

# School of Music

# Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra

Gerard Morris and Anna Wittstruck, conductors

Featuring guest artist composer Xiang Ao

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2017 7:30 p.m. Schneebeck Concert Hall

# PROGRAM

# Wind Ensemble

Gerard Morris, conductor

"Overture" from <i>Dancer in the Dark</i>	Björk (b. 1965)
Bach's Fugue à la Gigue	J.S. Bach (1685–1750) Gustav Holst, trans. Jon Ceander Mitchell, ed.

that secret from the river. ...... Joel Puckett (b. 1977)

# INTERMISSION

# Symphony Orchestra

Anna Wittstruck, conductor

Mandala	Xiang Ao (b. 1982)
Mathis der Maler	Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)
I. Engelkonzert	
II. Grablegung	
III. Versuchung des heiligen Antonius	

# **PROGRAM NOTES**

"Overture" from Dancer in the Dark (2000)......Björk Björk, the famous Icelandic singer who is known as much for her flair with costumes as for her catchy eccentric music, was born in 1965 and fronted the band *The Sugarcubes* in the 1980's before branching out on her own in the early 1990's. She writes most of her own music, which includes the instrumental "Overture" from *Dancer in the Dark*. Grammy-winning arranger and jazz artist Vince Mendoza orchestrated the Overture for brass, and it was included on Björk's album *Selmasongs*, which is essentially a soundtrack to the film.

Set in Washington state, *Dancer in the Dark* tells the story of Czech immigrant Selma Jezkova (played by Björk), who moved to the United States in 1964. She has a congenital disease that is making her go blind, so she is working as hard as she can (at the local factory) with the limited sight she has left to provide for her 12-yearold son, who will eventually develop the same condition unless she can raise the money for an expensive medical procedure for him. Her only diversion is her love for musicals; she lapses into daydreams involving musical numbers at several points throughout the film, often to her detriment. Nothing goes as Selma plans, yet she does her utmost to protect her son as her vision fades.

The Overture from *Dancer in the Dark* begins in stasis with an E-flat pedal performed by the entire ensemble. As the melody emerges (Selma's motif), it is restated and elaborated, each time becoming simultaneously more urgent and inexorably entwined in the darkening complexity of the work's underlying harmonic foundation. This music is haunting, shimmering, and melancholic in its effect, and as quickly as the work rises, it dissolves back to a more optimistic form of the stasis from which it grew. As a bookend to the story, the final song of the film is based on the Overture's "Selma motif" and is titled "New World."

"New World" Björk

Train-whistles, a sweet clementine Blueberries, dancers in line Cobwebs, a bakery sign Oocoh, a sweet clementine Oocoh, dancers in line Oocoh...

If living is seeing I'm holding my breath In wonder, I wonder What happens next? A new world, a new day to see I'm softly walking on air Halfway to heaven from here Sunlight unfolds in my hair Ooooh, I'm walking on air Ooooh, to heaven from here Ooooh...

If living is seeing I'm holding my breath In wonder, I wonder What happens next? A new world, a new day to see

... If there is no immediate hurry, I would like to postpone writing this piece and first arrange one of Bach's Organ Fugues for military band. I have had this at the back of my mind for many years.

Holst went into greater detail in a rare interview given during his third visit to the United States in 1932:

When I was studying organ some forty years or more ago, it struck me that of all Bach's organ works, just one, this fugue, seemed ineffective on the instrument for which it was composed... I made no attempt to orchestrate it at the time, but then the British Broadcasting Company requested me to write a large work for their military band. I decided to get my hand in—not having written for band for several years—by scoring the *Fugue à la Gigue* before attacking my own work, which was to be the *Prelude and Scherzo Hammersmith*... My publisher, rightfully fearing the opportunities for military band performance of the fugue would be small, insisted on issuing it in an orchestral arrangement, where of course it is likely to have many more performances. I still feel, however, that the band version is far richer and more effective!

The organ fugue to which Holst referred is the *Fugue in G Major* [BWV 577] from "Preludes, Fugues, Fantasias and Other Pieces" in Book III of the Organ Works: *Bachgesellschaft*. For centuries, this fugue was thought to have been an early work dating from Bach's Mühlhausen years, but today it is considered to be spurious. Holst himself gave the title *Bach's Fugue à la Gigue* to the work, completing his military band version in May of 1928. On July 22 of that same year, he conducted the premiere on a special BBC broadcast featuring his compositions for military band. An immediate hit, *Bach's Fugue à la Gigue* received a "record post" from listeners. Both the orchestral and military band versions were published in 1929.

"that secret from the river" (2015).....Puckett "Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time? That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past nor the shadow of the future?" Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*  Hesse's quotation, poetic in its nature, incites a compelling philosophical quandary on the nature of reality and the perception of reality through time. The proposed observation hearkens back to the flux doctrine of ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who noted that one who stepped into the same river twice was surrounded by changed waters. Hesse's further exploration of this concept proposes a host of possibilities. Is our perception of time as a linear progression fundamentally flawed? Does anything remain the same over time, even as it changes significantly? Siddhartha's journey in the novel hinges on his epiphanies by the river, as it serves as a metaphor for his (and the reader's) life.

This quotation serves as the inspiration and soul of Joel Puckett's "that secret from the river," which approaches the idea of the river from the abstraction of sound. The composer says of his creative process:

I have a very odd relationship with the past. I am constantly forced to confront past choices I've made in the form of the music I've written which I then experience in the present. When I hear music I've written, I am almost always overwhelmed by the feeling that I'm not actually the person who wrote it. And in a very real sense, I'm not; at least, not anymore. But when I hear it, I feel compelled to be grateful that the person who did write that music left the very best of himself in those notes and I go about my life trying to live up to them.

In a sense, the metaphor of Hesse's river is applied to the life of any person. Can any of us exist outside of the perspective of the absolute present, and are we still the same person as we were in the past or will be in the future? With art, the common predilection is to observe the creator's oeuvre through a synchronic lens, assuming all works are also of the artists themselves. In "that secret from the river," Puckett deals with this concept in a personally meaningful way through a lengthy study in motivic reference and thick, seemingly mystical harmonies. The work as a whole is cast in two large sections: first, an exploration of pure harmonies that are made distorted and hazy through glissandi into sound masses, and second, a series of variants on a familiar harmonic motive. For much of the later portions of the piece, sections of the Hesse quotation are printed to accompany the score in a quasi-programmatic fashion. These fragments, positioned out of order, further lend to the concept of universal existence outside of time presented by the quotation itself.

The piece opens with a flash of keyboard instruments and thick clouds of harmony orchestrated into large alternating consorts of wind instruments building to a tremendous sonority that combines elements of both A major and minor. Out of the resonance emerges a solitary D which carries a feeling of placidity from the previous tumult. The first large section begins in earnest here, as the pitch is expanded through its natural harmonic series. This meditation on D comes in and out of focus as it is increasingly distorted by intense neighboring dissonance (first by microtonal adjustment, and subsequently through ever multiplying collections of semitones). With each sequence, more instruments join and enrich the texture until the full

ensemble contributes. Two repetitions of this contour follow, albeit with altered pitch content and order of entry, before receding away into an expansive largo bearing the quotation fragment "...there is no such thing as time..." This transitional segment, which concludes the first half of the piece, executes glacially paced chords that slowly sink down by half-steps while a gentle canon between flute and trumpet ambiguously hint at both minor and major modalities once more.

The second half of the work, which in the score is accompanied by the Hesse fragment "...not the shadow of the past," begins with a statement in the keyboards of a ringing harmonic progression. These harmonies hauntingly call to mind the principal harmonic motive in the "Eye of Shadow" movement from Puckett's flute concerto *The Shadow of Sirius*. The ensemble joins in and grows in intensity and dissonance through a nearly direct repetition of the opening measures of the piece before cascading into a series of variants on this harmonic idea. A return to the glissando clusters from early in the piece closes the section, this time accompanied by the Sirius chord progression (which descends in this iteration much as the closing chords in the first half of the work). A brief coda continues the descent, adding to the dissonance until being swept away to frame a tender consonance of D-flat major. The journey moves the listener through a broad landscape of sounds, diverse, nostalgic, and seemingly spiritual. We are asked to meditate on whether this river and these waters—even if similar—are ever-changing and to accept these experiences as but a moment in the eternal continuum.

"That secret from the river" was commissioned by Northwestern University in celebration of the completion of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Center for the Musical Arts and is dedicated to Mallory Thompson and the members, past and present, of the Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

# "Mandala" (2016).....Ao

"A Mandala is a specially-drawn boundary line or a kind of earth altar built for preventing external "demons" from invading when Tibetan Esoteric Buddhists are practicing Buddhism. Figures of Buddha will be placed on the Mandala, indicating that Buddhas are gathering there, so that demons dare not get close to the Buddhists.

Actually, Mandala is an imaginary palace and a symbol mark for Buddhists to resist distractions during practice. In modern society, excessive materialism makes people anxious and struggling. Therefore, everyone is in need of a pure place to resist external temptations. Although a Mandala, which appears in a physical form, will always fade out, the one built in people's minds will become increasingly solid.

The creation of this work is like building a Mandala. During the process of constructing timbre's structure, I blend musical elements of Tibetan Buddhist sacrifice ceremony into the timbre structure of my work. When the whole band sings the six-word mantra of Tibetan Buddhism, Ong, Ma, Nee, Bay, Mei, and Hong, the climax of music is achieved. When the music fades out like ebb tide, everything goes quiet

like the sand painting being erased. Substances will die out, while spiritual power will exist in our minds forever." –*Xiang Ao* 

# Mathis der Maler (1934) ..... Hindemith Xiang's "Mandala" expresses abstracted and enduring spiritualism, drawn from the transient matter of an Eastern religious art. Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* ("Mathias the Painter") portrays the more concrete materialism of the West: altarpiece paintings by Mathias Grünewald (c. 1475–1528) from the abbey at Isenheim in Alsace. These sixteenth-century Christian paintings, housed in the historically disputed territory between Germany and France, became emblems of German culture—tactile characterizations of the German nation. Grünewald used bright colors and a stubbornly medievalist style to portray different scenes of Christ; the panels are striking, reverent, and at times grotesque.

Hindemith's three-part symphony *Mathis der Maler* premiered in 1934 and compiles musical material from an opera he was working on bearing the same title. A fictitious account of Grünewald's life, the opera addresses the role of the artist in society—a precarious and pertinent question for a German composer in the 1930s whose music was labeled "degenerate" by the Nazi party.

Each movement of the symphony is based on a panel from Grünewald's altarpiece. The first movement, "Engelkonzert" (Concert of Angels), represents Jesus and Mary surrounded by angels. A simple, pure G-major chord heralds the opening of the movement, against intrusions by G minor. The slow introduction, including a solemn hymn by the trombones, gives way to a spritely theme carried by flute and violins. The second movement, "Grablegung" (Entombment), is a haunting processional, with static orchestral episodes against the cry of the clarinet. This movement accompanies the image of Christ being placed in the tomb after crucifixion. The final movement, "Versuchung des heiligen Antonius" (Temptation of St. Anthony), is an orchestral tour-de-force that moves fluidly from terror to elation.

Throughout the symphony, Hindemith displays his love of crisp tonal music and arcane musical procedures. The first and final movements incorporate culminating and exhilarating fugues, gesturing to the contrapuntal writing of J.S. Bach. The symphony begins with medieval song and concludes with a thirteenth-century chant, "Lauda Sion Salvatorem" in the woodwinds, followed by a spectacular brass chorale. Yet the sonorous landscape of the twentieth century can also be heard in the expressionist yearnings of Hindemith's melodies, particularly the string section's rhapsodic lament ("langsam") in the final movement. A whole history of music unravels in this twenty-five-minute work, like an acoustical art gallery. –*Anna Wittstruck* 

# BIOGRAPHIES

**Xiang Ao** is an associate professor of composition at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music in Chengdu, China. Ao writes music across many genres, such as classical music, pop music, contemporary music, and movie and TV music. His work is enjoyed for its distinctive and innovative style, and has been performed in Australia, the United States, Japan, and South Korea.

Many of Ao's pieces have won awards: "Lian Chen for Trio" won first prize in the IIMHM Composition Competition at the Nava Music Festival in London; "The Night of Kuo Shi Festival" won first prize in the Bashu Composition Competition; "The Painting of Yi Nationality" for string quartet won best works in the 17th Chinese Composition Competition; and "Changes" won third prize in the Sun River Composition Competition.

His work "Mei Flower" was performed respectively at the Chinese International Contemporary Music Festival in Peking (2005) and the 7th Daegu International Contemporary Music Festival in Korea (2007). In October and November 2009, the string orchestra work "Ge Sang Mei Duo" was world premiered in China and the United States. In January 2010, San Diego Symphony Orchestra and the University of Dayton University Symphony Orchestra commissioned "Sichuan folk song—Xiu He Bao" for orchestra, performing in the United States in March 2010. In February 2017 "Mandala," a philharmonic orchestra piece, was commissioned by the Northern Iowa Philadelphia Orchestra and premiered at the University of Northern Iowa. In the same month "The Rhyme from the Ancient Sound," a chamber music piece, was performed in Tokyo Opera Hall.

**Gerard Morris** joined University of Puget Sound School of Music faculty in fall 2009 as director of bands and visiting assistant professor of music. In 2016 he became an associate professor and was honored as the recipient of the President's Excellence in Teaching Award and the United Methodist Church Board of Higher Education Exemplary Teaching Award. Morris earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Western Michigan University, a Master of Music Education degree from University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Doctor of Music degree in conducting from Northwestern University.

As a member of the Puget Sound faculty, he serves as the winds and percussion department chair and conducts the Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, and both the opera and musical theatre orchestras. In addition, he teaches courses in conducting and music education. With passion for new music, Morris has commissioned wind compositions by Michael Colgrass, Carter Pann, Steven Bryant, Daniel Kellogg, Andrew Ardizzoia, Gregory Youtz, Christopher Stark, Michael Markowski, Geoffrey Gordon, James Stephenson, Kevin Day, and Puget Sound student composers.

Morris's conducting credits include appearances at The Midwest Clinic, College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) Western/Northwestern Divisional Conference, Washington Music Educators Association (WMEA) State Conference, California Music Educators Association (CMEA) Bay Section Conference, University of Georgia JanFest, Colorado Music Festival at Chautaugua, Steamboat Strings Music in the Mountains Summer Music Festival, Heartland Marimba Festival, West Valley Winds Workshop (Canmore, Alberta), Calgary Summer Band Workshop, and as featured conductor on composer Neil Thornock's compact disc recording Between the Lines, a project that Morris also co-produced. In addition, he has appeared as guest clinician/ lecturer at CBDNA National Conference, WMEA State Conference, CMEA Bay Section Conference, University of North Carolina at Greensboro New Music Festival, Northwestern University Conducting and Wind Symposium, University of British Columbia Wind Conducting Symposium, and guest artist-in-residence at American Community School (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates), Iowa State University, Xavier University, California State Polytechnic University (Pomona), and St. George's School (Vancouver, British Columbia).

Morris's conducting and teaching are informed by years of professional performing experience as principal euphonium with Boulder Brass and United States Marine Corps Band, Hawai'i. With these organizations he toured the United States, Australia, and Costa Rica as both an ensemble member and soloist. In service to his passion as a conductor and teacher, Morris hosts the Puget Sound Conductors Institute; a biennial four-day workshop bringing together public school music teachers to hone conducting technique, deepen pedagogical knowledge, and strengthen professional relationships within the community.

**Anna Wittstruck** recently joined the University of Puget Sound School of Music as Assistant Professor and Director of Orchestra. Before that she spent two years at Stanford University as Acting Assistant Professor, serving as Interim Music Director and Conductor of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Philharmonia.

Wittstruck has conducted concerts across the United States, in Latin America, in Europe, and in Asia. She has served as a guest conductor with the Harbin Symphony in China and as the 2017 Conducting Fellow with the Eastern Sierra Symphony. She conducted concerts at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and Teatro Nacional de Cuba in Havana, where she performed with Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba and the Chamber Orchestra of Havana. In December 2013 she conducted the first-ever symphonic concert on Catalina Island, "Sounds of America," featuring Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and returned with her touring ensemble the following three seasons. She has conducted concerts at the Rudolfinum in Prague and the Musikzentrum Augarten (home of the Vienna Boys' Choir) in Vienna, as well as concerts in Berlin, Bad Elster, and Teplice.

Wittstruck is also an active orchestral musician whose performances as a cellist span from the Beijing Modern Music Festival to the 2011 YouTube Symphony

Orchestra under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. Her string quartet gave a concert tour of Thailand sponsored by the Yonok and American-Thai Foundations, in honor of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's sixtieth birthday celebrations. She won a blind audition at the age of fourteen to become the youngest contracted member of the Asheville Symphony Orchestra, and has participated in orchestra festivals such as Tanglewood, Round Top, and the National Symphony/ Kennedy Center Institute. She has appeared as a soloist with the Charlotte and Hendersonville Symphonies, on the Public Radio International show "From the Top," and with the Stanford Symphony Orchestra.

Increasingly sought after as an adjudicator, Dr. Wittstruck has judged concerto competitions for the San Francisco and El Camino Youth Symphonies, and appears regularly as a judge and clinician for WorldStrides Heritage Festival. She served on the jury of the 2014 Alice and Eleonore Schoenfeld International String Competition in Harbin, China.

She received her Bachelor of Arts in Music degree from Princeton University with certificates in orchestral conducting and creative writing, and her Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University. While a graduate student, she conducted the Summer Stanford Symphony Orchestra for six consecutive seasons, served as assistant conductor of Stanford's orchestral studies program, and directed the Stanford Wind Symphony, the Stanford New Ensemble, and the Stanford Chinese Ensemble. She also helped create the Stanford Youth Orchestra, an international program for advanced high school students, and taught courses through Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies. At Princeton, she spent two years as assistant conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra and as associate conductor of the Princeton Sinfonia.

Dr. Wittstruck has attended the Pierre Monteux School of Conducting in Hancock, Maine, where she studied with Michael Jinbo, and the Conductor's Retreat at Medomak, where she studied with Kenneth Kiesler. She was the 2017 Conducting Fellow. Other conducting teachers include Michael Pratt, Ruth Ochs, Stephen Sano, Jindong Cai, and Edwin Outwater.

#### WIND ENSEMBLE

Gerard Morris, conductor Tauvia Eggebroten '20, librarian

*Flute/Piccolo* Colin Babcock '18 \* Tauvia Eggebroten Emma Lenderink '20 Chloé Upshaw '19

*Oboe* Adam Duell '19 Emily Sawicky '21 Madeleine Scypinski '20

Bassoon Nicholas Navin '19 Zach Nelson '21 Kelsey Tryon '18 \*

*Contrabassoon* Zach Nelson

Sopranino Clarinet Davis Hampton '18 \* Reed Smith '20

Soprano Clarinet Amelia Green '19 Davis Hampton \* Aaron Klein '19 Ashley Mapile '19 Jahrme Risner '18 Reed Smith Alto Clarinet Reed Smith

*Bass Clarinet* Jordan Loucks '20

Alto Saxophone Luke Lewis '18\* Bryce Ulrich '20

Tenor Saxophone Michael Cook '20

Baritone Saxophone Jacob Shaffer '19

*Trumpet* Ido Baruch '21 Gloria Ferguson '19 Kate Hart '19 \* Adam Lewis '18

#### Horn

Evan Minsk (TCC) Nalin Richardson '20 Harrison Schatz '20 Savannah Schaumburg '20 \*

*Trombone* Ryan Apathy '18 \* Carly Baxter '18 *Bass Trombone* Connor Steen '20

Euphonium Keven Kraus '20 \*

*Tuba* Sam Paige '19 \*

String Bass Nicole Ecklund '20

*Piano/Celeste* Taylor Gonzales '17 Jillian Vernarsky '18

Percussion Rutie Mackenzie-Margulies '20 Spencer Moore '20 Kari Nolasco '21 Harrison Rosenberg '19 \* Julia Steeg '21 Christina Sumprer '18

\* denotes section leader

#### SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Wittstruck, conductor Zack Zydek '18 M.A.T. assistant Colin Babcock '18, librarian

Bass Abe Golding '20 \* Nicole Ecklund '20 Ellen Finn '19 Jack Danner '20

Flute Colin Babcock\* Kristin Goodell '20 Drew Shipman '21 Meadow Poplawsky '19

#### Oboe

Christopher Andersen '20 Katie Grainger '20 Madeline Scypinski '20 \*

*Clarinet* Davis Hampton '18 \* Aaron Klein '19 Jordan Loucks '20

*Bassoon* Aric MacDavid '20 Ethan Markowitz '20 Rosie Rogers '20 \*

# Horn Josh Pi '19 Nalin Richardson '20 Harrison Schatz '20 Savannah Schaumburg '20 \*

*Trumpet* Gloria Ferguson '19 Zachary Lyman Judson Scott *Trombone* Jack Day '21 David Imholz '20 \*

*Bass Trombone* Keven Kraus '20

*Tuba* Sam Paige '19

*Harp* Christina Sumprer '18

*Piano* Taylor Gonzales '17

Percussion Kassidy Giles '18 \* Rutie Mackenzie-Margulies '20 Spencer Moore '20 Clark Nichols '18 \* Kari Nolasco '21 Julia Steeg '21

\* denotes section leader

Violin I Eunmin Woo '19 \* Kaitlyn Seitz '20 Sarah Rogowskey '18 Sage Genna '19 Naomi Schroeter '18 Emily Chu '21 Alonso Tirado '20

Violin II

Ise Yoshimoto '20 Nicolas Casey '20 Brian Kim '21 Dana Levy '21 Ella James '21 Eva Baylin '21 Grace Osborne-Neukirch '21

# Viola

Jordan Goldstein '18\* Claire Helmberger '18 Kayce Guthmiller '20 Michelle Lefton '21 Lucy Prichard '21 McKenna Milton '19 Anna Mondschean '21 Kasey Stern '18 David Wetzel '21 Anny Schmidt '21

#### Cello

Olivia Katz '19 \* Eliott Wells '21 Zara Bagasol '20 Pierce Harken '21 Karina Cherniske '21 Elsa Soderberg '20 Annamarie Wright '21 Jocelyn Perrie '21

# UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

All events are free unless noted otherwise

Friday, Oct. 13

# Organ at Noon

Paul Thornock '97, organ Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 12:05 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 20 Jacobsen Series: *The Elements* 

A multimedia collaboration with TORCH, a contemporary chamber music ensemble Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$15, \$10

Friday, Oct. 27

# Jazz Orchestra

Tracy Knoop, director Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28 **Fall Festival of Choirs** Schneebeck Concert Hall, 4:30 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 3

#### Jacobsen Series: Guitar Images

Abe Landa, guitar and guest artist, David Sossa, guitar Tickets: \$15, \$10

# Sunday, Nov. 12 Annual Bethel Schneebeck Organ Recital

Paul Thornock '97, organ Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 2 p.m.

Tickets: 253.879.3100 | tickets.pugetsound.edu | Wheelock Information Center

All listings are subject to change. For the most current information about upcoming arts events and lectures, visit *pugetsound.edu/arts*.

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