

# **Wind Symphony Concert**

Dr. Dan Graser, conductor

Dr. Joel Schut, conductor

7:30 P.M.

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Louis Armstrong Theatre

Haas Center for Performing Arts

Program:

Biomimicry (2019)

Roger Zare (b. 1985)

- I. La Sagrada Familia
- II. Cetacean Energy
- III. Bullet Train

Laker Saxophone Ensemble

Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber (1943) Paul Hindemith (1894-1963)  
III. March

Colonial Song (1911)

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)

Molly on the Shore (1907)

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)

Symphony No. 1 *Lord of the Rings* (1988)

Johan De Meij (b. 1953)

- I. Gandalf (The Wizard)
- II. Lothlórien (The Elvenwood)
- III. Gollum (Sméagol)
- IV. Journey in the Dark
  - a. The Mines of Moria
  - b. The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm
- V. Hobbits

Program Notes:

**Zare – Biomimicry (arranged for saxophone ensemble by the composer)**

Biomimicry refers to the imitation of nature to enhance our man-made technology. We have been doing this in various manners for centuries, from creating umbrellas shaped like lotus leaves to Da Vinci's bird-like design for his flying machine to the invention of Velcro in the 1950s based on the hooked structure of burs. Learning from nature allows us to take advantage of millennia of evolution to create more efficient and sustainable technologies. The first movement, *La Sagrada Familia* is inspired by the famous cathedral in Barcelona, designed by architect Antoni Gaudí. He was finely attuned to the structures that he found in nature and believed that these structures represented the perfection of God the architect. When one enters the cathedral, they are struck by the bright colors and openness of the interior, under a roof supported by rounded and forking columns. Gaudí realized that imitating the structure of tree branches splitting away from the trunk was an incredibly robust way to hold up the roof, allowing for a more spacious interior than the typical gothic cathedrals that can be found throughout Europe. In a similar manner, the music begins at the foundation, with the whole ensemble playing a loud declamatory melody in unison. A quarter of the way through the movement, the unison splits into two parts, and halfway through, it splits into four parts, gradually calming as the texture spreads apart. At roughly three quarters of the way through, the texture splits into 8 parts to create a complex web of sound. These 8 parts begin to imitate each other and coalesce, climactically joining into a unison to bring the form full circle.

In the mid 2000s, scientists researching the fins of humpback whales noticed a peculiar characteristic. There were a number of bumps, called tubercles, on the leading edge of these whales' fins, and they

realized that this allowed the whales to be extraordinarily agile in the water despite their size. A company called WhalePower applied this discovery to the blades of wind turbines, and the increased aerodynamic shape increased their efficiency and allowed for power generation even when the wind was not strong. After living in and driving around the Midwest for about a third of my life, I am very familiar with the vast wind farms that dot the landscape. The slowly rotating blades are mesmerizing. This movement, *Cetacean Energy* (which literally translates to energy of the whales), features muted brass swells and a slowly building chord progression that are inspired by the gracefulness of both wind turbines and swimming humpback whales. The oboe, then the piccolo, and finally the trombone take turns playing a melody on top of this undulating texture.

When an early model of the Japanese high-speed train would go through a tunnel, it would create a loud boom when it emerged on the other side, disturbing anyone who lived nearby. To solve this problem, engineers turned to the kingfisher bird. These incredible birds find fish by diving straight into the water, but they barely make a splash despite their high velocity. In the 1990s, when the fronts of the trains were redesigned to be shaped like the kingfisher's beak, not only were they suddenly much quieter, but the trains also ran much faster and more efficiently. This movement begins playfully with a repeated 5-note motive as the woodwinds imitate kingfishers darting through the air. With increasing frequency, the woodwinds gather into a rapid swooping descent, setting off the low brass into a rising chord progression. As the chord progression returns a number of times, it becomes more and more compressed, until in an explosion of energy, the texture changes to a continuous wash of sound. No longer representing birds, the woodwinds now represent the wind aerodynamically flowing past the bullet train as it streaks across the landscape at nearly 200 miles per hour.

- Program Note by Roger Zare

## **Hindemith – March from Symphonic Metamorphosis**

*Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber* began life in early 1940, when Hindemith first took up residence in the United States after several years of public and private jousting with the Nazi government of his native Germany. The Nazis officially decried his music as “degenerate,” though they may also have been responding to his private, but hardly secret, expressions of revulsion regarding their policies.

Hindemith sketched a series of movements based on themes by Weber, to be used in a ballet for a dance company run by Léonide Massine, who had already collaborated with Hindemith on the ballet *Nobilissima visione*. The project died when Hindemith and Massine suffered one too many artistic differences, provoking Hindemith to reconstruct the music into the *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber*. The process produced a splashy, colorful orchestral piece of the kind that American audiences in particular seemed to like. The new piece was an immediate success when it was premiered by Artur Rodzinski and the New York Philharmonic in January 1944. *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber* has remained perhaps Hindemith's most popular work.

The themes Hindemith used are from some of Weber's most obscure works, and came to Hindemith's attention because they could all be found in one volume of piano duets that he owned. Hindemith not only retained all but one of the themes almost exactly as Weber wrote them but also preserved much of the formal structure of the pieces as well, so that it is possible to follow the general outlines of Hindemith's score while listening to Weber's music, or vice versa, and have a pretty good idea of what's going on. Hindemith alters nearly everything else, making radical changes to the harmony and adding to the music both vertically (with different harmonies and new countermelodies) and horizontally (extending phrases or entire sections).

- Program Note by Richard Floyd

## Grainger – Colonial Song

Percy Grainger's art is inextricably linked to folk music. Grainger's settings of British, Danish, and American folk music are the finest of their kind, prompting no less a figure than Benjamin Britten to declare that Grainger was his 'master' in the art of setting folk music. Among those works written in conscious imitation of folk-style, *Colonial Song* is perhaps the finest of any of his original works.

The musical material of *Colonial Song* dates from 1905. The work is dedicated to Grainger's mother, and Grainger describes,

"No traditional tunes of any kind are made use of in this piece, in which I have wished to express feelings aroused by thoughts of the scenery and people of my native land, Australia, and also to voice a certain kind of emotion that seems to me not untypical of native-born Colonials in general. Perhaps it is not unnatural that people living more or less lonely in vast virgin countries and struggling against natural and climatic hardships (rather than against the more actively and dramatically exciting counter wills of the fellow men, as in more thickly populated lands) should run largely to that patiently yearning, inactive sentimental wistfulness that we find so touchingly expressed in much American art. I have also noticed curious almost Italian-like musical tendencies in brass band performances and ways of singing in Australia (such as a preference for richness and intensity of tone and soulful breadth of phrasing over more subtly and sensitively varied delicacies of expression), which are also reflected here."

- Program Notes by Jennifer Daffinee

## Grainger – Molly on the Shore

In setting *Molly on the Shore* I strove to imbue the accompanying parts that made up the harmonic texture with a melodic character not too unlike that of the underlying reel tune. Melody seems to me to provide music with initiative, whereas rhythm appears to me to exert an enslaving influence. For that reason I have tried to avoid regular rhythmic domination in my music -- always excepting irregular rhythms, such as those of Gregorian chant, which seem to me to make for freedom. Equally with melody, I prize discordant harmony, because of the emotional and compassionate sway it exerts.

- Program Note by composer

## De Meij – Lord of the Rings

Johan de Meij's first symphony *The Lord of the Rings* is based on the trilogy of that name by J.R.R. Tolkien. This book has fascinated many millions of readers since its publication in 1955. The symphony consists of five separate movements, each illustrating a personage or an important episode from the book. The movements are:

- I. GANDALF (The Wizard)
- II. LOTHLORIEN (The Elvenwood)
- III. GOLLUM (Sméagol)
- IV. JOURNEY IN THE DARK
  - a. The Mines of Moria
  - b. The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm
- V. HOBBITS

The symphony was written in the period between March 1984 and December 1987, and had its première in Brussels on 15th March 1988, performed by the Groot Harmonieorkest van de Gidsen under the baton of Norbert Nozy. In 1989, The symphony *The Lord of the Rings* was awarded a first prize in the Sudler

International Wind Band Composition Competition in Chicago, and a year later, the symphony was awarded by the Dutch Composers Fund. In 2001, the orchestral version was premiered by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Although it is not simple to summarize such an extensive and complex work, the main outline is as follows: the central theme is the Ring, made by primaevael forces that decide the safety or destruction of the world. For years it was the possession of the creature Gollum, but when the ring falls into the hands of the Hobbits the evil forces awake, and the struggle for the ring commences. There is but one solution to save the World from disaster: the ring must be destroyed by the fire in which it was forged: Mount Doom in the heart of Mordor, the country of the evil Lord Sauron.

It is the Hobbit Frodo who is assigned to carry out this task, and to assist him a company, the Fellowship of the Ring, is formed under the leadership of Gandalf, the wizard, which includes the Hobbits Sam, Peregrin and Merin, the Dwarf Gimli, the Elf Legolas, Boromir and Aragorn, the later King. The companions are secretly followed by Gollum, who does not shun any means, however perfidious, to recover his priceless ring. However, the companions soon fall apart and , after many pernicious adventures and a surprising dénouement, Frodo and Sam can at last return to their familiar home, The Shire.

Explanation of the five movements:

I. GANDALF (The Wizard) The first movement is a musical portrait of the wizard Gandalf, one of the principal characters of the trilogy. His wise and noble personality is expressed by a stately motif which is used in a different form in movements IV and V. The sudden opening of the Allegro vivace is indicative of the unpredictability of the grey wizard, followed by a wild ride on his beautiful horse, Shadowfax.

II. LOTHLORIEN (The Elvenwood) The second movement is an impression of Lothlórien, the elvenwood with its beautiful trees, plants, exotic birds, expressed through woodwind solos. The meeting of the Hobbit Frodo with the Lady Galadriel is embodied in a charming Allegretto; in the Mirror of Galadriel, a silver basin in the wood, Frodo glimpses three visions, the last of which, a large ominous Eye, greatly upsets him.

III. GOLLUM (Sméagol) The third movement describes the monstrous creature Gollum, a slimy, shy being represented by the soprano saxophone. It mumbles and talks to itself, hisses and lisps, whines and snickers, is alternately pitiful and malicious, is continually fleeing and looking for his cherished treasure, the ring.

IV. JOURNEY IN THE DARK The fourth movement describes the laborious journey of the Fellowship of the ring, headed by the wizard Gandalf, through the dark tunnels of the Mines of Moria. The slow walking cadenza and the fear are clearly audible in the monotonous rhythm of the low brass, piano and percussion. After a wild pursuit by hostile creatures, the Orks, Gandalf is engaged in battle with a horrible monster, the Balrog, and crashes from the subterranean bridge of Khazad-Dûm in a fathomless abyss. To the melancholy tones of a Marcia funèbre, the bewildered companions trudge on, looking for the only way out of the mines, the East Gate of Moria.

V. HOBBITS The fifth movement expresses the carefree and optimistic character of the Hobbits in a happy folk dance; the hymn that follows emanates the determination and noblesse of the hobbit folk. The symphony does not end on an exuberant note, but is concluded peacefully and resigned, in keeping with the symbolic mood of the last chapter, *The Grey Havens*, in which Frodo and Gandalf sail away in a white ship and disappear slowly beyond the horizon.

- Program Note by Johan de Meij

### **GVSU Wind Symphony Personnel**

#### **Piccolo/Flute**

Brittlyn Keller

**Flute**

Vivian Lundskow  
Heavyn Musgrave\*  
Jillaena Weesies

**Oboe**

Kayla Hieb\*  
Elisa Skinner\*

**English Horn**

Kayla Hieb  
Elisa Skinner

**Bassoon**

Simon Furton  
Tanner Reynolds\*

**Eb Clarinet**

Lilly Childers

**Clarinet**

Lilly Childers  
Mariana Escobar  
Sophia Janiga  
Maddox Lewis\*  
Elyse Riter

**Bass Clarinet**

Maddison Sanborn

**Saxophone**

Jeremy Cleary\* (soprano/alto)  
David Grimard ø (alto)  
Caleb Peckham (alto)  
Zane Stoner (alto)  
Isaac Wright (alto)  
Connor Brendel (tenor)  
Seth Kane ø (tenor)  
Hailey Petersen (baritone)

**Trumpet**

Madison Cornelius  
Jack DeHaan  
Kaylee Hebert  
Seth Miller\*  
Blake Sutherland  
Alejandro Zorrilla

**Horn**

Gray Ballard  
Eli Gibson  
Brendan Reed\*  
Elizabeth Slabaugh\*

**Trombone**

Erik Courtney  
Matt Keith\*  
Elizabeth Phillips

**Bass Trombone**

Micah Babinski

**Euphonium**

Brandon Klein  
Timothy McDonald\*

**Tuba**

Julia Droscha ø  
Jorge Gonzalez\*  
Lanie LaPointe  
Jack Stoneman

**Percussion**

Ramses Arispe  
Dyami Campos  
Thomas Cordes  
Zachary Haverkamp\* ø  
Ash Martinez-Lopez  
Brayden VanderWall

**Keyboard:** Brendan Hollins †

\* denotes principal or  
co-principal

ø denotes a student  
graduating or  
pre-service teaching  
next semester

† denotes guest

Performer``

***Names are listed in alphabetical order to emphasize the contribution of each player***