

Washington Metropolitan  
Gamer Symphony Orchestra  
presents

# CHAMBERS & CONSOLES

*a Video Game Music Concert*

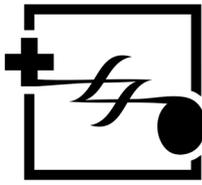
July 30, 2022, 7 p.m.

The Weinberg Center for the Arts  
20 West Patrick Street, Frederick, MD 21701



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WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN

# Gamer Symphony Orchestra

The Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra (WMGSO) is a community orchestra and choir whose mission is to share and celebrate video game music with a wide audience, primarily by putting on affordable, accessible concerts in the D.C. area.

Game music weaves a complex melodic thread through the traditions, shared memories, values, and myths of an entire international and intergenerational culture. WMGSO showcases this music that largely escapes recognition in professional circles.

The result: classical music with a 21st-century twist, drawing non-gamers to the artistic merits of video game soundtracks and attracting new audiences to orchestral concert halls.

## About Our Music Director



Jamin Morden attended Northwestern University, dual majoring in French Horn Performance and Music Education. After he completed a master's degree in French Horn Performance at Yale University, he moved to Maryland to teach instrumental music in Montgomery County Public Schools. Jamin is also involved with Symphony of the Potomac and the Maryland Band Directors' Band.



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Zeynep Dilli  
Beth Feldstein  
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### **Tenor Voice**

Thomas Ashcom  
Sherwin Fong  
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Chris McNees  
David Werner  
Sheldon Zamora-Soon

### **Alto Voice**

Danielle Bartolanzo  
Kai Diaz  
Mary Saffell  
Michelle Sloan  
Ashleah Younker  
Cindy Zhang

### **Bass Voice**

Jacob Coppage-Gross  
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# START!

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## **My Floating Sanctuary**

*Sea of Solitude (2019)*

Guy Jackson

Arr. Robb Saffell

*Sea of Solitude* is a stunning, atmospheric, and watery exploration of loneliness where ruin, creature, puzzle, and more are manifestations of one's internal landscape. This piece is a tone poem for solo cello and synthesized accompaniment that marks a point of calm and peace for the main character, Kay.

"My Floating Sanctuary" is performed by Alex Son on cello, who is accompanied by Thomas Ashcom on the piano, Robb Saffell with voice and singing bowls, and Scott Luxenberg on vibraphone.

## **Pewter City**

*Pokémon Red & Blue (1996)*

Junichi Masuda

Arr. Jacob Coppage-Gross

As one of the early towns in the first-generation Pokémon games, Pewter City features a quaint theme that strikes a nostalgia chord for fans of the series. While simple in its construction, the theme conjures up vivid images of the pixelated locale where you take on your first gym leader, one of the first steps on your journey to becoming world champion. Inspired by Trevor Alan Gomes's rendition on his album *Piano Collections: Pokémon Red/Blue*, this arrangement is a grand interpretation of this heartwarming theme in a lush, romantic setting.

The piece is performed by Jacob Coppage-Gross on the piano and Alex Son on the cello.

## **Fates of Time**

[Arranger's notes to be added post concert. Check back soon!]

## **Tifa's Theme; Airship**

*Final Fantasy VII (1997); Final Fantasy (1987)*

Nobuo Uematsu

Arr. Jamin Morden

Nobuo Uematsu's place in the canon of video game music composers is unmistakable and largely based on his work with the Final Fantasy series, with which he has had a long-lasting association not unlike that of John Williams with the Star Wars series. His music is memorable and enriches the game experience. While his greatest genius might be in constructing melodies, close behind is his remarkable range and dexterity with a wide variety of genres and styles.

Four selections in this concert program showcase that range beautifully. These two, the lyrical, gentle "Tifa's Theme" from Final Fantasy VII and the

expansive, joyous “Airship” from the very first Final Fantasy, are great examples of the melodic genius. The arrangement for “Tifa” explores the boundaries of the harmonic possibilities of the sweet-but-wistful-but-sweet theme song for the always loyal, steadfast childhood friend of the game’s main character. As for “Airship,” the melody lends itself to both energetic and majestic interpretations, the full range of which is visited by the performing duo. Through the presence of various quotes and references, both pieces present themselves in the contexts of the games they belong to.

This piece features Zeynep Dilli on the piano and Jamin Morden on the French horn.

### **Se Il Mio Amore Sta Vincino**

*Paradise Eve (1998)*

Yoko Shimomura

*Arr. Thomas Håkanson*

In *Parasite Eve*, you follow the adventures of an NYPD cop who, after witnessing a very flammable operatic performance, has to hunt down and defeat a genetically engineered human who is intent on wiping out the human race. “Se Il Mio Amore Sta Vincino” is part of the opera, in a performance that was on fire—in more ways than one.

This piece is performed by Amanda Cavanagh, who is accompanied by Thomas Ashcom on the piano.

### **Grape Garden**

*Kirby’s Adventure (1993)*

Hirokazu Ando, Jun Ishikawa

*Arr. Jamin Morden*

“Grape Garden” is the fourth level theme from *Kirby’s Adventure* for the NES. The tune is characterized by bouncy accompaniment textures, bumpy basslines, and sprightly melodies. While the original is bubbly, energetic, and a ton of fun, the arranger here wanted to write something chill, relaxed, and jazzy. One of the best things about arranging is re-imagining songs in different styles and genres, and “Grape Garden” works extremely well in this context.

For this arrangement, some of the bubbiness is traded in for silky smooth horn lines and woodwind solis. In one of the largest instrumental “small” ensembles WMGSO has assembled, every player gets a moment to shine. Now and again, the energy of the original piece can’t help but bubble back to the surface, resulting in a big finish featuring all players.

“Grape Garden” is performed by Maggie Mariotti on piccolo; Jessie Biele on flute; Yannick Joseph, Jonathan Farrell, and Ashleah Younker on clarinet; Jacob Deaven on bass clarinet; Jenn Ganss on Oboe; Hunter Evans and Chris McNees on bassoon; John Ball on trumpet; Adam Zerance on Flugelhorn; Jamin Morden on French Horn; Scott Luxenberg on vibraphone; Benjamin Downey on drumset; Les Doerfler on electric bass; Jasmine Marcelo on piano; Kara Welch on harp;

Kai Diaz, Sherwin Fong, Elias Schwartzman, and Cindy Zhang on violin; Aaliyah Cuthrell and Danielle Daines on viola; Alex Son on cello; Dan Serino on double bass; and JP Zavodny on guitar.

## **Clair de Lune**

*Composed in 1905; appears in various games*

Claude Debussy

*Arr. Mary Beck*

The third movement of Debussy's *Suite bergamasque*, "Clair de Lune," is one of his most popular compositions. It has made appearances in a variety of films and video games alike, including the *Persona* series, the *Gran Turismo* series, and *Fallout 76*. This piece, originally been written for solo piano, has been arranged for a flute choir.

"Clair de Lune" is performed by Mary Beck and Jessie Biele on flute, Jess Bateman on piccolo, Jenn Ganss on the alto flute, and Maggie Mariotti on bass flute.

## **MEGALOVANIA**

*UNDERTALE (2015)*

Toby Fox

*Arr. James-Michael Sellers*

*UNDERTALE* is a Japanese Role-Playing Game (JRPG)-style game with multiple ending options based on decisions the player makes after they have fallen down to the Underground. The tune "MEGALOVANIA" plays during the final boss that the player only faces if they have taken the "Genocide" path through the game. While the path to get to this fight is, to put it mildly, not pleasant, the battle's theme has grown popular enough to become a meme on its own across the internet. You are about to have a ... good time.

"MEGALOVANIA" is performed by Mary Beck and Jessie Biele on flute, Jess Bateman on piccolo, Jenn Ganss on the alto flute, and Maggie Mariotti on bass flute.

## **The Fields of Ard Skellig**

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt (2015)*

Marcin Przybyłowicz

*Arr. David Werner*

The second act of *The Witcher 3* sees Geralt of Rivia setting sail for the islands of Skellige in the midst of his search for Ciri, the emperor's daughter. While there, he meets with Yennefer of Vengerbeg to investigate a mysterious explosion thought to have been caused by Ciri while she was escaping from the Wild Hunt. "The Fields of Ard Skellig" plays while Geralt travels through the main island of the region, Ard Skellig, riding through the snow-covered mountains and rocky plains on his horse, Roach.

This arrangement converts the violin/harp/solo voice/synth instrumentation

of the original piece in the game to a cappella choir. The lyrics for this piece are excerpts from an 18th century Scots Gaelic piece named “Fhir a’ bhàta,” or “The Boatman,” which was written by Sine NicFhionnlaigh from Tong, in Scotland, about a fisherman she was courting. Historical accounts say they were married after the song was written.

“The Fields of Ard Skellig” is presented by the WMGSO summer choir. Danielle Bartolanzo is the vocal soloist, and Robb Saffell is conducting.

### **Baby, It’s Just You**

*Fallout 4 (2015)*

John Jarvis, Kerry Marx & Lynda Carter

*Arr. Jamin Morden & Ashleah Younker*

In *Fallout 4*, it’s nice to take a break from post-apocalyptic Boston by stopping by the Third Rail jazz club. Drifters around town claim that the booze and synth vocalist Magnolia are the only reasons to visit the bar. Once you drop in to see Magnolia perform live, you can hear her song on Diamond City Radio. Magnolia is voiced by Lynda Carter—of Wonder Woman fame—who co-wrote and performed “Baby, It’s Just You” specifically for the game.

The performers are Ashleah Younker on voice, Zeynep Dilli on piano, Scott Luxenberg on drums, Jamin Morden on French Horn, and Dan Serino on the double bass.

### **A Quick Break**

*Cuphead (2017)*

Kristofer Maddigan

*Cuphead* is the first game developed by brothers Chad and Jared Moldenhauer. Inspired by the “rubberhose” cartoons that they loved in their



childhood, everything about this game screams 1930s aesthetic. The game features surrealistic imagery: from a very angry dancing sunflower, to a pair of boxing frogs that turn into a slot machine, to a fight with the devil himself.

The game is entirely hand drawn and animated in the style of classic Walt Disney and Fleischer Studio cartoons. To match the visuals, the soundtrack features dozens of jazz and big band tunes, including two barbershop quartet pieces: the main theme and a somewhat hidden song sung in game by a quartet of anthropomorphized barbershop poles after you find their missing member. So please enjoy, and as the lyrics say, “please come back for more!”

Barbershop quartets feature four parts: the Tenor voice, which generally harmonizes the highest notes of each chord; the Lead voice, which features the main melody; the Baritone voice, which harmonizes below the lead voice, and the Bass voice, which sings the lowest note of each chord.

This piece features Sheldon Zamora-Soon (Tenor), Tony McMannis (Lead), Stephen Wiley (Baritone), and Michael Ohr (Bass).

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## PAUSE

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so far?

- Yes.
- Of course!

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## Level 2 – START!

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### **Lament of Orpheus**

*Hades (2020)*

Darren Korb

*Arr. Robb Saffell*

“Lament of Orpheus”, from *Hades*, composed and originally performed by Darren Korb, does not have a false advertisement for a title. The song, an art song in its own right, recounts the classical Greek story of Orpheus and Eurydice. After Eurydice’s death, Orpheus descends into the Underworld to plead for her return, and thanks partly to his beautiful voice and the strength of his feelings, his request is granted, on one condition: on their way back to the surface, he must not turn around to look at her until they have both left the Underworld. But on the way, his doubt that she is following gets the better of him, as the song laments—and he loses Eurydice forever.

“Lament of Orpheus” is sung by Robb Saffell, who is accompanied by Thomas Ashcom on the piano, Alex Son on the cello, and Scott Luxenberg on vibraphone.

### **Dark World of Funk**

[Arranger’s notes to be added post concert. Check back soon!]

### **Ronfaure**

*Final Fantasy XI (2002)*

Nobuo Uematsu

*Arr. Josh Haas*

One of the few pieces Uematsu has contributed to the first foray of the *Final Fantasy* franchise into the MMORPG world, “Ronfaure” is the theme for the forested area of the same name. The form of the piece is that of a pavane, a courtly Renaissance dance, with a distinctive rhythmic pattern heard in the opening and carried almost straight throughout—except in an interlude where the melody becomes sparse and fanciful, followed by another stretch where it falls back to the pavane pattern, but is softer, less percussive, and more lyrical.

The performers are Zeynep Dilli, Yannick Joseph, Angela Small, Doug Eber and Josh Haas on alto/sopranino, alto, tenor, bass and great bass recorders respectively; Kara Welch on the harp; Iain Kierzewski and Lee Stearns on the bodhran; and Scott Luxenberg on the tambourine.

This particular piece was tailored for WMGSO's own Amanda Cavanagh, whose poetry inspired its creation. The song takes the perspective of a princess trapped in a tower, an old-fashioned trope rooted in storytelling. However, if set as a video-game, the person playing as the rescuer is fooled into significance by the narrative and painted as omnipotent by always having a checkpoint to restart at. All the while, the princess has lived this scenario numerous times across an endless maze of the same story. She sings in a mixture of disdain, frustration, and insanity. This song is a taunting reminder to the hero that their powers are a mere copy of her own.

The piece is performed by Amanda Cavanagh, accompanied by Thomas Ashcom on the piano, Elias Schwartzman on the violin, Dan Serino on the contrabass, Kara Welch on the harp, and Lee Stearns on the egg shaker.

**A Lesson in Simlish***The Sims 3 (2009)*

Darrell Brown

*Arr. Thomas Ashcom*

Learning a new language is challenging. And perhaps this musical "lesson" won't make Simlish, the gibberish language used in *The Sims* universe, much easier to understand.

The main theme for this piece is a song that might play when tuning into a kid's radio station in the game, suggesting that the music is easy to grasp by Sim children. The irony is that *The Sims* franchise is a real-life simulation. Players construct their own characters, called Sims, in great detail and can design their homes, families, and careers to the same degree of intricacy. This arrangement extrapolates on this child-like tune as if orchestrating a Sim's journey in life, which is infamously known to abruptly end in nonsensical and twisted ways back when the first installment of the game came out in the year 2000.

This piece is performed by the WMGSO summer choir, accompanied by Thomas Ashcom on the piano. Robb Saffell is conducting.

**Costa del Sol***Final Fantasy VII (1997)*

Nobuo Uematsu

*Arr. Dan Serino*

In hot pursuit of an old enemy and older friend who may be planning to bring about a massive calamity to destroy the life of the planet for unknown reasons, our not-so-merry band of ragtag—well, not heroes, but sort-of environmentalist activists—cross the ocean and land to the eastern shores of the next continent over. They hope to pick up the lead on their quarry in the port town.

Well ... beach town, as it happens. Sea, surf, sun, and all that. What a pity you can't really take a vacation in the world-saving business, because Costa del Sol

is a lovely, relaxed, and relaxing place. Its theme music is expertly constructed by Uematsu in the bossa nova style to make the player get into the groove. The arrangement deeply leans into this bossa nova influence, also adding a touch of samba—both musical styles originating in Brazil. The instrumentation in particular is heavily influenced by that found in the album “The Wave,” by Tom Jobim, the Brazilian composer and performer who has been considered “The Father of Bossa Nova.”

The performers of “Costa del Sol” are Lauren Barefoot, Kai Diaz, Sherwin Fong, Andrew Wang, Jess Yuen, and Cindy Zhang on violin; Aly Bittner, Claire Bradfuhrer, Danielle Daines, and Victor Ontiveros on viola; Alex Le Floch and Alex Son on cello; Benjamin Downey on triangle and vibraslap, Julius Verzosa on güiro, Scott Luxenberg on congas, Jess Bateman on tubano, Les Doerfler on shaker, Lee Stearns on drums, Isabel Martinez on upright bass, Dan Serino on guitar, and Cory Haley on cuíca; and the following soloists: Mary Beck on flute, Jamin Morden on horn, Josh Haas on trombone, and Zeynep Dilli on piano.

### **Vamo’alla Flamenco**

*Final Fantasy IX (2000)*

Nobuo Uematsu

*Arr. Dan Serino & Alex Son*

“La Folia” is an old tune, emerging in the 16th century and first published in the 17th century. Over the centuries, hundreds of composers, from Bach to Vangelis, have written variations on the tune, in all styles imaginable.

Square Enix, the publisher of *Final Fantasy IX*, intended the story and game to represent a return to the medieval fantasy roots of the first few games in the *Final Fantasy* series. Therefore, Nobuo Uematsu leans heavily on early music influences for the soundtrack, including by writing multiple “La Folia” variations. “Vamo’alla Flamenco,” which appears in a couple of minigames, is an upbeat version, with obvious Flamenco influences. This arrangement goes one step further in showcasing its medieval roots through the inclusion of a harpsichord or piano part.

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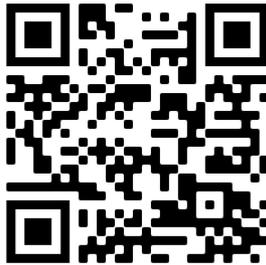




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