



College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU Symphony Orchestra

Lift Up Thine Ears

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor
Zongheng Zhang, guest conductor
Suren Bagratuni, cello

Michael Daugherty, guest composer

*Generously sponsored by
James and Susan Bonfiglio*

Sunday, October 26, 2025
Cobb Great Hall, Wharton Center, 7:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104, B. 191

Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)

Allegro

Adagio, ma non troppo

Finale. Allegro moderato

Suren Bagratuni, cello

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor

Intermission

*Catch Me When I Fall

Ayako Pederson-Takeda
(b. 2000)

The Sam and Mary Austin New Fanfares Project

Zongheng Zhang, conductor

Lift Up Thine Ears

Michael Daugherty
(b. 1954)

Lend me your ears

It rings in the ear

The Spirit is the Conscious Ear

Octavio Más-Arocas, conductor

**world premiere*

PROGRAM NOTES

The Sam and Mary Austin New Fanfares Project

MSU Symphony Orchestra concerts will open with a newly written fanfare composed by a current composition student. The selected students are assigned to write short works for a diverse group of players giving them the opportunity to present their work with the Symphony Orchestra audience. For their continuing support of new music at MSU, we are honored to name the fanfare project after Sam and Mary Austin.

Catch Me When I Fall - And after everything we have been through, will you be there to catch me when I fall? Thank you to the Michigan State University composition faculty for inviting me to compose this fanfare as a part of the Sam and Mary Austin Fanfares Project. Thank you to Sam and Mary Austin for your generosity in supporting this project.

- Ayako Pederson-Takeda

Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104 - In September 1892, Antonín Dvořák arrived in America to assume the post of director at the National Conservatory of Music in New York, invited by its founder, Jeannette Thurber. The position offered not only a generous salary but also the opportunity to perform his own works. Dvořák spent the next two and a half years teaching, performing, and discovering musical inspiration in his new environment. His *Cello Concerto in B Minor*, one of only two works written during his final year in New York, was inspired by cellist and composer Victor Herbert. After hearing Herbert's *Second Cello Concerto*, Dvořák was struck by its brilliant use of the cello's upper register and imaginative orchestration. He adopted similar innovations, expanding the traditional orchestra with three trombones, tuba, piccolo, and triangle to create a rich, symphonic texture. Though the larger forces might have threatened to overwhelm the soloist, Dvořák skillfully balanced the cello and orchestra, often allowing the cello to accompany or remain silent while other instruments sang. The result is a dialogue between equals rather than a virtuoso showcase.

The first movement opens like a symphonic exposition, beginning with a dark, march-like theme that grows to a grand climax before yielding to a tender horn melody. The cello enters *quasi improvvisando*, exploring distant keys and emotional depths. The *Adagio, ma non troppo* unfolds in lyrical G major before a sudden outburst introduces a quotation from Dvořák's song "Leave

PROGRAM NOTES (cont.)

Me Alone”, written years earlier and beloved by his sister-in-law, Josefina Kaunitzová, who was gravely ill during the concerto’s composition. This poignant moment imbues the movement with deep personal resonance.

The finale is a lively, dance-like celebration colored by Dvořák’s anticipation of returning to Bohemia. Echoes of earlier themes, including the song quotation now transformed into a major key, culminate in an exuberant and triumphant close—one of the most powerful endings in the cello repertoire.

- James M. Keller, LA Phil

Lift Up Thine Ears for orchestra was commissioned in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Omaha Symphony. The theme of my three-movement, 20-minute symphony is how the human spirit can be uplifted by learning to listen with new ears.

The first movement recalls Shakespeare’s dramatic words, “Lend me your ears,” from his play Julius Caesar. These four words are echoed in a four-note musical motive that I have composed, which is heard at the beginning of the movement, played by the strings. I then develop the four-note motive through various orchestrations, melodic transpositions and rhythmic transformations.

The title of the second movement comes from Martin Luther King’s 1963 “Letter from Birmingham Jail” where he wrote, “it rings in the ear”, as a lamentation and call for action after he was arrested for leading a civil rights protest. I have composed a musical lament introduced by the English horn and harp, developed by the woodwind section, and then leading into the cellos and French horns playing a melody that evokes Dr. King as “a wayfaring stranger traveling this world of woe”.

The third movement turns a phrase from Emily Dickinson’s poem, “The Spirit is the Conscious Ear”, into a celebration of the orchestra as a spirit of community created through the power and energy of music. As they listen to each other, the conductor and the musicians of the orchestra, playing diverse instruments in the woodwind, brass, percussion and string sections, collaborate in pulsating rhythmic counterpoint to create an uplifting experience for all listeners.

- Michael Daugherty

ARTIST-FACULTY BIOS

Suren Bagratuni, professor of cello at the MSU College of Music – winner of the Silver Medal at the 1986 International Tchaikovsky Competition while still a student at the Moscow Conservatory – has gone on to a distinguished international career as a soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Professor Bagratuni began his musical education there at the age of six. After winning several national and international competitions, he continued his studies at the Moscow Conservatory and later in the United States, at the New England Conservatory of Music. Performing since age ten and as a soloist since age thirteen, he has appeared in solo recitals and as a soloist with all the major orchestras in the former Soviet Union, throughout Europe, North and South America, Asia, and South Africa. His chamber music appearances have included invitations to major festivals throughout North, South, and Central America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Mr. Bagratuni has been invited to judge and chair in numerous international competitions such as Tchaikovsky, Isang Yun, and Khachaturian, to name a few. He has won critical acclaim for his recordings on several labels, and he is artistic director of MSU's Ken and Sandy Beall Cello Plus Chamber Music Festival, and founder of International Music Academy in Todi, Italy.

Octavio Más-Arocas is Director of Orchestras at MSU. He is the Music Director and Conductor of the Mansfield Symphony in Ohio, the Marquette Symphony in Michigan, the Clinton Symphony in New York, and Conductor-in-Residence at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, California. Previous positions include Principal Conductor of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Resident Conductor of the Unicamp Symphony Orchestra in Brazil, Director of Orchestras at Ithaca College, Lawrence University, Baldwin Wallace University, and at Interlochen Arts Academy. He has also been Resident-Conductor of the Sewanee Summer Music Festival and Assistant Conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra. An award-winning conductor, Más-Arocas was chosen by Kurt Masur for the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Award working as Maestro Masur's assistant with the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Helsinki Radio orchestras. Más-Arocas is the winner of the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, Thelma A. Robinson Award from the Conductors Guild, Prize Winner of the Third European Conductors Competition, and winner of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain Conductors Competition. He has appeared with orchestras and taught masterclasses throughout the world.

GUEST COMPOSER BIO

Multiple GRAMMY Award-winning composer **Michael Daugherty** has achieved international recognition as one of the ten most performed American composers of concert music, according to the League of American Orchestras. His orchestral music, recorded by Naxos over the last two decades, has received six GRAMMY Awards, including Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2011 for *Deus ex Machina* for piano and orchestra and in 2017 for *Tales of Hemingway* for cello and orchestra. Current commissions for 2020 include new orchestral works for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Omaha Symphony, and a concerto for violinist Anne Akiko Meyers who will give the world premiere with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in 2021.

Michael Daugherty was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1954 and is the son of a dance-band drummer and the oldest of five brothers, all professional musicians. As a young man, Daugherty studied composition with many of the preeminent composers of the 20th century including Pierre Boulez at IRCAM in Paris (1979), Jacob Druckman, Earle Brown, Bernard Rands, and Roger Reynolds at Yale (1980-82), and György Ligeti in Hamburg (1982-84). Daugherty was also an assistant to jazz arranger Gil Evans in New York from 1980-82. In 1991, Daugherty joined the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance as Professor of Composition, where he is a mentor to many of today's most talented young composers. He is also a frequent guest of professional orchestras, festivals, universities and conservatories around the world.

STUDENT BIOS

Ayako Pederson-Takeda is a composer, educator, and cellist based in East Lansing, MI. She is pursuing dual Master of Music degrees in Composition and Theory at Michigan State University, where she serves as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Ayako holds Bachelor degrees in Composition and Music Education from the University of Georgia. Her music blends lyrical melodies, lush harmonies, and rhythmic grooves influenced by contemporary classical, folk, soft rock, and singer-songwriter styles. Inspired by words, photographs, and everyday life, she often incorporates her own poetry and text, exploring sound, timbre, and timing to create vivid musical storytelling.

Zongheng Zhang is a second-year Doctoral student in Orchestral Conducting at Michigan State University, studying under Professors Octavio Mas-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.

PERSONNEL

Violin I

Leonid Tsoy **
Chonghua Zuo
Qingzhuo Li
Runqi Weng
Endi Chen
Amy Chang
Yulin Zhou
Wang Liang
Layang Ka
Zenan Li
Fanhong Jiang
Wenjin Zhang
Kieran Venugopal
Selin Samsar
Lin Heng Ping
Chenghong Yin
Lyudmila Gofurova
Noah Walter

Violin II

Diya Dong *
Farangiz Takhirova
Thomas Shahbaghyan
Hannah Hsu
Sarah Munson
Min-Han Tsai
Arianna Argentieri
Hsin-Jen Yang
Tadan Baartz-Bowman
You-Jung Hsu
Xinying Hu
Yueyu Liu
Jungmin Lee
Dana Hardy
Mabel Ciske
Ashwin Innuganti
Alison Birmingham

Viola

Yu-Chieh Lin *
Jian Xiong
Xinye Xu
Megan Turner
Yifei Wang
Jiajing Fang

Viola (cont.)

Mengyuan Song
Tirian Cooper
Qiongwen Zhang
Jamie Kasper
A. Chapman-Anderson

Cello

Weigen Jiang *
Aaron Longuski
Weian Gu
Cheng-Hung Chung
Ruiyang Xie
Tung-An Chien
Yi-Chen Ke
Nolan Wiebenga
Jingyuan Zhang
Shaniah Cooper

Bass

Alex Zajdel *
Otto Krueger
Grant Phillips
Parker Duncan
Manyi Zhang
Ariel LeBlanc
Kaden Connell
Grace Kovacs

Flute

Morgan Page
Ivana Chacon
Josean Delgado

Oboe

Brett Boyer
Emily Quintana
Ari Vanderlaan

Clarinet

Chang Shu
Jake Basil
Rafael Puga

Bassoon

Megan Frederick
Katherine Dahn
Rosalie Trueback

Horn

Reed Fitzpatrick
Caden Dennie
Alexander Delperdang
Alden Leonard

Trumpet

Natalia Vela
Calvin Pfund
Kaley Rodriguez
Evelyn Szilagyi

Trombone

Jordan Dove
David Grimes

Bass Trombone

Jonah Weller

Tuba

AJ Johnson

Percussion

Colin Chandler
Benjamin Lober
Cadence Miller
Taryn Parry
Jonah Schertz
Klaire Thomas

Harp

Serenity Flores

Assistant Conductor

Daniel Jaggars
Zongheng Zhang

Librarians

Aaron Longuski
Cole Sheffer

***Denotes Concert
Master*

** Denotes Principal*

PRIVATE GIFTS play a vital role in our ability to maintain and enhance the quality of the programs we offer. Donations support student scholarships, fellowships, student travel and performance opportunities, instrument acquisitions, guest artists, outreach activities, operations, and other crucial areas that make the College of Music an exemplary place of learning.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025-2026 SPONSORS

- **Sam and Mary Austin Fund for New Music** (Musique 21 concerts)
- **Ken and Sandy Beall** (Cello Plus Chamber Music Festival Series)
- **James and Susan Bonfiglio** (Symphony Orchestra, Oct. 26; Fall Opera)
- **Jenny Chung and Family for Human Rights Fund** (Rucker, Feb. 15)
- **Joanne and Bill Church** (West Circle Series)
- **April Clobes and Glen Brough** (USA at 250 Years)
- **Trustee Emerita Dee Cook in memory of her husband Byron Cook** (Four Seasons)
- **Susan Davis** (Spring Opera)
- **Dean Transportation** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Alena Fabian, M.D.** (Votapek, Mar. 23; Khristenko, Mar. 30)
- **Jim Forger and Deborah Moriarty** (Lunar New Year Celebration Concert)
- **John and Gretchen Forsyth** (Wagner, Sept. 19)
- **Barbara and Bill Given** (Four Seasons; Alegría Navideña)
- **Anonymous** (Rucker, Feb. 15)
- **Howard and Pam Gourwitz** (Lulloff, Oct. 30)
- **Kevin and Amy Guskiewicz** (Alegría Navideña)
- **Hamilton-Dodson African Diaspora Endowment for the College of Music** (Musekiwa Chingodza, Oct. 2)
- **Lauren Harris** (Symphonic Dialogues; Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Anne Hiller** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Stanley and Selma Hollander Endowment for Chamber Music** (Gems for Cello)
- **Eileen G. Houston** (Wagner/Johnson/Wang, Sept. 19; Thompkins/Dease/Tang, Oct. 14; Trombone Ensemble, Nov. 8; Kanda, Nov. 18; Tuba/Euphonium, Jan. 28; Huiet, Feb. 24)
- **Taylor Johnston Early Music Series Endowment established by Taylor Johnston** (Taylor Johnston Early Music Series)
- **Hari Kern and the late Ralph R. Edminster, M.D.** (Votapek, Mar. 23)
- **Michael and Paula Koppisch** (Votapek Piano Festival, Aug. 15-17; Sherman/Zuber, Mar. 24)
- **Lansing Chapter of the American Guild of Organists** (Organist Nicole Keller, Sept. 14; Organist Peter Sykes, Mar. 22)
- **Jill Canny and Robert Last** (MSU Federal Credit Union Jazz Artist in Residence, A. Cohen, April 18; Jazz Spectacular Finale Concert)
- **Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment established by Lauren Julius Harris** (Fall and Spring Opera)

- **Ann, John and Abby Lindley** (Alegría Navideña)
- **Merritt Lutz** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Joseph and Jeanne Maguire** (A Jazzy Little Christmas)
- **Marshall Music Co.** (Symphonic Dialogues)
- **Pat and Mary McPharlin** (Jazz Infusion; Jazz: Spirituals Prayer and Protest)
- **Friends of Jay D. Meetz** (Fall Opera)
- **Dr. Roy and Christine Meland** (Four Seasons)
- **Gordon E. Miracle** (Four Seasons; Votapek, Mar. 23)
- **MSU Federal Credit Union** (Showcase Series; Spartan Spectacular; Celebrating the Spectrum; MSU Music on The Road in Detroit)
- **George Urban and Rae Ramsdell** (Jang/Moriarty, Feb. 8)
- **Liz and Tony Raduazo** (Pass a Good Time, Oct. 5; Sensory Friendly Spartan Concerts)
- **Charles and Nancy Seebeck** (Bagratuni, Mar. 16)
- **Leonard and Sharon Tabaka** (Jazz Spectacular Finale Concert)
- **TechSmith** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Dr. Robert W. Uphaus and Dr. Lois M. Rosen** (Symphonic Dialogues; Four Seasons; Beethoven; Happy Birthday Mozart!; Yehuda/Warren, Jan. 29; Bagratuni, Mar. 16; and Bagratuni, Mar. 31)
- **Linn Van Dyne and Mike Knox** (Happy Birthday Mozart!)
- **Barbara E. Wagner** (Wagner Chamber Music Competition)
- **Anonymous** (Beacon Hill Music Series)
- **Richard Witter** (A Celebration of the Beautiful Voice)
- **Richard and Joan Witter Endowment for MSU Opera Theatre** (Fall and Spring Opera)
- **WKAR** (Artist-Faculty and Guest Recital Series)
- **Worthington Family Foundation** (Opera Season)
- **Andrea L. Wulf** (Piano Monster)

SPONSORSHIPS AND RECOGNITION

Sponsorships are available at \$1,000, \$2,500, and \$5,000. Sponsors will receive recognition in the form of event publicity, promotions, programs, and through online recognition. For information about event sponsorships and giving to the college, please call (517) 353-9872 or e-mail music.giving@msu.edu.



UPCOMING EVENTS

10/27 Monday
Musique 21
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$

10/28 Tuesday
Taylor Johnston Early Music Series
Emi Ferguson and Ruckus
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$\$

10/29 Wednesday
Artist-Faculty and Guest Recital Series sponsored by WKAR
andPlay: Drifting Landscapes
Cook Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m. \$

10/30 Thursday
Halloween, Spooky Tunes for Carillon
Beaumont Tower, 9:00 p.m. free

11/1 Saturday
Chorale/State Singers: A Choral Tapestry
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$

11/3 Monday
Joanne and Bill Church West Circle Series
Four Seasons
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$\$

11/5 Wednesday
Percussion Ensemble
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$

11/6 Thursday
African Diaspora Percussion Ensemble
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$

TICKET PRICES

\$ \$14 Adults, \$12 Seniors (age 60 and older), Students with ID and anyone under age 18 are free but require a ticket for admission.
\$\$ \$19 Adults, \$17 Seniors, \$9 Students with ID and anyone under age 18.
\$\$\$ \$24 Adults, \$22 Seniors, \$14 Students and those under age 18.
Please note: *All events scheduled in Murray Hall are general admission seating.*