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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bringing Classical Music to Life: Painted Violin Awarded

Montrose, CO – Last month, the Valley Symphony Association announced the selection of Troy Raper of Grand Junction as its new music director and orchestra conductor. Raper’s selection was the result of a year-long search that included input from the VSA search committee, musicians, board of directors, and audience members.

Each time audience members provided feedback, their names were entered into a drawing to win a beautiful painted violin donated by professional painter and VSA Chorus member Kaitlynn Hurford. The artist and chorister generously offered her artistic talents by painting a violin that was the focus of the VSA’s season-long conductor search. For inspiration, she used photographs from past performances along with colors and imagery from the VSA’s season 51 branding.

“Frankly, we’ve been both surprised and thrilled by how many people are filling out the surveys,” VSA Board President Hartland H. Clubb, Jr., said. “It’s great to know our music lovers care, and we thank you all for your terrific feedback!”

Some of the audience feedback on Raper included:

- “The conductor is delightful. Very at ease, which makes the concert seem fun and relaxed (less stuffy).”
- “Love his enthusiasm, his kindness, his stories, his bearing as a conductor.”

- “Enjoyed the variety of music—some of which I had not heard before. It is nice to have a joyful conductor.”

Concert-goer Ben Larson is the lucky winner of the painted violin and the son of VSA cellist Tim Larson. Ben is the RN supervisor of surgery at Montrose Regional Health, which is a long-time supporter of the VSA. Larson recently began attending VSA concerts to support his father, who joined the VSA last year.

“I felt it was difficult not to give top marks for each of the conductors,” he said about the survey process. “Each brought their own experience and passion for the music. I felt they all had great chemistry with the orchestra and chorus, and each performance was very entertaining.”

Larson plans to display the violin in his father’s music room, mostly to keep it out of reach of his energetic young son’s curious hands. “Dad’s music room is the perfect place to display it for now.”

The senior Larson has played his instrument since elementary school, and when he moved to the area in 2021, he soon discovered the VSA. He noted that, “There is nothing like the VSA back in Ohio where I lived before—it’s really a special to have something like this organization and what it provides to the musicians as well as the community.” He joined the VSA starting with the February 2023 concert, and being a member has given him a new reason to utilize his music room, where he practices. “The VSA is such a great opportunity to use my talents into retirement, and I’m excited to be a part of it—and this beautiful violin will provide additional inspiration to practice.”

Hurford was on hand to present her artwork to Larson. “The violin was purchased at a garage sale, and once I determined it was beyond repair, it seemed natural to turn it into a piece of art for someone who loves

classical music,” she said. “While my normal work leans towards landscapes, this was an extremely fun and challenging project, and I’m delighted it is going to a good home.”

Hurford’s artwork will be on display at the Montrose Center for Arts beginning July 7 (First Friday Art Walk) from 4:30 – 7 p.m., where she will be available to chat with the public. Her works will remain on display at the MCA through July 28.

“We’re so grateful to Kaitlynn for sharing her musical and artistic gifts with the VSA,” Clubb said. “Witnessing her process and watching the violin develop over the season was inspirational and great fun.”

Raper’s first official performance will be at the season 52 opener on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at the VSA’s annual “Pops in the Park” concert at the Montrose Amphitheater. The Montrose Community Band will open the concert at 6pm, and the VSA Orchestra and Chorus will perform at 7pm. Colorado Outdoors is the concert partner.

Season and individual tickets are now available for the VSA’s 52nd season. For information, upcoming concerts, tickets, and the audition process, visit the VSA on Facebook @ValleySymphonyAssociation and online at ValleySymphony.net. Tickets are also available in Delta at Clubb’s (417 Main St), in Montrose at Colorado Smiles (601 S 3rd St), at season partner Cimarron Wealth Management (1731 E Niagara Rd), and at the door on event days. Other inquiries may be directed to 970-765-8323 or info@ValleySymphony.net.

About the Valley Symphony Association

Since 1970, the Valley Symphony Association has culturally enriched the community and its members by bringing together some of the best volunteer musicians from the Uncompahgre, North Fork, and Grand Valleys to discover and present works of great composers, past and

present. Performances range from classical orchestral to upbeat pop, from purely instrumental to purely choral, to a combination of both.

Our goal is to ensure that future generations will enjoy the legacy of live orchestral and choral music that so magnificently celebrates the human spirit.

About Season Co-Partner Cimarron Wealth Management

We strive to simplify your financial life and give you confidence about your future so you can focus on your passions. It starts with the foundation of investment, estate and tax planning discussions, but our passion is honest conversations about purpose, legacy and generosity.

About Season Co-Partner The David Mize Family

The David Mize Family joins Cimarron Wealth Management to support the VSA at the co-season partner level. We thank them for their generous and long-time support of the VSA.