
ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA

STEVEN AMUNDSON, *CONDUCTOR*

SPRING PERFORMANCE RECORDING



BROADCAST: SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021

*RECORDED: MAY 16, 2021 (SKOGLUND AUDITORIUM)
APRIL 26, 2021 (BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL)*

Overture to *La gazza ladra* (“The Thieving Magpie”)

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

Rossini wrote *La gazza ladra* (“The Thieving Magpie”) at the young age of 25, during the peak of his opera career. His reputation as a master of the genre was already established, and his quick rise to power left him in an unprecedented position of notoriety. Although Rossini is best known for his comic works, *La gazza ladra* is nothing of the sort. Though it has comedic moments, the story is based on a tragic, real situation: a maid is wrongfully accused of stealing a silver spoon, and is sentenced to death for her crime. After she is executed, it comes to light that the spoon was not stolen, but rather was taken by a magpie that put it in its nest. In Rossini’s opera the story has a happier ending, with the truth being discovered before the girl is executed. Despite the happy ending, however, Rossini’s opera is not short on dramatic moments.

With this overture, Rossini breaks from his tradition of reusing overtures, or leaving their composition for the last minute. The overture to *La gazza ladra* is a distinct, unique work that features music from later in the opera. It is in loose sonata form, opening with a drum roll before the militaristic, march-like first theme emerges. The next theme is a contemplative, minor melody, during which the maid is assessing her sentencing. The trombones solemnly seem to seal her fate. The second theme begins her trial, and in typical Rossini fashion, steadily builds from a whisper to a loud, triumphant statement. Both themes return before a wild *prestissimo* finish.

—Program note by Penelope Musto ’21

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

I. *Allegro aperto*

Jessica Folson ’21, violin

In 1775, in the span of nine months, Mozart composed five violin concertos. His fifth and last violin concerto was likely written for Antonio Brunetti, a violinist in the orchestra of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Mozart, an accomplished violinist himself, opens the concerto with an orchestral version of the piece’s exposition, and then brings in the solo violin with a new and different angelic *adagio* melody. However, before long, the beginning melody comes back in the solo violin to continue the movement in sonata form, comprised of an exposition with two light and cheerful themes, a development with an operatic minor melody, and a recapitulation, ending with a *cadenza*. In Mozart’s time, *cadenzas* were often improvised, but this performance features the *cadenza* written by the Hungarian violinist Josef Joachim.

—Program note by Jessica Folson ’21

Concerto for Harp and Orchestra in A Major

Carl von Dittersdorf (1739–1799)

III. *Rondeau (Allegretto)*

Anna Koopmann ’21, harp

Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf was an Austrian violinist and composer. In his time, he was known as a writer of many popular symphonies, operas, concertos, and chamber works, and was a friend of Haydn and Mozart. Dittersdorf played first violin when the three, joined by Johann Vanhal, famously performed together in a string quartet in 1784. Unlike his colleague Mozart, Dittersdorf is not known to have written for the harp. Despite the prevalence of the single-action pedal harp during this time period, it had a greater reputation as a parlor instrument in the domestic domain of females than as a concert instrument. As little original music was composed for them, harpists frequently adopted harpsichord music into their repertoire. That practice continues today, and Dittersdorf’s Harpsichord Concerto in A Major has been transcribed for the harp many times to emphasize its place in the classical repertoire of the instrument. This arrangement adds oboes and horns to the original string section of the orchestration. The third movement of this piece, the *Rondeau (Allegretto)*, performed alone far less than the more substantial opening movement, is nonetheless charming and dramatic. It wonderfully showcases the character and color of the modern pedal harp and is a joy for both soloist and orchestra, who pass off its laughingly contagious theme in playful conversation.

—Program note by Anna Koopmann ’21

“Zeffiretti lusinghieri” from *Idomeneo*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Emma Arachtingi '21, *soprano*

Zeffiretti lusinghieri,
Deh volate al mio tesoro:
E gli dite, ch'io l'adoro
Che mi serbi il cor fedel.

Zephyrs gently caressing,
Oh fly to my beloved:
And tell him that I adore him
and keep his heart faithful.

E voi piante, e fior sinceri
Che ora innaffia il pianto amaro,
Dite a lui, che amor più raro
Mai vedeste sotto al ciel.

And you plants, and flowers tender
which my bitter tears water,
tell him that a love more rare
was never seen beneath the sky.

— *Giambattista Varesco*
tr. *Tina Gray*

On the Island of Crete after the end of the Trojan War, Ilia is singing to the winds and telling them of her rare love for Prince Idamante who is far from her. She asks the winds to carry her love to him wherever he may be. In this dialogue with the winds and plants around her, she finds comfort and joy in telling the natural world of her love. After this year of being separated from loved ones, there is certainly a very tangible connection to Ilia's longing for her distant love.

—*Program note by Emma Arachtingi '21*

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor

Florence B. Price (1887–1953)

II. *Andante cantabile*

III. *Juba*

Florence Price was born in 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas. When none of the white music teachers in her town would take her on as a student, her own mother began teaching her. She enrolled in the New England Conservatory in Boston, which was one of the few conservatories accepting Black students into their programs. She returned to Little Rock after her studies, and settled down to teach and raise her family there. However, racial tensions and violence in the city became too much, and after a public lynching she chose to relocate with her family to Chicago. It was in Chicago that her musical career began to take off. Her first symphony, deeply inspired by Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, won a prize in composition. In addition to a cash prize, her symphony received its premiere with the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Frederick Stock. She later wrote songs for the iconic Marian Anderson, and she eventually sang Price's arrangement of "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord" at the historic Lincoln Memorial concert in Washington, D.C. Despite her success, however, Price still struggled to make ends meet with her music career. In a 1943 letter to the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, she acknowledged the cause of her struggle: "I have two handicaps, I am a woman and I have some Negro blood in my veins."

Price's fourth symphony was the last major work she wrote before her death. It was composed in 1945, but was never performed during Price's lifetime. It was considered a lost piece until a new owner of Price's summer home in St. Anne, Illinois found a collection of manuscripts in 2009. The piece was later premiered in 2018 by the Fort Smith Symphony. The second movement is a lilting lullaby, with the melody in the oboe and rich harmonies in the strings. The third movement is an homage to the African American Juba Dance, a circle dance that involves stomping and slapping the arms, legs, chest, and cheeks.

—*Program note by Penelope Musto '21*

Eight Instrumental Miniatures

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

V. *Moderato alla breve*

VI. *Tempo di Marcia*

VII. *Larghetto*

VIII. *Tempo di Tango*

Max Voda '21, *conductor*

Stravinsky composed these miniatures originally as five finger piano exercises based off of a five-note tone row and adapted these exercises for a series of evening concerts. Movements V–VII were first performed in Toronto, and movement VIII at a concert in Mexico. The instruments that voice the melody line play the tone row, with the supporting instruments playing flushed out accompaniment. These miniatures are extremely sparse, and require each performer to distinctly own their part as each voice is unique.

—*Program note by Max Voda '21*

Le Tombeau de Couperin

IV. Rigaudon

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Lauren Flaten '21, *conductor*

Known today for his masterful orchestration and unique musical language, Maurice Ravel's compositions did not easily gain notoriety in France. He studied under Fauré at the Paris Conservatory, but won no prizes and was therefore expelled in 1895 and again in 1900. Ravel nonetheless continued to establish himself as a composer through his methodical work ethic. In 1914, Ravel began work on a suite for piano entitled *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, drawing inspiration from Baroque composer François Couperin and the 18th century dance suite. His work was interrupted by World War I, which had a profound impact on the young composer. Ravel returned to finish the piece in 1917 after experiencing the death of his mother and numerous friends. After the war, each movement received a dedication to a friend lost in combat and was orchestrated from the piano version in 1919. Based on the Baroque *Rigaudon* dance, the fourth movement's fanfare motives sound particularly celebratory, while commemorating the loss of brothers Pierre and Pascal Gaudin. Musicologist Gerard McBurney notes: "*Le Tombeau* does not talk directly about the war; it talks about eternal values: it talks about beauty and elegance, the things we want to preserve...in other words, the opposite of war."

—Program note by Lauren Flaten '21

Banner for string quartet and chamber orchestra

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Jessica Folson '21, Clara Brown '21, *violin*; Alex Long '22, *viola*; Anna Seppa '21, *cello*

Harrison Clark '21, *string bass soloist*

Acclaimed composer and violinist Jessie Montgomery's ability to expertly blend classical music with nods to vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice makes her one of the most relevant composers and commentators on life in the 21st century. Born in Manhattan to a musician father and a theater artist mother, she grew up experiencing activism through music firsthand. The Lower East Side of Manhattan was in a pivotal moment during Montgomery's early life, as artists, students, and immigrants began moving to the area after a period of decline. Along with this change came a wave of musical experimentation and community activism, and Montgomery cites these early experiences as inspiration for her unique musical style. About *Banner*, Montgomery says:

Banner was commissioned by the Sphinx Organization as a tribute for the 200th anniversary of the "Star Spangled Banner," the American national anthem. *Banner* is a rhapsody on the "Star Spangled Banner" theme. Drawing on musical and historical sources from various world anthems and patriotic songs, I've made an attempt to answer the question: "What does an anthem for the 21st century sound like in today's multi-cultural environment?" The structure is loosely based on traditional marching band form where there are several strains or contrasting sections; I have drawn on the drum line chorus as a source for the rhythmic underpinning in the finale.

As a culture, we Americans are perpetually in search of ways to express our ideals of freedom, to proclaim, "We've made it!" as if the very action of saying it aloud makes it so. And for many of our nation's people, that was the case: through work songs and spirituals, enslaved Africans promised themselves a way out and built the nerve to endure the most abominable treatment for the promise of a free life. Immigrants from Europe, Central America, and the Pacific have sought out a safe haven here and, though met with the trials of building a multi-cultured democracy, continue to find roots in our nation and make significant contributions to our cultural landscape. A tribute to the U.S. national anthem means acknowledging the contradictions, leaps and bounds and milestones that allow us to celebrate and maintain the tradition of our ideals.

—Program note by Penelope Musto '21

Ragtime Dance

Scott Joplin (1868–1917)
ed. Gunther Schuller

Hermione Yim '22, *piano*

American composer and pianist Scott Joplin is often referred to as the “king of ragtime.” Though his career was brief, he wrote over 100 ragtime pieces. His most popular ragtime, *Maple Leaf Rag*, is now considered the archetypal ideal for the ragtime genre. Joplin grew up in a musical family in Texarkana, Arkansas. His musical inclinations were nurtured by local teachers, who taught him basic musical knowledge. In the late 1800s, Joplin left his railroad job to pursue music, and traveled the South as a musician. He moved to Sedalia, Missouri in 1894, and began to work as a piano teacher, where he taught a collection of future ragtime composers. He also began publishing during this time; *Maple Leaf Rag* was published in 1899, which catapulted his career. The popularity of *Maple Leaf Rag* brought in a steady lifelong income for Joplin, though his career never reached that level of fame again. He continued to compose ragtime pieces along with two operas and a ragtime ballet until his death in 1917. His death is widely referred to as the death of the purely ragtime era, as it went on to blend with other styles such as jazz and big band swing.

This version of *Ragtime Dance* is arranged by American composer and music historian Gunther Schuller. It is arranged for solo piano and orchestra, and embodies the lively ragtime genre with foot stomps, repeated sections, and layers of rhythmic texture. Schuller acknowledges that there is no ideal interpretation of ragtime music, but attempts to make his arrangements a faithful interpretation of Joplin’s intentions and provide a suggestion for one way to play the piece. *Ragtime Dance* is full of life and energy, and gives a window into the ragtime genre. The solo piano weaves in and out of the orchestral lines, providing rhythmic motives that carry on as echoes throughout the orchestra.

—Program note by Penelope Musto '21

Libertango

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)
orch. Lito Valle

Astor Piazzolla has a diverse musical background; he claims that his inspiration comes from three prominent teachers and sources: the Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera, the French pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, and the people of Buenos Aires. Throughout his career, he not only became a master of the tango, but also brought it from the dance world into the concert music scene. Piazzolla also used his diverse musical training to create a new genre called *Nuevo Tango*, of which *Libertango* is considered a prime example. *Nuevo Tango* blends the traditional Argentine tango with jazz, classical, and folk elements to create a new tango style that was more recognizable for those new to the genre. While the people of Argentina were skeptical of *Nuevo Tango*, the genre took off in Europe and North America.

Libertango was written shortly after Piazzolla’s departure from Argentina in 1973. The title blends the word “liberation” with “tango” as an homage to his departure from traditional tango into a more freeform interpretation of the genre. It also represents his physical departure from the political situation in Argentina, and his newfound ability to live a life free from political and military restrictions. The piece features snappy, traditional rhythms as well as sultry melody lines that embody the *Nuevo Tango* genre.

—Program note by Penelope Musto '21

The Turtle Dove

arr. G. Winston Cassler (1906–1990)

St. Olaf professor of music Winston Cassler wrote this tender arrangement of the English folk song “The Turtle Dove” for the St. Olaf Orchestra in 1960. It is a sentimental favorite of the orchestra and continues to be heard at various concerts each year. Cassler was a member of the faculty from 1949 until his retirement in 1972.

—Program note by Penelope Musto '21

Fare you well, my dear, I must be gone,
And leave you for a while;
If I roam away I'll come back again,
Though I roam ten thousand miles, my dear
Though I roam ten thousand miles.

O yonder doth sit that little turtle dove,
He doth sit on yonder high tree,
A-making a moan for the loss of his love,
As I will do for thee, my dear,
As I will do for thee.

— English folk song

Biographies

Emma Arachtingi, soprano, has been awarded numerous accolades throughout her undergraduate career. Most recently, she was the 2020 winner of the Minnesota division of NATS, as well as the 2019 finalist and 2021 honorable mention in the Schubert Club Scholarship Competition. Beginning her sophomore year, she was a member of the St Olaf Choir through 2020. This spring, Arachtingi decided to defer from graduate school and will spend the next year auditioning and performing in the Twin Cities before going back to school.



Lauren Flaten is senior flute performance major from Roseville, Minnesota. She studies flute under Dr. Catherine Ramirez and has studied conducting under Steven Amundson, Dr. Timothy Mahr, and Dr. Therees Hibbard. She currently serves as principal flute in the St. Olaf Band and St. Olaf Orchestra, and plays in the Left Door woodwind quintet. With these ensembles, Lauren has had the opportunity to travel to Australia, New Zealand, the Midwest, and California. At St. Olaf, Lauren has been a TRIO mentor, member of Phi Sigma Tau Philosophy Honor Society, and enjoys playing softball with the band each spring. After graduation, Lauren will be pursuing a master's degree at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she plans to continue studying flute and conducting.

Jessica Folsom is a violin performance major from Grand Forks, North Dakota. She is honored to have been a member of the St. Olaf Orchestra for the past four years, where she has made her closest friends, best memories, and most impactful music making, especially over domestic and international tours. She has also enjoyed singing in the St. Olaf Chapel Choir and Agnes a Cappella, playing in several chamber ensembles, and ringing in the St. Olaf Handbell Choir. In the fall, she will begin her master's degree in performance at San Francisco Conservatory of Music, studying with Simon James.



Anna Katherine Koopmann is a fifth year senior from central Minnesota majoring in instrumental music education, English, and education. She began studying harp at age eight, and her teachers have included Rachel Brandwein, Kathy Kienzle, Elinor Niemisto, and Carol Harrison. Koopmann previously soloed with the St. Olaf Philharmonia in 2019, and in her time at St. Olaf she has served as harpist and cellist with the St. Olaf Orchestra, harpist and violist in the St. Olaf Philharmonia, harpist in the St. Olaf Band and Norseman Band, and soprano in the St. Olaf Chamber Singers. An awarded composer for the harp, her work was featured at the 2017 National Institute of the American Harp Society. A recent blessing to her life has been welcoming her first niece, Rebel Jane, to the world in April. Following student teaching in the Minneapolis area next year, Koopmann plans for a career combining performing, teaching, composing, writing, and learning without cease!

Max Voda is an instrumental music education major, and a proud member of the St. Olaf Band (by God), St. Olaf Orchestra, and jazz ensembles. He plays violin in orchestra, and string bass in band and jazz. This past year he has had the privilege of being the president of the St. Olaf Band. Max has also participated in a variety of string quartets and jazz combos, and performed and recorded as a member of the indie band Ointment Appointment. Max has served as director of the St. Olaf Horn Ensemble, and sits on the Music Department Student Committee. He would like to thank each of the musicians who joined his lab orchestra this semester, and is proud of the hard work these members have dedicated to making his conducting independent study successful. This fall, Max will student teach in the Twin Cities and looks forward to teaching middle school band and orchestra in the near future.



ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA

STEVEN AMUNDSON, CONDUCTOR

VIOLIN I

- Grace Alexander, *Santa Monica, Calif.*
- Renee Audette, *Baltimore, Md.*
- ††• Clara Brown, *Indianapolis, Ind.*
- Owen Cromwell, *Mukilteo, Wash.*
- Louis Dhoore, *Boise, Idaho*
- Emma Dougherty, *Alma, Mich.*
- †† Jessica Folson, *Grand Forks, N.D.*
- Phoebe Olszewski, *Escondido, Calif.*
- Holly Petersen, *Holland, Mich.*
- Grace Pugh, *Lincoln, Neb.*
- Anna Raphael, *Bloomington, Ind.*
- Annika Seager, *Minnertonka, Minn.*
- Eli Schrubbe, *Andover, Minn.*
- †† Olivia Skaja, *Deer River, Minn.*
- Kalli Sobania, *Little Falls, Minn.*
- Lauren Williams, *Tampa, Fla.*
- Rachel Wyffels, *Plymouth, Minn.*
- Lauren Zimmerman, *Littleton, Colo.*

VIOLIN II

- Erica Anderson, *Duluth, Minn.*
- Renee Audette, *Baltimore, Md.*
- +** Clara Brown, *Indianapolis, Ind.*
- Max Clifford, *Golden Valley, Minn.*
- Addie Jo Lambrecht, *Neenah, Wis.*
- Maria Landherr, *Lake Elmo, Minn.*
- Ann Li, *Olympia, Wash.*
- Katie Marshall, *Horseheads, N.Y.*
- Phoebe Olszewski, *Escondido, Calif.*
- Elyssa Post, *Lincoln, Neb.*
- Emma Rosen, *Carson City, Nev.*
- Eli Schrubbe, *Andover, Minn.*
- Sophia Singleton, *Houston, Texas*
- Maxwell Voda, *Minneapolis, Minn.*
- Veronica White, *Dallas, Texas*

VIOLA

- Louis Dhoore, *Boise, Idaho*
- Brita Gallagher, *Dresser, Wis.*
- Jake Gesell, *Hartland, Wis.*
- Tristan Hall, *Littleton, Colo.*
- Ben Homan, *Waunakee, Wis.*
- Jens Lange, *Albert Lea, Minn.*
- ** Alex Long, *Worthington, Ohio*
- * Shaelyn Muldowney, *Eden Prairie, Minn.*
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- Hayden Reid, *Spokane, Wash.*
- ** Andy Sprinkle, *University Park, Md.*

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♦ English horn

- Piccolo

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