



**MANASSAS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

JAMES VILLANI
MUSIC DIRECTOR

*The Manassas Symphony Orchestra
is honored receive the
Prince William County Chamber of Commerce's
2026 Agnes L. Colgan Award in Arts and Education*

SONIC AMERICA
MARCH 7, 2026
7:30 PM

HYLTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

EVERY KID, EVERY CONCERT, ALWAYS FREE

PARTIALLY FUNDED & SUPPORTED BY



**I. J. & HILDA M. BREEDEN
FOUNDATION**



**HYLTON PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER**

ManassasSymphony.org



KAREN RADLEY ACURA VOLKSWAGEN | 14700 RICHMOND HWY, WOODBRIDGE, VA

KAREN
RADLEY
ACURA VOLKSWAGEN

VOLKSWAGEN: (703) 997-7047 | ACURA: (703) 994-4643



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

ANDREA BROTHERS



We are excited to present the MSO's very own harpist, Melanie Young, as soloist in this evening's "Sonic America" concert. In this all-American program, Melanie will be performing *Ennanga* by William Grant Still, a three-movement piece for (modern) harp, piano and strings that honors the traditional African harp, or ennanga. The music continues with Edward MacDowell's *Suite No. 2 in E Minor*, which evokes musical themes derived from Native American sources. The orchestra concludes the concert with Ferde Grofé's quintessentially American composition, the *Grand Canyon Suite*, which combines classical,

impressionistic, and symphonic jazz styles to celebrate the grandeur of the American West.

In May, the MSO welcomes back violin virtuoso Andrew Sords to perform Richard Strauss's *Violin Concerto in D Minor*. He will appear for the third time with the MSO since he first played in Merchant Hall in 2011. Works by J. S. Bach and Felix Mendelssohn will round out the program and serve as the finale to the MSO's season.

Adult tickets to MSO concerts are \$35, which includes all fees, and children and students attend for free, with no fees added. It is through your support of the Manassas Symphony Orchestra that we can keep ticket prices down while bringing world-class musicians to perform. We need your help to continue. Please consider buying an ad in the program, becoming a corporate sponsor or an individual donor. Information is available in the program or online.

Visit www.manassassymphony.org. The MSO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

We thank our generous donors, sponsors, grantors, and musicians for their support, and who make it possible for the Manassas Symphony Orchestra to present beautiful music close to home.

Sincerely,



Andrea Brothers

President

Manassas Symphony Orchestra, Inc.



SPONSORS

MASTER CLASS SPONSOR



WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR SPONSORS



I. J. & HILDA M. BREEDEN FOUNDATION



If you enjoyed the concert this evening, please consider donating to support the Manassas Symphony Orchestra.

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

JAMES VILLANI | MUSIC DIRECTOR



Conductor James Villani has served as Music Director of the Manassas Symphony Orchestra (MSO) since 2002, bringing decades of leadership and dedication to the community. In recognition of his contributions, he received the 2022 Seefeldt Award for Arts Excellence from the Prince William Arts Council as Outstanding Individual Artist.

A passionate advocate for adult music education and volunteerism in the arts, Mr. Villani has been deeply involved in community music organizations since moving to Northern Virginia in 1986. He spent 10 years as associate conductor and clarinetist for the Reston Chamber Orchestra and has participated in countless performances across the region. An active judge and clinician for music festivals and competitions, he was honored by the Virginia Senate in 2018 for his leadership during the MSO's 25th season. His conducting achievements have earned national recognition, including being a semi-finalist for *The American Prize for Community Orchestra Conductors* (2010) and a finalist for *The American Prize in Orchestral Programming / Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award* (2019–2020).

A native of New Castle, Pennsylvania, Mr. Villani discovered his passion for music at age eight when he began playing the clarinet. Like many young musicians in his hometown, he honed his skills in the back room of Al Colella's Shoe Store, where Colella—while tending to customers—trained generations of clarinetists. In high school, he studied with Carl Marks, a distinguished faculty member at Duquesne University and the Dana School of Music, who was himself a student of the legendary Daniel Bonade. Mr. Villani went on to earn dual Bachelor's degrees in Clarinet Performance and Music Education from Penn State University, where he performed in every major ensemble—from the renowned Blue Band to the Symphony Orchestra. Highlights of his time at PSU include performing at four major bowl games, playing tenor saxophone in Disney's All-American College Marching Band for the grand opening of EPCOT, and performing with the Pittsburgh Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas.

continued on next page

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

CONTINUED

Mr. Villani earned his Master of Music in Conducting from Northwestern University, studying with the legendary John P. Paynter while serving as a graduate assistant for the university's wind ensembles. In a unique opportunity for a conducting major, he also played bass clarinet in the top wind ensemble alongside future symphony musicians. His mentors included Clark Brody, former principal clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner, and renowned composer Alan Stout. A former band director and music theory teacher, Mr. Villani taught in public schools in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Virginia, including at Stonewall Jackson (now Unity Reed) High School in Manassas. In addition to his musical endeavors, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Ferde Grofé Foundation and works as a Senior Manager of Software Engineering at Capital Financial One in McLean.

WEDDINGS • EVENTS • MUSIC

SWEENEY BARN

A unique venue where
rustic charm meets
elegant sophistication



9310 Discovery Blvd. Manassas, VA 20109
sweeneybarn.com

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

SONIC AMERICA

MANASSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY | MARCH 7, 2026 | 7:30 PM

MERCHANT HALL OF THE HYLTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

JAMES VILLANI | Music Director

The Star-Spangled Banner

John Stafford Smith (1750–1836)
Words by Francis Scott Key (1779–1843)

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

Claude T. Smith (1932–1987)
arr. James Villani

Suite No. 2, Op. 48 "Indian" (1892)

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)

Legend: *Not fast. With much dignity and character.*

Love Song: *Not fast. Tenderly.*

In War-time: *With rough vigor, almost savagely.*

Dirge: *Dirge-like, mournfully.*

Village Festival: *Swift and light.*

Intermission (20 minutes)

Grand Canyon Suite (1931)

Ferde Grofé (1892–1972)

Sunrise

Painted Desert

On the Trail

Sunset

Cloudburst

Music for Grand Canyon Suite courtesy of the Ferde Grofé Foundation.

This performance is copyright © 2026 Manassas Symphony Orchestra, Inc.

Audio or video recording without express consent from the Manassas Symphony Orchestra is prohibited.
Please respect the performers and audience members by refraining from flash photography during the performance.
Please turn off all electronic devices. Patrons will be seated during appropriate pauses in the music.

PROGRAM NOTES

DR. STEPHEN C. FISHER



This program features works by American composers who were prominent in their own day but have fallen somewhat out of fashion due to changes in taste and to the musical life of the country—but whose work is still well worth performing and hearing.

Claude T. Smith's *Eternal Father, Strong to Save* stands as a definitive symphonic treatment of the “Navy Hymn” (the tune *Melita*), originally composed in 1975 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United States

Navy Band. Smith's career was defined by a versatile mastery of diverse musical spheres, ranging from his service in the 371st U.S. Army Band to his prolific output of over 180 works for orchestra, choir, and wind ensemble. As noted by the legendary composer W. Francis McBeth, the sheer impact of the work's opening fanfare alone cemented Smith's status as a titan of American composition.

The work's structure mirrors the “scenic” traditions found in works like the *Grand Canyon Suite*. While the original hymn is a steadfast major-key chorale, Smith begins by casting the theme in a brooding minor key, heightening the drama before transitioning into a spirited *Allegro Vivace*. The familiar melody is then put through its paces via several rigorous variations, including two intricate *fugati*—one for the woodwinds and one for the brass. A pivotal rhythmic transition, marked by Smith's signature 7/8 measure, leads into an evocative French horn quartet that returns the hymn to its original major key in a moment of reverent, emotional clarity. While Smith is primarily celebrated as a master of the wind band, this arrangement for full orchestra by music director **James Villani**, was debuted by the Manassas Symphony Orchestra in 2015.

Though he was born in New York City, **Edward MacDowell** spent his formative years as a musician in France and especially in Germany, and his orientation as a composer was toward Europe. In this he resembled many other American classical composers of his generation, with the notable exception of George Whitefield Chadwick. On the rare occasions when he chose an American subject, it does not seem to have been one arising from his own experience. His most notable “American” piece, this orchestral suite, was freely based on Indian melodies from Theodore Baker's book *Music of the North American Wilderness*, some of which reminded MacDowell of Northern European folk music. MacDowell composed the suite in Boston in 1892, before Dvořák's famous recommendation that Americans base a national school of composition on Black and Indigenous music, an idea that MacDowell emphatically rejected.

MacDowell used material ascribed to a number of different tribes in the suite, with no attempt to preserve aspects of the originals. The titles of the movements are generally self-explanatory. The stormy opening movement depicts the tragic fate of the



American Indian. In the tender, lyrical second movement most of the brass is silent, returning, of course, in the martial movement that follows. MacDowell was particularly proud of the fourth movement, which depicts a mother mourning her son. The fifth movement provides a satisfactory conclusion to the whole.

The suite, MacDowell's largest composition, was first performed in 1896 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and appeared on concert programs frequently over the next few years. It slipped into obscurity along with most of the work of MacDowell and his American contemporaries as Romanticism fell out of fashion. Now some of their music is being performed once more; we have heard both MacDowell's piano concertos in these concerts in recent years.

Like MacDowell, **Ferdinand Rudolph von Grofé** was born in New York City, but while his parents were immigrants from Germany and his family contained many professional musicians, Grofé took as much interest in the popular music of the era as he did in the classical music he studied and performed. He received thorough musical training, studying in Germany and playing viola in the Los Angeles Symphony; he also played ragtime, blues, and early jazz and roamed much of the country working musical and non-musical odd jobs—he was even a steelworker for a time. In 1920 he joined Paul Whiteman's orchestra as keyboard player and arranger; by then he was generally known as Ferde (or Ferdie) Grofé. One high point of that period was his orchestration of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924; Grofé also composed some fine original works for Whiteman, including the *Mississippi Suite* and *Three Shades of Blue*, which we have heard at these concerts. The climax of these labors, and of Grofé's career, came with the *Grand Canyon Suite*, first performed in 1931. The suite quickly made its way into the orchestral repertory and was one of the most-performed pieces by an American composer for decades, though it is not heard as often nowadays. Grofé was active as composer and conductor for many years, as well as teaching orchestration at the Juilliard School of Music for a time, but never again achieved a comparable success; the musical culture was changing, and the kind of light classical music Grofé wrote was no longer in much demand.

The *Grand Canyon Suite* was directly inspired by Grofé's travels in the American West. It belongs to a tradition of orchestral pieces depicting the outdoors that includes perennial favorites like Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* (no. 6) and Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, both of which we have heard in recent years. Also familiar to us today is Vivaldi's set of violin concertos *The Four Seasons*, though

DR. STEPHEN C. FISHER

CONTINUED

these became widely known only after World War II. The three delightful symphonies by Haydn depicting the times of day (nos. 6-8), are also better known now than they were in the 1920s, though the scores were available then. One piece that must have been on Grofé's mind is the magnificent *Alpine Symphony* of 1915 by Richard Strauss. Like the *Grand Canyon Suite*, Strauss's work depicts the course of a day in an awe-inspiring landscape, starting with sunrise (also depicted by Haydn and Rossini), and of course reaching its climax in a thunderstorm (which occurs in all the works mentioned). Strauss's work, as one would expect, features memorable melodies that recur to hold the piece together, lush harmonies, and brilliant orchestration—elements that Grofé had the skill to emulate in a lighter vein.

The movements of the suite need little comment beyond their titles. *Painted Desert* depicts the changing colors of the place as the sun rises higher in the sky. *On the Trail* begins with the braying of the donkey whose hoofbeats provide the accompaniment for the song of the beast's rider. They hear a waterfall and stop for refreshment at a nearby cabin, where a music box can be heard playing. Reinvigorated, man and donkey ride off, both vocalizing. At the end of the *Cloudburst* the clouds part to reveal the moon shining on the canyon. After 95 years, the *Grand Canyon Suite* is still a crowd-pleaser!

© 2026 STEPHEN C. FISHER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

The advertisement for EVO PRINTING features a close-up, artistic photograph of a harp. The harp's frame is highly ornate with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns. The strings are visible, and the lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the texture of the wood and metal. The EVO PRINTING logo is overlaid on the left side of the harp. The logo consists of the word "evo" in a bold, lowercase, orange sans-serif font, with the "o" having a circular cutout. Below it, the word "PRINTING" is written in a tall, white, uppercase, sans-serif font. Underneath the logo, the text "Proudly supporting the Manassas Symphony Orchestra" is written in a small, white, sans-serif font. Below that, the phrase "with award winning design, printing + signs" is written in a white, cursive script font. At the bottom left, the phone number "571.292.1213" and the website "www.EVOprinting.com | orders@EVOprinting.com" are listed in a white, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a square QR code with the EVO PRINTING logo in the center.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Andrea Blake Brothers | President
Manager
Electron Microscope Facility
George Mason University

Jessica Leggett | Vice President
General Music Teacher
Woodbridge Senior High School
Prince William County Public Schools

Patty Parker | Secretary
Owner
Drive Safe, Inc., Driver Improvement Program

Allen Howe, M.D. | Treasurer
Physician (retired)

Nnenna Aninye
Branch Manager
United Bank

Diane Bennett
Owner
Bennett Insurance Services, LLC

J. Timothy Mauk
Principal
DuvallWheeler, LLP

Shirley Rice
NOVEC Administrative Specialist
(retired)
Community Volunteer

Beth Sharpe
Senior Account Executive
Classic Catering

Steven Thompson
Elementary Music Teacher (retired)
Manassas Park City Public Schools
Flute and Piano Teacher
Music and Arts

James Villani, Ex-Officio
Music Director
Manassas Symphony

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Gail Kettlewell, Ph.D.
Director Emerita

Joan Van Doren
Director Emerita

Bradley T. White

THE ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN 1

Daria Olinger,
concertmaster
Ikhyeon Kim,
assoc. concertmaster
Heather Amico
Luann Carlson
Joan Lunsford
Kate O’Konski
Jeanette Rimbey
Yvonne Smit
Anne Sullivan
Chris White

VIOLIN 2

Michelle Luman**
Sean Arzaga
Dale Baseri
Andrea Brothers
Nicole Caputo
Alexandra Long
Christopher Powell
Gail Sander
Michael Van Wambeke
Melanie Waddy
Kerris Watson

VIOLA

Jeff Ohmart*
Catherine Cole
Ahnika Emery
Sarah Fort
Lindsay Mullins

CELLO

Emily Gagnon*,
The Leslie A. Lydick Chair
David Boyer
Pam Clem
Shawn Johnson Jr
Rochelle Kidd
Leslie Lydick
Joshua Porter
Sunny Wicks

BASS

Eric Renne*
Edenilson Chicas Ramos
Manuel Guzman
Karen Harris
Elizabeth Porter
Jimmy Rioja
Thomas Stevenson

FLUTE/PICCOLO

Claire Loerch*
Amy Lenk
Heidi Schuller

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Jane Hughes*
Andy Eshbach
Connie Tyler

CLARINET

Allen Howe*
Steven Darling



BASS CLARINET

Julie Pangelinan

BASSOON

Elizabeth Gustafson†
The Andrew G. Loerch Chair
William Jokela**
Karen O'Donoghue

CONTRABASSOON

Karen Bell

HORN

Connie Pittman*
Sarah Howe
Bruce McWhirter
Travis Prim
Ilycia Silver

TRUMPET

Timothy Smith*
Tyler Easterling
Kristin Kohler

TROMBONE

Joe Michel*
Chris Callier
Emma Moores

TUBA

Thomas Keane

TIMPANI

Matthew Orban*

PERCUSSION

Carlos Figueiras*
Sarah Clements
Junyoung Heo
Scott Wolcott
Tim Zolandz

PIANO/CELESTA

Mary Garrahan*
Gail Sander

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Heather Amico

MUSIC LIBRARIAN

Timothy Smith

* Principal player

** Acting principal

† Inactive

*Sections are listed alphabetically
after the principal player*

CONTRIBUTORS | 2025-2026

GRAND PATRON | \$10,000-\$19,999

Prince William County

PATRON | \$3,000-\$4,999

City of Manassas

BENEFACTOR | \$1,000-\$2,999

Heather and Anthony Amico

Michele, Rich & Helena Boyd

I.J & Hilda M. Breeden Foundation

Duvall Wheeler LLP

Allen and Lisa Howe

Jane Hughes and William Jokela

Charles and Rochelle Kidd

Susan Larimer

The Lydick family

Michael and Lynn Maletick

NOVEC - Master Class Sponsor

John and Jane Orban

Julie Pangelinan

Shirley Rice

Rosie's Gives Back

The Villani Family

Virginia Commission for the Arts

Chris and Rich White

ASSOCIATE | \$500-\$999

Michael F. Ahern

The Bain Family

Diane Bennett

Steven Darling

Claire Loerch in loving memory of Andy Loerch

Bob Scherago

Theo and Laura Scott

J. Michael Wood in memory of Di Anne Wood

CONTRIBUTOR | \$300-\$499

Susan Bardenhagen in memory of
Betty & Arthur Bardenhagen

Dale and Ramin Baseri

Christine Junker in honor of Jim
and Kathy Villani

Edwin and Susan Powell

Eileen Roberts

Gail Sander



SUPPORTER | \$100-\$299

Anonymous

Karla and Roger Anzzolin

Jim and Loretta Baxa

David Boyer

Arlene Childs

James and Vicki Cole

Amy Dalmas

Connie and Stuart Gilman

Carol and Glenn Hall

Jennifer Katebini

Michelle and Dean Luman

Nancy M. MacKenzie

Sandra Mills

Kieran Roberts

Kathleen Seefeldt

Michael Soler

Steve Thompson

Shawn and Jan Towne

Constance Tyler

Frank and Joan Van Doren

The Watson Family

Mary White in honor of Steve Thompson

Tim Zolandz

FRIEND | \$25-\$99

Karen Harris

Jesse Johnson in honor
of Jim Villani

Linda Szymczak

Virginia National
Ballet

virginiationalballet.org

THE NUTCRACKER

Hylton Performing Arts Center
Capital One Hall
Nov/Dec 2025

Swan Lake

Hylton Performing Arts Center
Capital One Hall
March 2026

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Hylton Performing Arts Center
May 2026



The Manassas Chorale
A Measure of Excellence

Voices United

*Gathered
As
One*

**With Voices United Festival Choir
Guest Conductor Joel Raney**

**Saturday, March 21, 2026, 7:30 pm
Hylton Performing Arts Center**

Rebecca D. Verner, Director
Kristina Schenck, Accompanist
manassaschorale.org
info@manassaschorale.org

Hylton Center Box Office
703-993-7759
www.hyltoncenter.org
Tue.-Sat. 10-6pm



DRY TIME
RESTORATION

24/7 Emergency Water Damage Specialists

Water Mitigation · Mold Remediation · Reconstruction

Local · Family Owned Business

10359 Piper Lane Bristow, VA 20136

571-866-7400



Your full service travel agency

**Anything from a Caribbean Cruise
to an African Safari**

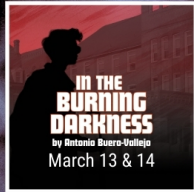
Our specialty is custom crafted trips

Call Andrea Savitch 703-986-0934

Email- asavitch@uniquetravevents.com

www.uniquetravevents.com

Two companies. One season you won't want to miss.



A year of live theatre from two award-winning companies, Actors Theatre at the ARTfactory and ARTfactory's Pied Piper Theater. From comedies to classics to can't-miss musicals, there's always a reason to take a seat and see what happens next.

ARTfactory www.virginiaartfactory.org

9419 Battle Street, Manassas, VA 20110, Ph: 703.330.2787

BAKER ~ POST

FUNERAL HOME
&
CREMATION CENTER

"Caring for the Community we Call Home"



Michael & Gina Post, along with their children Connor, Ellie and Jackson

Family Owned, Family Operated



@BPFH2007

10001 Nokesville Road | Manassas, VA 20110

703.368.3116

WWW.BAKERPOSTFH.COM

THE LESLIE A. LYDICK CHAIR

In recognition of the lifelong musical achievements of long-time MSO cellist Leslie Lydick, the Lydick family has proudly named the Manassas Symphony Orchestra's principal Cellist chair in her honor.

If you are interested in named or endowed chair opportunities, please contact us at info@manassassymphony.org



MANASSAS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

SUPPORT YOUR SYMPHONY

2026-2027 CONCERT SEASON

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE
MANASSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

How would you like to be acknowledged in the program and on the MSO website?

Please accept my contribution for \$ _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION:



- Check attached (payable to Manassas Symphony Orchestra)
 Scan QR code to donate via credit card

CONTRIBUTION LEVELS

CONDUCTOR'S CIRCLE

"Musica est ancilla divinitatis" | \$20,000 +

GRAND PATRON | \$10,000 - \$19,999

SUSTAINING PATRON | \$5,000 - \$9,999

PATRON | \$3,000 - \$4,999

BENEFACTOR | \$1,000 - \$2,999

ASSOCIATE | \$500 - \$999

CONTRIBUTOR | \$300 - \$499

SUPPORTER | \$100 - \$299

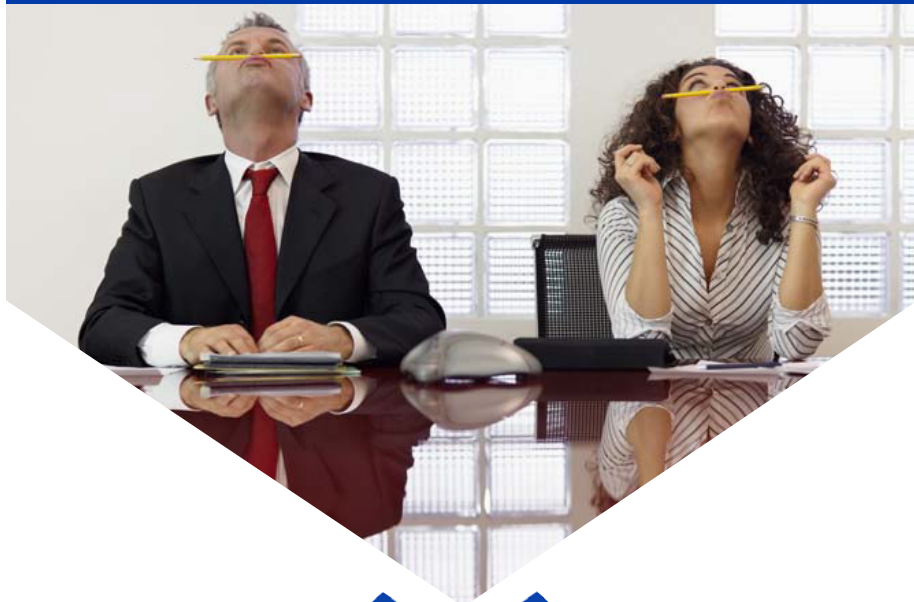
FRIEND | \$25 - \$99

*Make checks payable to "Manassas Symphony Orchestra" and mail to
8665 Sudley Road, #107, Manassas, VA 20110,
or visit our table in the lobby of the Hylton Center during intermission.
Any contributions received will be included in the next program.*

*The Manassas Symphony Orchestra is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*



what we do when clients aren't looking



Working with accountants is probably not considered a high point of your day. We'd like to change that...

CPA's since 1986, DuvallWheeler has thrived under the philosophy that accounting firms should be a welcome partner in the growth of our clients, that conventions of the past are best left in the past, and that the key to growth is through relentless learning and commitment to offer the best possible outcome for each individual client. We don't have standard processes; each client experience is different, and needs to be treated as such. We're passionate about problem-solving... **and it shows in everything we do!**

DUVALLWHEELER LLP

Certified Public Accountants & Consultants

9430 Forestwood Lane, Suite 203, Manassas, VA 20110
703-392-9292 ~ www.duvallwheeler.com

LET US PUT OUR EXPERIENCE TO WORK FOR YOU

With a history of excellence in service,
we remain a trusted financial partner
in our communities.



*The Community Bank of
The Nation's Capital*



Learn more at [BankWithUnited.com](https://www.BankWithUnited.com)
Member FDIC





proudly supporting

The Manassas Symphony

We provide financial planning almost as elegant and relaxing as the music you are enjoying tonight.

HeritageFin.com

7001 Heritage Village Plaza, Suite 190 | Gainesville, VA 20155 | (703)754-1233

© 2025 HERITAGE FINANCIAL, LLC Investment advisory services offered through Heritage Financial, LLC, a Registered Investment Adviser.