

#### A MESSAGE FROM ANNA . . .

#### Greetings,

Welcome to the second concert of WashMetPhil's 53rd Season! It is with honor and excitement that we continue to demonstrate our commitment to the power of unity through the spirit of connection and collaboration within our surrounding communities.

Today's program will transport you into a realm of festive delight as "Holiday Dreams" offers a captivating blend of seasonal cheer and musical charm. Grace-Evangeline Mason's *The Imagined Forest* sets a magical tone, weaving together melodies that evoke the spirit of the holidays. Tchaikovsky's classic *Nutcracker Suite* is reimagined by local legend Duke Ellington by infusing familiar melodies with jazz-inflected brilliance that captivates listeners with its exuberant energy and nostalgia. The second half of the concert features a selection of holiday favorites that will fill the hall with the joy of the season as we collaborate with the stunning Alexandria Choral Society under the direction of their Music Director, Kathryn Harsha.

We hope you enjoy the concert – and, remember to join us after the concert for our **AfterChats with Anna**.

From all of us here at WMPA, we wish you and your loved ones, a joyous and peaceful holiday season!



#### **PROGRAM**

GRACE-EVANGELINE MASON The Imagined Forest

#### DUKE FLLINGTON

# Nutcracker Suite (after Tchaikovsky)

- 1. Overture
- 2. Toot Tootie Toot (Dance of the Reed Pipes)
- 3. Dance of the Floreadors (Waltz of the Flowers)
- 4. Sugar Rum Cherry (Dance of the Sugar Rum Fairy)
- 5. Peanut Brittle Brigade (March)





Santa LuciaTraditionalTemporalDiana SáezBalulalowFrom Benjamin Britten's A Ceremy of CarolsGo, Tell It On the Mountainarr. Lloyd LarsonThe Sleigh (á la Russe)Richard Iounta, arr. W. RieggerA Musicological Journey Through the Twelve Days of ChristmasCraig Courtney

# **PROGRAM NOTES**

# The Imagined Forest

# - Grace-Evangeline Mason

Born 1994 in the West Midlands of England

This work was premiered on September 5, 2021, by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Domingo Hindoyan at a BBC Proms concert at Royal Albert Hall in London. It is scored for piccolo, two flutes, three oboes, English horn, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, organ (optional), celesta, harp, and strings.



Named as the 'Face to Watch' for Classical Music in The Times 2020 Calendar of the Arts, Grace-Evangeline Mason is a British composer of orchestral, chamber, choral, electronic and operatic music, described as a 'supreme painter in sound' [Seen and Heard International] and as having a 'keen ear for musical texture - from dreamy hazes of electronic sound to sumptuous choral writing.' [BBC] Mason creates ethereal sound-worlds often inspired by art, poetry and literature to take a listener on a narrative journey.



# PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

Her music has been performed by ensembles such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Lahti, Oslo Opera House's Operaorkestret, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Aurora Orchestra, in venues across the UK and internationally, including European countries, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and South Africa. Her music has been performed at festivals such as the Cheltenham Music Festival, Southbank SoundState Festival, LFCCM, and MiTo SettembreMusica at Teatro Alla Scala. Her BBC Proms debut was in 2017 with her work 'RIVER' co-commissioned with BBC Radio 4's Front Row programme, followed by the premiere of her orchestral work 'The Imagined Forest' at the 2021 BBC Proms by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Domingo Hindoyan, described as being 'drawn with pen-and-ink precision and filled with vivid orchestral colour' [The Times] and co-commissioned to mark the 150th anniversary of the Royal Albert Hall. Her most recent orchestral work 'ABLAZE THE MOON' was premiered by the BBC Philharmonic under Mark Wigglesworth at the BBC Proms in September 2023.

Mason is the recipient of awards including BBC Young Composer of the Year (2013) and the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize (2018). She has studied at the RNCM, the University of Oxford, and the Royal Academy of Music, London.

"The Imagined Forest (2021) for orchestra is a fantastical journey through a space that appears to be a familiar impression of nature, but simultaneously somewhere entirely unknown. The forest, a place rooted in fairy tales, fantasy and folklore, often represents areas of refuge, danger, transformation, and adventure. Recognising the forest as an ethereal and intangible entity, the piece seeks to momentarily transport the listener somewhere intimate and yet, surreal.

"The piece is inspired by the work of Clare Celeste Börsch, a Berlin-based artist who uses collage techniques to build imagined worlds filled with foliage and fauna. Bringing together thousands of delicate hand cut paper images, she creates intricate and immersive spaces to transform ordinary rooms into magical forests. The Imagined Forest travels through the musical space by interweaving atmospheric textures and fragmentary melodic lines as a collage of fleeting images, just like the artwork upon which it is inspired. The music follows a voyage through the forest with moments of florid energy marked by tumbling, intervallic passages enacting the liveliness of nature itself, contrasted with large interludes of static stillness embodying expansive clearings. The central musical theme wanders through the piece towards enclosed glades where it pauses, as if it is interspersed with shimmering light from the canopies above and the dreamlike dances from the elements of nature; the orchestra glistens with sparkly interjections. Both music and art are fascinating in that countless people can all be experiencing the same work at once and yet, through the lens of their own influence, encounter a completely different artwork.

"This piece is therefore not a prescriptive experience but is instead a fictional journey; whether it is blooming with flora, captivated by colour, or an airy garden darkened by storm, it is the forest of your own imagination."

Program notes and composer biography courtesy of the composer.

# The Nutcracker Suite (after Tchaikovsky)

# - Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington

Born April 29, 1899, in Washington, D.C. Died May 24, 1974, in New York City

# **Billy Strayhorn**

Born November 29, 1915, in Dayton, Ohio Died May 31, 1967, in New York, New York

This work was recorded in May and June of 1960 by the Duke Ellington Orchestra in Los Angeles. It is scored for two flutes, oboe, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, jazz bass, drum set, and strings.



Duke Ellington was born in the spring of 1899 in the Shaw neighborhood, an upper middle-class African American area not far from the tourist areas of our nation's capital. Even before the Harlem Renaissance caused a generation to rethink the social order in New York, Shaw had become America's center of Black intellectualism. In the shadow of Howard University, the community thrived. Many notable American leaders in entertainment, business, and civil rights were associated with this vibrant neighborhood – among them singers Pearl Bailey and Billy Eckstine, pianists Dr. Billy Taylor and Jelly Roll Morton, poet Langston Hughes, blood bank innovator Dr. Charles Drew, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. It was in this climate that the seven-year-old Ellington began to take piano lessons.

After moving to New York at the age of twenty-four, Ellington began to gain notoriety in the jazz world. Within four years he had associated himself with Louis Armstrong and became the leading figure in the New York club scene. Ellington's twelve-member band already included many musicians who are regarded as legends today – clarinetist Barney Bigard, saxophonist Johnny Hodges, and trumpeter Cootie Williams foremost among them. Their popularity no doubt stems from their very active recording schedule, which produced over two hundred recording over the next few years. By the time the band made their first European tour in 1933, they had already released such standards as East St. Louis Toodle-oo, Black and Tan Fantasy, Creole Love Call, Mood Indigo, Rockin' in Rhythm, It Don't Mean a Thing, and Sophisticated Lady. By the late thirties tenor saxophonist Ben Webster had joined, as had arranger Billy Strayhorn. Strayhorn penned many of the tunes associated with Ellington's band, including Something to Live For, Take the "A" Train, Chelsea Bridge, and Satin Doll.

In the early 1940s Strayhorn's influence over Ellington was immense. It was likely through Strayhorn that the bandleader got the idea to compose large-scale orchestra works. Over the next two decades, the collaborators composed a few dozen works for orchestra. In 1960, while the Ellington band was in residence at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Columbia Records recorded Ellington and his orchestra in a new arrangement of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite prepared by Ellington and Strayhorn (it was his idea). The album was the first to picture both collaborators on the cover. When the album was released during Christmastime in 1960, Ellington was asked about Tchaikovsky. His response, "That cat was it!"

# PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

Ellington's Nutcracker has nine movements that parallel movements from Tchaikovsky. The arrangers, since they were paraphrasing Tchaikovsky's music, felt that they should update the titles to reflect the jazz style of the project. Given the popularity of the original work, no description of individual movements. Just expect to hear familiar music in a new style or, as Beethoven once said of his own music, new wine in old bottles.

The titles are followed by the original movement names:

Overture

Toot Tootie Toot (Dance of the Reed Pipes)

Peanut Brittle Brigade (March)

Sugar Rum Cherry (Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy)

Entr'acte

Volga Vouty (Russian Dance)

Chinoiserie (Chinese Dance)

Dance of the Floreadores (Waltz of the Flowers)

Arabesque Cookie (Arabian Dance)

2024 Orpheus Music Prose & Craig Doolin www.orpheusnotes.com



# Santa Lucia Lucy Vaughan Snead, procession leader

traditional Neapolitan, arr. William Rayer

In Sweden, December 13th is Santa Lucia Day. This festival honoring Saint Lucia officially begins the 12 days of Christmas, and is a celebration of light at the time of year when the days are short and the world is dark. Traditionally, one girl is chosen to lead the processional, dressed in a

white robe and red sash wearing a crown of real candles on her head. Lucy Vaughn Snead is our Sankta Lucia, and our arrangement was created specifically for today's concert by William Rayer.

#### Temporal

#### Diana Sáez & Suzzette Ortiz

Local composer Diana Sáez collaborated with Suzzette Ortiz in Temporal, a traditional plena from Puerto Rico. Plena is a musical genre with Afro-Puerto Rican rhythm that blends melodic and rhythmic elements from Spanish and African musical influences. Temporal means storm, and refers to the hurricanes that are common in the Caribbean. This arrangement pays tribute to the resilience shown by the people of Puerto Rico after surviving the hurricanes that hit the island in 2017. Today we are mindful of the recent devastation caused by hurricanes and their survivors.

There comes the storm!

What will become of Puerto Rico when the storm arrives?

What will become of my Boringuen\* when the storm arrives?

The people arise to the rhythm of the drums.

The wind cannot bring us down, nor ten thousand earthquakes.

We are resilient

We are warriors!

# Balulalow from A Ceremony of Carols Soloist: Kelly Wildermuth

Benjamin Britten

A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28, was written while Benjamin Britten was at sea returning home to England from the United States in 1942. It was originally scored for three-part treble chorus, solo voices, and harp, and is sung in Middle English with text from The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems. Written as a lullaby, the phrases swing back and forth between major and minor, blurring and blending behind the graceful melody.

#### Go, Tell it on the Mountain

#### traditional spiritual; arr. Lloyd Larson

The earliest version of this spiritual appeared in in Religious Folk Songs of The Negro, as Sung on The Plantations, new edition (1909) with the heading "Christmas Plantation Song." Originally written down by John W. Work, Jr., director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers choir, this upbeat song has become part of the standard holiday repertoire.

#### The Sleigh (à la Russe)

#### Kountz / Tchervanow; arr. Riegger

Written in 1926 by lyricist Richard Kountz and composer Ivor Tchervanow, this quick-paced piece evokes the imagery of a Russian sleigh sprinting through a snowy landscape. It captures the energy and excitement of a traditional winter journey with its breathless tempo and exhilarating bounc.

#### A Musicological Journey through the 12 days of Christmas

**Craig Courtney** 

Thought to be French in origin, the original "12 days of Christmas" text was published without music in England in 1780, and the tune we all know appears to originate around the turn of the 20th century. Craig Courtney's clever arrangement takes this music far beyond its usual borders, with a different musical pairing for each day, from the earliest music to contemporary composers. From Vivaldi to Tchaikovsky and everywhere in between, this is an arrangement you'll never forget!

<sup>\*</sup> Boringuen or Boriquén or Borikén is the Taíno name for Puerto Rico.

#### MEET OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

# "Collaborative... Engaging... Audience-ingratiating..." - Baltimore Sun

As Music Director/Conductor of the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (Alexandria VA). the Naptown Philharmonic Orchestra (Annapolis MD), the AACC Symphony Orchestra at Anne Arundel Community College (Arnold MD) and a frequent guest conductor on the national and international scene, ANNA BINNEWEG repeatedly captures audiences with her enthusiasm and passion for music. Her orchestras' shared focus and energy makes orchestral music sound new, fresh, and exciting. Her programs and performances are alluring, engaging and attract audiences of all ages,



particularly making classical music more appealing to younger generations. Over the course of her career, Binneweg has performed in some of the nation's most reputable concert venues including the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall (Washington, DC), the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall (Baltimore MD) and the Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles CA). Her international conducting experiences include tours to Austria and Spain and guest appearances with the Chernihiv Philharmonic (Ukraine), Lviv Virtuosi (Ukraine) and the Minsk Conservatory Orchestra (Belarus). A committed music educator, Binneweg's youth orchestra experience includes appointments with the Houston Youth Symphony (Houston TX) and the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony (San Luis Obispo CA). In addition to her guest conducting appearances with colleges and universities throughout the United States, she has served as guest conductor for prestigious All-State festivals such as Maryland and Vermont in recent seasons. She is in frequent demand as an orchestra clinician and adjudicator throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and served on the national executive board of directors for the College Orchestra Directors Association (CODA) from 2014-2018. She has worked with conducting mentors such as Leonard Slatkin, Daniel Barenboim, Robert Spano, James Paul, Michael Morgan, Duaine Wolfe, Nurhan Arman and David Effron through various engagements sponsored by the League of American Orchestras, the Conductors Institute of New York and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Most recently, Binneweg was elected to the board of directors of the International Conductors Guild (2021) where she advocates for women conductors in the field.

Earning a doctorate degree of music in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University where she studied with Victor Yampolsky, she has also served on the conducting faculties at Loyola University (Chicago, IL), the Sherwood Conservatory of Music (Chicago IL), and American University (Washington DC). Binneweg is the recipient of the 2015 Annie Award for the Performing Arts awarded by the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County. As an active conductor of the 2024|2025 season, she remains committed to igniting passion and unity in her community through live performance.

For more information about Anna, please visit: annabinneweg.com

#### THE PHILHARMONIC

#### **VIOLINI**

Timothy Kidder, Concertmaster
Sophie Bouwsma
Rosan Choi
Perry Francis
Sophia Hoagland
Joseph Keum
Lynn Rovelli
Cheryl Stickley

#### VIOLIN II

Slavica Ilic, *Principal* Anne Anderson Rebecca Edelstein Lynn Mueller Claire Gron Randall Jane Thell Hannah Villa Kelley Williams

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Kimia Hesabi, *Principal* Sharon Bingham Wolfolk, *Asst. Principal* Kevin Kirby Dennis Murphy Isaiah Reed

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Alex Cooper
Alix Gates
Soren Johnson
John Matzner
Amy Medearis

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Melinda Ward

Robyn Ambrose, *Principal* Scott Freeman Greg Ondo

#### **FLUTES**

Crystal Lee, *Principal* Julia Amadee Rachel Minto

#### **OBOES**

Laurel Kuxhaus, *Principal* Jeff Kahan Alicia McMahan, *English horn* 

#### **CLARINETS**

Brittany Pemberton, *Principal* Chris Epinger David Spiegelthal, *bass clarinet* 

#### **SAXOPHONE**

Vaughn Ambrose

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Walter Wynn III, *Principal* Hillary Burchuk Robert Goler, *contrabassoon* 

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#### **TROMBONES**

Bryan Bourne, *Principal* Chris Thackery Robb McDonald

#### **TUBA**

Karl Hovey

#### **TIMPANI**

Bruce Davies

#### **PERCUSSION**

Randy Eyles, *Principal* Julie Choi Emily Curran

#### **HARP**

Madeline Jarzembak

#### ABOUT ALEXANDRIA CHORAL SOCIETY

For over half a century, the Alexandria Choral Society has presented a broad spectrum of choral works, delighting audiences and fostering an inclusive environment of belonging and collaboration in the city of Alexandria and beyond. Since its founding in 1970, the Alexandria Choral Society has captivated audiences year in and year out. Most recently, ACS commissioned and presented the world premiere of *You Birth the Seeds*, a work by acclaimed com-



poser Melissa Dunphy, with text from Alexandria poet laureate Zeina Azzam. Under the direction of Artistic Director Kathryn Harsha, ACS is committed to enhancing the cultural life of the city of Alexandria by presenting diverse and engaging vocal music programs at the highest artistic level.

Join the Alexandria Choral Society as we celebrate 55 years of choral excellence! This season, ACS honors our history, our future, and the vibrant musical community in Alexandria through partnerships with Alfred Street Baptist Church, the Alexandria A Capella Collective, the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, the NOVA Symphony Orchestra, and more. To mark our 55th season, we'll be performing some favorite pieces from ACS's very first season at each concert. In celebration of the City of Alexandria's 275th anniversary, we will present selections from Bach's B minor Mass, which also premiered in 1749. Additionally, you'll hear the gorgeous music of Palestrina on the 500th anniversary of his birth. Across seven concerts, we will showcase a rich tapestry of beloved masterworks by Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, alongside contemporary compositions by Artemisia, Rosephanye Powell, and Diana Sáez. Our season will culminate in the inaugural All-Alexandria Choral Festival in May 2025, a grand celebration of beautiful, joy-filled music that highlights the unity and spirit of our local choral community. Don't miss out on what promises to be our most remarkable season yet!

#### ABOUT ACS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KATHRYN HARSHA holds a Master of Music in Conducting from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance from Bluffton University. While studying at the Sorbonne in Paris, she served as Assistant Conductor of the Chorale des Étudiants Etrangères and studied conducting at the Conservatoire Messiaen in Saint-Maurice, France. An active conductor in choral, opera, and orchestral music, Harsha has worked with ensembles across the country, conducting most recently in Severance Hall and the Kennedy



Center, and in France, Italy, Austria, and Germany. Harsha served for many years as Music Director and Conductor of the Lakeland Civic Orchestra in Cleveland, Ohio, and as the Music Director of Opera per Tutti, now the Cleveland Opera Theater. For more than 20 years, she was the Music Director of the Sing Out! for Cleveland Rape Crisis Center benefit concert, where the Visionary Voice Award was named in her honor in 2018. Harsha enjoys working with musicians of all ages, including young people at the Peabody Children's Chorus and Opus Community Music School, and mature singers at Encore Creativity for Older Adults, where she currently conducts multiple ensembles across the Washington metropolitan area. Kathryn Harsha is honored to serve as the Artistic Director of Pro Coro Alexandria and the Alexandria Choral Society for its 55th season.

# **ALEXANDRIA CHORAL SOCIETY**

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Joshua Heit +
Terry Langendoen
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- Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic: an adult orchestra for local professional, semi professional, and dedicated amateur musicians
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- Lyceum Chamber Series: a summer series of weekly chamber music concerts at the Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum
- **Bilingual Family Concerts**: Bilingual narration concert programs presented in underserved communities featuring members of the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic

# PURPOSE, VISION, AND MISSION

WMPA's purpose is to unite and uplift our community through classical music.

Our **vision** is to create the audience of the future for classical music.

Our **mission** is to provide programs to:

- Educate and engage students through our Youth Orchestras
- Perform and promote orchestral music through the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic
- Connect and communicate chamber music through our summer Lyceum Series
- Expand and enlighten newcomers to classical music through our Bilingual Family Concerts

# The Ulysses James Legacy Fund

This fund is established in 2023 to honor Maestro Ulysses "Ul" James and his 40 years of visionary leadership of WMPA, as well as to fund the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic's Music Director podium. While providing partial support for general operations, this Fund will ensure that the orchestra can secure a vibrant, professional music director and present high quality programs for years to come which is vital to the ongoing mission of the WMPA to inspire enthusiasm for the live performance experience of both classical and new music. Maestro James has been integral to that whole process in his championing of American music and presenting underrepresented composers.





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- SHOWCASE musicians of from WashMetPhil at your events.

To explore partnership opportunities, contact Executive and Artistic Planning Director Caroline Mousset at carolinemousset@wmpamusic.org

# **IMMEDIATELY AFTER TODAY'S CONCERT!**



AfterChats with Anna are relaxed, post-concert conversations with Music Director Anna Binneweg, moderated by Executive and Artistic Planning Director Caroline Mousset, and featuring our guest artists. Grab a glass of bubbly, bring your questions, and join us for these engaging sessions! You'll gain insight into the music you've just experienced and have the chance to meet the artists. Best of all, AfterChats are free for all ticket holders.

# **UPCOMING CONCERTS | TICKETS AT WMPAMUSIC.ORG**







Anna Binneweg, Music Director

# CONTACT

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