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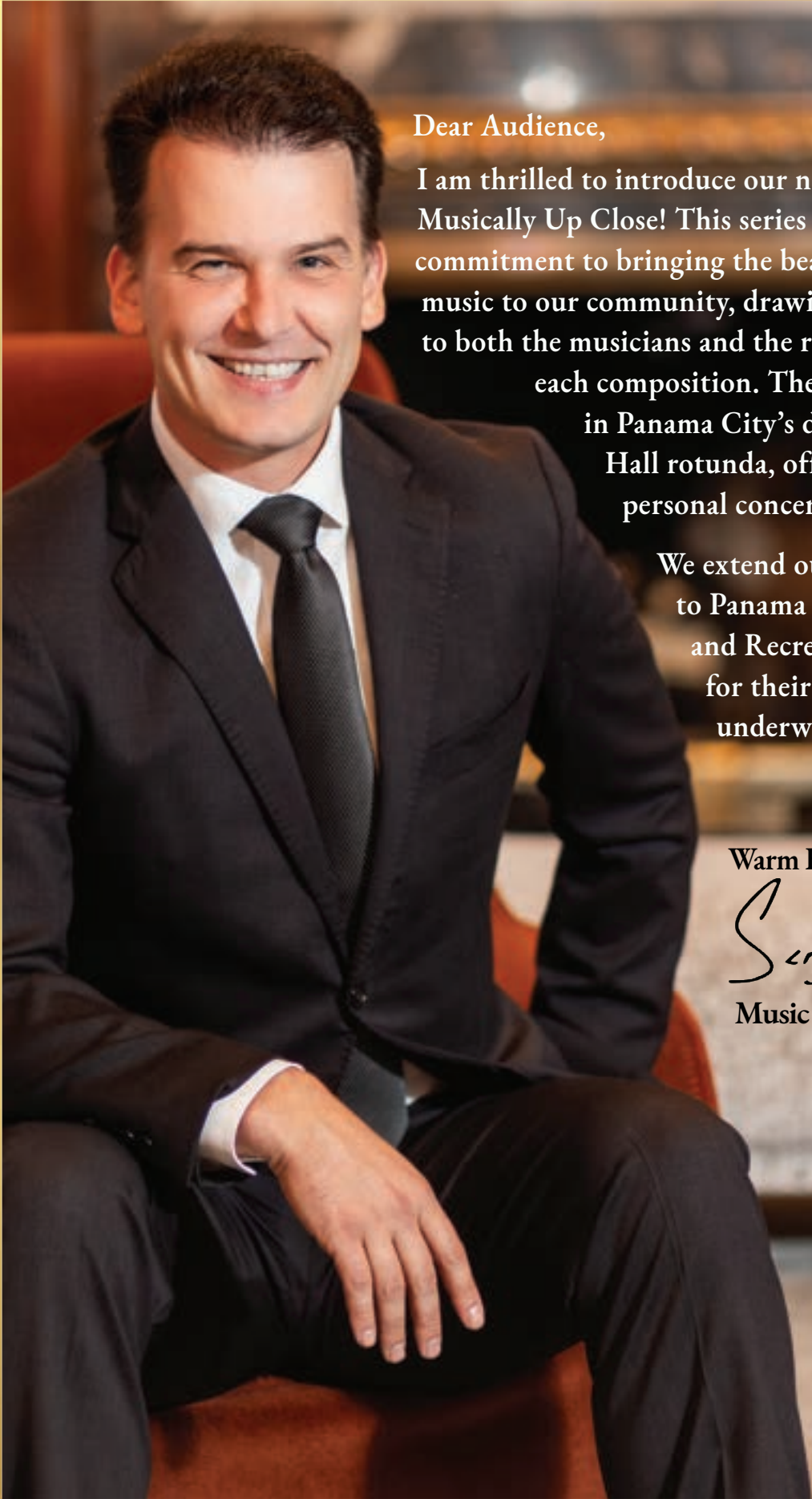
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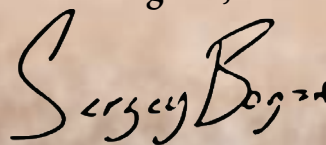


Dear Audience,

I am thrilled to introduce our new music series, Musically Up Close! This series reflects our commitment to bringing the beauty of chamber music to our community, drawing audiences closer to both the musicians and the rich stories behind each composition. These events take place in Panama City's downtown City Hall rotunda, offering a unique and personal concert experience.

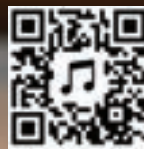
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Panama City's Parks, Culture and Recreation Department for their generous support in underwriting this series.

Warm Regards,



Music Director & Conductor

*Scan QR code for information
about Musically Up Close*



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Sergey Bogza

Music Director and Conductor

Sergey Bogza, described as "a charismatic conductor whose passion radiates from the podium" (*The Virginian-Pilot*), is known for his unique approach to working with orchestras and engaging audiences on and off the podium. In his third year as the Music Director of the Panama City Symphony, he leads masterworks and holiday concerts, curates a monthly chamber music series, and serves as the Director of Music Education. In 2024, he was named the Music Director and Conductor of the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra and has made his professional debut with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and the Alabama Ballet. Bogza has previously held Music Director roles with orchestras such as the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra, Willmar Symphony, and Heartland Symphony Orchestra.

Equally comfortable leading productions of opera, ballet, and concert repertoire, Bogza's energy and artistic integrity are highly regarded by audiences and musicians alike. He has been awarded top prizes at international conducting competitions and is an active composer of symphonic and chamber music. Combining the roles of a conductor and a composer, the premieres of his works are enthusiastically received by audiences and musical ensembles across the United States and Europe.

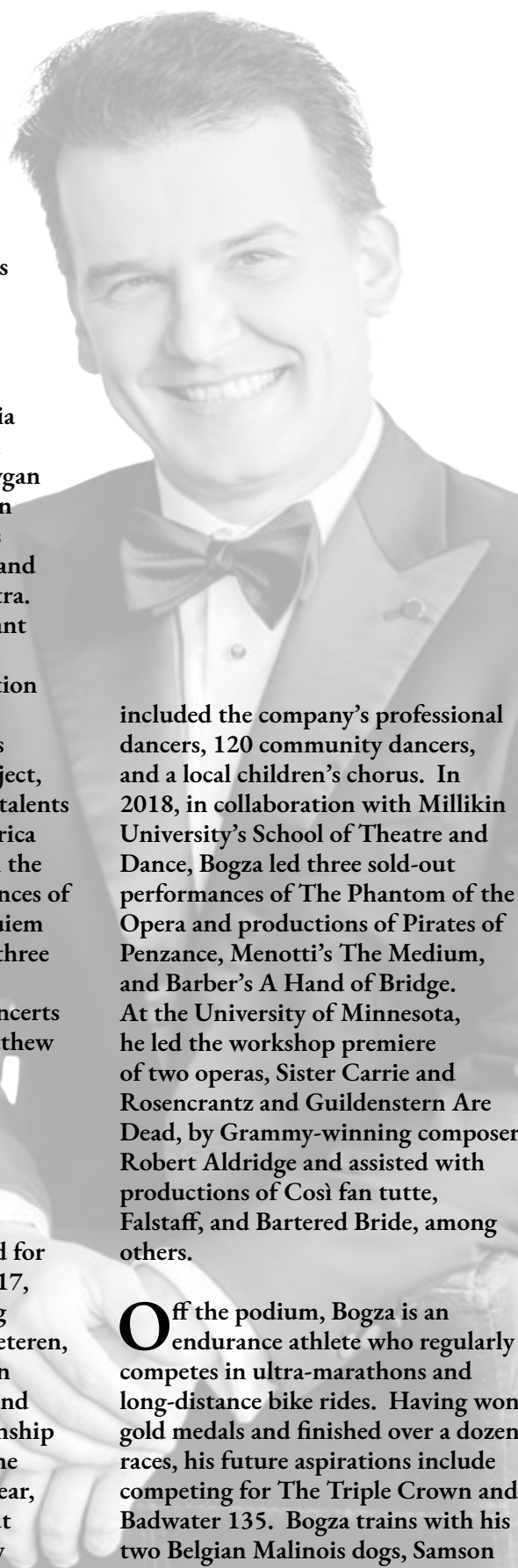
As a guest conductor, Bogza cultivates a burgeoning international presence that

has brought him engagements in the USA and Europe with orchestras, ballet companies, and festivals. He has guest conducted musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra, Virginia Beach Symphony, Pazardzhik Symphony Orchestra, Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra, Auburn Symphony Orchestra, Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra, and Gwinnett Symphony Orchestra. Bogza also served as an assistant conductor for Joffrey Ballet's 100-year anniversary production of *The Rite of Spring*, and the University of Minnesota's Benjamin Britten's Peace Project, which combined the musical talents of students from North America and Germany, culminating in the critically acclaimed performances of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* in the USA and abroad. For three consecutive summers, he was selected to conduct public concerts of the B-Minor Mass, St. Matthew Passion, and the Christmas Oratorio at the Oregon Bach Festival.

Bogza is responsible for a number of successful collaborations and is regarded for his sensitive approach. In 2017, he engaged an award-winning choreographer, Roger Van Fleteren, to present an abridged version of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and the fruitful relationship led to future projects with The Alabama Ballet. That same year, Bogza conducted two sold-out performances of The Moscow Ballet's *The Great Russian Nutcracker*, a production that

included the company's professional dancers, 120 community dancers, and a local children's chorus. In 2018, in collaboration with Millikin University's School of Theatre and Dance, Bogza led three sold-out performances of *The Phantom of the Opera* and productions of *Pirates of Penzance*, Menotti's *The Medium*, and Barber's *A Hand of Bridge*. At the University of Minnesota, he led the workshop premiere of two operas, *Sister Carrie* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, by Grammy-winning composer Robert Aldridge and assisted with productions of *Così fan tutte*, *Falstaff*, and *Bartered Bride*, among others.

Off the podium, Bogza is an endurance athlete who regularly competes in ultra-marathons and long-distance bike rides. Having won gold medals and finished over a dozen races, his future aspirations include competing for The Triple Crown and Badwater 135. Bogza trains with his two Belgian Malinois dogs, Samson and Stella, and is an avid chef of Slavic cuisine.



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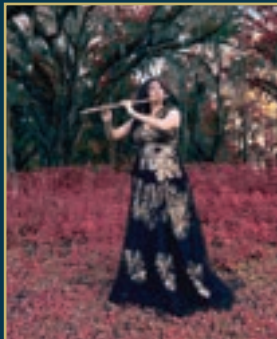
April 4, 2025, 2:30 pm
Jim Colvin & the Bass Trombone
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MUSIC EDUCATION

The Heartbeat of Panama City Symphony



Panama City Symphony offers innovative, interactive music education programs to all ages to foster music appreciation, build confidence, and nurture talent.

Enjoy photos & learn more
about our music education programs
on the next two pages! →

Make Music Magic

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Designed for our youngest audiences, Make Music Magic creates awareness and appreciation for the 'language' of music. This program guides students as they listen and share



their thoughts associated with a variety of music genres. The program includes interactive singing, clapping to various beats and melodies,

imaginative exercises, and discovering how music can express emotion and connect them to others.

Guest Artist Outreach & Masterclasses

In addition to being world-class performers, the Symphony's guest artists are educators and community builders. Throughout the season, the Symphony's guest artists teach masterclasses in local high schools and colleges, perform for students, and play a vital role in the community leading up to their concert appearance with



the Symphony. Artists perform recitals at Musically Up Close events, retirement communities, high schools and colleges.

Discovering Music

3rd Grade - 5th Grade

Featuring musician ensembles, Discovering Music helps students explore the 'ingredients' of music. To engage curious young



minds, the Panama City Symphony conductor and musicians demonstrate distinctive attributes of musical

instruments and convey how these unique attributes provide the 'recipe' for creating a full musical performance. Students actively listen to discover how music is built, observe individual instrument demonstrations, learn how melody connects the senses, and interactively learn through narrated stories.

Moments with the Maestro

Hosted by the Panama City Center for the Arts, the interactive lectures take place from 4:00-5:00 pm on the Friday before each Masterworks concert. The Maestro and guest artists share thoughts behind the selections, history of the composers and their works, and the nuances to listen for during the concert.



*Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education
because rhythm and harmony find their way
into the inward places of the soul.*

– Plato (Source: *The Republic*)



MUSIC EDUCATION

The Heartbeat of Panama City Symphony

Panama City Symphony aims to inspire the next generation of musicians!

Panama City Symphony Mentoring Program

The Panama City Symphony's Mentoring Program places advanced musicians (9th grade and beyond) with a mentor who guides and serves as an intermediary between the conductor and the orchestra. Mentees shadow experienced musicians during rehearsals and concert performances, receiving high-level orchestral training in a nurturing and professional environment. Panama City Symphony often invites mentees to participate in community outreach performances. Since 2009, forty (40) students have been mentored representing homeschools, public and private high schools in Bay and Walton counties, and Gulf Coast State College. Taliah Bohlen will continue as a mentee in 2024-25.



Pictured are the 2023 - 2024 mentees (L to R) with Music Director Sergey Bogza: Emily Kent (violin), Taliah Bohlen (violin), and Sarah Vaden (french horn).

The talent you attracted with the competition was incredible!

~Ben Keating

I'm eternally grateful to all who made Emerging Artists Competition an enjoyable and wonderful experience.

~Sam Vaillancourt

I want to send my warmest thank you to everyone who has helped me grow into a better musician for the past two years. I am not sure where I would be without all your support, love, and guidance. You have taught me not to be afraid of new challenges but to instead face them with courage. You have pushed me to be better and more importantly, strive for greatness. I am so grateful for the opportunities provided by you and the wisdom imparted on me along the way. Thank you, thank you. I hope to see you all again soon!

*My best wishes,
Emily Kent*

Emerging Artists Competition

The inaugural Emerging Artists Competition was held in June 2024 at Gulf Coast State College Amelia G. Tapper Center and will return bi-annually. Winners receive exciting cash prizes and awards and perform with various Panama City Symphony events and recitals in the year following a competitions.

Judges were Maestro Sergey Bogza, Music Director and Conductor, Panama City Symphony; Dr. Gregory Jones, Associate Dean of Engagement, College of Music – FSU; and Erika Sciascia, Panama City Symphony Concertmaster. Sharing the stage as accompanists for the finalists at Panama City Symphony's Emerging Artists Competition were Valerie Trujillo and Mikayla Rogers.



Grand Prize Winner - High School Division
Croft "Didi" Stone, violin



Grand Prize Winner - College Division
Victor Shlyakhtenko, piano



College Division - Second Place
Sam Parrini, violin



College Division - Third Place
Antonio Jarvey, saxophone

Symphony organizations have long noted the need to have music education specific to early education, effecting improved math and language skills, improved test scores, heightened listening skills and increased creativity.



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"It's Opening Night!"

Expressing heartfelt appreciation to the orchestra musicians, *It's Opening Night* is a donated art piece created by local glass artist Dr. Marlene East, President, Panama City Symphony Board of Directors.

Getting ready for the season opener, the violinist ponders honoring the leadership of Maestro Bogza and the composers of the pieces to be performed by Panama City Symphony in the 24/25 season.

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It's Opening Night is displayed in the foyer on concert nights.
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The winner's name will be drawn at the season finale on April 12, 2025.
Winner need not be present to win.



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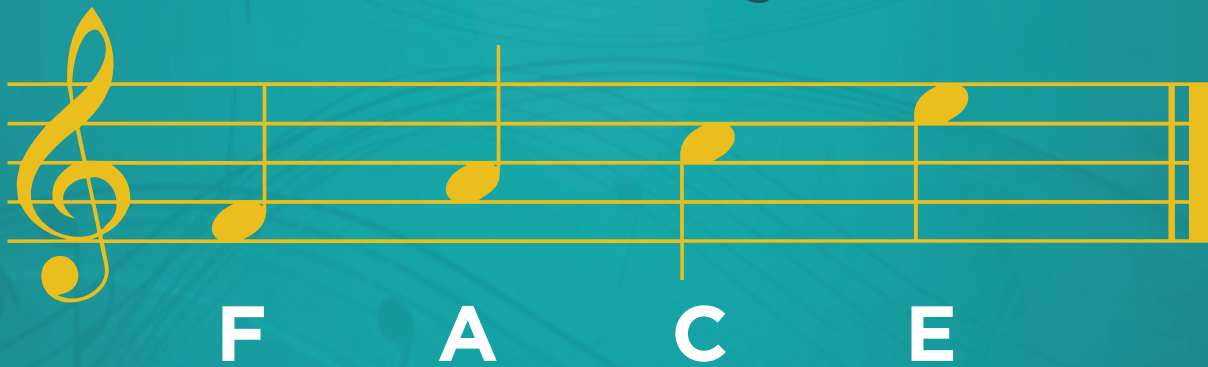


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Presents

MUSIC OF THE COSMOS

with NASA Video and Imagery

Saturday, April 12, 2025, 7:00 pm

Barbara W. Nelson Fine Arts Center
Bay High School, Panama City, Florida

Kevin Day: Lightspeed, 3'

(1996)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto, 20'

(1840–1893)

I. Allegro moderato

Didi Stone, Violin

Winner of the Panama City Symphony

Emerging Artist Competition, High School Division



Intermission



Gustav Holst: The Planets, 50'

(1874-1934)

1. Mars, the Bringer of War
2. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
3. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
4. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
5. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
6. Uranus, the Magician
7. Neptune, the Mystic

Guest Artist, Didi Stone

Didi Stone is a freshman at the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia pursuing his bachelor's degree in violin performance under the tutelage of Professor Sergiu Schwartz. A native of Georgia, he began his musical journey at age 5, starting violin after his sister began playing the year prior. He comes from a very musical family, as both his parents are musicians, his mom a pianist and music educator, and his dad a guitarist and singer-songwriter.



Didi discovered his passion for orchestra in middle school. Since then, he has served as the concertmaster of the National Youth Orchestra (NYO-USA), performing under Marin Alsop in their tour of South America, the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the Alpharetta High School Symphony Orchestra. He was selected as the assistant concertmaster for the GMEA all state orchestra multiple years in a row.

Besides orchestra, Didi loves performing both solo and chamber music. Recent accomplishments include the 2024 Georgia MTNA (Music Teachers' National Association) Young Artist competition first prize, runner up in the 2024 Samuel Fordis Young Artist concerto competition, and

the 2024 Franklin Pond chamber music competition first prize.

As the winner of the 2024 Emory Youth Symphony Orchestra concerto competition, he performed the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto last May and won the Panama City Symphony Emerging Artist competition one month later with the same piece. He is thrilled to be joining the symphony to perform the Tchaikovsky concerto again!

Didi has had the incredible opportunity to work with soloists such as violinists Simon Zhu, Nancy Zhou, and pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet. He has played in masterclasses for David Coucheron, Peter Winograd, and Kevin Zhu. As part of the Franklin Pond Chamber Music program, he has performed in chamber masterclasses for the Emerson String Quartet, the Dover quartet, the Ying Quartet, the Vega Quartet, Itamar Zorman, and cellist Johannes Moser.

In addition to violin, Didi discovered his talent for singing at age 10 and since then has won competitions and performed at various events in both China and the U.S. Next year, he will be taking a gap year to pursue his singing career in Beijing while continuing his violin studies. Aside from music, Didi enjoys going to the gym, playing tennis, and solving Rubik's cubes. He would like to thank his family and his teacher, Professor Schwartz, for their unwavering support in his musical journey.



Finalists in Panama City Symphony's Emerging Artists Competition, June 2024

Music of the Cosmos

Program Notes

Compiled by Sergey Bogza

Kevin Day: Lightspeed

estimated duration: 3 minutes

In 2019, when he was 23, Kevin Day composed a concert opener that is emblematic of his budding career – Lightspeed. Since then, Day has written well over 120 pieces for piano, accompanied solo instruments, orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles, concert band (both professional and educational), film, electronics and jazz ensemble that encompass the influences of jazz, minimalism, Latin music, R&B, fusion and contemporary classical. An Arlington native and Texas Christian University graduate, Kevin Day has a heterogeneous assortment of musical influences. Day said that the title and spirit of Lightspeed: Fanfare for Orchestra, commissioned in 2019 by the Washington and Lee University Orchestra, were influenced by his love of Star Trek and Doctor Who. Lightspeed brilliantly scored, bursts with optimism and energy, balancing bracing rhythmic statements for full orchestra with lyrical passages in the strings to give the piece a fine formal balance in its complementary moods and styles.



Initially criticized for its supposed unplayability, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto has since been embraced as a cornerstone of the violin repertoire, celebrated for its depth and technical innovations.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto (1st movement)

estimated duration: 20 minutes

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky composed his Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35, in 1878, a work that encapsulates his extraordinary ability to channel personal strife into profound musical expression.

Written in the aftermath of a disastrous marriage and during a period

of deep personal crisis, the concerto contrasts its backdrop with an exuberance and lyrical beauty that belies the composer's emotional state. The first movement,



“Allegro moderato,” commences with a lively orchestral introduction that sets the stage for the solo violin's dramatic entry. The violin soon embarks on a journey through soaring melodies and intricate passages that showcase both the instrument's and the performer's virtuosity.

Tchaikovsky's integration of demanding technical feats with rich melodic lines creates a compelling dialogue between the soloist and orchestra, making this movement a favorite among both musicians and audiences. Challenges such as swift scales, demanding double stops, and delicate phrasing enhance the emotional and technical complexity of the piece. Initially criticized for its supposed unplayability, the concerto has since been embraced as a cornerstone of the violin repertoire, celebrated for its depth and technical innovations. Today, it stands as a testament to Tchaikovsky's resilience and creativity, offering a vibrant, emotive experience that continues to captivate and inspire.

Gustav Holst: The Planets

estimated duration: 50 minutes

Gustav Holst's orchestral suite, *The Planets*, composed between 1914 and 1917, stands as a monumental work in the classical repertoire, distinguished by its innovative combination of astrology and mythology with music. Conceived during the tumultuous backdrop of World War I, Holst's composition captures the distinct personalities of the planets as understood through astrological symbolism, excluding Earth. Each movement of the suite is named after a different celestial body and explores its associated mythological character.

The music ranges from the aggressive and intense to the serene and mystical, using a large orchestra to achieve a vast array of tonal colors and dynamic contrasts.

Holst's interest in astrology significantly influenced the thematic and emotional development of the music, making it a pioneering work that extended beyond traditional symphonic forms. The suite has captivated audiences with its rich orchestration and dramatic themes, becoming one of Holst's most famous and enduring works. *The Planets* not only showcases Holst's masterful compositional skills but also reflects the period's fascination with both the heavens and the human psyche. Its legacy is evident in its continued popularity and its influence on film scores and contemporary music.

In his preface to *The Planets*, Holst advised that there is no program in the pieces and that the subtitles should be sufficient to guide the imagination of the listener. Holst's own imagination had been stimulated by many things, not the least of which was the great literature of English folk songs, introduced to him by his life-long friend, Ralph Vaughan Williams. Another influence was that of Stravinsky, whose music had greatly impressed Holst before he took on the universe, the effects of which in *The Planets* can be seen in the very large *Firebird* and *Petrushka* kind of orchestration, in insistent rhythms, and also in striding rhythmic shifts. Holst's musico-spatial explorations may not be cosmic, but they are

brilliant, dramatic, and picturesque enough to fit into almost anyone's concert hall horoscope.

“Mars, the Bringer of War” opens in ominous quiet, with the portent of a fierce martial confrontation. Brass fanfares blare contemptuously while timpani provide support. A sudden cessation of the activity is only a pause before an even more violent onslaught, with rhythmic punctuation throbbing mercilessly.

“Venus, the Bringer of Peace” is a tranquil scene cooled by flutes and an austere solo violin.

A suggestion of sensuality evolves as the music gathers strength, but it is tempered by serene dissipation.

“Mercury, the Winged Messenger,” a dashing, stunning orchestral scherzo, features harps, celesta, and a solo violin dancing to an ephemeral tune. The fuller orchestral textures invest Mercury with a decidedly French Impressionistic character.

“Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity” is the most thoroughly English section of the work, with Jupiter's high spirits projected through a broad, infectiously energetic melody. A stately, more serious processional theme then enters, its royal dignity fully intact, after which the vigorous melody returns.

In “Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age,” the aching despair of youth lost fills the section, first with solemnity, then with outrage as bells clang wildly. But the protest is futile, and the inevitable journey continues, this time ending in transfigured peacefulness.

“Uranus, the Magician”: Here, Holst unleashes diabolical energy, some of it reminiscent of some earlier conjurings by Dukas, Saint-Saëns, Mussorgsky – i.e., *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Danse Macabre*, *Bald Mountain*.

“Neptune, the Mystic”: A pure other-worldliness, an aura of lost-in-space, permeates this final section. The transparency of the scoring is intensified by the disembodied sound of a wordless women's chorus, the combination casting a spell that is wondrously mystic, transcendental.





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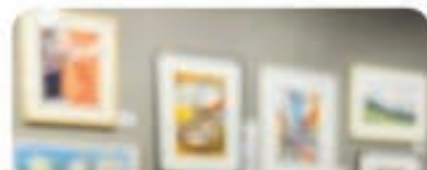
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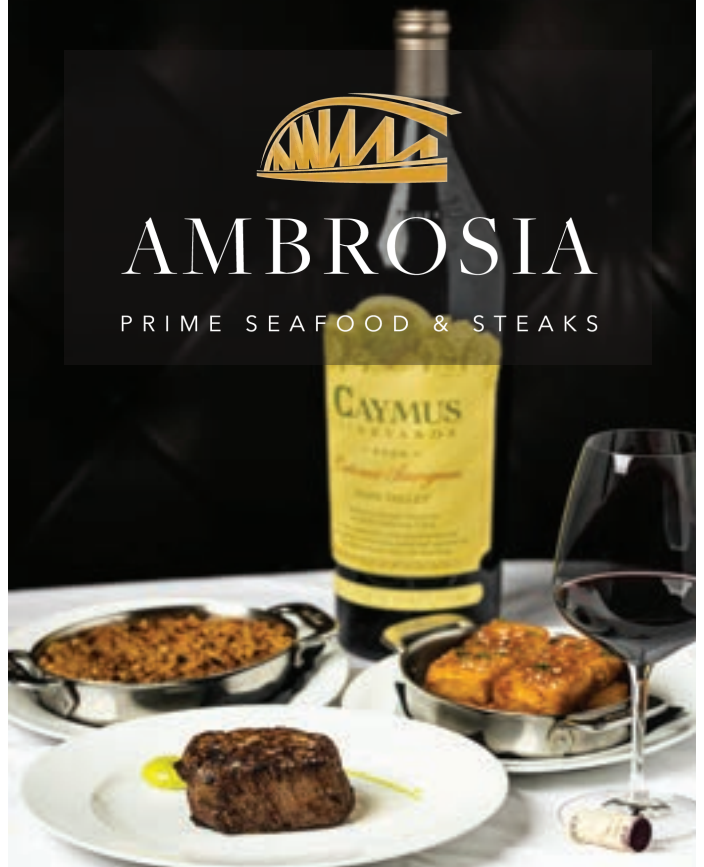


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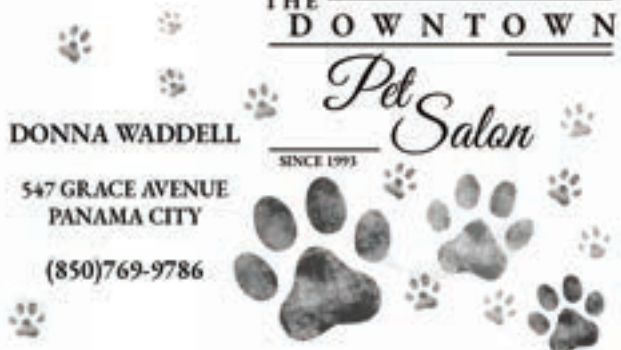
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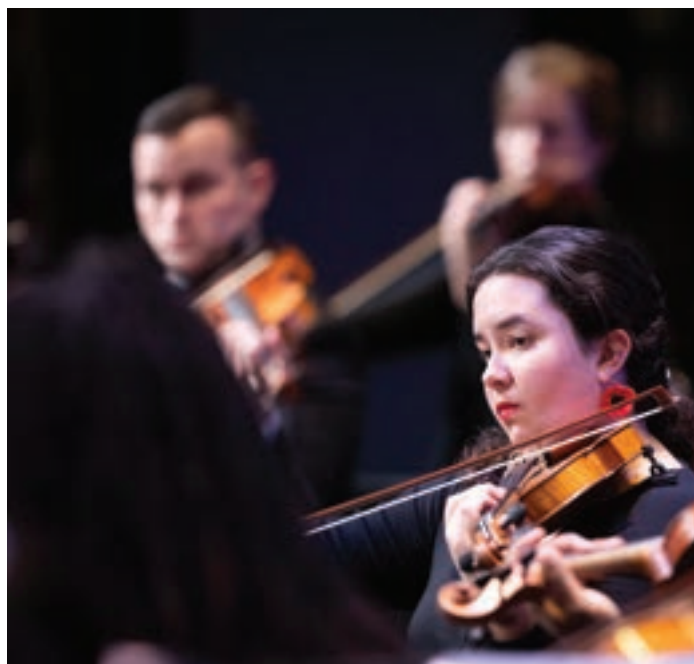


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it sings with the skylark
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but at night it growls
in the belly of the earth,
drawing breath with the wind
and keeping time with thunder.*

*from The Bassoon Shall
Have New Breath
A Poem by Jacob Ludlow*

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*Alfred
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