

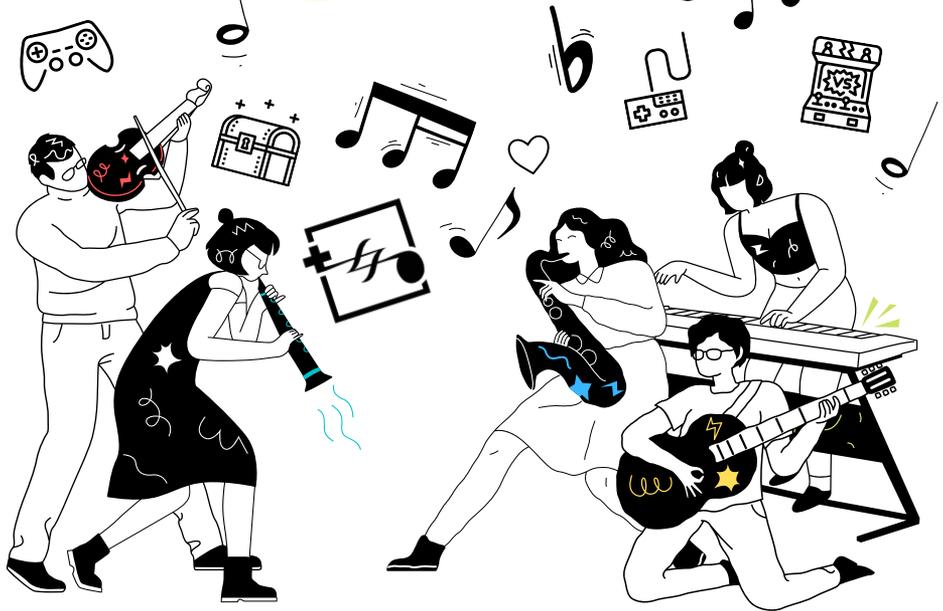
THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN GAMER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

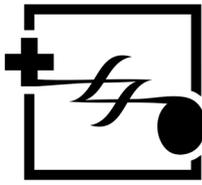
A VIDEO GAME RECITAL

FEBRUARY 3,
2023

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENTS
BASED ON CLASSIC
VIDEO GAME
SOUNDTRACKS

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& STREAMING





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.

About Our Choir Director



Anthony Khong is an active musician, educator, and arts administrator and is native to the D.C. area. Prior to his work in community choirs, he served as a chorus teacher in Fairfax County. Anthony holds a master's in Arts Management from George Mason University, and a bachelor's in Music Education from James Madison University, where he studied voice and clarinet.

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Those who give at the Diamond level (\$200 or more) receive VIP Seating for two for our seasonal concerts for the next year, a supporter pin, and their names listed in our website, concert programs, and video credits for one year.

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Kevin Barefoot
Colleen Benner
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Maria Koelbel
Gregory Lord

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Amy Moffit
Kevin Murphy
Waldemar Ortiz
Anne M. Porter
Jacqueline Ryan
Sunny
Sally Taber
Cambria Van de Vaarst

Jackie Vandewater
Laurie Vazquez
Lori Wicks
Wayne Wiley
James Wissman
Alice Wright
Holly Wu
Elizabeth Young

Performer Bios

Alexander Le Floch has been infatuated with video game music since getting a cello and a Game Boy at age six. He went on to obtain a bachelor's in Music focusing on cello from Allegheny College, where he began his interest in violin making. He is currently an apprentice violin maker and leads the cello section in WMGSO. His favorite video game music is the soundtrack to *Runescape*.



Angela Small was a Development Director for WMGSO and has been performing with us since 2018. Angela can be seen playing clarinet in the orchestra during the season.

Twitch Team

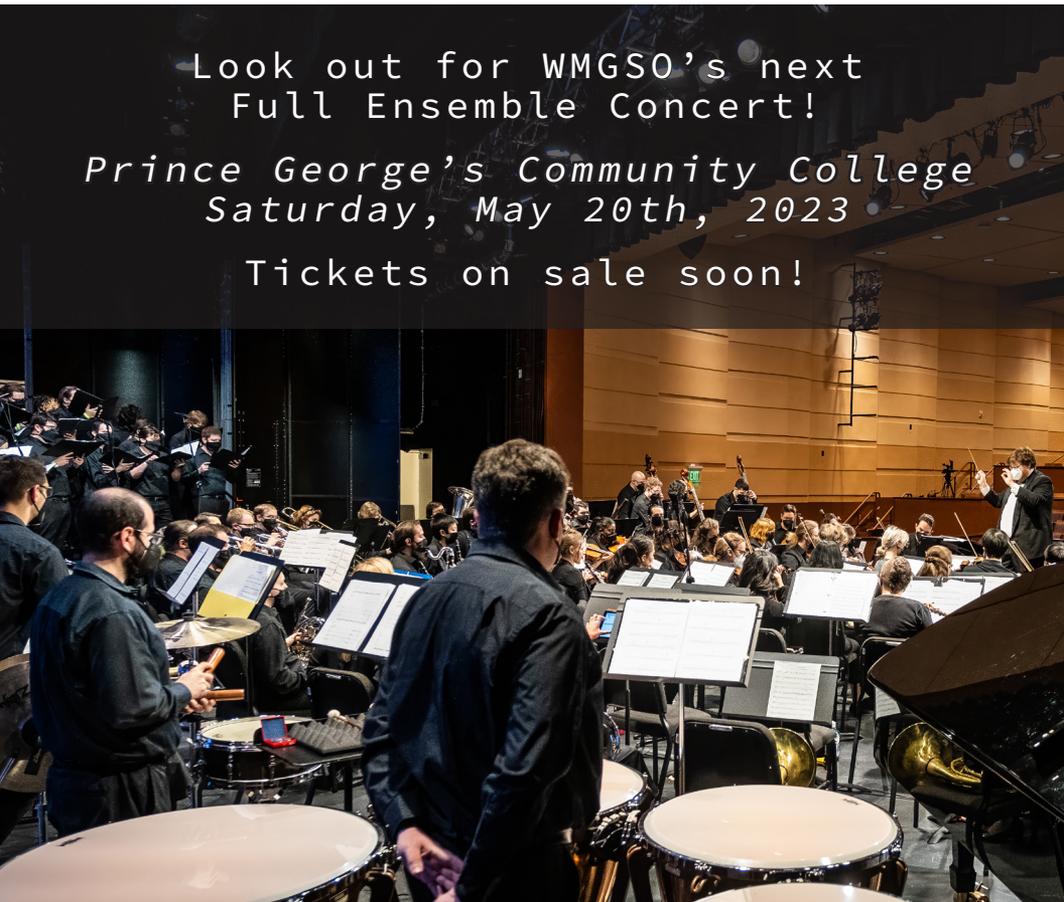
Jarel Jones, Twitch Lead
Darian Price
David Werner

Fabio Moreira
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START!

Clockwork in the Evergreen

Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse (1989)

Konami Kukeiha Club

Arr. Alex Son

It's over; you've destroyed all three forms of Dracula (including the version where he's three times your height, summons constantly moving platforms, and fires relentless projectiles), all the while desperately moving a sluggish, arthritic Trevor Belmont to just the right spot to get a few attacks in without getting hit. The castle falls, the screen turns black, and something unexpected starts to play: a somber, bittersweet, and harmonious tune exemplifying not so much one of great victory but one of resolution and relief.

"Clockwork in the Evergreen" is an amalgam of two songs in *Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse*. The main body of the arrangement features "Evergreen," the beautiful ending theme that plays once Dracula is defeated. The piece is further supplemented with parts of "Clockwork" from the clocktower level in the game, before returning back to "Evergreen" to finish off in a ternary form.

This arrangement features two cellos (Alexander Le Floch and Ben Cho) and two double basses (Dan Serino and Isabel Martinez), exemplifying the somberness of the deeper tones and the low range of these instruments.

Legendary Hero

The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (2002)

Kenta Nagata, Hajime Wakai, Toru Minegishi & Koji Kondo

Arr. Alex Son

Stories evolve through the retellings of tales from one person to another, oftentimes taking on a life of their own. If spread enough times to enough people, that story may eventually become a legend. "Legendary Hero" is featured in the opening cutscene of *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* and musically encompasses the story of the long lost land of Hyrule and its usurping by the villain Ganon, rescue by the Hero of Time, and precipitous fall after Ganon's return.

This arrangement is performed with four cellos (Alex Son, Sandy Chilson, Ben Cho, and Alexander Le Floch), with each performer at times leading an integral piece of that story which, when played together, retells the legend.

**The following pieces are performed by a woodwind quintet:
Jess Bateman (flute), Jenn Ganss (oboe), Ben Ryer (clarinet),
Jamin Morden (French horn), and Doug Eber (bassoon).**

Green Greens

Kirby's Dream Land (1992)

Jun Ishikawa

Arr. Jamin Morden

Ever since *Kirby's Dream Land*, "Green Greens" has served as the "first level" theme for several *Kirby* games. Bouncy, upbeat, and endlessly catchy, the tune is presented first in the flute and then passed around to other players. Midway through, the group has an excursion into 7/8 time signature, giving it an off-kilter kind of feel, but this quickly resolves back to a more sensible 4/4. The bassoon guides the quintet through the final melody, and the arrangement ends with the group unable to quite agree which note is the last one.

City Trial

Kirby Air Ride (2003)

Jun Ishikawa

Arr. Jess Bateman

City Trial is one of the three game modes in *Kirby Air Ride*. This arrangement of the background music for the City Trial mode is almost a transcription of the original game music. This fun and flashy piece lays perfectly for woodwind quintet because there are five parts that match up to the ranges of the instruments.

Zelda's Lullaby

The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past (1991)

Koji Kondo

Arr. Jamin Morden

"Zelda's Lullaby" has become a staple in the *Zelda* series after first appearing in *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*. The tune carefully dances around dissonances that in another context would be jarring or grating. Koji Kondo's excellent treatment of this material instead renders it sweet and nostalgic.

This arrangement, adapted from the full orchestra version, features a middle section where different segments of the song play over themselves as accompaniment to new material. At the end, the original setting returns with full chords to send us out on a peaceful, contemplative note.

Creative Exercise

Mario Paint (1992)

Kazumi Totaka & Dmitri Shostakovich

Arr. Dan Serino

Before there was Microsoft Paint, there was *Mario Paint*. *Mario Paint* for the SNES was played with a mouse and mousepad and featured gameplay where you can free-paint on a blank easel, compose songs using sound effects, and swat at gnats. The music was composed by an early-career Kazumi Totaka, who later went on to compose some of Nintendo's most beloved soundtracks, including those for *Animal Crossing*, the Wii, and *Luigi's Mansion*.

This arrangement of “Creative Exercise” contains a nod to Dmitri Shostakovich’s arrangement of “Tea For Two,” which playfully sets the mood for the transition to polka.

Spring Yard Zone

Sonic the Hedgehog (1991)

Masato Nakamura

Arr. Jamin Morden

The original *Sonic the Hedgehog* boasts some amazing music, and “Spring Yard Zone” is just one example. Funky, driving, and memorable, the piece uses rhythmic and melodic tropes from more modern genres to give it a distinct feel.

In this arrangement, players improvise over chord changes and partake in a quintet-wide solo that features all the members of the group at once.

The following piceces are performed by a jam band:

**Alex Son (cello), Jamin Morden (French horn), Adam Zerance (trumpet),
Zeynep Dilli (piano), Cindy Zhang (violin), and Dan Serino (double bass)**

Aquatic Ambience

Donkey Kong Country (1994)

David Wise

Arr. Jer Roque

Donkey Kong Country is one of the more widely known side-scrolling *Donkey Kong* games in the series. It’s also a platforming game where you’re tasked with collecting bananas that were stolen from you. Donkey Kong’s nephew is in tow, and together they go up against King K. Rool and his crocodile baddies. While not traditional for the series, “Aquatic Ambience” is the water level for this game. Rather than give the stressful experience that we know from most water levels, this piece reminds us of the tranquility of the ocean.

Snowman

EarthBound (1994)

Hirakazu Tanaka

Arr. AarekMG

In *EarthBound*, you start the game as a child named Ness who investigates weird happenings around his home. When zombies trap Ness and his friend Paula in a pit, Paula uses her psychic abilities to contact a stranger named Jeff, who is asleep at a boarding school in another country altogether. “Snowman” plays during the cutscene as Paula begs for Jeff’s aid.

After the cutscene, you play as Jeff, escape the boarding school, and head south to save the friends you have yet to meet, knowing you are their “one and only hope.”

Corridors of Time

Chrono Trigger (1995)

Yasunori Mitsuda

Arr. Jer Roque

The Kingdom of Zeal is a land of floating islands in the sky. There is deep magic in this beautiful land, in its places and people, but...maybe too much of it. Maybe the idyll is too idyllic.

The background theme for Zeal, “Corridors of Time,” bears this duality perfectly. It opens with the ticking-clock motif that appears repeatedly through the game, but the beats are doubled and a little off-tune; the melody is lilting and calm, but it changes direction unexpectedly in a couple of places, not letting the listener fully settle into a sense of security.

**The following pieces are performed by a string quintet:
Cindy Zhang (violin), Chris “CTL” Lee (violin), Alex Son (cello),
Alexander Le Floch (cello), and Dan Serino (double bass).**

Space Junk Galaxy

Super Mario Galaxy (2007)

Koji Kondo

Arr. Cindy Zhang

The original music for “Space Junk Galaxy” is anything but junk. While you jump, float, and fly through debris spread across the vast emptiness of space, a piano using the sustain pedal is punctuated by synth to mimic twinkling stars.

This arrangement offers a strings’ take on illustrating space through sound, with the double bass’ low drone replacing the piano’s echoing sustain pedal and violin harmonics representing the synth star twinkles. The arrangement’s key of G major is also a nod to the Prelude of the first Bach cello suite.

Once in a Lullaby

Risk of Rain 2 (2020)

Chris Christodoulou

Arr. Alex Son

“Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high; There’s a land that I heard of once in a lullaby...”

“Once in a Lullaby” is featured in *Risk of Rain 2* as a part of the DLC expansion *Survivors of the Void*, in which you play as a survivor (or group of survivors) trying to find the UES: Contact Light as you traverse teleporters across the planet. This arrangement is performed by five such survivors as they travel through the void of his arrangement.

The piece presents a deep underlying bassline along with a tune that is repeated and shared by the various instruments. Following a tranquil interlude, the second half of the arrangement shifts from 4/4 to 7/4 (much to the chagrin of the survivors) and continuously builds the theme to an anthem-like climax, before ending in a peaceful trance back into the void from which it came.

On The Other Side
Chrono Trigger (1995)

Yasunori Mitsuda
Arr. Anne Marie Porter

“On the Other Side” is a rendition of “Chrono and Marle - A Distant Promise” and “Epilogue - To Good Friends” from the *Chrono Trigger* soundtrack, with added lyrics written by Laura Shighihara. The song tenderly conveys the bittersweetness of partings and the hope of meeting again someday.

Anne Marie Porter is the soprano soloist.

PAUSE

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Level 2 – START!

The following pieces are performed by Alexander Le Floch on the cello and accompanied by Angela Small on the piano.

Rainbow Castle
Mario Party (1998)

Yasunori Mitsuda
Arr. Marcos Garcia

A castle in the skies full of rainbows—this piece describes living and exploring a dreamy castle while you get anxiety over if you are going to get Toad or Bowser at the end of the Road. The piece couldn't care less about your troubles as it glides along like the clouds in the sky.

The composer Yasunori Mitsuda is famed for *Chrono Trigger* and *Xenogears*, but not many people know he composed the soundtrack to the first *Mario Party* as well. As the cello and piano play the main themes and improvise on them, the piece reminds you to just relax and have fun. And don't rage too much if you get Bowser; he obviously loves the Castle as well!

Near the Border
Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War (2006)

Keiki Kobayashi
Arr. David Crisler

The soundtrack for *Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War* draws heavy inspiration from Spanish music, frequently using Spanish guitars and Spanish-inspired rhythms to add excitement to the game's dogfights.

"Near the Border," the game's credits music, is no exception, written originally for guitars, castanets, and a vocal soloist. The game's bittersweet ending causes the track to take on a more melancholic, contemplative tone. Despite this, the 3-against-2 rhythmic friction and occasional outbursts in the music serve as a constant reminder of the tension lying just below the surface of the game's conclusion.

Brilliant & Shining Lake
Pokémon Diamond & Pearl (2006)

Go Ichinose
Arr. David Crisler

The "Lake Theme" from *Pokémon Diamond and Pearl* is perhaps most notable for the striking metric shift that appears near the end of its 70-second loop. More subtly, the track embodies the ebb and flow of water in its constant build and release of tension. Taking naming inspiration from the Diamond and Pearl remakes, "Brilliant and Shining Lake" remakes the "Lake Theme," reusing its compositional tricks to create a larger work that is entirely an extension of the original.

Unova Story

Pokémon Black & White (2010)

Junichi Masuda, Go Ichinose, Shota Kageyama,

Minako Adachi, Mark Summer & Billy Preston

Arr. Dan Serino

The setting of *Pokémon Black and White* is the Unova Region, which was inspired by the New York City metropolitan area. “Unova Story” combines the upbeat and carefree theme of Accumula Town with the bustling but nostalgic tune of Skyarrow Bridge in a tribute to Mark Summer’s virtuoso cello solo, “Julie-O.” This piece features many cello extended effects, including percussive pizzicato and chords.

White Palace

Hollow Knight (2017)

Christopher Larkin

Arr. Alex Son

Many of the themes of *Hollow Knight* are told through the dreams of the game’s denizens in the forms of hopes, ambitions, history, and ultimately, regrets. This mournful remembrance of “what once was” is most poignant at the White Palace, a part of the dream realm buried deep within the decaying ruins of Hallownest. The White Palace reflects a kingdom of former splendor and magnificence, but shrouded with the mystery and desperation of its leader, the Pale King.

This arrangement of the White Palace theme reflects on the mournful mood of that kingdom, filled with moving desperation of the piano and overlaid with the somber theme played by the cello.

Cello Gear Solid

Metal Gear Solid (1998), *Metal Gear Solid 2* (2001) &
Metal Gear Solid 3 (2004)

Tappi Iwase & Harry Gregson-Williams

Arr. Cindy Zhang

The *Metal Gear Solid* (MGS) franchise is legendary developer Hideo Kojima’s overwrought love letter to Hollywood spy action thrillers. “Cello Gear Solid” showcases the cello as the thriller protagonist, accompanied by the piano’s fast-moving, frenetic energy. The arrangement opens with a mournful version of *MGS 2*’s theme before transitioning into the fast-paced *MGS 1* theme. Careful listeners may hear hints of *MGS 3*’s “Snake Eater” creep in towards the end.

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