

Tuesday, February 27, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.
E. Desmond Lee Concert Hall, 560 Music Center

Symphony Orchestra

featuring
Megan Stout, harp

Darwin Aquino,
Conductor-in-Residence

Program

Opening words presented by William Lenihan

Danse sacrée et danse profane
pour harpe et orchestre (1904)

Claude Debussy
(1862 - 1918)

Megan Stout, harp
(Dedicated to the memory of harpist Sue Taylor)

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 38 "Spring" (1841)
I. *Andante un poco maestoso - Allegro molto vivace*
III. *Scherzo - Molto vivace*
IV. *Allegro animato e grazioso*

Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1918)

Solar (2011)

Jocelyn Hagen
(b. 1980)

Program Notes

Danse sacrée et danse profane (1904) by Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

Danse sacrée et danse profane, composed by Claude Debussy in 1904, was commissioned by Pleyel, the Parisian instrument manufacturing company, to promote a new chromatic harp invented by Gustave Lyon, the company's director. This instrument was designed to overcome the limitations of the traditional double-action harp, especially in playing chromatic intervals simultaneously, by eliminating the need for the complex pedal mechanism and incorporating a separate string for every pitch. However, despite Debussy's magnificent composition, the chromatic harp did not achieve the success Pleyel had hoped for. The instrument proved to be too cumbersome, difficult to tune, and lacked the resonance of the traditional pedal harp. As a result, the use of the chromatic harp was short-lived, but the piece endured and became a staple of the harp repertoire.

Danse sacrée et danse profane premiered on November 6, 1904, at one of the Concerts Colonne in the Châtelet Theatre in Paris, with Lucile Wurmser-Delcourt as the soloist. The reception of the piece was varied and reflected the evolving tastes and expectations of the audiences and critics of the time. Pierre Lalo, a music critic for *Le Temps* and usually an admirer of Debussy, was less than enthusiastic, suggesting that the piece seemed more like the work of an imitator of Debussy rather than the composer himself. When the piece debuted in London, *The Musical Times* offered a somewhat reserved yet intrigued response, noting that the piece held the audience's attention and hinted at an emerging admiration. Meanwhile, the work's introduction to the American audience was met with enthusiasm, with *The New York Times* praising the *Danses* for their "distinctive charm and flavor," indicating a quick and appreciative recognition of Debussy's unique style and musical language.

The piece comprises two contrasting dances: the first, *Danse sacrée*, is characterized by somber melodies reminiscent of ecclesiastical chant, creating an aura of serenity and reverence. The second, *Danse profane*, in contrast, is more light-hearted and secular, resembling a gentle, perhaps waltz-like, secular dance. This composition demonstrates Debussy's signature musical characteristics, such as modal melodies, parallel harmonies, and non-functional harmonies that don't necessarily drive to a cadence but create a pleasant sound. The orchestration showcases Debussy's mastery of color in the French tradition.

Symphony No. 1 "Spring" (1841) by Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)

Robert Schumann composed his Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 38, known as the "Spring" Symphony, during an especially fruitful period following his marriage to Clara Schumann, née Wieck, in 1840. Schumann, primarily known for his piano and vocal compositions, was encouraged by Clara to explore symphonic music. The resulting work, his first foray into the genre, was composed rapidly during late January and February of 1841 and warmly received at its premiere in March of the same year under Felix Mendelssohn's baton in Leipzig. The symphony draws its poetic inspiration from Adolf Böttger's *Frühlingsgedicht* (*Poem of Spring*), characterized by its vibrant thematic material. Schumann's love for poetry, particularly as a composer of lieder, is evident in the way the symphony captures the essence of spring.

The symphony maintains the traditional four-movement format, but with Schumann's unique touches. Tonight's performance will include three of the movements. The first movement begins with a dramatic fanfare by the trumpets, symbolizing the awakening of spring. Schumann envisioned this introduction as a call to the greening of the world and the flutter of butterflies, leading into an allegro that captures the dynamic qualities of the season. The third movement, *Scherzo: Molto vivace*, is characterized by its dance-like quality and innovative structure, including two contrasting trios. The first trio is noted for its originality and rich harmony, whereas the second demonstrates Schumann's romantic style fused with the classical minuet form. The final movement begins with a prominent scale passage and introduces a fresh, lively theme. This movement features an engaging dialogue between various musical ideas, culminating in a joyous and exuberant finale. The "Spring" Symphony is recognized for its thematic representation of the season and holds a place in the Romantic symphonic repertoire, beloved by audiences for its depth, beauty, and the sheer joy it evokes.

Solar for orchestra (2011) by Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)

Jocelyn Hagen is an American composer who has established herself as a dynamic force in contemporary composition. Her pieces, lauded as “simply magical” by *Fanfare Magazine* and “dramatic and deeply moving” by the *Star Tribune*, push the boundaries of traditional music-making. Beginning her artistic journey with songwriting, Hagen has honed a compositional style marked by melodic richness, rhythmic vitality, and textural nuances. Her oeuvre spans a spectrum of genres, from expansive multimedia symphonies and electro-acoustic pieces to dance and opera, all woven with an emotionally resonant thread. Hagen’s work has attracted commissions from notable ensembles including *Conspirare* and the Minnesota Opera. Among these commissions, the multimedia symphony *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* stands out as a prime example of her capacity to blend music with visual art and historical text. This same creative synergy is evident in Hagen’s first orchestral composition, *Solar*, which was supported by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board and composed for the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra in 2011. Melissa Morey, Hagen’s friend and the chair of the orchestra’s board at that time, received a gesture of gratitude from the composer: an epic horn solo in the piece that showcased Hagen’s flair for creating impactful musical moments. *Solar*, which premiered in 2012, encapsulates Hagen’s affinity for vivid musical colors and serves as a sonic reflection of her interpretation of the sun’s radiant energy and light.

Conceived with the vibrant imagery of the sun in mind, *Solar* captures the celestial body’s essence in three sections—“Shining,” “Burning,” and “Glowing”—each representing a different quality of the sun. In the ‘Shining’ sections, cascades of sound filter down through the orchestra, allowing for broad expansions in the lower strings and brass. The orchestra then modulates its intensity to depict the sun’s comforting warmth and glow. It is in this warmth that the horn player unveils a lush, regal melody, which is later echoed by the entire string section. This melody transitions into the third section of the piece, characterized by frantic strings and punctuated with timpani and floor toms burning into a shimmering climax of cascades. From there, the piece culminates in an explosion of brilliance, with all three qualities—shining, glowing, and burning—merging to showcase the sun’s true power: strong, brilliant, powerful, and a force both to be reckoned with and admired.

Fang Liu, Ph.D. student in Musicology, Washington University in St. Louis

Biography & Dedication



Megan Stout is a native of Philadelphia, P.A. and moved to St. Louis in 2009 after completing a Bachelor and Master's Degree in Harp Performance at Indiana University. She appears regularly with the St. Louis Symphony and is passionate about chamber music, performing with the Chamber Music Society of St. Louis, Chamber Project St. Louis, and Ariel Chamber Music Series. Megan was named the harpist for the MUNY orchestra in 2018 and performs with Opera Theatre St. Louis and Union Avenue

Opera. She also regularly performs with many ensembles throughout St. Louis and the area-Bach Society of St. Louis, Masterworks Chorale (IL), and Metropolitan Orchestra of St. Louis, to name a few. She is currently on faculty at Webster University and Washington University in St. Louis.

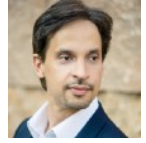


This evening's performance of the Debussy is dedicated to Dr. Virginia Sue Taylor who passed away on October 30, 2023 at the age of 85. Sue was a vital member of the Department of Music from 1976, when she entered the graduate program in Musicology, until her retirement in 2022. During her almost fifty years at WashU, Sue earned a Ph.D. in Musicology with a dissertation on "The Harp in Mahler's Klangfarbengruppe"; served in valuable administrative roles including Concert Coordinator, Associate Director of Friends of Music, and

sponsor of the Jazz at Holmes Lounge series; and taught popular University College courses on classical music. She will perhaps be best remembered as a dedicated and inspiring instructor of harp. We miss her enthusiasm and generosity.

Conductor-in-Residence

Known for his charismatic energy and musical versatility as a conductor, composer and violinist, **Darwin Aquino's** career has taken him to orchestra halls and opera theaters across Europe, United States and Latin America. His constant presence as a Latinx artist in multiples stages is seen as a bright light for diversity, equity, and inclusion in classical music.



Recently appointed Conductor for the New Works Collective with Opera Theater of St. Louis and Music Director of the St. Louis Philharmonic Orchestra, Darwin's 23/24 season also includes a number of national and international engagements. He has been selected as guest conductor for the Interlochen Center for the Arts, the St. Louis Ballet and the Chamber Music Society; guest composer for the San Francisco Civic Orchestra (Lunga Pandemia for orchestra), the Orquesta Sinfónica de Heredia in Costa Rica (Concert for Violin, Strings and Percussion), and two commissions of new works for the Lux Nova Duo in Hamburg, Germany, and the Arizona State University Clarinet Studio.

During the 22/23 season, Darwin was invited to conduct the premiere of D. Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto* for the Florida Grand Opera, in his own Spanish translation. Other recent appearances include guest conductor for the Missouri Symphony Orchestra, the Ashland Symphony Orchestra in Ohio, and the Caribbean Lyric Festival; plus performances of his compositions with the Juilliard School in New York City, the Illinois Modern Ensemble at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Latin American Music Festival in Venezuela, and the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City.

Darwin has enjoyed regular engagements around the world, including the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Mainz, Saarländisches Staatsorchester in Germany, the Cleveland Opera, National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, ADCA Symphony Orchestra in New York, Chicago Summer Opera, Filarmónica Boca del Rio in Mexico, the Orchestra of the Americas, Caribbean Lyric Festival, Missouri Festival for the Arts, Alfredo Saint Malo Festival Orchestra in Panama, and FIU Symphony Orchestra in Miami, among others.

As a composer, Darwin's most celebrated orchestral composition, *Espacio Ritual*, had its European premiere by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France during the Festival Presences. The Latin American Collegium of Composers invited Aquino as their youngest member for his outstanding achievements in composition. He is a three-time recipient of the National Music Prize in composition in his country, a winner of the Musicici Mojanesi composition prize in Italy, and his works have been published by Ars Publica in Europe and Cayambis Music Press in the USA.

Darwin held the position of Music Director for Winter Opera St. Louis (2016-2019), Director of Orchestral Studies University of Missouri St. Louis (2017-2021), Cover Conductor St. Louis Symphony Orchestra & Youth Symphony (2018-2021), Assistant Conductor Florida Grand Opera (2015-2017), Director National Conservatory of Music Dominican Republic (2016-2017), Assistant Conductor Palm Beach Symphony (2014-1016), Composer in Residence Dominican National Symphony Orchestra (2008-2010), Artistic Director El Sistema Dominican Republic (2004-2016), and holds a masters of music degree in orchestral conducting from the Florida International University, studying with Gzregorz Nowak.

Darwin has also received conducting coaching with, notably, Colin Metters, David Efron, Enrique Garcia Asensio, Benjamin Zander, Carlos Miguel Prieto, and has assisted Leonard Slatkin, Patrick Summers, Gemma New, Ramon Tebar, Benjamin Zander, and Rory McDonald, among others.

Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Jasmine Yang
Noah Kennedy
David Hill
Ian Lee
Ellie Capobianco
Jake Tetenman
Andy Liu
Gwyneth Noel
Leonard Ma
Eva Cohen
Tatiana Flores
Etienne Strandberg-Houze
Luc Bourgeade
Sophie Anderson
Shashank Mani
Yang Yang
Jane Price*

Violin 2

Nora Navid
Xiaoyu Luo
Jessica Hu
Jahnvi Datta
Edgar Palomino
Bradley Gober
Audra Stump
Shira Miller
Sofia La Rosa
Joshua Berner
Jerry Sun
James Wang
Megan Broussard
Yuxuan He
Milo Lytle
Jo Nardolillo*

Viola

MacKenzie Larkin
Holly Lam
Klara Schmidt
Justin Park
Anitra Krishnan
Emily Updike
Shalini Vican
John Christian
Haley Rhodes
Junyi Su
Amy Greenhalgh*

Cello

Eric Liu
Chloe Hughlett
Frances Fang
Jordan Thomson
Joseph Sorel
Ken Kulosa*

Bass

Melissa Parkinson
Michael Moore
Tim Weddle*

Flute

Lillie Kang
Elizabeth Chen
Cynthia Yan

Oboe

Michelle Zhang
Stephanie Bergman

Clarinet

Jayden Liu
Richard Li

Bassoon

Emily DePaz
Donita Bauer**

French Horn

Ceresa Munjak-Khoury
Will Corbin
Tai Moore
Aobo Lyu

Trumpet

Gabi Grasso
Ankit Chhajed
Mary Weber*

Trombone

Conner Yamnitz
Julian Mitchell
Henry Wasserman

Tuba

Chance Huiet**

Harp

Ariel Richards

Percussion

Jake Page
Alex Nguyen
Jessica Flannigan*

* Music Faculty

** Community Member

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