Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra

presents

Sunday, November 18, 2018, 4 p.m. **Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center** 7995 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910

> \$10 online wmgso.org/events











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 DC area.

Game music weaves a complex melodic thread through the traditions, shared memories, values, and mythos 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



is Nigel an experienced conductor, clinician, and composer, with a degree in band studies from the University of Sheffield, England, and a of Philosophy in Composition from the University of Leeds. Nigel has also directed the Rockville Brass Band since 2009.

Staff

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About Our Chorus Master



Jacob Coppage-Gross served as the conductor for the Gamer Symphony Orchestra at University of Maryland Cllege Park for two years and has performed in collaborations with the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, as well as at local churches and other groups in the area.

Board of Executives

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Those who give at the Diamond level (\$150 or more) earn an exclusive season poster, VIP Seating for two to our seasonal concerts for the next year, a special treble clef supporter pin, and have their names listed in our concert programs and on our website for one year.

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Oboe

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Kristi Engel

Clarinet

Mel Anton Angela Small

Bass Clarinet

Ashley Best Yannick Joseph Brennan McQuillen

Contrabass Clarinet

Douglas Eber

Alto Sax

Anna Trejo Joseph Wang

Tenor Sax

Greg Danis

Baritone Sax

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Douglas Eber* Kristi Engel Amelia Myers

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Lindsey Falbo George Marshall Jamin Morden Morgan Moscati

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Robert Garner‡ Richard Gray* Mira V. Rossberg

D Trumpet

Richard Gray

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Tuba

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John Burke Ben Downey Scott Luxenberg Nadine Markham-Itteilag Lee Stearns*

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Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar

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Alto Voice

Claire Hedgespeth Tegan Hendrickson Charlotte Johnson Nicole Pennington Michelle Sloan Christine Thomas Holly Wu* Soumya Yanamandra Ashleah Younker

Tenor Voice

Jacob Coppage-Gross†
Dante Hicks
Benton Green
Kevin Hencke
Kyle Jamolin
Jimyo Lin
Rainar Manteuffel
Anthony McMannis
Robb Saffell
Sheldon Zamora-Soon*

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Thomas Ashcom Christian Carlsson Marshall Finch Matthew Harker* Jeremy Hersh Tristan Kirkman Kevin Morris Michael Ohr Mark Shrout Benjamin Tousley Stephen Wiley

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Double Bass

Stephen Miskimins

Harr

Claire Bradfuhrer

** Concertmaster

* Section Leaders

† Chorus Master

START!

Jebediah's Theme and Fanfare

Kerbal Space Program (2015)

Felipe "HarvesteR" Falanghe *Arr. Iosh Haas*

The title theme to Kerbal Space Program is the first music every little green astronaut hears when he signs up to be launched into the great beyond. If he can keep the rocket's pointy end facing up, he'll go to space and follow in Jebediah Kerman's footsteps. He'll survive orbital flights, land on moons, and hear this music. If he's not so lucky, well, rocket science is hard, the ground is harder, and explosions are really cool.

Kerbal Space Program makes the challenges of rocket science and orbital mechanics into a sandbox game where your imagination runs wild, if you can figure out how to launch it there in the first place. Once you master the basics of orbit, you can land on the moon, drive your own Mars rover, or even fly a rocket-powered fist into the sun.

In the game, *Kerbal Space Program*'s title theme is heard in an orchestral setting. In this arrangement, the brass section introduces pieces of that theme in a soaring fanfare, before launching the theme into the entire orchestra.

Preservation

Howard Mostrom

Planetary Annihilation (2014)

Arr. William Capon

The real-time strategy game *Planetary Annihilation* is known for its ambitious scope. The game setting encompasses entire solar systems, and the single-player campaign targets galactic conquest. The full orchestral and choral soundtrack of this game, which was developed through crowdfunding, matches this scope.

This arrangement for "Preservation" continues the theme of scope by expanding the instrumentation of the original even further. From the start, the dark but confident mood of the piece is established with controlled, low-pitch, and soft-dynamic orchestration that gradually opens into a full, bright martial tone, exploring the complete soundscape range of the orchestra and chorus. The piece ends with the Latin words "For battle, we are confident" and, having come full circle, the same motif in the strings from the opening.

Formations

FEZ (2012)

Richard "Disasterpeace" Vreeland Arr. Thomas Kresge

FEZ, an independent puzzle-platform game, is based on a mind-bending gameplay element: In a flat world of only two dimensions, the main character, Gomez, can perceive three, thanks in part to a fez he receives from a wizened mentor. Gomez can rotate the landscape to look at the world from multiple viewpoints at once, solving puzzles and tracking down cube- and anti-cube fragments.

The heavily electronically scored soundtrack features wobbling and uncertain pitch elements, and "Formations" evokes the uncertainty of what our eyes (or ears) could show us at any given moment, as complete perspective changes follow one

after another.

At first, "Formations" conjures the image of floating in a vast, mutable space while instruments playing staccato imitate the sounds of nearly random drops from stalactites. Long, legato lines of instruments and vocals move, twist, and glide from one vantage point to the other. These aspects develop into a grand vision that never ends up where one would expect, even when the full orchestra is presenting a solid block of sound. Just like how new perspectives expand our worldview, as the arrangement progresses, our sense of what is possible broadens.

"Formations" features Zeynep Dilli as our vocal soloist.

The Power of One

Pokémon: The Movie 2000 (2000)

John Loeffler & Ralph Schuckett *Arr. Katie Noble*

"The Power of One" is a myth brought to life. The lone flute carries the ancient song of the Great Guardian, mimicking the creature's cries in his desperate bid to restore harmony to the warring Titans. The song grows in strength with the help of the string section, augmented by the triumphant heralding of the horns and trumpets, as the Guardian finds his strength in the fulfilling of the Chosen One's destiny. Together, the Great Guardian and the Chosen One undo that which was erringly done, putting to rest the Titans and returning balance to the world.

Finally, as the music falls away sound by sound, the Great Guardian returns to his slumber.

Songs of Zavazsil

Tarn Adams & Josh Haas

Dwarf Fortress (2006)

Arr. Josh Haas

In its current form, the soundtrack of Dwarf Fortress is a couple of solo guitar tunes recorded by the developer. However, everything in Dwarf Fortress is procedurally generated, from the world itself all the way down to the musical instruments and scales. Songs of Zavazsil is an exploration of these unique musical creations—described by the game but never heard. This suite uses languages from the game, rhythms that are difficult to listen to, and scales alien to Western musical tradition. The following descriptions are adapted from descriptions of songs that the game procedurally generated when creating a new world: Zavazsil.

Prelude

Originally by Tarn Adams, Prelude is a simple guitar theme that accompanies world creation in Dwarf Fortress.



WMGSO's Twitch Stream Raises \$1,000 for Charity

As part of Extra-Life 2018, WMGSO streamed video games to raise money for Washington, DC's National Children's Hospital. Congratulations to the WMGSO Twitch team, which raised \$1,000 in 22 hours!

For fundraiser highlights and more, visit twitch.tv/wmgso

We See Ways

"We See Ways" is a lament about the futility of war. Its lyrics are taken from the dwarven poem "Toads and Nothing More." Its musical characteristics follow the form called The Sable Silkiness. The first two verses of this song use the dwarven *kulet* mode to create a feeling of hopelessness. The final verse, in contrast, uses the *öntak* mode to evoke the sound of fate itself while apologizing for the conflict created in the first verses. All three verses use a contrasting pair of rhythmic patterns. The ever-changing relationship between the two rhythms creates tension and irregularity across the entire song.

The Tulips of Rhyme/Dimshasdèg óboth

This popular dwarven drinking tune features improvised lyrics and a stomping backbeat rhythm called *onaf*, commonly accompanied with *Dimshasdèg óboth*, a tavern dance. The orchestration features a solo viola in place of the dwarven *bikdá* and bass clarinet in place of the dwarven themsol. Our vocal soloists are Sheldon Zamora-Soon and Robb Saffell, and Claire Bradfuhrer is our viola soloist.

The Sands Mourn

This movement is written in the elven Tress of Chants style. It memorializes the destruction of a forest retreat and features organic irregular rhythms in complex meters. After a simple cello introduction, a solo voice cries out a theme—"Mina Idala"—Forest Glen! This theme swells, and the rest of the strings and choir join in. As the first theme becomes tense, the choir begins a tearful refrain—"Polefa Alethi"—The Sands Mourn.

The solo voice introduces the second theme, which the strings and choir pass back and forth in a playful dance as the song grows ever stronger. Elements of the first theme join in, until both the first and second themes join in a final synthesis. This, too, comes to a tense end as the choir repeats the refrain—"Polefa Alethi!" The refrain swells as one, then is silenced voice by voice until nothing remains.

Our featured vocal soloists are Jasmine Marcelo (soprano), Ashleah Younker (alto), Sheldon Zamora-Soon (tenor), and Tristan Kirkman (bass).

Interlude

This guitar melody by Tarn Adams is the heart of the Dwarf Fortress soundtrack.



Go to www.wmgso.org/join to schedule a tryout!

Destruction and the Birds

This movement features an expanded percussion section playing goblin rhythms in a repeating cadence. Each rendition of the rhythm is angrier, until the entire orchestra explodes in a vicious war cry. Then, the contrabass clarinet takes the lead with a monstrous delivery of the same melody in the *usmdas* rhythmic theme originally played by a goblin's instrument in the *odu* pentatonic scale. This theme creeps around the woodwind section before the percussion section returns with goblin rhythms as the marauding goblin army prepares for battle.

The Feed and Silk

This dwarven Droplet of Meadows-style war song depicts the events of the first battle of *îton Shasad*. It begins with a tense fragment of a theme heard earlier in "We See Ways." The soaring main theme is introduced in the dwarven *öntak* mode by the horn section, before expanding and aggressively fragmenting into the entire orchestra.

A melodic passage in the inquisitive *nel* mode occurs next. Listen for the muted sound of the horn's hand-stop, shared with the dwarven *datlad* horn that initially introduced the theme. The *datlad* theme relaxes into a series of sleepy, drunken, and fantastic variations in the dwarven *biban* mode. These variations are built on a traditional combination of two rhythms, known together as *okag*.

Underneath these sleepy variations, the bass clarinet enters with the goblin theme from "Destruction and the Birds." The goblin intruders trip the alarm and send the entire orchestra into a frenzy. The variations accelerate as the dwarves organize in defense. Finally, the battle itself begins with a rousing recapitulation of the main theme, clashing with the goblins' war song. When the fight comes to a heroic conclusion, we close with a reminder of the original Dwarf Fortress theme.

PAUSE

This performance of Songs of Zavazsil is a world premiere!

For extended program notes and the story behind the journey through the world of Zavazsil that inspired this original composition, scan the code on the right or go to: wmgso.org/fall-2018-zavazsil-notes



Are you enjoying the show so far?

Yes. Of course!

Intermission is the perfect time to drop off your feedback form or make a donation at WMGSO's booth in the lobby!

Level 2 - START!

Then Were Created the Gods in the Midst of Heaven $Abz\hat{u}$ (2016)

Austin Wintory

Arr. Robb Saffell

"Then Were Created the Gods..." is the final track of the original soundtrack for $Abz\hat{u}$. Austin Wintory, the acclaimed composer for *Journey*, composed the music for this game in which the player dives into gorgeous underwater landscapes that straddle realism and fantasy. Each track name on the soundtrack is an English translation of lines from the first tablet of the Enûma Eliš, a Babylonian creation myth. The first line of the tablet: "In the beginning, nothing whatever existed except APSÛ, a boundless, confused and disordered mass of watery matter; how it came into being is unknown."

The lyrics are a modified version of the entire first tablet, focusing on the water themes. The choir sings in Babylonian: "When in the height heaven was not named, and the earth beneath did not yet bear a name; great $Abz\hat{u}$, who begat them, and Chaos, the mother of them both—their waters were mingled together; and none bore a name, and no destinies were ordained, then were created the gods in the midst of heaven." The singers then invoke e and a, different forms of water, and kua, a fish-symbol, representing the emergence of life. The nameless chaos has been given a name, has settled. Creation abides.



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Rat Race

Марру (1983)

Nobuyuki Ohnogi Arr. Thomas Ashcom

Mappy is a side-scrolling arcade game first released in 1983. Players control the eponymous character Mappy, a policeman mouse, who must bounce across the lairs of the cat burglars, recovering stolen items while the cats give chase. Only two songs loop through the whole game: one for the main levels and one for the bonus levels. "Rat Race" variates and expands on these two themes in an A-B-A structure.

The playful main level theme is sandwiched around a leisurely slowdown of the bonus level theme that in the game was as fast and peppy as the main level music. This arrangement on solo piano may evoke old ragtime music, but notes that sound "wrong" and sudden tonic changes are purposefully written in to demonstrate how a relatively simple melody can become harmonically complex.

Songs of Hyrule – II. Songs of Courage: The People of Hyrule *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (1998)*

Koji Kondo Arr. Andrew Nixon

"Songs of Hyrule" is an epic journey through the music of *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time.* The second of five suites, "Songs of Courage: The People of Hyrule," explores the three sacred virtues of Courage, Wisdom, and Power.

According to Hyrulean lore, upon completing the creation of the world, the three Golden Goddesses created the Triforce, a sacred artifact consisting of three pieces, each bearing the essence of one of the goddesses and manifesting one of the three sacred virtues. The hero Link, the titular Princess Zelda, and the villain Ganondorf are sometimes said to be recurring reincarnations of ancient spirits embodying Courage, Wisdom, and Power, respectively. In *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, they are the bearers of the respective pieces of the Triforce.

Link, more often than not, comes from humble origins—the nephew of a soldier, the grandson of a blacksmith, a farmboy, an orphan—and has his destiny thrust upon him. Throughout his adventure, he meets a variety of other ordinary people merely trying to live their lives while monsters are roaming about and evil is descending upon the land. Link helps these people with their troubles, and in turn they help him on his journey, despite often being met with retribution by Ganondorf and his forces.

"Songs of Courage: The People of Hyrule" is a collection of music from the towns in *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, celebrating the courage of everyday people to do what is right in difficult times.

WMGSO Cover Art by GENNA DUBERSTEIN

video • graphic design • multimedia skill tutoring www.gennaduberstein.com



God Only Knows

Bioshock Infinite (2013)

The Beach Boys Arr. Sasquatch and Laserdiscs

Bioshock Infinite takes place in an alternate timeline from our world, where in 1893, at the World's Fair: Columbian Exposition, the flying city of Columbia is launched. This steampunk city—suspended by blimps, balloons, propellers, and futuristic technology—soon secedes from the United States. By the time the game takes place in 1912, Columbia is an independent theocratic city-state.

Columbia features influences from multiple universes and timelines, including futuristic weapons, technology, and of course, music. Stroll the streets of this floating city, and you might notice eerily familiar tunes—but adapted to appeal to the audience of Columbia. One such adaptation is of the 1966 Beach Boys hit "God Only Knows," but instead performed by a barbershop quartet.

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

This arrangement by Sasquatch and Laserdiscs (sasquatchandlaserdiscs. tumblr.com) features Sheldon Zamora-Soon (Tenor), Matt Harker (Lead), Tristan Kirkman (Baritone), and Kevin Morris (Bass).



Gusty Garden Galaxy

Super Mario Galaxy (2007)

Mahito Yokota Arr. Rob Garner

Super Mario Galaxy has a familiar setup: Bowser has captured Princess Peach, and Mario must rescue her. On this adventure, Mario travels to different worlds ("galaxies," in the parlance of the game) for stars to power his own spaceship, thwart Bowser's plan to conquer the universe, and save the princess.

Super Mario Galaxy is the first title in Nintendo's long-running signature franchise to feature music recorded by a live orchestra. As the piece's title implies, "Gusty Garden Galaxy" is the soundtrack for a section of the game where wind strongly influences the gameplay. Mario must soar aboard gigantic dandelion puffballs to navigate floating islands. This arrangement follows the whimsical and airy feel of Mario's adventure through this world, while retaining the light Latin flavor of the original soundtrack.

Luigi's Mansion Main Theme

Luigi's Mansion (2001)

Shinobu Tanaka & Kazumi Totaka

Arr. Lee Stearns

Luigi has won a mansion in a contest that he ... did not enter. He excitedly calls Mario to celebrate, but when he arrives at the mansion, his brother has vanished, and the place is filled with ghosts. With the help of paranormal professor E. Gadd, a ghost-sucking vacuum cleaner, and his trusty flashlight, Luigi must steady his nerves, explore the mansion, and, for once, rescue his brother.

The music of Luigi's Mansion captures the creepy and playful aspects of the game, embracing dissonance and a minor key along with some unusual instrumentation. In the game, Luigi's voice carries the primary melody as he nervously hums with the spooky bass and synthesizer music while exploring the mansion. This orchestrated version expands on this base, including several variations on the melody as Luigi explores the mansion, steadily building momentum and volume until the climactic battle with King Boo—before eerily fading away at the end.

...don't look behind you.

GAME OVER?



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