



College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Anthem of Unity

Katherine Kilburn, conductor
Sally Yu, assistant conductor

Thursday, December 7, 2023
Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Lyric for Strings (1946)	George Walker (1922–2018)
Sally Yu, conductor	
Legends, Op. 59, No. 10 (1881)	Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
Umoja, Anthem of Unity (2019)	Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)
Petite Suite de Concert (1910)	Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)
Le Caprice de Nannette	
Demande et réponse	
Un sonnet d'amour	
La tarantelle frétilante	
Katherine Kilburn, conductor	

PROGRAM NOTES

Lyric for Strings (1946)

George Walker started off his music career as a pianist, studying at Oberlin Conservatory at the age of fourteen, expanding his studies at Curtis Institute of Music and later in Paris. He published over 90 works, including the Pulitzer Prize winning *Lilacs*. Although he struggled with his identity as a black composer, he often incorporated black music idioms, such as spirituals, jazz, and folk songs and classical music, making his music very unique and powerful.

Lyric for Strings was composed when Walker was a graduate student, and while composing it, he learned that his grandmother had passed away. The piece became a memorial to her, as it was originally named *Lament* and soon after became the second movement, Adagio, of a string quartet which was premiered at Curtis Institute of Music. Afterwards, the name changed to *Lyric for Strings*.

In Walker's own words on *Lyric for Strings*: "A static interlude is followed by successive imitations of the theme that lead to an intense climax. The final section of the work presents a somewhat more animated statement of the same thematic material. The coda recalls the quiet interlude that appeared earlier."

- Mio Hogan

Legends, Op. 59, No. 10 (1881)

More than ever, as winter emerges, music conjures a warm brew of light, stories, and reflection. In the autumn of 1841, Czech composer Antonín Dvořák was born into the Prague scene of Romantic music, finding himself stirred by intercontinental folk tales. The mysterious air of such myths imbues his ten short pieces, *Legends* (1881), which were originally written for four-hand piano. True to name, this collection derives from the mystical ballads of Czech poet Erben. English musicologist Gerald Abraham first uncovered how the rhythm and character of *Legends* reflects that of Erben's 1853 folk anthology entitled *Bouquet*. Another possible inspiration was Franz Liszt's *Deux Légendes* (1862-63) for piano, which illuminates the spiritual life of St. Francis. Dvořák has neither confirmed nor denied either of these influences, so the enigma continues. Enthralled by this mystery, German composer Johannes Brahms expressed admiration for the *Legends*. This ultimately led to its orchestral arrangement in the winter of 1881, featuring a story-telling

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

exchange between strings and winds. In the contemporary era, the mythicity of *Legends* is being unraveled into even more enduring tales. Composers of African heritage, such as Coleridge-Taylor (ca. 1875–1912), a British biracial composer, and Valerie Coleman, a 21st-century black female composer, have been roused by elements of Dvořák's works. Yet their unique grasps on musical identity have evolved into a legendary cultural heroism in the historically white world of composition. Dvořák himself is now known to have been influenced by students at the National Conservatory, where he witnessed African-American spirituals, as well as Native American musicians. The transformation of these diverse folk songs into original themes can be traced in his greatest works, even throughout *Legends*. More than ever, as the mystery of winter unfolds, music casts a new light on the interconnection of cultural expressions.

- Jenna Waggoner

Umoja, Anthem of Unity (2019)

In its original form, *Umoja*, the Swahili word for “Unity” and the first principle of the African Diaspora holiday Kwanzaa, was composed of a simple song for women’s choir. It embodied a sense of “tribal unity”, through the feel of a drum circle, the sharing of history through traditional “call and response” form and the repetition of a memorable sing-song melody. It was rearranged into woodwind quintet form during the genesis of Coleman’s chamber music ensemble, Imani Winds, with the intent of providing an anthem that celebrated the diverse heritages of the ensemble itself.

Almost two decades later from the original, the orchestral version brings an expansion and sophistication to the short and sweet melody, beginning with sustained ethereal passages that float and shift from a bowed vibraphone, supporting the introduction of the melody by solo violin. Here, the melody is sweetly singing in its simplest form with an earnest reminiscent of Appalachian style music. From there, the melody dances and weaves throughout the instrument families, interrupted by dissonant viewpoints led by the brass and percussion sections, which represent the clash of injustices, racism and hate that threatens to gain a foothold in the world today. Spiky textures turn into an aggressive exchange between the upper woodwinds and percussion before a return to the melody as a gentle reminder of kindness and humanity. Through the brass led ensemble tutti, the journey ends with a bold call of unity that harkens back to the original anthem.

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

Umoja has seen the creation of many versions that are like siblings to one another, similar in many ways, but each with a unique voice that is informed by Coleman's ever evolving creativity and perspective. "This version honors the simple melody that ever was, but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, *Umoja* has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today."

- Valerie Coleman

Petite Suite de Concert (1910)

Born to a Sierra Leonean doctor and an Englishwoman – and indeed named after British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge – British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor began his musical career as a child, beginning his studies with the violin and voice. Initially, Coleridge-Taylor elected to study the violin upon admission to the Royal College of Music in 1890. However, it was there that Coleridge-Taylor wrote his first major composition, *Te Deum*, and began his career as a composer. Following completion of his studies, Coleridge-Taylor received some minor commissions, and an interaction with A.J. Jaeger, friend of composer Edward Elgar (and in fact the inspiration behind "Nimrod"), helped facilitate Coleridge-Taylor's musical breakthrough. It was Coleridge-Taylor's sprawling cantata *The Song of Hiawatha* (1899), inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem, that brought the fledgling composer overnight stardom. Before long, Coleridge-Taylor was producing sequels to this magnum opus at the request of beguiled commissioners.

Despite the lasting legacy *Hiawatha*, Coleridge-Taylor's *Petite Suite* is admired in equal measure by listeners today, and is regarded as one of his best-known works. It is unclear where Coleridge-Taylor obtained his inspiration for the suite, although it is believed to be the product of a trivial commission. The suite serves as a fine example of the British "light music", a form of orchestral music that gained widespread popularity in the early to mid-20th century. Lacking the melodrama of large-scale concertos and symphonies premiered at the time, light music appealed to audiences through palatable, whimsical melodies. Coleridge-Taylor's *Petite Suite* is no exception. The suite is divided into four movements of varying impressions. The first movement, "Le caprice de nannette", provides a thunderous yet refined introduction and is reminiscent of composer Antonín Dvořák, who served as great inspiration for Coleridge-Taylor. The second movement, "Demande et réponse",

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

takes a romantic diversion from the first, containing the sumptuous “big tune” of the work; naturally, this theme gained popularity in British piano parlors. The coquettish third movement, “Un sonnet d’amour”, leads a surprising segue into the delightfully playful fourth movement, “La tarantelle fréillante”, which ultimately concludes the piece with a sense of dizzying charm.

- Paige Rissman

ARTIST-FACULTY BIO

Award-winning conductor **Katherine Kilburn** has conducted in music halls all over the U.S. and in Europe. She has served as Assistant Conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, the El Paso Opera, the Hot Springs Music Festival, the Bowling Green State University Philharmonia, and the St. Louis Symphony Chorus. She was Conductor of the Interlochen Arts Academy Wind Ensemble, Music Director and Conductor of the Greater New Haven Youth and Chamber Orchestras, and Conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Repertory Orchestra. She has guest conducted the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra, the Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra and Opera Theater, the Green Bay Symphony, Ensemble X, Cleveland Opera Theater, and the Baldwin Wallace Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Kilburn assisted Sir Simon Rattle for performances of *Peter Grimes* at the Salzburg Easter Festival, and toured with world-renowned clarinetists David Shifrin and Alexander Fiterstein. She has conducted numerous world and USA premieres and has conducted in the Cabrillo Music Festival, the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music Festival, the Philadelphia International Music Festival, and the Sewanee Summer Music Festival. Ms. Kilburn has been on the faculty of Cornell University, Kent State University, and Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, and is now Assistant Director of Orchestras at Michigan State University.

STUDENT BIO

Born and raised in Yunnan, China, **Sally (Mingyan) Yu** is a rising young conductor and pianist from a versatile background. Sally once embarked on a promising career path as an integrated circuit designer in 5G industry after graduating from Cornell and Columbia University in 2016 and 2017 respectively with Bachelor and Master degrees in Electrical Engineering. After studying conducting with Maestro Charles Peltz, in 2019, Sally decided to switch her career path and subsequently received a second Master degree in Instrumental conducting from New England Conservatory. Sally is currently pursuing her doctoral studies in Orchestral Conducting with Maestro Octavio Más-Arocas and Dr. Katherine Kilburn at MSU.

PERSONNEL

Violin I

Ethan Biederman ** International Relations
William Chettleburgh, Advanced Mathematics
Gucci Fan, Horticulture
Ryan Choi, Data Science
Joan Rissman, Kinesiology, Music
Ceridwyn F Hunter, Biochemistry/Molecular Biology
David Oh, Computer Science
Kaede Schenk, Global Studies
Jessica Hopson, Marketing Research and Analytics
Sarah Pecis, Undecided
Peter Van Osdol, Finance
James Cho, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
George Berry, Mechanical Engineering
Jessie Fnu, Piano Performance
Andy Mak, Computer Science
Charles Mahoney, Osteopathic Medicine

Violin II

Sofia Rowell*, Criminal Justice and Psychology
Nick Majestic, Astrophysics
Gwendolyn Kohl, Political Science
Jenna Waggoner, English
Emily Telgenhoff, Computer Science
Jolie Kretschmar, Psychology
Ana Ivanov, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Maya Stackable, Psychology
Sofia Lamerato, Integrative Biology
Emily Walters, Public Relations
Grace Schneider, Arts and Humanities
Sydney Martin, Chinese
X.Hoang Le, Computer Science
Srishti Gowda, Psychology
Destiny Rodney, Human Biology
Breanna Vermeulen, Biomedical Lab Science

Viola

Mio Hogan *, Environmental Biology, Microbiology
Mihir Naik, Math
Sarah Percival, Asst. Professor Computational Mathematics
Ryan Peoples, Chemical Engineering
Jared Bloch, Computer Science
Eric Rymkiewicz, Mechanical Engineering
Julia Brose, Plant Biology
Sarah Bill, English Education
Hailey Mecnas, Human Biology
Allicea Sommerville, undecided
Andrew Harms, Astrophysics
Nate Banotai, Human Resources
Michael Nardi, Pre-Veterinary Medicine
Gerik Wolak, Actuarial Science

Cello

Ayako Pederson-Takeda*, Music Composition
Allison Voneida, Horticulture
Alex Logan, Math, Data Science
Isabell Ku, English
Madeline Benson, undecided
Jack Finlan-Hitt, Computer Engineering
Jeffery Wu, Computer Science
Emma Riggs, Computational Mathematics
Juliana Banotai, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
JJ Bird, Entomology
Marcelino Juarez, Electrical Engineering
Calisto Kohn, Environmental Studies and Sustainability
Kael Ligon, International Relations
Robin Lock, Social Work
Rees Rillema, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Sam Colby, Digital Storytelling

PERSONNEL (cont.)

Bass

Carter Crosby*, Music Composition
Jadyn Waggoner*, Astrophysics
Colette Walraven, Veterinary
Nursing
Justin Hakim, Finance
Faith Thomson, Computer
Engineering
Theo Durrett, alumni

Flute

Adam Gulley, Music Composition
Dean Jang *, Computer Science
Tiffany Rennells, Neuroscience
Paige Rissman, International
Relations, and Spanish
Kenia Segura-Abá ^, Genetics

Oboe

Nathan Marsh *, Oboe Performance
Cormac Roth ^, Games and
Interactive Media
Jackie Russell, Political Theory and
Constitutional Democracy

Clarinet

Christopher Dhesspollari, Accounting
Madeline Howard *, Music
Performance and Education
Solomon Makonnen, Neuroscience
Ciel Riskus ^, Music Education

Bassoon

Eric Hall *, Alumni/Retired
Suebinn O ^, Biochemistry

Horn

Ethan Antineau, Data Science
Billur Haskara, Computer
Engineering
Spencer Margolis, Criminal Justice
Jonah Weber *, Music Composition

** Denotes Concert Master

* Denotes Principal

^ Denotes Principal

Trumpet

Matthew Gagea, Biochemistry
Chanmin Jung *, Political Science
Eddie Kolodziej, Animal science
Patrick Mulligan, Euphonium
Performance
Taylor Robison, Psychology

Trombone

Brody Keeley, Urban Planning
Madeline Mitchell *, Advanced Math,
Nicholas Simonelli, Comparative
Cultures and Politics

Tuba

Blake VandenBrink, Tuba
Performance

Percussion

Gabriel Grauvogel, Physics
Mackenzie Edick, Music Education
Catherine Lee (coach) *, Percussion
Performance
Jared Reiling, Computational
Neuroscience
Alex Walters, Social Relations and
Policy

Harp

Kevin Cawley, Computer
Engineering

Concert Orchestra Student Association (COSA)

Grace Schneider, President
Jonah Weber, Vice President
Tiffany Rennells, Events Coordinator
Jolie Kretzschmar, Social Media and
Webmaster Chair
Peter van Osdol, Treasurer
Matthew Gagea, Graphic Design
Chair

Librarian

Sally Yu

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- **Joseph and Jeanne Maguire** (A Jazzy Little Christmas)
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MSUFCU Jazz Artist in Residence

Jazz Orchestras with Sylvia Cuenca, jazz drums

Fairchild Theatre, 8:00 p.m. \$\$

12/9 Saturday

Holiday Cheer with MSU Symphony Orchestra and Choirs

Cobb Great Hall - Wharton Center, 8:00 p.m. \$\$\$

(tickets only available through Wharton Center Box Office 517-432-2000 or whartoncenter.com)

12/10 Sunday

Chamber Music Showcase Concert

Fairchild Theatre, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. \$

12/16 Saturday

A Jazzy Little Christmas

Fairchild Theatre, 8:00 p.m. \$\$\$

1/12 Friday

Artist-Faculty and Guest Recital Series sponsored by WKAR

Jazz Works by Whitaker and Ruggiero

Murray Hall, 8:00 p.m. \$

1/13 Saturday

Artist-Faculty and Guest Recital Series sponsored by WKAR

New Works for Voice with Piano and Harpsichord

Cook Recital Hall, 3:00 p.m. \$

1/14 Sunday

Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest Concert

Fairchild Theatre, 3:00 p.m. free (ticket required)

Free tickets are available over the phone at 517-353-5340 or for pick-up from the College of Music main office (333 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing) M-F, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (closed Dec. 25-Jan. 2)

Please note: Tickets that are not claimed 10 minutes prior to the start of the concert will be released.

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\$\$ \$17 Adults, \$15 Seniors, \$7 Students with ID and anyone under age 18.

\$\$\$ \$22 Adults, \$20 Seniors, \$12 Students and those under age 18.

Please note: *All events scheduled in Murray Hall are general admission seating.*