



THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN
GAMER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PRESENTS

A VIDEO GAME RECITAL



SATURDAY, JULY 15TH, 7:00PM



HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH;
3022 WOODLAWN AVE, FALLS CHURCH, VA 22042



MetroGSO



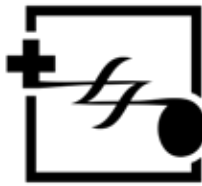
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WMGSO



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, digital season art wallpapers, and their names listed in our website, concert programs, and video credits for one year.

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Michael Ikeda

Michael Kierzewski
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The Marinelli's
Jessica Metcalf-Burton
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Jeanie Arnold
Max Buenaventura
Meredith ChenLu
Sarah Elkins
Dustin Ewry
Sherwin Fong
Thomas Frank
Marcos Garcia
Michael H. & Jen O.

Gregory Lord
Scott & Mary McNees
Rob Metzger
Michael Michalik
Kevin Murphy
Waldemar Ortiz
Anne M. Porter
DA Rice
Jacqueline Ryan

Jaden Sims
Sally Taber
Joshua Turner
Seth Whitsitt
Wayne Wiley
James Wissman
Alice Wright
Holly Wu
Elizabeth Young

Section Leader Bios

Douglas Eber

Bassoon

Douglas has been playing with WMGSO for almost eight years, serving as the woodwind section leader for four. He previously studied Bassoon Performance at the University of Maryland, where he first became interested in playing and arranging video game music with their gamer symphony orchestra back in 2011. Douglas loves the music of *The Legend of Zelda*, as his first video game was *Link's Awakening* on his purple Gameboy Color. He can also be found expounding on his love for the music of *Final Fantasy XIV*.

Adam Zerance

Trumpet

Adam joined WMGSO in 2019 and is the brass section leader. He spent the majority of his musical career playing in jazz bands and joined WMGSO because the orchestra was always playing something new. At his day job, he repairs brass and woodwind instruments. Favorite video game soundtracks include *Grim Fandango*, *Cuphead*, and *Contrast*. Favorite games to play include *Thief*, *Ori and the Blind Forest*, *Fallout*, and *Fallout 2*.

Lee Stearns

Drums/Percussion

Lee has played percussion all his life and has been a member of WMGSO since it was first formed in 2013. He led the orchestra's rhythm section from 2014–2022, and today he is filling in for the current rhythm section leader, Scott Luxenberg. Lee is WMGSO's IT Director, as well as one of our video editors and arrangers. WMGSO has performed his arrangements of pieces from some of his favorite video game soundtracks, including *Super Mario RPG*, *Donkey Kong Country*, *Luigi's Mansion*, and *Day of the Tentacle*.

Thomas Ashcom

Piano

Thomas joined WMGSO in 2018 as a choir member, then migrated into the position of choir accompanist after the pandemic. He has casually played keyboard and sung since childhood, but didn't have any formal instruction until studying at Montgomery College. His greatest passions lie with writing music, and WMGSO has been an incredible resource with openness for arrangements. *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* was one of Thomas' earliest inspirations for pursuing music, but he tends to instantly enjoy video games and soundtracks with childlike whimsy, which is to say almost all Nintendo series.

Isabella Umberger

Soprano Vocalist

Isabella just completed her first season with WMGSO and is excited to serve as the recently appointed soprano section leader. A lifelong musician, she earned her BA in Vocal Performance from University of Maryland, Baltimore County in 2019 where she took a keen interest in small ensemble work and choral conducting. She performs professionally in the DC area in both singer and conductor capacities and volunteers as a producer for the Shakespeare Opera Theatre. She was introduced to gaming at a very young age by close family members, but didn't develop a real interest in gaming music until she played *Kingdom Hearts* in 2002. Today, her favorite games include *Dragon Age*, *Civilization*, and *The Sims*.

Amanda Cavanagh

Ensemble Manager/Soprano Vocalist

Amanda is the Ensemble Manager of WMGSO. She joined in 2016 as a choir member and volunteers at many events. When she isn't answering emails or planning music opportunities, she volunteers with MAGFest year round. Her favorite game series is *The Legend of Zelda*, so much so that she named her cat Zelda.

Robb Saffell

Alto Vocalist

Robb joined WMGSO in 2017 after three years volunteering as a front-of-house assistant during our concerts. He is a lifelong singer, multi-instrumentalist, director, overtone singing clinician, and composer—as well as WMGSO's alto section leader. In addition to this evening's music, some of his favorite video game soundtracks include *Hades*, *Fire Emblem*, *Sea of Solitude*, *.hack*, *Starbound*, and *Forbidden Siren*.

Kyle G. Jamolin

Tenor Vocalist

Kyle joined WMGSO in 2015 as a tenor vocalist. Although Kyle has been playing piano for much longer, he's very much settled as a singer these days and is WMGSO's tenor section leader. He has sung in various church and community groups on and off since 6th grade and has had experience with a wide variety of choral repertoire. Notably, one of those groups was the University of Maryland Gamer Symphony Orchestra, for which he served as choral director from 2012 to 2014. When not doing dailies for *Final Fantasy XIV* and *For Honor*, Kyle enjoys listening to the soundtracks of the *Soul Series* fighting games.

Tristan Kirkman

Bass Vocalist

Tristan has sung in choirs for much of his life and joined WMGSO in 2018 as a bass vocalist shortly after moving to the DC area. He is now the bass section's section leader. His favorite video game genres include turn-based strategy games and combat-centered role playing games, with the *Dark Souls* series being his long-time favorite.

Cindy Zhang

Violin/Concertmaster

Cindy joined WMGSO as a guest during its virtual season before becoming concertmaster in the fall of 2021. She has been playing violin for almost two decades, performs on Twitch under the Chundy Chang alias, and is a member of the DC Concert Orchestra. When not sinking time into *Old School RuneScape*, Cindy's favorite games include *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, *Animal Crossing*, *Civilization V*, and *Civilization VI*.

Keep an eye on WMGSO's YouTube channel for the latest in our professionally recorded video game music!

www.youtube.com/wmgso



Chris “CTL” Lee

Violin

CTL was a part of WMGSO's founding group but left for school before the first season and officially joined after the pandemic. While not officially a section leader, he leads the second violin section and will play second violin in this recital. He is notorious for arranging pieces with an absurdly large number of sharps and other challenges, to the point where it is a running gag, but he doesn't just like to challenge other people for fun—he is internet-famous for being able to play *DDR* and violin at the same time.

Elias Schwartzman

Viola

Elias has been playing violin for three decades and viola for two. He currently performs and teaches string instruments professionally. Recruited via Twitch during the 2021 spring virtual season as a guest performer and editor, Elias moved back to the DC area after eight years in California in no small part due to the vibrant community of WMGSO. He joined as a member in the 2022 spring season and now leads the viola section. *The Legend of Zelda* is his favorite franchise, but his love of video game music is rather indiscriminate. Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.

Alexander Le Floch

Cello

Alexander has been playing with WMGSO since 2021, serving as the cello section leader. He also serves as the orchestra's instrument obsessive and can usually be found during breaks inspecting the string section for damage and wear. This is Alexander's last performance with WMGSO, as he will be attending the Chicago School of Violin Making in the fall. Alex's love of video game music came from learning *RuneScape* songs on cello in elementary school, and his current favorites include *Journey*, *Genshin Impact*, *The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom*, and anything with unusual instrumentation.

Dan Serino

Double Bass/Guitar

Dan joined WMGSO in 2019 as a double bassist. Dan has been playing the double bass since 5th grade, when his orchestra teacher made the instrument choice based on his height. Since then, Dan has been involved in various community orchestras, musical theater pits, and jazz bands and now is the double bass section leader. Dan's favorite video game and soundtrack is *Earthbound/Mother 2*, but is generally a fan of all Nintendo music (especially *Mario Kart*).

START!

The Journey Home

Ace Combat 5 (2004)

Keiki Kobayashi

Arranger: David Crisler

The melody for “The Journey Home” appears a few times in the campaign of *Ace Combat 5*. Heard first by singing protestors opposing the counter-invasion of a rival nation, the melody comes up twice more later in the campaign as the player and their allies rally pilots from both sides to stop the conspirators who instigated the war. As this plot synopsis might suggest, “The Journey Home” is a beautiful ballad that perfectly rides the line of cheesiness and sincerity.

Tear it Down

Where the Water Tastes Like Wine (2018)

Ryan Ike and Akenya

Arranger: Angela Small

In *Where the Water Tastes Like Wine*, the Wanderer, after losing a poker game with the Dire Wolf, must hitchhike through Depression-era America collecting stories and then trading them for truths. The questions the player asks and actions taken while listening drastically affect the mood and topic of the story, represented by tarot cards. With the focus of a story changing from freedom to bondage or love to righteous anger with a single player choice, the game speaks to the limitations of hearing a single perspective.

“Tear it Down” tells the story of a black preacher overcoming systemic oppression in the 1930s. This gospel-influenced blues travels through the liminal space between hardship and hope while maintaining its resolve and perseverance. Musically, this journey translates to increasingly impressive vocal blues riffs against a heartbeat pulse in the drums.

Reading off of a minimalistic lead sheet, the musicians you hear tonight are forced to make their own choices in diction, improvisations, and blues embellishments.

What kind of story do you hear?

Becalmed

Sea of Thieves (2018)

Freya Catherine

Arranger: Angela Small

This moving ballad, originally an instrumental sea shanty duet for hurdy gurdy and concertina, draws our attention to a future where we can reap the treasures of our hard work and the “sinking ships” of the present are far behind us. Dressed up as an arietta with fanfare descant, this arrangement conveys the fearlessness required to sail against the crosswinds of change and serves as a distraction from the game’s notoriously brutal Player Versus Player (PVP) combat.

The Pikmin: Six Characteristic Pieces from Pikmin 2

Pikmin 2 (2004)

Hajime Wakai & Kazumi Totaka

Arranger: David Crisler

Fitting for an entry in one of Nintendo's quirkiest franchises, *Pikmin 2* has an unusual soundtrack featuring randomly generated melodies and musical tracks that respond to the actions of the player and the world around them. The result is music that can seem ambient, but only because it so accurately reflects the beauty, danger, and joy in these delightful games.

This arrangement features six tracks, each chosen as a representative of one of *Pikmin 2*'s available Pikmin types (including the adorable but underappreciated bulbmin).

What Will We Leave Behind

Spiritfarer (2020)

Maxime Lacoste-Lebuis (Max LL)

Arranger: Angela Small with improvisation by Robb Saffell

In *Spiritfarer*, the protagonist Stella ferries souls to the afterlife, befriendng and caring for them along the way. Over the course of the game, we witness the transformative power of these friendships as each soul, including Stella, finds peace through the support of those around them.

This arrangement blends two distinct musical styles, polyphonic overtone singing and a chorale harmonization for string quintet, in the process creating a unique timbre of its own. As the lyrics guide the listener through the emotions of saying goodbye, the ethereal overtones capture the continually flowing ocean of time and the string accompaniment grounds the listener with a sacred context.

This arrangement serves as an especially meaningful reflection, as this summer marks the arranger's last season with WMGSO.

"And so it is that art alone is left in our wake. The only veritable form of transcendence to have ever been in our grasp. Proof of our existence, and of our pitiful efforts to raise from the chaos, as would some unknown script from a long-gone power... 'Oh, we're here! Well, well, now, Stella. Ozymandias beckons. Let's go.'" —Gustav, *Spiritfarer*

Tranquil Town

Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom (1990)

Izuho Numata

Arranger: Marcos Garcia

In *Phantasy Star III*, you play as a prince named Rhys about to be married. During the wedding ceremony, a dragon captures Rhys' bride, which sets the Prince on a quest to retrieve her back. This theme plays in the towns you visit on your journey, giving romantic vibes to the different locations. *Phantasy Star III*'s premise revolves around playing as the three generations of Rhys' bloodline, and this theme would fit right in at a wedding reception.

Despite the Genesis' sound chip having a mechanical sound, Izuho Numata was able to add different layers to emphasize the romantic sound and create an immaculate picture of Rhys' true love to his bride. May you be able to save the bride and carry on the legacy to future generations...

WMGSO Item Shop

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Final Hours

The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (2000)

Koji Kondo & Duke Ellington

Arranger: Dan Serino

In *Majora's Mask*, the hero arrives in Clock Town three days before an apocalyptic disaster is set to occur. The hero must awaken the four giants of the land to stop the moon from crashing into the land of Termina.

This piece begins with the microtonal lament of the giants played on the viola. Afterwards, the piece transitions into a melancholy mashup of "In a Sentimental Mood" and "Astral Observatory." The tension then builds into the serene and hopeless theme of "Final Hours." After the giants save Termina from doom, they return to their slumbers while reprising their lament one final time.

Marisate

Touhou 13.5: Hopeless Masquerade (2013)

Jun'ya Ota (aka ZUN)

Arranger: Chris "CTL" Lee

Marisa Kirisame, known for her skills as a magical thief, has taken a new artistic direction by pilfering ideas from the works of the renowned Spanish violinist and composer Pablo de Sarasate. This piece mashes one of her many themes, "Magus Night," with various virtuosic techniques from Sarasate's works that Marisa skillfully claims as her own, resulting in a flashy showpiece that fits how much Marisa loves to show off.

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Level 2 – START!

Swanky Maximino

Grim Fandango (1998)

Peter McConnell

Arranger: Dan Serino

This piece features the swankiest trumpet plunger solo in all of video game music. Taking influence from 1920s swing music and Django jazz, this tune offers an ambiance well suited for a cigar-smoking, purple-suit-wearing crime boss named Maximino.

The orchestration is adapted to an ensemble of trumpet, violin, guitar, bassoon, and drums and features improvised solos from all.

Stage 1

Journey to Silius (1990)

Composer: Naoki Kodaka

Arranger: Alex Son

Journey to Silius is a 2D side-scrolling NES futuristic game about the assassination of a brilliant scientist, the destruction of the space colony by space terrorists, and the revenge by the brilliant scientist's son against those terrorists, all using assets for a *Terminator* game that never came to pass. What better way then to present this musically than through a rockin' 80s rock soundtrack?

This arrangement captures the 80s rock feel but with a twist of instrumentation (trumpet, bassoon, cello) you typically wouldn't think to combine.

Carmelita's Dance

Sly 2: Band of Thieves (2004)

Peter McConnell

Arranger: Cindy Zhang

In the second installment of the platform stealth series *Sly Cooper*, Sly and his childhood friends take on more complicated heist jobs. One of them requires Sly to infiltrate a ball and distract his law enforcement nemesis/romantic interest Carmelita Fox while his friends carry out the heist. Said distraction takes the form of a Quick-Time Event (QTE) dance sequence, with Sly and Carmelita dancing together—and Carmelita somehow not recognizing Sly despite his minimal disguise.

“Carmelita's Dance” is reminiscent of tango classics like “Por Una Cabeza” and the famous “Habanera” from the comedy opera *Carmen*, interspersed with echoes of the *Sly Cooper* theme. The original track also includes humorous voice dialogue where Sly technically tells Carmelita the truth about his identity. This arrangement of “Carmelita's Dance” has been adapted for string quintet, percussion, and our soprano and bass section leaders playing the roles of Carmelita and Sly, respectively.

The Tulips of Rhyme/Dimshasdèg óboth

Dwarf Fortress (2006)

Josh Haas

“The Tulips of Rhyme” is a drinking song I encountered in a rowdy tavern at îton Shasad during my adventures in the realm of Zavazsil. This song most often accompanies their celebratory (and usually drunken) circle-dance called Dimshasdèg óboth. It features an agile string instrument they call the bikdá and a reedy bass bagpipe called a themsol. As these instruments do not exist in our own realm, a viola and a bassoon will have to suffice. Their melodies are bound by a stomping backbeat rhythm called onaf.

None of this music is actually heard in game, of course. The details of *Dwarf Fortress*’ procedurally generated music, dance, poetry, and art are visible only to those with the patience to read through their deep descriptions and render them in their imaginations. This is but one such rendering.

Lyrics, translated from the original Dwarven:

Verse 1:

I once met an elf (tree-man) with wooden boots (strange boots!)
He dreamed he could drink like a dwarf!
One sunshine drank he and then one mushroom wine
And then he fell to the floor!

Verse 2:

I once met a goblin (green-woman) with red evil eyes (unspeakables!)
She dreamed she could drink like a dwarf!
Two whiskeys drank she and then two ales
And then she fell to the floor!

Bridge:

A kirunotin (mushroom wine) keg to share with dearest family and friends
We sing this night until morning sun rises and the birds know our words!

(Dance break: Dimshasdèg óboth (The Poetic Droplets). A proud yet sensual group dance, performed in a double concentric circle. The circles spin in opposing directions.)

Verse 3:

I once met a human (tall-man) with an admirable beard (large beard!)
He dreamed he could drink like a dwarf!
Three beers drank he and then three meads
And then he fell to the floor!

Cheer:

To the Brewer! (a toast!)

Klungo's Theme

Banjo-Tooie (2000)

Grant Kirkhope
Arranger: Thomas Ashcom

Klungo is the first boss encounter in the sequel to the largely successful *Banjo-Kazooie* title. He is the main antagonist's star henchman, crafting potions and building machines to aid the wicked witch Gruntilda.

This arrangement is rather straightforward in its musical representation of the original melody, but bends in ways that extrapolate on the quirkiness in even more tonalities. And as with a lot of video-game battle music that must be able to loop endlessly, this arrangement finds a way to end on a happy note, if not ironically.

It's Dangerous to Go Alone

Cook, Serve, Delicious 3?! (2020)

Jonathan Geer
Arranger: Angela Small

As WMGSO continually strives to improve our musicianship and the difficulty of our repertoire, we present a selection from a video game so difficult that only 36% of players have any Steam achievements and some players haven't made it through the tutorial.

This piece, describing the ups and downs of starting a food truck with your friends after nuclear fallout, mirrors the game's difficulty by featuring ridiculous musical tropes like fast diminished arpeggios, simultaneous conflicting grooves, a 3/2 son clave, a Hamilton-style shout chorus, crossing a cappella vocal lines, and less-than-helpful musical instructions like "Al Dente"!

However, this piece isn't about the merits of button mashing, but instead is a celebratory ode to the friends we make along the way while grinding through the challenging levels of life. On that note, Jonny Geer says hi! Or in the words of *Cook, Serve, Delicious 3*: Hofolafa! Mufuchofo gufustofolo!

Building Tarrey Town

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild (2017)

Yasuaki Iwata
Arranger: Cindy Zhang

Breath of the Wild's most beloved sidequest about building a new town is a slow burn, musically and gameplay-wise. Starting with just one construction worker whittling away at giant boulders, Tarrey Town grows in population and musical complexity as you recruit characters from each of the different races in Hyrule to help build Tarrey Town. Each character is represented by a section leader's repeated musical phrase—see if you can pick out each one during the performance!

Tarrey Town's transformation from a sparse melody and accompaniment into a robust song that includes all the musicians captures the larger game's themes of togetherness and rebuilding anew after world-ending loss and tragedy. Like in the game, the arrangement culminates in a wedding chorale, a joyous celebration of love and community that is perfectly in compliance with Bolson Construction company guidelines. Dedicated to the diversely talented musicians of WMGSO, it is the arranger's hope that "Building Tarrey Town" can be replayed in future concerts, to be adapted to any instrumentation.