

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHAT: Virginia Chamber Orchestra presents
“Music in the Life of George Washington”

WHEN: Sunday, September 21st, 2008 at 4 P.M.

WHERE: Ernst Community Cultural Center
Northern Virginia Community College - Annandale Campus
8333 Little River Turnpike
Annandale, VA 22003

FEATURE: John Harris, costumed George Washington interpreter, will link the orchestra’s selections to music performed at public concerts which Washington attended as president in New York City and Philadelphia, the nation’s early capitals. Harris will also discuss keyboard arrangements of orchestral works in the Washington family’s music collections.

TICKETS: available at door: seniors and groups, \$12; adults, \$18
advance purchase: seniors and groups, \$10; adults, \$15
telephone 703-758-0179

Complimentary reception will follow. Additional information is available at www.virginiachamberorchestra.org

**GEORGE WASHINGTON INTERPRETER JOINS VIRGINIA CHAMBER
TO ILLUMINATE WASHINGTON’S MUSICAL EXPERIENCES**

Luis Haza to Conduct Music by Johann Christian Bach, Haydn, Handel

“Music in the Life of George Washington” will open the Virginia Chamber Orchestra’s 38th Season on Sunday, September 21st at 4 pm. John Harris, a costumed George Washington interpreter, will share the stage with the orchestra, providing informed commentary about the music at public concerts which Washington attended as president in New York City and Philadelphia, the nation’s early capitals. Harris will also discuss keyboard arrangements of orchestral works which the Washingtons enjoyed in their home. Portions of the program will be videotaped and integrated into a television broadcast, to be produced by the Education Department at George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens and the Fairfax Network.

The concert venue will be the Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, on the Annandale Campus of the Northern Virginia Community College. Tickets will be available at the door, or at an advance discounted rate by phoning: 703-758-0179.

Washington's attendance at concerts and "plays"—the latter frequently included ballad operas—is documented through records of ticket purchases and entries in his diaries. There were few concerts in eighteenth-century America and fewer surviving concert programs. Newspaper announcements of the music to be offered on specific dates, although quite general by contemporary standards, reveal that he heard orchestral performances of movements from Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 85, and works by Johann Christian Bach, among others. Music Director Luis Haza and the Virginia Chamber Orchestra will perform Johann Christian Bach's Sinfonia Opus 18 No. 3, and Haydn's Symphony No. 85 in B-flat major (*La Reine*). "La Reine," which means "the Queen" in French, was a favorite of Marie Antoinette's when she heard it performed in Paris. The symphony has kept that nickname through the present day. In Washington's time, it was the custom to include one or perhaps two movements from a symphony on the program rather than the entire work.

As Washington was known for his skilled and enthusiastic dancing of the minuet, the orchestra will also perform the Minuet in A major by Boccherini. Other program highlights will include the Overture to *The Beggar's Opera* by Johann Christoph Pepusch, and movements from the *Water Music* Suite No.1 in F major by George Frideric Handel. Washington's step-granddaughter, Eleanor Parke Custis, known as "Nelly," had an excerpt from the *Water Music* in her collection of keyboard music, as well as a keyboard arrangement of the Haydn symphony.

The Virginia Chamber Orchestra's mission is to perform fine music with the highest artistic integrity for the broadest possible audience, within the limits of fiscal responsibility.

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