

MICHAEL STERN, *Music Director*

GONZALO FARIAS, *Associate Conductor, David T. Beals III Chair*

FIRST VIOLINS

Jun Iwasaki[^], *Concertmaster*
Miller Nichols Chair
Stirling Trent, *Associate Concertmaster*
Chiafei Lin, *Acting Assistant Concertmaster*
Sunho Kim[‡], *Assistant Concertmaster*
Anne-Marie Brown
Michael Brown[^]
Betty Chen
Anthony DeMarco
Susan Goldenberg*
Tomoko Iguchi
Dorris Dai Janssen
Filip Lazovski^Δ
Vladimir Rykov
Alex Shum*

SECOND VIOLINS

Tamamo Someya Gibbs, *Principal*
Kristin Velicer, *Acting Associate Principal*
Minhye Helena Choi, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Nancy Beckmann
Autumn Chodorowski[^]
Mary Garcia Grant
Kazato Inouye
Rena Ishii
Lisa Jackson^Δ
Stephanie Larsen
Sodam Lim[^]
Rachel Sandman^Δ

VIOLAS

MingYu Hsu[^], *Principal*
Jessica Nance, *Acting Associate Principal*
Duke Lee, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Julius Adams^Δ
Kent Brauning
Sean Brumble
Marvin Gruenbaum
Jenifer Houck
Jesse Yukimura

CELLOS

Mark Gibbs, *Principal*
Robert A. Kipp Chair
Susie Yang, *Associate Principal*
Richard Hill Chair
Alexander East, *Assistant Principal*
Maria Crosby
John Eadie
Lawrence Figg
Rung Lee
Meredith McCook
Allen Probus

DOUBLE BASSES

Jeffrey Kail, *Principal*
Evan Halloin, *Associate Principal*
Nils Aardahl[^]
Joseph Nuñez^Δ
Caleb Quillen
Richard Ryan
Nash Tomey[‡]

FLUTES

Michael Gordon, *Principal*
Marylou and John Dodds Turner Chair
Shannon Finney, *Associate Principal*
Kayla Burggraf Michal

PICCOLO

Kayla Burggraf Michal

OBOES

Kristina Fulton, *Principal*
Shirley Bush Helzberg Chair
Alison Chung, *Associate Principal*
Matthew Lengas[^]

ENGLISH HORN

Matthew Lengas[^]

CLARINETS

Raymond Santos, *Principal*
Bill and Peggy Lyons Chair
Silvio Guitian, *Associate Principal*
John Klinghammer

E-FLAT CLARINET

Silvio Guitian

BASS CLARINET

John Klinghammer

BASSOONS

Ann Bilderback, *Principal*
Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Chair
Thomas DeWitt, *Associate Principal*
Maxwell Pipinich

CONTRABASSOON

Thomas DeWitt

HORNS

Alberto Suarez, *Principal*
Landon and Sarah Rowland Chair
David Sullivan, *Associate Principal*
Elizabeth Gray
David Gamble
Stephen Multer,
Associate Principal Emeritus

TRUMPETS

Julian Kaplan, *Principal*
James B. and Annabel Nutter Chair
Steven Franklin, *Associate Principal*
George Goad[^]

TROMBONES

Roger Oyster, *Principal*
Porter Wyatt Henderson,
Associate Principal
Jahleel Smith^Δ
Adam Rainey[‡]

BASS TROMBONE

Jahleel Smith^Δ
Adam Rainey[‡]

TUBA

Joe LeFevre, *Principal*
Frank Byrne Chair

TIMPANI

Timothy Jepson, *Principal*
Michael and Susan Newburger Chair

PERCUSSION

Josh Jones, *Principal*
David Yoon, *Associate Principal*

HARP

Katie Ventura^Δ, *Acting Principal*
Katherine Siochi[‡], *Principal*

LIBRARIANS

Elena Lence Talley, *Principal*
Fabrice Curtis

Justin White,
Director of Orchestra Personnel

Tyler Miller,
Stage Manager

* Non-Rotating Musician
[^] New Member
[‡] On Leave of Absence
^Δ One-Year Member

HOLST'S THE PLANETS

Friday and Saturday, March 24-25, 2023 at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 26, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

HELZBERG HALL, KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

TEDDY ABRAMS, *guest conductor*
JENNIFER KOH, *violin*
WOMEN OF THE KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS
CHARLES BRUFFY, *chorus director*

CAROLINE SHAW

The Observatory

MISSY MAZZOLI

Violin Concerto (Procession)
I. Procession in a Spiral
II. St. Vitus
III. O My Soul
IV. Bone to Bone, Blood to Blood
V. Procession Ascending
Jennifer Koh, *violin*

INTERMISSION

GUSTAV HOLST

The Planets

I. Mars, the Bringer of War
II. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
III. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
V. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
VI. Uranus, the Magician
VII. Neptune, the Mystic
Women of the Kansas City Symphony Chorus

The 2022/23 season is generously sponsored by
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Guest artist Jennifer Koh is sponsored by
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Photo by Chris Witzke

TEDDY ABRAMS, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Named Musical America's 2022 Conductor of the Year, Teddy Abrams is the widely acclaimed music director of the Louisville Orchestra. Now in his ninth season as music director, Abrams launches the Orchestra's groundbreaking Creators Corps — a fully funded residency for three composers — and the Orchestra goes on tour across Kentucky with a first-of-its-kind multiyear funding commitment from the Kentucky State Legislature.

Abrams's rap opera, *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*, premiered in 2017, celebrating Louisville's hometown hero with an all-star cast that included Rhiannon Giddens and Jubilant Sykes, as well as Jecorey "1200" Arthur, with whom he started the Louisville Orchestra Rap School. Abrams' work with the Louisville Orchestra has been profiled on "CBS

Sunday Morning," NPR, the Wall Street Journal, "Articulate" and "PBS NewsHour."

Highlights of the 2022/23 season include guest conducting engagements with the Cincinnati, Kansas City, Utah, Colorado and Pacific symphonies, a return to conduct the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and his debut with the Tiroler Symphonieorchester Innsbruck.

Abrams has been music director and conductor of the Britt Festival Orchestra since 2013, where, in addition to an annual three-week festival of concerts, he has taken the orchestra across the region in the creation of new work — including Michael Gordon's *Natural History*, which was premiered on the edge of Crater Lake National Park in partnership with the National Parks Service, and was the subject of the PBS documentary *Symphony for Nature*; and Pulitzer Prize-winning-composer Caroline Shaw's *Brush*, an experiential work written to be performed in summer 2021 on the Jacksonville Woodlands Trail system.

Abrams recently collaborated with Jim James, vocalist and guitarist for My Morning Jacket, on the song cycle *The Order of Nature*, which they premiered with the Louisville Orchestra in 2018 and recorded on Decca Gold. They performed the work with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in 2019. In addition, Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra recorded the album "All In" with vocalist Storm Large in 2017. Most recently, he released *Space Variations*, a collection of three new compositions for Universal Music Group's 2022 World Sleep Day.

As a guest conductor, Abrams has worked with such distinguished ensembles as the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the Chicago, San Francisco, National, Houston, Pacific, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Vancouver, Colorado, Utah and Phoenix symphonies; the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; and the Sarasota and Florida orchestras. Internationally, he has worked with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and Malaysian Philharmonic. He served as assistant conductor of the Detroit Symphony from 2012 to 2014. From 2008 to 2011, Abrams was the conducting fellow and assistant conductor of the New World Symphony.



Photo by Juergen Frank

JENNIFER KOH, VIOLIN

Recognized for intense, commanding performances delivered with dazzling virtuosity and technical assurance, violinist Jennifer Koh is a forward-thinking artist dedicated to exploring a broad and eclectic repertoire while promoting equity and inclusivity in classical music. She has expanded the contemporary violin repertoire through a wide range of commissioning projects and has premiered more than 100 works written especially for her. Her quest for the new and unusual, sense of endless curiosity, and ability to lead and inspire a host of multidisciplinary collaborators truly set her apart.

This season, Koh continues her critically acclaimed New American Concerto series, an ongoing, multi-season commissioning project that explores the form of the violin

concerto and its potential for artistic engagement with contemporary societal concerns and issues through commissions from a diverse collective of composers. Featured performances of Missy Mazzoli's Violin Concerto *Procession* include appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra led by Marin Alsop, the Philharmonia Orchestra led by Santtu-Matias Rouvali, the Lahti Symphony conducted by Dalia Stasevska and the Kansas City Symphony conducted by Teddy Abrams.

Koh brings the same sense of adventure and brilliant musicianship to her recordings as she does to her live performances. She has recorded more than a dozen albums with Chicago-based Cedille Records, including her Grammy® Award-winning "Alone Together" album. Her Bach & Beyond recording series was released as a three-disc box set in September 2021. These recordings explore the history of the solo violin repertoire from Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas to the music of 20th- and 21st-century composers, including new commissions from Missy Mazzoli (*Dissolve, O My Heart*) and John Harbison (*For Violin Alone*). The collection also includes the world-premiere recording of Kaija Saariaho's *Prises*, as well as works by Berio, Bartók and Ysaÿe.

Koh also is active as a lecturer and teacher. She has been on faculty at the Mannes School of Music since 2018 and has held residencies at Brown, Cornell, Duke and Tulane universities, as well as at the Curtis Institute of Music, Oberlin Conservatory and College and University of California, Santa Barbara. She was the keynote speaker for the Royal College of Music's 2020 "Orchestrating Isolation" conference and the League of American Orchestras' 2018 annual conference.

Born in Chicago of Korean parents, Koh began playing the violin by chance, choosing the instrument in a Suzuki-method program only because spaces for cello and piano had been filled. She made her debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age 11. She was Musical America's 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year and has also been recently recognized as a Virtuoso Award honoree by Concert Artists Guild in 2020 and "A Force of Nature" by the American Composers Orchestra in 2019. She was a top prize winner at Moscow's International Tchaikovsky Competition, winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition and a recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Oberlin College and studied at the Curtis Institute, where she worked extensively with Jaime Laredo and Felix Galimir.

CAROLINE SHAW

The Observatory (2019)

16 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, glockenspiel, snare drum, vibraphone, piano and strings.

Creating a score for full orchestra can feel like simultaneously standing on a mountaintop, scrubbing your kitchen floor, swimming in the middle of a lake, riding the subway during rush hour, and gently holding someone's hand. It's not a medium that I work in very often. I always try to write for the particular environment (place, ensemble or person, time of year, etc.) in which the music will first be heard (in this case: the Hollywood Bowl, the LA Phil, the brilliant Xian Zhang, the heat of August 2019). It's a fun constraint, and it helps keep the writing personal and connected to the real world. The first and only time I've ever been to the Hollywood Bowl was in September 2015, singing with Kanye at the 808s and Heartbreak show. It was a wild ride, and I remember feeling like an observer of a mysterious workshop that somehow churned beauty out of chaos. There is also something about writing an orchestral work for a summer evening in Hollywood that got me thinking about my favorite genre of film and storytelling — sci-fi. I love the way epic tales of the beyond can zoom in and out, using grand imagined alternate universes to tell stories about ourselves. And I love how music in these films carves and colors our attention to those worlds (in their various scales).

While writing music, I often imagine some kind of visual (usually abstract, sometimes figural, rarely narrative), as a guide for myself and sometimes as a thing to write against. There's an invisible counterpoint here, but I'd rather someone simply listen and create their own contrapuntal narrative adventure than read an account of mine — to leave space for one's own observation and reflection, whether it be of the music or their neighbor's t-shirt or cosmology or tomorrow's grocery list. (The grand story arcs of our lives sometimes play out in minutiae and the mundane.) And often the imagined visuals that I write to are nothing more than shifts in color or a quick cut between undefined scenes. (Sometimes the juxtapositions and transitions [and parentheses] are where the stories are.)

I was in the midst of writing *The Observatory* while in LA to record some vocals (hi, Teddy Shapiro!). So one morning before our session I went up to the Griffith Observatory to clear my head. I looked down at the city with all its curves and all its edges (thanks, John Legend), and up at the sky, which has been observed and wondered about since the beginning of consciousness. I had been thinking about my friend Kendrick Smith, a cosmologist at the Perimeter Institute (and also my favorite grill master). Kendrick is at the cutting edge of the ancient tradition of stargazing, constructing new frameworks for analyzing data collected by the CHIME radio telescope. My simplistic distillation of his work: Kendrick develops ways of looking at ways of looking at ways of looking at nn(ways of looking at) the universe. Sometimes I think maybe that's what music is. Or maybe it's just a way to acknowledge and pass the time.

If you've gotten this far in the program note, you're probably wondering if I'll actually talk about the music you will hear in *The Observatory*. Okay. There are some very large chords, and some very large spaces. There are patterns and details of movements of patterns (thanks, T.S.). There are motives that appear in diminution and augmentation simultaneously, like objects in orbit at different phases. There is foreground and background. There is love for Andrew Norman. There are references to Strauss' *Don Juan*, Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Sibelius' Symphony No. 2, Brahms' Symphony No. 1, and the arpeggiated chimes used to summon audiences to their seats at orchestra concerts. There is celebration and criticism of systems. There is chaos and clarity. The very large chords return at the end, but their behavior is not the same as when we began. Welcome to *The Observatory*.

— Caroline Shaw



CAROLINE SHAW (b. 1982), COMPOSER

Caroline Shaw is a musician who moves among roles, genres and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist and vocalist. Shaw is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several Grammy® awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale University and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship.

This year's projects include the score to "Fleishman Is in Trouble" (FX/Hulu), vocal work with Rosalía ("MOTOMAMI"), the score to Josephine Decker's "The Sky Is Everywhere" (A24/Apple), music for the National Theatre's production of "The Crucible," Justin Peck's "Partita" with New York City Ballet, a new stage work entitled "LIFE" (Gandini Juggling/Merce Cunningham Trust), the premiere of "Microfictions Vol. 3" for the New York Philharmonic and

Roomful of Teeth, a live orchestral score for Wu Tsang's silent film "Moby Dick" co-composed with Andrew Yee, two albums on Nonesuch ("Evergreen" and "The Blue Hour"), the score for Helen Simoneau's dance work "Delicate Power," tours of Graveyards & Gardens (co-created immersive theatrical work with Vanessa Goodman), and tours with Sō Percussion featuring songs from "Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part" (Nonesuch), amid occasional chamber music appearances as violist (Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, La Jolla Music Society).

Shaw has written over 100 works in the last decade, for Anne Sofie von Otter, Davóne Tines, Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philharmonia Baroque, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, The Crossing, Dover Quartet, Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Miro Quartet, I Giardini, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Ariadne Greif, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Britt Festival and the Vail Dance Festival. She has contributed production to albums by Rosalía, Woodkid and Nas. Her work as vocalist or composer has appeared in several films, television series and podcasts including "The Humans," "Bombshell," "Yellowjackets," "Maid," "Dark," Beyoncé's "Homecoming," "Tár," "Dolly Parton's America" and "More Perfect." Her favorite color is yellow, and her favorite smell is rosemary.

MISSY MAZZOLI

Violin Concerto (*Procession*) (2022)

21 minutes

Solo violin, piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, bass drum, brake drum, glockenspiel, temple blocks, snare drum, suspended cymbal, vibraphone, harp and strings.

Violin Concerto (*Procession*) casts the soloist as a soothsayer, sorcerer, healer and piper-type character, leading the orchestra through five interconnected healing spells. Part one, “Procession in a Spiral,” references medieval penitential processions; part two, “St. Vitus,” is an homage to the patron saint of dancing, who could reportedly cast out evil spirits; part three, “O My Soul,” is a twisted reworking of the hymn of the same name, and part four, “Bone to Bone, Blood to Blood,” derives its name from the 9th-century Merseburg Charm, a spell meant to cure broken limbs. In the final movement, “Procession Ascending,” the soloist straightens out the spiral of the first section and leads the orchestra straight into the sky. Violin Concerto (*Procession*) was commissioned by the National Symphony and the Cincinnati Symphony for soloist Jennifer Koh.

— Missy Mazzoli

From an interview with Mazzoli on the Cincinnati Symphony’s un/HEARD video series:

What I discovered in writing this piece is that the concerto is an inherently dramatic form. You have the one soloist against the many of the orchestra, and so that is an inherently dramatic situation. I tried to keep that in mind as I was composing, and I hope that drama captivates the listener.

As I first started writing, I was thinking a lot about healing rituals in music. Coming out of a global pandemic this was very much on my mind, and I think a lot of us were talking about this, [asking] what is the role of music in healing? How do we as a society heal? How do we as individuals heal? I started looking at history going back to the time of the Black Death in the 14th century in Europe. And I was really fascinated to discover a lot of the rituals around healing and coping with sickness, curing sickness, warding off sickness at a time when sickness was everywhere, much more prevalent than it is today, and also much less understood. So each of the five movements of the Violin Concerto is based on a different healing ritual from the Middle Ages.



Photo by Caroline Tompkins

MISSY MAZZOLI (b. 1980), COMPOSER

The New York Times hailed Missy Mazzoli, a Grammy® Award-nominated composer and musician, as “one of the more consistently inventive, surprising composers now working in New York.” Her music has been performed all over the world by the Kronos Quartet, eighth blackbird, pianist Emanuel Ax, Opera Philadelphia, Scottish Opera, Cincinnati Opera, New York City Opera, Chicago Fringe Opera, Detroit Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony, cellist Maya Beiser, violinist Jennifer Koh, pianist Kathleen Supové, Dublin’s Crash Ensemble and many others. In 2018 she became one of the first two women (along with Jeanine Tesori) to be commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera. That year she was also nominated for a Grammy

in the category of Best Classical Composition for her work *Vespers for Violin*, recorded by Olivia De Prato. Her third opera, *Proving Up*, written with longtime collaborator Royce Vavrek, was commissioned by the Washington National Opera, Opera Omaha and New York’s Miller Theatre. It premiered to critical acclaim with the Washington Post calling it “harrowing ... powerful ... a true opera of our time.” Her second opera, *Breaking the Waves*, also with librettist Vavrek, was described as “among the best 21st-century operas yet” by Opera News. Mazzoli is an active TV and film composer; she wrote and performed music for the fictional character Thomas Pembroke on the Amazon series “Mozart in the Jungle.” She also contributed music to the documentaries “Detropia” and “Book of Conrad” and the film “A Woman, A Part.” Her music has been recorded and released on several labels including New Amsterdam, Cedille, Bedroom Community, 4AD and Innova.

Additional honors for Mazzoli include the 2017 Music Critics Association of America Inaugural Award for Best Opera, Goddard Lieberman Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award, four ASCAP Young Composer Awards, a Fulbright grant to the Netherlands, the Detroit Symphony’s Elaine Lebenbom Award and grants from the Jerome Foundation, American Music Center and Barlow Endowment. She has been awarded fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Ucross, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Blue Mountain Center and the Hermitage. Mazzoli is also an active pianist and keyboardist who often performs with Victoire, a chamber-rock quintet she founded in 2008. Their debut CD, “Cathedral City,” was named one of 2010’s best classical albums by the New Yorker, New York Times, Time Out New York and NPR.

Mazzoli has served as Mead Composer-in-Residence at the Chicago Symphony; Composer-in-Residence with Opera Philadelphia, Gotham Chamber Opera, and Music-Theatre Group; and Composer/Educator-in-Residence with the Albany Symphony. She was a visiting professor of music at New York University and member of the composition faculty at the Mannes School of Music. She is on the Artistic Advisory Board of the MATA Festival in New York and, in 2016, along with composer Ellen Reid and in collaboration with the Kaufman Music Center, founded Luna Composition Lab, a mentorship program and support network for female-identifying, nonbinary and gender nonconforming composers ages 12 to 18.

GUSTAV HOLST

The Planets (1914-1916)

48 minutes

2 piccolos, 4 flutes, alto flute, 3 oboes, English horn, bass oboe, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tenor tuba, tuba, 2 sets of timpani, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, gong, orchestra bells, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, 2 harps, celeste, organ, strings and women's chorus.

THE STORY

There was nothing in Gustav Holst's background or career accomplishments in 1914 to suggest the middle-aged teacher was about to compose a blockbuster symphonic work that would continue to thrill audiences more than a century later. He had studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford at London's Royal College of Music and had written a number of choral and instrumental works but was far from a household name.

While vacationing with friends in Spain in 1913, Holst delved into astrology. Captivated, he commented, "As a rule, I only study things which suggest music to me ... recently I became acquainted with astrology and the character of each planet suggested lots to me, and I have been studying astrology fairly closely." Perhaps it was the combination of astrology and his earlier interest in Sanskrit and Indian philosophy that served as the inspirational impetus for writing a large orchestral work.

Working nights and weekends in a soundproof room that had been specially constructed for him in the new music wing at St. Paul's Girls' School where he had been teaching since 1905, Holst began composing what he tentatively called "Seven Pieces for Large Orchestra." Mars, Venus and Jupiter were completed in 1914 with Saturn, Uranus and Neptune following in 1915. He finished Mercury in 1916 but the work languished until concert promoter Henry Balfour Gardiner bankrolled a private performance by the Queen's Hall Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult on September 29, 1918. The first public performance of the entire work was led by Albert Coates on November 15, 1920, in London.

THE MUSIC

Holst offered the following note for the 1920 performance:

These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; there is no programme music, neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology bearing the same names. If any guide to the music is required the subtitle to each piece will be found sufficient, especially if it be used in the broad sense. For instance, Jupiter brings jollity in the ordinary sense, and also the more ceremonial type of rejoicing associated with religions or national festivities. Saturn brings not only physical decay, but also a vision of fulfillment. Mercury is the symbol of mind.

Well aware of compositional trends and avant-garde works by Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Richard Strauss and others, Holst hewed to his own unique path in *The Planets*, staying within a tonal orbit but avidly exploring other musical realms. His frequent and inventive use of ostinato — a repeated rhythmic and/or melodic figure — is a notable characteristic of the work.

With its off-kilter 5/4 meter and nearly incessant bombast, Mars' militaristic march summons a bellicose image, worthy inspiration for sections of John Williams' "Star Wars" scores. Venus provides serene contrast, setting the stage for fleet Mercury and its quicksilver changes. Jovian jollity is certainly inflected by Holst's interest in English folk music.

Saturn's deliberate pace and magisterial bearing builds gradually to a driving syncopation filled with clanging bells, all gradually subsiding into the distance. A flourish of unison brass notes heralds the arrival of Uranus, the magician. With a lopsided rhythmic bounce, the magic show commences. Grand gestures lead to a moment of disbelief before the magician disappears in a wisp of smoke. The veiled sounds of mystical Neptune swirl mysteriously as women's voices float wordlessly into the ether, bringing Holst's astrological contemplation to a close. *ETW*





GUSTAV HOLST (1874-1934)

Known for:

- *The Planets* (1914-1916)
- *St. Paul's Suite* (1913)
- *Brook Green Suite* (1933)

- The von Holst family had Scandinavian roots but was decidedly settled in England when Gustavus Theodore von Holst was born in Cheltenham in 1874. His mother, father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all musicians and Gustav was taught piano and violin at an early age. His mother was frail and died when Gustav was only 8 years old. His constitution was similarly fragile and he suffered from asthma and exceptionally poor eyesight. He developed neuritis (an inflammation of the nerves) in his right arm, dashing career aspirations as a pianist so he took up trombone, thinking it would be therapeutic for asthma.
- Following stints as a village organist and choirmaster, Holst attended the Royal College of Music, studying composition with Charles Villiers Stanford. While there, Holst met fellow composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. Lifelong friends, the two would often discuss literature and critique each other's works.
- As a young man, Holst cobbled together a modest living playing trombone with several ensembles. He composed various works deeply influenced by Richard Wagner's music and began exploring Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit literature. He wanted to compose hymns using the Rig Veda, the oldest of the four sacred Hindu texts, but thought existing English translations were stilted so he embarked on learning Sanskrit in order to make his own translation. His abiding interest in Hindu texts would result in several compositions, including two operas.
- Another early interest was in socialism as espoused by William Morris and George Bernard Shaw. Holst became conductor of the Hammersmith Socialist Choir where he met soprano Isobel Harrison. She had a civilizing effect on him and they married in 1901.
- Seeking more time to compose, Holst gave up the trombone and embarked on a teaching career at a number of schools, most notably St. Paul's Girls' School, a post he would hold from 1905 until his death.
- A new music wing at St. Paul's opened in 1913 and it included a soundproof room where Holst could teach and compose in peace. In honor of the occasion, he composed *St. Paul's Suite*, one of his best-known works. Motivated by a newfound interest in astrology, he began working on *The Planets* shortly thereafter.
- A fall from the podium while conducting in 1923 left Holst with lingering physical issues aggravating his always poor health. Contending with his worsening condition, he agreed to a major operation in May 1934. Although the procedure was successful, his heart failed under the strain and he died two days later. His ashes are interred at Chichester Cathedral. **ETW**



CHARLES BRUFFY, CHORUS DIRECTOR

One of the most admired choral conductors in the United States, Charles Bruffy began his career as a tenor soloist, performing with the Robert Shaw Festival Singers for recordings and concerts in France and concerts at Carnegie Hall. Shaw encouraged his development as a conductor. He received his undergraduate degree from Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph and his master's degree in voice performance from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. A scholarship fund has been established at the Conservatory in his name.

Bruffy has been artistic director of the Kansas City Chorale since 1988 and chorus director for the Kansas City Symphony since 2008.

Respected and renowned for his fresh and passionate interpretations of standards of the choral music repertoire, and for championing new music, he has commissioned and premiered works by composers such as Jean Belmont Ford, Ola Gjeilo, Matthew Harris, Anne Kilstofte, Libby Larsen, Zhou Long, Cecilia McDowall, Michael McGlynn, Stephen Paulus, Jessica Rudman, Steven Sametz, Terry Schlenker, Philip Stopford, Steven Stucky, Eric Whitacre, Edna Yeh and Chen Yi.

Under Bruffy's supervision, MusicSpoke and the Roger Dean Company, a division of the Lorenz Corporation, publish a choral series specializing in music for professional ensembles and sophisticated high school and college choirs. His eclectic discography includes five albums on the Nimbus label and eight recordings for Chandos Records, three of which have been recognized by the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences with Grammy® Awards for Best Choral Performance. Joining the likes of Alan Bergman, Maynard Ferguson, Carlisle Floyd, Daniel E. Gawthrop, Andy Griffith, Ellis Marsalis, Jr., and Frank Ticheli, Charles Bruffy was celebrated in 2017 with the Signature Sinfonian award conferred by the national fraternal society Phi Mu Alpha, recognizing "alumni members who have achieved a high standard of accomplishment in their field."

In his spare time, Bruffy breeds and raises Arabian and Saddlebred horses on his ranch just south of Kansas City in Cass County, Missouri.

Program notes by AJ Harbison (AJH) and Eric T. Williams (ETW).



The Kansas City Symphony Chorus, led by Grammy® Award-winning Chorus Director Charles Bruffy, is a 160-voice ensemble that continues its long tradition of excellence serving as “the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony.” The Symphony Chorus has been offering quality choral music to the greater Kansas City metropolitan area since the early 1960s, first as the Mendelssohn Choir and then as the Civic Chorus. After the creation of the Kansas City Symphony, the Symphony Chorus assumed its current name and role as the Symphony’s “choral voice” in 1988. Before the appointment of Chorus Director Charles Bruffy in 2008, the Symphony Chorus worked under the direction of choral conductors Eph Ehly and Arnold Epley.

The Symphony Chorus has represented Kansas City in five concert tours, including performances in New York City, Boston, the Berkshires, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Mexico where it performed with the Mexico City Symphony. The Symphony Chorus women recorded Holst’s *The Planets* with the Kansas City Symphony in January 2015.

The Kansas City Symphony Chorus musicians are all volunteers from the region’s extensive musical community selected through rigorous auditions. Members have rich backgrounds in both music education and performance, and are engaged in churches and venues throughout the region.

CHARLES BRUFFY, *chorus director*
PATRICE SOLLENBERGER, *assistant chorus director*
DAN VELICER, *accompanist*
LYNNE BEEBE, *president*
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