

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music
presents

**JMU Symphony
Honors Concert**

featuring
2021 & 2022 JMU Concerto/Aria Competition Winners

Haven Kahn, *alto saxophone*
Aaron Soforenko, *marimba*
Huanwen Wendy Wang, *piano*

JMU Symphony Orchestra
Foster Beyers, *director*

Sunday, April 24, 2022
2 pm
Concert Hall



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

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by Kathy Moran Wealth Group.

Program

Piano Concerto for the Left Hand.....Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)

Aaron Soforenko, *marimba*

Prologue.....Joe Jaxson
(b. 2000)

Concertino da camera.....Jacques Ibert
(1890–1962)

I. Allegro con moto

II. Larghetto – Animato molto

Haven Kahn, *alto saxophone*

15-Minute Intermission

Piano Concerto in C-Sharp Minor, FP 146.....Francis Poulenc
(1899–1963)

I. Allegretto

Huanwen Wendy Wang, *piano*

Capriccio Espagnol.....Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
(1844–1908)

I. Alborada

II. Variazioni

III. Alborada

IV. Scena e canto gitano

V. Fandango asturiano

Presentation of Honors

“Nimrod” from *Enigma Variations*.....Edward Elgar
(1857–1934)

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Program Notes

Piano Concerto for the Left Hand - Maurice Ravel

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) wrote the **Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in D Major** between 1929–1930 as a part of a commission by concert pianist Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961). Paul Wittgenstein was a soldier in World War I and when a mission went terribly wrong, he got shot in the right elbow and could no longer perform with both hands. After he survived the rest of the war, he began to commission works so he could still perform. He commissioned Richard Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev, and Benjamin Britten, but the most famous work to come from these commissions is Ravel's. Maurice Ravel was a French composer born in the Basque region and studied at the Paris Conservatory. Ravel's compositions combine neoclassicism, modernism, and jazz. In this work, Ravel favored the dark sonorities as he wanted to highlight the fact that it was for left hand alone, not just composed despite the limitation.

The piece is one movement, but is split into three different sections. It begins with a low cello and bass accompaniment, with contrabassoon and horns adding a somber melody. Suspense is created while waiting for the soloist to enter, and the soloist enters playing brilliant glissandos and arpeggiations. Then, the piece suddenly switches to a scherzo like allegro, and the composer himself said he wanted this section to feel almost improvised. The section builds by adding more instruments and growing in dynamic until another grand soloist entrance and cadenza. The final section then harkens back to the beginning with the low sonorities and solemn quality, and the soloist plays the most technically demanding cadenza yet. After this grand cadenza there is a coda that concludes the piece with full orchestra.

This transcription was done by Aaron Soforenko (b. 2000) for marimba and features him as the soloist. In his transcription he keeps the virtuosity and dense harmonies, but makes slight alterations so it can be played with four mallets on marimba. The marimba is an ancient instrument, originally seen in Africa, Central America, and South America. The instrument has wooden keys made of rosewood that are struck with yarn and felt mallets, meaning the instrumentalist never feels the keys. Today, the instrument is used as a virtuosic solo instrument, in percussion ensembles, wind symphonies, and chamber music.

Program note by Vanessa Putnam.

Prologue - Joe Jaxson

Prologue is standalone work that acts as the prelude to a larger work in progress. This piece invites the listener to envision a narrative they think is best illuminated based on the sounds and the moods they are experiencing. What started as a small assignment now expanded into a full-fledged work for strings. Jaxson aims to capture a multitude of colors and settings utilizing different performance techniques combined with familiar ones.

“I wanted to write a work inspired by the eventful journey I experienced studying at JMU. The opening sounds are filled with optimism and grandiose emotions to a fast-paced section evoking the thrill and rush of the busy schedules I consistently had. The final climax of the piece is meant to represent all the hard work paying off during my studies and professional career. The pieces end with a calming, resplendent chord which ironically closes this chapter of my life like an epilogue. However, it also acts as the opening of a new and fresh chapter, and possibly even for you!”

Program note provided by the composer.

Program Notes (cont'd)

Concertino da camera - Jacques Ibert

Jacques Ibert was a French composer born in Paris in 1890. As a young man, his education was disrupted by his service in World War I, after which he finished his schooling at the Paris Conservatoire. A very prolific composer, he is known for his eclectic output, writing in many different styles and genres rather than defining himself with a specific type of music.

Concertino da camera was dedicated to the saxophonist Sigurd Raschèr, whom Ibert had met a few years before. Raschèr was a virtuosic saxophonist, and he inspired many composers of the 20th century to write pieces featuring the saxophone in a new way. The title of the piece translates literally to “small chamber concerto,” which is reflected in the use of a reduced orchestra as well as its condensed length; additionally, all of the parts are virtuosic in nature, another quality common to chamber music. Stylistically, this piece uses colorful harmony, light articulations, and conversational textures that connect it to both the French Impressionist movement as well as neoclassicism.

The first movement is characterized by its balance of intensity and carefree character. After a tumultuous opening, the solo saxophone takes up a syncopated theme that highlights the flexibility and color of the instrument. The second section of this movement is a joyful melody that soars over the orchestra. The second movement begins with a slow cadenza for the saxophone, which is joined by a pulsating undercurrent in the orchestra. When the full orchestra begins to play, the saxophone floats over the aching accompaniment. This is followed by another fast section similar in character to the first movement, essentially completing the standard three-movement form found in most concertos. This section barrels towards the end of the piece at break-neck speed, yet maintains the buoyancy that is present throughout the piece.

Program note by Thomas O'Keefe.

Piano Concerto in C-Sharp Minor, FP 146 - Francis Poulenc

The son of a wealthy manufacturer, Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) was forbidden to study music formally and gained much of his first understanding of performance and composition on his own. After the death of his parents, he studied piano and composition with Ricardo Viñes and later with Erik Satie. Under Satie's tutelage, he became known as one of Les Six, a group representing young, aspiring musicians from both France and Switzerland. He is highly regarded for his use of simple and memorable melodies within a classic harmonic structure that evoke emotion and expression.

The **Piano Concerto in C-Sharp Minor, FP 146**, is the last of Poulenc's five concertos. The premiere with the Boston Symphony Orchestra occurred in 1950 with the composer as soloist and was an effort to promote restored communication between the United States and France after World War II. Although his previous compositions during wartime were known for their darker, more somber character, Poulenc returns to a more lighthearted, whimsical approach for the concerto in C-sharp minor. In the concerto, the piano is treated as a member of the ensemble instead of only the principal character. Musical lines are delicately and purposefully handed to instrumentalists within, who exchange melodies with each other, and hand them back to the pianist. The first movement consists of three separate episodes, the first a minor brooding tune, the second a hopeful lyrical statement, and the third a throwback to a neoclassical dance in a major key. Located at the center of the piece is a complete disconnect from the previous themes: a gauzy, lazy escape from the three previously stated episodes. This illusion is rudely interrupted first by forte winds, and then dissonant brass. We are immediately

Program Notes (cont'd)

returned to our episodes, first the hopeful lyrical statement, then the melancholic melody, and finally the dance. As the dance concludes, a brief pause thrusts us into the coda; an exuberant exclamation of finality as accented interjections from previous sections abound and the orchestra concludes the movement with a joyous shout.

Program note by Kim Souther.

Capriccio Espagnol - Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was known as the master of orchestration in his time, and the **Capriccio Espagnol** is no exception. Originally intended for solo violin and orchestra, the piece is based on Spanish folk melodies, which reappear many times throughout the piece, in different keys and instrument sections. For example, the first and third movements are based off of the same Asturian Alborada, a tune that is traditionally played to celebrate the sunrise. The second movement, a theme and variations, develops a melody, starting in the French horns, that slowly makes its way through the orchestra. The fourth movement features upper brass, solo violin, flute, clarinet and harp, each with its own cadenza, accompanied by various percussion instruments. This movement then moves in the lively fifth movement, also based on an Asturian folk melody, and transitions effortlessly to a recapitulation of the original theme.

The piece demonstrates the full texture and size of an orchestra, while telling a story using themes indigenous to northwest Spain. The strings consistently use extended techniques, such as ricochet (sometimes known as saltando) and are instructed to pluck their strings quasi guitarra – like a guitar. While not a native Spaniard, Rimsky-Korsakov perfectly captures the vibrant culture of Asturias through his celebration of sunrise, encapsulation of passion, and lively dances.

Program note by Laura Friloux, edited by Foster Beyers.

JMU Symphony Orchestra

(members are listed alphabetically by section)

Violin I

Paul Anderson
Aidan Coleman
Isaac Cotnoir
Adeline King
Thomas O'Keefe
Patrick Shaughnessy*
Rachel Tan
Emily Werner

Violin II

Briana Clark
Jonathan Colmenares
Louanna Colon
Isaac Cotnoir^
Nathaniel Gordy
Aidan Hall
Sierra Rickard

Viola

Kamryn Cajohn
Laura Friloux
Madeleine Gabalski^
Katie Hayes
Ryan Haymans
Chris King
Hannah Rahrig
Nina Ravel

Cello

Julia King
Alison Lilly
Vikram Lothe
Isaiah Ortiz
Jessi Sfarnas
Kim Souther^

Bass

James Adkinson-Piccirello
Tina Battaglia
Michael Cseh
Alex Haldane
Gabe Ravel
Cole Sheffer^

Flute

Dominic Baldoni^
Bo Boisen
Ariel Collins

Oboe

Will Slopnick^
Mekhi Tyree
Andrew Welling

Clarinet

Thomas Heal
Gregorio Paone^
Sophie Uy

Bassoon

Ella Lovinelli
Hanna Maranzatto^
Anthony Russo

Horn

Jacob Anderson^
Benjamin Coates
Ainsley Hanson
Joe Jaxson

Trumpet

Britney Bennet
Amy Millesen
Joshua Villa^

Trombone

Alex Mizroch^
Isaiah Tomalesky

Bass Trombone

Dan Tubbs

Tuba

John Kelley

Harp

Vanessa Putnam

Percussion

Miles Cingolani
Kohl Corrigan
Ben Millesen
Shane Roderick^
Aaron Soforenko
Jack Yagerline

* = Concertmaster

^ = Principal

Upcoming Events

APRIL

<i>Isle of Noises</i> Written by TJ Young	Apr. 26–30
JMU Jazz Ensemble	Apr. 26
JMU Jazz Band	Apr. 27
Spring Student Dance Concert	Apr. 28–30
JMU Madison Singers and Chorale	Apr. 29

MAY

JMU Treble Chamber Choir and University Choruses	May 2
JMU Chamber Orchestra	May 3
JMU Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band	May 5

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