



College of Music  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU Concert Orchestra

# Of War and Peace, Struggle and Hope

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Katherine Kilburn, conductor  
Maria Fátima Corona del Toro, assistant conductor  
Asieh Mahyar, assistant conductor  
R.J. McLaren, guest conductor

Tuesday, April 26, 2022  
Cobb Great Hall, 7:30 p.m.

# PROGRAM

- Two Elegiac Melodies*, Op. 34 (1881) Edvard Grieg  
(1843–1907)  
The Wounded Heart  
The Last Spring  
Maria Fátima Corona del Toro, conductor
- Haunted Topography (2013) David T. Little  
(b. 1978)  
Asieh Mahyar, conductor
- Of Our New Day Begun (2015) Omar Thomas  
(b. 1984)
- from *The Planets*, Op. 32 (1917) Gustav Holst  
(1874–1934)  
I. Mars, the Bringer of War  
IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity  
Katherine Kilburn, conductor
- MSU Shadows Bernard Traynor  
(1894–1980)  
arr. H. Owen Reed  
R.J. McLaren, guest conductor

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34*

Edvard Grieg was a Norwegian composer who wrote symphonic music, chamber music, songs, and piano music. His music has a very particular style and stands out for its spontaneity and the beauty and poetic feeling of its themes and melodies. Among his best-known works for string orchestra are the *Holberg Suite* and *Two Elegiac Melodies* with the titles: Hjertesår (The Wounded Heart) and Våren (Spring).

*Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34*, date from 1880 to 1881 and it is worth mentioning that these two pieces were originally written for voice and piano, along with twelve other songs included in his Op. 33. The texts of these songs belong to the famous Norwegian poet and writer, Aasmund Olavsson Vinje (1818-1870). Grieg composed several songs based on his poems.

In Vinje's poems, he describes the beauty of the first time in the countryside after a long, cold winter, describing this moment as the last he can experience.

*Two Elegiac Melodies* possesses an appealing melancholy and tenderness. As the descriptive music that they are, their titles evoke the atmospheres through which the sonorous discourse will pass. These melodies were dedicated to the Austrian composer Heinrich von Herzogenberg.

- Fatima Corona

*Haunted Topography* is a meditation on a story told to me by Moe Armstrong in the summer of 2011. Moe is the founder of the veteran rehabilitation program Vet2Vet. It was in this capacity that he met a woman whose son had been killed in Vietnam. Even decades after the loss, this mother could not even begin to move past the pain. In speaking with Moe, it came out that, though she had asked, no one had ever shown her a map of where it had happened. She felt that she needed to know this—to see the place where her son had been killed—before her healing process could begin. Moe showed her, and it helped her to begin to heal.

It is a simple story, of course, but it says a lot about the nature of grief, of mortality and of the peculiarities of each individual's needs while engaging with the healing process.

## PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

Originally commissioned by Alarm Will Sound, the sinfonietta version of *Haunted Topography* received its world premiere on October 21, 2011, at Roulette as part of the 2011 SONiC Festival. The orchestral version of the work was commissioned by Christopher James Lees, who premiered the work at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on October 18, 2013.

- David T. Little

*Of Our New Day Begun* was written to honor nine beautiful souls who lost their lives to a callous act of hatred and domestic terrorism on the evening of June 17, 2015, while worshipping in their beloved sanctuary, the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately referred to as “Mother Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina. My greatest challenge in creating this work was walking the line between reverence for the victims and their families, and honoring my strong, bitter feelings towards both the perpetrator and the segments of our society that continue to create people like him. I realized that the most powerful musical expression I could offer incorporated elements from both sides of that line - embracing my pain and anger while being moved by the displays of grace and forgiveness demonstrated by the victims’ families.

Historically, black Americans have, in great number, turned to the church to find refuge and grounding in the most trying of times. Thus, the musical themes and ideas for *Of Our New Day Begun* are rooted in the Black American church tradition. The piece is anchored by James and John Johnson’s time-honored song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (known endearingly as the “Negro National Anthem”), and peppered with blues harmonies and melodies. Singing, stomping, and clapping are also prominent features of this work, as they have always been a mainstay of black music traditions, and the inclusion of the tambourine in these sections is a direct nod to black worship services.

*Of Our New Day Begun* begins with a unison statement of a melodic cell from “Lift Every Voice...” before suddenly giving way to ghostly, bluesy chords in the horns and bassoons. This section moves to a dolorous and bitter dirge presentation of the anthem in irregularly shifting 12/8 and 6/8 meter, which grows in intensity as it offers fleeting glimmers of hope and relief answered by cries of

## PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

blues-inspired licks. A maddening, ostinato-driven section representing a frustration and weariness that words cannot, grows into a group singing of “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, fueled by the stomping and clapping reminiscent of the black church.

In the latter half of the piece, the music turns hopeful, settling into 9/8 time and modulating up a step during its ascent to a glorious statement of the final lines of “Lift Every Voice...” in 4/4, honoring the powerful display of humanity set forth by the families of the victims. There is a long and emotional decrescendo that lands on a pensive and cathartic gospel-inspired hymnsong. Returning to 9/8 time, the piece comes to rest on a unison F note that grows from a very distant hum to a thunderous roar, driven forward by march-like stomping to represent the ceaseless marching of black Americans towards equality.

The consortium assembled to create this work is led by Dr. Gary Schallert and the Western Kentucky University Wind Ensemble.

- Omar Thomas

### *The Planets (Mars and Jupiter)*

Throughout his musical career, Gustav Holst’s occupations spanned various fields: he played as a trombonist for traveling ensembles, served as an organist at several London churches, maintained a teaching position at the St. Paul Girls’ School, Hammersmith, and composed. Thus, when Holst suddenly became the subject of immense acclaim following the composition of *The Planets*, one can imagine his bewilderment: Holst had never enjoyed great popularity beforehand. Although the triumph of *The Planets* elevated Holst’s reputation as one of the great British composers, its scale even eclipsed his later works. Undoubtedly his magnum opus, *The Planets* may well be Holst’s only recognized work among most listeners.

The idea for *The Planets* was born in 1913, when Clifford Bax - brother of composer Arnold Bax and friend to Holst - introduced Holst to the subject of astrology. Their extensive discussions on the topic, along with Holst’s study of Sanskrit literature, deepened Holst’s interest in astrology and horoscopes, the latter of which he studied in depth. Holst’s studies on these topics, however, primarily served the purpose to inspire a “mood” or “setting” for a future composition.

## PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

Holst wrote *The Planets* intermittently between 1914-1917, and the work was premiered in its entirety in 1920. Each movement is named after a planet and captures the essence of its corresponding astrological sign according to Holst's research. However, Holst was mainly concerned with the effectiveness of his musical ideas rather than the accuracy in which he portrayed the planets. Furthermore, the concept of the solar system was still novel in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which may account for Holst's unique representation and order of the planets within his music.

Mars, The Bringer of War is the first movement of Holst's suite. Although regarded as a depiction of mechanized warfare, the piece was written before the onset of World War I. Nonetheless, iconic col legno carried by the strings in the beginning, thunderous brass, dissonant harmonies, and precisely metered passages perfectly encapsulates the many paradoxes of war: clarity and confusion, order and chaos, prudence and reckless abandon.

Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity, is a foil to Mars. The piece is playful, frivolous, and seemingly celestial in nature. This mood is interrupted by a deeply patriotic, distinctly British hymn: "I Vow to Thee My Country". The tune was later adapted to accompany the words to the poem "Urbs Dei" written by British diplomat Sir Cecil Spring Rice and was included in the hymnal *Songs of Praise*, edited by the British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, in 1926. "I Vow to Thee My Country" remains popular in the United Kingdom: it is the school hymn of the St. Paul Girls' School where Holst taught and is performed regularly at Remembrance Day services.

- Paige Rissman

## ARTIST-FACULTY BIO

**Katherine Kilburn** was a recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Conducting Award, and has been Assistant Conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, the El Paso Opera, the Hot Springs Music Festival, the Bowling Green State University Philharmonia, and the St. Louis Symphony Chorus. She was Conductor of the Interlochen Arts Academy Wind Ensemble, Music Director and Conductor of the Greater New Haven Youth and Chamber Orchestras, Conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Repertory Orchestra, and Interim Director of the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association's Philharmonia.

She has conducted the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra, the Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra and Opera Theater, the Green Bay Symphony, Ensemble X, Cleveland Opera Theater, and the Baldwin Wallace Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Kilburn assisted Sir Simon Rattle for performances of *Peter Grimes* at the Salzburg Easter Festival, and toured with world-renowned clarinetists David Shifrin and Alexander Fiterstein. She has conducted numerous world and USA premieres and has conducted in the Cabrillo Music Festival, the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music Festival, the Philadelphia International Music Festival, and the Sewanee Summer Music Festival.

Ms. Kilburn has been on the faculty of Cornell University, Kent State University, and Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, and is now Assistant Director of Orchestras at Michigan State University.

Ms. Kilburn studied conducting at the Conservatoire Darius Milhaud in France and at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She holds the DMA in Contemporary Music from Bowling Green State University, the MM in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Michigan, the MM Choral Conducting from Indiana University, and the BA in Music and French from Wellesley College.

## STUDENT BIOS

After graduating with honors in violin performance from the University of Baja California, **María Fátima Corona del Toro** became a professor of music at the University of Nayarit.

In 2011, she made her debut as the conductor of the Esperanza Azteca Nayarit Symphony Orchestra, becoming the first female conductor of this project nationwide.

In 2020, Ms. Corona pursued an Artistic Diploma in orchestral conducting at the Catholic University of America with Simeone Tartaglione and Murry Sidlin. She served as assistant conductor and violin coach for the DC Concert Orchestra Society, and Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras.

She has taken masterclasses with Linus Lerner, Benjamin Zander, Carlos Spierer, Ángel Garrido, Alfredo Ibarra, David Harutyunyan, and Kenneth Kiesler, among others. She has performed in numerous venues across the U.S., Mexico, Canada, and Ecuador.

Currently, Miss Corona is pursuing her master degree as a T.A. at Michigan State University with Octavio Más-Arocas. She serves as assistant conductor of the Opera, Musique 21, Concert, and Symphony ensembles from MSU.

Passionate about performing music from different cultures, **Asieh Mahyar** is pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting at Michigan State University with Octavio Más-Arocas and Katherine Kilburn. She is the assistant conductor of the MSU Symphony Orchestra, MSU Concert Orchestra, Musique 21 Ensemble, and MSU Opera. Ms. Mahyar holds a MA in orchestral conducting from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst where she studied with Morihiko Nakahara and Kristo Kondakci. She received her BA in choral conducting from Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan-Armenia with Hovhanness Mirzoyan and in orchestral conducting with Ruben Asatryan. Miss Mahyar has served as a teaching assistant at UMass, assistant conductor at UMass SO, and co-director of UMass All-University Orchestra. She was appointed assistant conductor at the Tchaikovsky Music School of Yerevan, Sorayesh Choir, Charentz Choir, and Narek Choir. Ms. Mahyar has attended masterclasses with Miguel Hart-Bedoya, Kenneth Kiesler, and Antanina Kalechyts, among others. Her other mentors include Loris Tjeknavorian, Yervand Yerkanian, and Anahit Nersesyan.



# PERSONNEL

## Violin I

Ethan Biederman\*\*  
William Chettleburgh  
Joan Rissman  
Harvey Lee  
Eliza Guernsey  
Madison Plunkert  
Peter Van Osdol  
Shawn Pryde  
James Cozzi  
Jessica Hopson  
William Quackenbush  
Kaori Marikawa

## Violin II

Fatima Corona\*  
Kaede Schenk  
Jeweliana Rupright  
Jackie Bao  
Bryce Kobe  
Jolie Kretschmar  
Maya Stackable  
Srishti Gowda  
Evan Dyke  
Melissa Guerra  
Sydney Martin  
Abigail Banks  
Blerta Prenaj  
Silvio Rowe

## Viola

Sarah Percival\*  
Madelaine Fussy  
Noelle Riccobono  
Thomas Burns  
Leah Fan  
Jared Bloch  
Joy Li  
Nathan Banotai  
Ali Cramer  
Clarence Nanamori  
Sarah Bill  
Isaac Swanson

## Cello

Justin Hamlin\*  
Allison Voneida  
Kayleigh Manchester  
Alex Logan  
Madigan Lautzenheiser  
Sylvie Martin-Eberhardt  
Erika Shiino  
Laura Perrin

## Bass

Jenna Thayer\*  
Macey Matthews  
Jadyn Waggoner  
Nick Zoller  
Kehan Batt  
Colette Walraven  
Theo Durrett

## Flute

Alex Coble  
Taeyoon Hur  
Paige Rissman  
Gabe Schroeder

## Oboe

Lauren O'Connor  
Sevana Mailian  
Nathan Marsh

## Clarinet

Jingxian Chen  
Cade Dembski  
Madelaine Howard  
Audrey Rancourt

## Bassoon

Eric Hall  
Christina Hazell  
Guy Sloan  
Matt Weber

## Horn

Evan Bell  
Dylan Grace  
Newt Kelbley  
Keshav Lalchandani  
Jonah Weber  
Elaina Wizinsky

## Trumpet

Mark Davis  
Emmet Lewis  
Drew Robinson  
Trent VanderKamp

## Trombone

Alex Bakke  
Brody Keeley  
Annaliese Marks  
Tom Schluckbier  
Elizabeth Simpson

## Tuba/Euphonium

Michael Kirby  
R.J. McLaren

## Percussion

Maura Drinkert  
Lacy Jewell  
Catherine Lee \*  
Noah Mallett  
Felix Moy  
Erin Widman

## Piano

Anqi Huang

## Harp

Kevin Cawley  
Katelynn Ehlert

\*denotes principal

\*\*concert master

## TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

### *Lift Every Voice and Sing (Of Our New Day Begun)*

James Weldon Johnson, J. Rosamond Johnson

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea

### MSU Shadows

MSU, we love thy shadows  
When twilight silence falls,  
Flushing deep and softly paling  
O'er ivy covered halls;  
Beneath the pines we'll gather  
To give our faith so true,  
Sing our love for Alma Mater  
And thy praises, MSU.

When from these scenes we wander  
And twilight shadows fade,  
Our mem'ry still will linger  
Where light and shadows played;  
In the evening oft we'll gather  
And pledge our faith anew,  
Sing our love for Alma Mater  
And thy praises, MSU.

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