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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **AUGUSTA SYMPHONY MASTERWORKS FEATURES PIANIST VALENTINA LISITSA**



The **Augusta Symphony**, under the direction of **Maestro Donald Portnoy**, presents a **Masterworks concert** featuring pianist **Valentina Lisitsa** on **Friday, February 29**. The **7:30 p.m. concert is at First Baptist of Augusta**. Acclaimed pianist Valentina Lisitsa performs Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3. The orchestra is highlighted in Copland's Symphony No. 3. Miss Lisitsa replaces Miss Olga Kern who was released by the Augusta Symphony so she can appear at the prestigious 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Van Cliburn's Tchaikovsky Competition triumph. Miss Kern will perform with the Augusta Symphony, under the direction of Maestro Donald Portnoy, on March 21, 2009.

**Tickets are available online at [www.augustasympphony.org](http://www.augustasympphony.org) or by calling 706.826.4705. Tickets are \$25, \$40, and \$50.** Full-time students and military personnel with valid I.D. may purchase \$7 tickets on concert evening only, subject to availability (no advance reservations for discounted tickets). The concert box office opens at 6:30 p.m. at First Baptist of Augusta. This season presents **Interludes**, an opportunity for patrons to discuss the evening's performance and enjoy light refreshments. **Interludes**, hosted by The Friends of the Symphony support group, begins at 7 p.m. and resumes during intermission in the Welcome Center at First Baptist of Augusta.

Described by Leonard Bernstein as the "Dean of American Music," **Aaron Copland** is one of the most notable American composers. After composing several works for the stage and film screens, including Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Wilder's *Our Town*, Copland decided to compose a different type of work—one without any literary or cinematic connections. Copland

premiered his **Symphony No. 3** in 1946 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Created after the start of World War II, Copland described it as a war symphony.

Of **Rachmaninoff's** three concertos for piano and orchestra, his **Piano Concerto No. 3** is the most difficult, requiring unparalleled technical brilliance. Composed in 1909 for Rachmaninoff's American debut, this work was the ultimate showpiece for his astounding pianistic abilities and received high praise from critics and audiences. Today's audiences will recognize the music since it was featured in the 1996 film *Shine* about pianist David Helfgott's struggles with mental illness.

**Valentina Lisitsa** is capturing the attention of audiences throughout the world for her stunning virtuosity and unequalled sense of lyricism. Widely known and respected as a duo-pianist alongside her husband Alexei Kuznetsoff, she brings to the concert stage a rare technical mastery combined with deep understanding of musical inner life. A performance of Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto* at the Grant Park Festival in Chicago was described by the *Chicago Sun-Times* as "jaw-dropping."

Born in Kiev, Ms. Lisitsa presented her first solo recital at the age of six. A graduate of the famed Kiev Conservatory, she has won numerous international prizes, such as the Murray Dranoff Two Piano Competition, Concertino Prague, The Lysenko Piano Competition, The Paris Chamber Music Competition, and the Ukrainian Chamber Music Competition. Since making her New York debut in 1995 at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center with Gerard Schwartz, she has maintained an active international schedule in recital and with orchestras, including a U.S. tour with the Orchestre National de France under Charles Dutoit, performing the Poulenc *Concerto for Two Pianos* with her husband in, among other places, New York and Boston. She has also performed in a 30 performance tour with the Prague Chamber Orchestra.

Recent engagements have included a tour with the Talich String Quartet, a month-long tour with the Russian Symphony Orchestra in the United States and Mexico, recitals and an orchestra tour in Italy, a 12 concert US tour with the Russian State Symphony Orchestra, a European tour with the Stuttgart Symphony Orchestra and solo and chamber music recitals in Milan, Vienna, Amsterdam, London, Glasgow, San Diego, Miami, New York, and Chicago. Highlights from past seasons include the Atlanta Symphony, Stuttgart Philharmoniker, with the NYPO Chamber Players and Lynn Harrell, concerts in Knoxville, Las Vegas, Miami, Pensacola, and at the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. For additional information about Valentina Lisitsa, visit <http://www.valentalisitsa.com/>.

**THE MASTERWORKS SERIES SPONSOR IS MCG HEALTH SYSTEM. CONCERT SPONSORS FOR THIS EVENING'S PERFORMANCE ARE DR. & MRS. DANIEL RAHN AND THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA. MEDIA SPONSORS ARE AT&T THE REAL YELLOW PAGES, CLEAR CHANNEL RADIO, COMCAST, AND THE AUGUSTA CHRONICLE.**

For more information about the Augusta Symphony, visit [www.augustasympphony.org](http://www.augustasympphony.org), call 706.826.4705, fax 706.826.4735, or email [marketing@augustasympphony.org](mailto:marketing@augustasympphony.org). Located on the second floor of the Sacred Heart Cultural Center, the Symphony office is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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