



## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **BVSO AND THE MARIAN ANDERSON STRING QUARTET TOGETHER IN CONCERT!**

February 9, 2016 College Station, TX—The next outstanding live performance of the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra's 34<sup>th</sup> season will be Sunday, February 21, 2016 at 5pm in Rudder Theatre. The BVSO's 2015-16 Season of "Unforgettable Moments" is generously supported by CHI St. Joseph Health. This concert, sponsored by **Briaud Financial Advisors in honor of Chuck and Lorraine Hermann**, will feature the acclaimed Marian Anderson String Quartet as they perform "Follow the Drinking Gourd". The BVSO commissioned composer Jonathan McNair to create a very special arrangement of his work specifically for this performance. The orchestra will also be performing the deeply expressive "Lyric for Strings" by Pulitzer Prize winning composer, George Walker. The performance will include Grant Still's groundbreaking work for full orchestra, Symphony No. 1 "Afro-American" as well, which is the first symphony composed by an African American to be performed by a major orchestra.

Maestro Marcelo Bussiki shared that this program is centered on having the Marian Anderson String Quartet perform with the BVSO as this has been a goal of his for some time. Bussiki indicated the repertoire available for string quartet and orchestra is limited. When Bussiki heard "Follow the Drinking Gourd" a few years ago, he had an idea. He recalls thinking to himself: "You know what—this piece would work beautifully for string quartet and orchestra. If we could get this piece arranged for string quartet and orchestra it would make for a very exciting work. And that's how this program was born."

"The other music was selected to compliment what I really wanted to feature, which was the Marian Anderson String Quartet." Bussiki continued.

**What:** "Follow the Drinking Gourd"

**When:** Sunday, February 21, 2016 at 5:00 PM

**Where:** Rudder Theatre on Texas A&M University Campus in College Station

**Program:**

<b>Walker</b>	Lyric for Strings
<b>McNair</b>	Follow the Drinking Gourd <i>World Premiere—Commissioned by the BVSO</i>
<b>Grant Still</b>	Symphony No. 1 "Afro-American"
<b>Guest Artists</b>	<b>Marian Anderson String Quartet</b> Marianne Henry, <i>first violin</i> Nicole Cherry, <i>second violin</i> Diedra Lawrence, <i>viola</i> Prudence McDaniel, <i>cello</i>

**Concert Sponsor** **Briaud Financial Advisors in honor of Chuck and Lorraine Hermann**

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After becoming the first African-American ensemble to win a classical competition by winning the prestigious International Cleveland Quartet Competition, Marian Anderson gave the quartet permission to use her name. They are the winners of the 2008 Chamber Music America Guarneri String Quartet Award and of the 2006 Congress of Racial Equality Martin Luther King Award for Excellence in Arts and Culture. The Quartet is currently Quartet in Residence at Blinn College and recently founded the Marian Anderson String Quartet Community Music School in Bryan, TX.

The original version of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" was the result of a 1999 commission by another orchestra to compose an educational outreach piece for string and woodwind quintets with a story/narrator element. In 2014, the Marian Anderson String Quartet conducted a residency at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, which is where they met the composer, Jonathan McNair. The quartet asked McNair for an adaptation for string quartet and has performed it in several locations around the country and Texas, including the performance that Bussiki attended. The work has been expanded to incorporate full orchestra and additional musical highlights on the quartet. This will be the world premiere of this version of this original work.

In speaking with McNair, he indicated that he had thought of expanding the piece and when asked by the BVSO to do so he was of course excited. When asked how this version might differ from the quartet only version previously performed in the area, McNair explained, "This new version greatly expands the range of instrumental color, and expands the expressive potential and power of the music. One can do a great deal with the resources found in a string quartet . . . adding the orchestra amplifies those resources."

Bussiki is confident the performance will be an audience favorite, "This will be one of the most exciting programs that we will do this season. Everyone is so looking forward to this," said Bussiki. "The quartet is excited about it, the composer is very excited about it, and I am very excited about putting this together for the community."

BVSO patrons can attend the free pre-concert talk at 4pm just prior to the performance in the Rudder Theatre Complex. Ann Thompson, a popular lecturer who has also presented with the Houston Grand Opera, will again present her delightful and witty insights into the composers, the history, and meaning behind the music. Get there early to ensure you have a seat at these extremely popular sessions!

Then after each subscription concert, a patron social hour at Napa Flats will keep the enjoyment going to top off an exquisite evening of culture and entertainment. The Maestro and guest artists are scheduled to attend these socials as well.

Individual tickets to all concerts are on sale now at the MSC Box Office, \$39/ adult and \$13/student advance; \$44/ adult and \$16/student at the door. Call (979) 845-1234 or go on-line to [boxoffice.tamu.edu](http://boxoffice.tamu.edu). Please call the Symphony Office (979) 696-6100 with any further questions.

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*About the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra: The BVSO is a non-profit performing arts organization with the mission to maintain a symphony of high artistic standards, and to promote the musical arts for cultural and education purposes in the Brazos Valley. For more information about the Symphony's 2015-2016 Season, please visit the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra website at [www.bvso.org](http://www.bvso.org).*

**The Brazos Valley Symphony Society wishes to recognize and thank our programming sponsors, grant funding providers, and charitable trust contributors:**

*Nina Astin Winkler Charitable Trusts, Ham Family Trust,  
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