



College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU Concert Orchestra

Colorscapes

Katherine Kilburn, conductor
Daniel Jagers, guest conductor
Zongheng Zhang, guest conductor

Thursday, October 24, 2024
Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

from *Les Indes galantes*
Les sauvages

Jean-Philippe Rameau
(1683-1764)

Katherine Kilburn, conductor

from *The Telling Rooms*
The Happiest Color

Michael-Thomas Foumai
(b. 1987)

Daniel Jaggars, conductor

Blue Glacier Decoy

Jennifer Jolley
(b. 1981)

Katherine Kilburn, conductor

An der schönen blauen Donau, Op. 314
(The Blue Danube)

Johann Strauss II
(1825-1899)

Zhongheng Zhang, conductor

Gasoline Rainbows

Katahji Copley
(b. 1988)

Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32 (Gaelic Symphony)
I. Allegro con fuoco

Amy Beach
(1867-1944)

Katherine Kilburn, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

Les sauvages from Les Indes galantes

The music of the Baroque era was often characterized by its intellectual rigor and ornate complexity, designed to appeal to the cultural and economic elite. In an age where live music was primarily reserved for courts and churches, compositions were filled with intricate melodies, lavish ornamentation, and grand gestures, meant to showcase both the composer's skill and the sophistication of its audience. Figures like Arcangelo Corelli, a quintessential voice of the era, wrote music primarily for the church and royal courts. Other composers, such as Dietrich Buxtehude, were even employed by the church and wrote music that aligned with religious institutions for most of their lives. Jean-Philippe Rameau's 1733 opera, *Les Indes galantes*, steps beyond the refined elegance typical of the Baroque era, venturing into more visceral and evocative territory that was reflective of 18th-century French perceptions of indigenous cultures. The fourth entrée, entitled "*Les sauvages*" or "*The Savages*", was particularly captivating to European audiences. While the characteristically ornate melodies and ornamentation remain, the underpinning rhythmic and harmonic drive gives the impression of a primitive and ritualistic dance, grounded by the persistent marching rhythm of a military drum. This dance was influenced by a performance given by two Native American chiefs in Paris, of which Rameau sought to capture the perceived exoticism and wildness of these indigenous peoples in his music. The music of *Les Indes galantes* captured what European audiences saw as the wild energy of indigenous peoples, blending the refined style of the Baroque with a rhythmic drive that felt raw and lively, transporting listeners to a world which they could only have imagined.

- Zach Bickell

The Happiest Color from The Telling Rooms

The Telling Rooms is an orchestral triptych inspired by the poetry of three young writers from Maine who have captured color, asked questions of it, and challenged its traditional meanings and associations. Each movement is a different room, with a different color and story to tell. An orchestral chaconne paints the first room in *The Happiest Color* of Aubrey Duplissie's veiled allusion to tender and tragic memories of life and loss. Discordant harmonies shadow the second room in Husna Quinn's *Dressed in Red* and an ominous ostinato frames a portrait of family secrets. Eliza Rudalevige's *Ink Wash* showers and swirls the final room in a palette of the senses. A

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

festivity of color and rhythm, patterns and gestures are twirled and splashed in mixed meters between instrumental families as primary colors in an orchestral game of Twister.

- Michael-Thomas Foumai

Blue Glacier Decoy

Last year's obituary in *The New York Times* for the modern dancer and choreographer Trisha Brown only casually mentioned her debt to the landscapes of the Pacific Northwest. It was an unusual characterization for an artist who once told her fellow Washingtonian, choreographer Merce Cunningham, that, "The rainforest was my first art class." Indeed, the Pacific Northwest's instruction is found in many of Brown's works. Her 1970 piece "Floor of the Forest" employs a steel scaffolding to hold a cloth canopy of ropes threaded with colorful used clothing to create a synthetic forest where dancers writhe and wiggle. Her 1979 piece "Glacial Decoy" is similarly derived from these experiences. In this work Brown and Robert Rauschenberg created fleeting images via gossamer-clad dancers and an ongoing found image slide projection. The mechanical and physical movements become an elegant analog to the glaciers. The images and dancers move and shift forward and back, side or other side, or anywhere in between, like a lateral melt. The fleeting projections become a visual metaphor melting and congealing anew.

I have never been to Olympic National Park, so I followed Brown's example and combined my own experiences with what I learned from an artist who followed the Hoh River Trail, studied the Hoh Rainforest, and revered the Blue Glacier. We should follow her lead and do the same. We must "give [ourselves] a moment to feel this very mobile sense of how the balance is."

- Jennifer Jolley

The Blue Danube is commonly given the moniker "King of the Waltz" and for good reason: With over one hundred waltzes to his name, he practically fathered the dance to fruition and cemented its standing as a leading musical form that prevails even in modern times. Originally written as a choral work in 1866, *The Blue Danube* served to uplift the spirit of Austria after its tragic loss to Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War. It featured a men's chorus singing lyrics written by Josef Weyl, however the words he wrote after the war only served to ridicule the Austrian government for the loss. The sarcastic tone of this version led to a fairly bitter reception at its

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

initial premiere, and it was not until Strauss' reformulation of the piece as a purely orchestral work that it gained its staggering notoriety.

This instrumental rendition is perhaps the most prime example of Strauss' prolific artistry. Inspired by a poem written by Karl Isidor Beck (1817-1879) that romanticizes the view of the Danube River, the music opens with an extended introduction in A major that features a shimmering orchestral texture underneath a tender horn solo, evoking the sight of sunlight gently glinting from the surface of the calm and vibrant waters. Throughout the rest of the work, a collection of five Viennese waltzes plays out, each one building towards the coda where the music culminates in a joyful and grandiose conclusion. *The Blue Danube* has been performed in nearly every corner of the world, seemingly transcending any language barrier as an anthem that represents pure joy and human spirit.

- Zach Bickell

Gasoline Rainbows is a musical ode to the dynamic city of Detroit, drawing inspiration from three distinct sources. The title itself pays homage to Detroit, also known as the Motor City, capturing both the industrial legacy and the pulsating energy of this iconic metropolis. Reflecting my personal encounter with the city earlier that year, the composition is a heartfelt expression of the vibrant atmosphere that captivated me during my visit. The second inspiration stems from the rich musical heritage of Detroit, particularly the Motown era. Through intentional references to Motown's soulful melodies and rhythmic brilliance, "Gasoline Rainbows" becomes a musical time capsule, transporting listeners to a golden era of this influential musical movement. The third layer of inspiration arises from the scientific phenomenon known as the gasoline rainbow effect. Analogous to spilled gasoline creating a mesmerizing spectrum of colors, the piece employs a diverse palette of sounds and textures. This effect becomes a metaphorical representation of the diverse and colorful tapestry that defines the city of Detroit. Commissioned by the Detroit Metropolitan Youth Symphony, "Gasoline Rainbows" serves as a sincere thank-you letter to the city and its people. By interweaving Motown influences with a vibrant orchestral canvas, the composition strives to encapsulate the essence of a city known for its resilience, creativity, and cultural richness. Thank you, Detroit.

- Katahji Copley

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

Symphony in E minor, Op. 32, “Gaelic Symphony”, Mvt 1, debuted in the late 19th century, a time when male composers dominated classical music. Icons like Dvořák, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky shaped the orchestral landscape, while women were typically celebrated only as performers. Despite these cultural barriers, Beach emerged as a leading voice in American classical music.

Born in 1867, Amy Marcy Cheney displayed remarkable musical talent from an early age, gaining acclaim as a pianist before her compositional skills attracted attention. Though societal norms restricted women’s roles, her husband, Henry Beach, supported her musical pursuits, albeit within the confines of tradition. Throughout her life, Beach maintained a profound connection to nature, which heavily influenced her music. This influence is evident in pieces like *Romance for Violin and Piano*, where the violin mimics birdsong, and in her symphonic works. Beach also experienced synesthesia, perceiving music as colors, which added layers of vivid textures to her compositions.

Her *Gaelic Symphony*, particularly its first movement, showcases her ability to paint with sound. The woodwinds provide beautifully orchestrated lines, creating a vibrant array of colors, while the low strings deliver a dark, driving rhythm. The brass adds depth, outlining key melodic and motivic figures. The result is a rich mosaic of orchestral hues that gives the work its emotional and sonic power. The premiere of the Gaelic Symphony was a significant moment in challenging the gender norms of the time, receiving widespread acclaim. Fellow composer George Whitefield Chadwick even humorously remarked, “Why was I not born a woman?” The symphony not only affirmed Beach’s place in the American musical canon but also left a lasting impression on the public and continues to be celebrated for its artistic brilliance.

- Zach Bickell

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 U.S.A. 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 BIOS

Zongheng Zhang is a first-year Doctoral student in Orchestral Conducting at Michigan State University, studying under Professors Octavio Más-Arocas and Kathrine Kilburn. He holds a Master degree in Orchestral Conducting from UT Austin, where he served as Assistant Conductor for the UT Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the UT University Orchestra. Zhang has worked with Austin Opera, Butler Opera Center, and Berlin Opera Academy. He has conducted operas such as *La bohème* and *Carmen*, and premiered *Le faucon* by Dmitry Bortniansky in 2024. From 2016 to 2021, Zhang was Concertmaster for The Orchestra Now and Bard Conservatory, collaborating with renowned conductors.

Daniel Jaggars is a Master student in Orchestral Conducting at Michigan State University. A student of Professors Octavio Mas-Arocas and Katherine Kilburn, Daniel serves as Assistant Conductor for the MSU Symphony Orchestra and MSU Concert Orchestra. He holds a Bachelor degree in music from the University of Nebraska, Omaha, where he studied conducting with Miguel Harth-Bedoya. Additionally, Daniel studied clarinet at Ithaca College with Dr. Richard Faria. He has attended several workshops with renowned conductors and performers, studying symphonic, operatic, and chamber repertoire. He is immensely grateful for the numerous people who have made his journey in music possible.

PERSONNEL

Violin I

**Colin Davidson, Computer Science
Leah Tantengco, Business
Renee Crachiola, Humanities Pre Law
Gwendolyn Kohl, Political Science
Sophie Rees, Marketing
Sarah Pecis, Integrative biology
Samantha Lang, Human Biology
Jannifer Choe, Business Mgmt.
Emily Telgenhoff, Computer Science
Grace Khamis, Psychology
Esther Toy, Political Theory/German
Sarah Saado, Computer Science
Michael Salem, Psychology
Emily Swieringa, Horticulture
Hyoungkoo Jeong, Mechanical
Engineering
Jessica Hopson Marketing Research
& Analytics
Jolie Kretzschmar, Psychology

Violin II

*Ethan Davidson, Microbiology
Sofia Rowell, Criminal Justice
Will DeRuyter, Neuroscience &
Psychology
Nick Majestic, Astrophysics
Alisia Coipel, Psychology
Hannah Podsiadlik, Psychology
Michael Barger, Computer
Engineering
Maya Stackable
Sofia Lamerato, Integrative Biology
Ana Ivanov, Biochemistry &
Molecular Biology
Bre Vermeulen, Biomedical
Laboratory Science
Paulson Justin, Zoology
Carolyn Cheyne, Fisheries and
Wildlife & Communications)
Srishti Gowda, Psychology
Allysha Potts, Linguistics
Josie Fillman, Chemistry
Lara Rassam, Biochemistry
Julia Mejza, Interior Design
Chasen Liu

Viola

*Mio Hogan, Environmental Biology
& Microbiology
Mark Remington, Intl. Relations

Viola (cont.)

Joshua Hamilton
Ryan Peoples, Chemical Engineering
Drake Howard, Linguistics & French
Mihir Naik, Math & Physics
Andrew Harms, Astrophysics
Hailey Macenas, Human Biology
Allicea Sommerville, Human
Biology
Brandon Grabowski, Mechanical Engr.
Michael Nardi
Gerik Wolak, Actuarial Science

Cello

*Allison Voneida, Horticulture
Griffon Siersma, Physics
Alex Logan
Isabell Ku, English & French
Madeline Benson, Chemical
Engineering
Alex Cross, Physics
Zach Bickell, Biochemistry &
Molecular Biology
Kael Ligon, International Relations/
French
Tristen Olsson, Physics
Abby Majestic, Psychology/Spanish
Sam Colby, Digital Storytelling
Caleb Patrick
Jaiyu Bai, Cello Performance

Bass

*Justin Bennett, Advanced
Mathematics
Adam Albanese, Biochemistry
Colette Walraven, Veterinary
Nursing Alumni
Faith Thomson, Computer
Engineering
Lily Dixon, Arts and Humanities &
Public Policy
Theo Durrett, Alumni

Flute

Tiffany Rennells, Neuroscience &
data science
Sophie Aguas, Supply Chain Mgmt.
Adam Gulley, Music Composition

PERSONNEL (cont.)

Oboe

Jackie Russell, Political Theory &
Constitutional Democracy
Theising Davis, Mechanical Engr.

Clarinet

Ciel Riskus, Music Education
Chris Dhespollari, Accounting
Solomon Makonnen, Neuroscience
Rylan McCurdy, Biochemistry &
Molecular Biology

Bassoon

Eric Hall, community member
Evan Dietrich
Erika Clippinger, Music Performance

Horn

Jonah Weber, Music Composition
Marco Abat, Data Science
Alton Fox, Game and Interactive
Media
Billur Haskara, Computer
Engineering
Alex Osborn, Pre-Med/ Biosystem
Engineering

Trumpet

Ian Freeman Computational
Mathematics, Science, Engr.
Taylor Robison, Psychology & Law,
Justice, and Public Policy
Patrick Mulligan, Music Performance
Nathan Emeott, Computer Science
Sohum Kapoor, Computer Science
Edward Kolodziej, Animal Science

Trombone

Adam Duffy
Brody Keeley, Urban Planning
Patrick Mulligan, Music Performance
Nicholas Simonelli, Comparative
Cultures and Politics

Tuba

Josh Pope, Game & Interactive
Media

Percussion

Alex Walters, Social Relations/Policy
Matthew Gagea, Biochemistry. and
Genetics
Tristan Gras
Nathan Chou, Exploratory
Jack Briggs
Sydney Fairman, Exploratory
Catherine Lee, Coach

Harp

Ryan Johnston

Piano

Jingting Huang, Music Performance

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Aaron Longuski
Cole Sheffer

Assistant Conductor

Daniel Jaggars
Zongheng Zhang

** Denotes Concert Master

* Denotes Principal

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