LES ROETTGES, STEPS OUT FRONT FOR MAY CONCERT

Monday, May 8, 2023 ★ Brunswick High School Auditorium

It is no secret that the Coastal Symphony of Georgia musicians are world class. They hold degrees from some of the most prestigious music schools in the country, have studied or played abroad as well as nationally, received awards for their work, and bring excellence in music every time we hear them in our concert halls.

Les Roettges, principal flute for the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, the Coastal Symphony of Georgia, and the Eastern Music Festival, is one of those musicians. Les says he is mainly an orchestra player but enjoys stepping out front occasionally which he will do at our May 8th concert when he performs as soloist for Carl Reinecke's *Flute Concerto in D major*.

This is Roettges' first experience performing the challenging concerto. He says the score has been on his music stand since last summer. "It is more than just practicing the notes. Living with a piece of music like this really develops a clear idea of how I would like it to go."

Les is married to Lorraine, also a flutist, and they have three grown children. He has a bachelor's in music from the New England Conservatory, and a Master of Music Degree from The Juilliard School. Les enjoys fishing and kayaking and is proud to share he is a cancer survivor. His favorite thing about being a musician is "the never-ending mission to improve my abilities to perform."



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CONCERT NOTES

ENDURANCE

Monday, May 8, 2023

Brunswick High School Auditorium

The Season Finale will showcase our musicians' virtuoso talents as the Orchestra brings us music of endurance and the resilience of the human spirit.



Sarah Kirkland Snider's haunting piece, *Something for the Dark* was commissioned by The Detroit Symphony in 2016 as a result of her receiving the DSO Elaine Lebnhom Award for Female

Composers in 2014. Snider says thinking about Detroit caused her to think about resilience – what it means to endure. The music opens with a bold statement of hope in the horns and trombones, then takes us through humbling passages to a delicate tune in flute, harp and celeste, then on to a testing tumult before finding a “kind of clear-eyed serenity, maybe even the kind of hope that endures.”



Carl Reinecke was considered one of the most influential and versatile musicians of his time. His Flute Concerto was the last work he composed before his death in 1910. A contemporary of Schuman, Reinecke shared his fondness for the Romantic Period.

Reinecke's flute concerto will be performed by **Les Roettges**, principal flute for The Jacksonville Symphony and The Coastal Symphony of Georgia. It allows the flutist to take center stage throughout while pairing with other orchestra members in a cheerful first movement, followed by a dark second movement, and finally stirring the brass and strings into dramatic swells of harmony and texture leading to a triumphant finale.

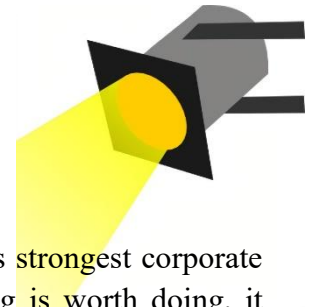


The evening closes with **Dimitri Shostakovich's** powerful Fifth Symphony. It was written at the height of the Stalin era, a time of death, fear, and artistic repression. There is a constant sense of urgency, an overwhelming sadness to the music.

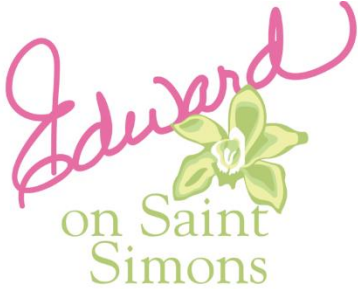
Scholar Richard Taruskin described Shostakovich as one who “embodied the idea of the artist in society,” and the public heard the symphony as an expression of the suffering to which it had been subjected. Dimitri Shostakovich is considered one of the greatest composers of the 20th century.



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Musical Marriages

Music brought them together, and music remains integral to their lives. Meet our fascinating married couples who are members of The Coastal Symphony of Georgia.



Michelle Merrill, Music Director and Conductor

Steve Merrill, The H. William Emde Principal Percussion Chair

Michelle Merrill says music definitely had a crucial role in bringing the couple together. The two were in many of the same music classes at Southern Methodist University playing together in large and small ensembles. Steve even used music to propose to Michelle. “He wrote a song in the style of a jazz standard I heard sung for the first time at a restaurant the night he proposed.” Now Steve plays under her baton for the CSG which she describes as “Fun! ... He’s already my favorite to listen to on percussion, so it makes it even more special when it’s for a concert I’m conducting.”



The Merrills have two little boys, five-year-old Davis who has started kindergarten, and one-year-old Emmett who has traveled with his family since he was a month old. It makes for a complicated schedule trying to decide which parent stays home while the other is performing or conducting. Both boys enjoy traveling as a family, when possible, to see new places and visit old favorites. They also enjoy books, listening to music, and just talking. “We play lots of different types of music at home and in the car (not just classical!), said Michelle. “To us, it is important that they like music as a whole.”

The family calls Jacksonville home base where Steve is principal percussionist for the Jacksonville Symphony. He enjoys playing classical or jazz percussion equally because it crosses over into almost every genre of music, giving him so much to experience and explore. Nationally and internationally, Michelle continues to conduct numerous symphonic and philharmonic orchestras. Regarding their increasingly busy schedule, “we just take it one week (sometimes one day!) at a time!”

Jorge Peña, The Jane Gunter-McCoy Memorial Principal Viola Chair

Jin Kim, The Elizabeth and John H. Starr Principal Cello Chair

Reaching new musicians is important to the Peñas. “There is a saying that music chooses you and not the other way around.” Jorge says. “Classical music continues to attract new generations of students and audiences.” Jorge is Music Director and Conductor of the Golden Isles Youth Orchestra (GIYO) where students learn the discipline necessary to become good musicians.

Jin Kim coaches for the Jacksonville Youth Orchestra and the GIYO and has a small studio of cello students. She thinks there is more interest in music and arts in young people today and finds it gratifying to see how they can flourish with a little encouragement and good guidance.



The Peñas studied in their home countries before attending Columbus State University where they met in orchestra class. Coming from very different countries (Honduras and Korea) they were not fluent in English, but music made it easier to get to know each other. Their three beautiful daughters all received the same musical training but were allowed to choose their own paths. Gabriella plays with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ines is a model working in New York and Los Angeles, and Elisa continues to sing, play guitar, and paint while working for the government in Tallahassee, FL.

You might say their fourth “baby” is the popular St. Augustine Music Festival which is celebrating its 17th anniversary this year. They co-founded the festival in order to be ambassadors of classical music and to give back to the community. Festival events are performed in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine, the oldest Catholic parish (1565) in the country. “As far as we know,” says Jin Kim, “it has become the largest free chamber music festival in the United States.”

Jorge plays with the Jacksonville Symphony and both he and Jin have performed nationally. To say they are busy people is an understatement, but for them, making music together is a true blessing and a good deal of fun.

Aurica Duca, *Southeast Georgia Health System Concertmaster’s Chair* Clinton Dewing, *First Violin*

Children are certainly central to the lives of Aurica Duca and Clinton Dewing. You may remember three little girls presenting their mother with flowers after she played a Mozart concerto with the orchestra in 2021. Today, Siena is nine, Nola is five, and Soma is two, and Clinton says it has been quite a challenge to juggle parenthood and life as a musician “If we need to practice, one of us does it in a closet at around 10 p.m. at night.”

Aurica is from Moldova and still has family there who live about 170 miles from the Ukraine border. “We are worried about them,” Clinton says, but everything seems to be OK for now. It has been five years since they have seen Aurica’s family, and they hope to be able to travel to see them in 2024. “We both enjoy traveling,” he adds, and they go to California every summer in July to perform at Festival Mozaic where they play both orchestra and chamber music programs with what Clinton calls “some of the best musicians in the country.” Indeed, Aurica and Clinton met while attending a music festival in the Netherlands in 2004. He was living in New York City at the time, and she in Rome, Italy.

Aurica studied in Germany and Italy and is an award-winning violinist. Clinton studied at Julliard and is an active soloist, chamber player, and violin orchestral musician. They both play for the Jacksonville Symphony, have performed internationally, and are instilling the love of music in their daughters. Siena plays the violin and studies with a teacher in Finland via zoom. Clinton says “this works because Aurica practices with Siena every day.” Nola wants to play the violin, and little Soma is something of a singer.



More CSG Musical Marriages will be featured in the May Newsletter.

SoundBites

FROM THE VAULT

CSG String Quartet

**THE BEATLES
AND BROADWAY**
*at Southeastern Bank
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The Coastal Symphony of Georgia’s String Quartet presented an amazing SoundBites concert on March 15th at the Southeastern Bank on St. Simons Island featuring music from The Beatles and Broadway. A capacity audience enjoyed golden hits – *from the vault* - and met the musicians at a cocktail reception following the performance. The string quartet included Concertmaster Aurica Duca, Violinist Ingang Han, Violist Jorge Peña, and Cellist Jin Kim.



Aurica Duca; Terri Jaensch; Ingang Han



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