

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®**

School of Music

**JMU Symphony Orchestra**

*presents*

**CELESTIAL JOURNEYS**

*featuring*

**Kevin Day, *guest composer***

**Dr. Kira Omelchenko, *director***

**Noelle Singleton, *graduate conductor***

**Dalton Guin, *graduate conductor***

(Pre-Concert talk 6:30-7:00pm in the Grand Lobby)

Thursday, March 12, 2026

7:30 pm

Concert Hall



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

## Program

Lightspeed  
Kevin Day  
(b. 1996)  
Noelle Singleton, graduate conductor

Intermezzo no. 7 from *Cavalleria rusticana*  
Pietro Mascagni  
(1863-1945)

Clair de lune from *Suite bergamasque*  
Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Danza Del Sol  
Kevin Day  
(b. 1996)  
Dalton Guin, graduate conductor

## 15-Minute Intermission

2001: A Space Odyssey Theme  
(from *Also sprach Zarathustra*)  
Richard Strauss  
(1864-1949)

Planets, Op. 32  
Mars, The Bringer of War  
Venus, The Bringer of Peace  
Jupiter, The Bringer of Jollity  
Gustav Holst  
(1874-1934)

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## Program Notes

### **Lightspeed – Kevin Day (b.1996)**

*Lightspeed* is a brief, energetic fanfare-like work by American composer Kevin Day. Composed in 2019, the piece was commissioned by the Washington & Lee University Orchestra.

The music bursts forth with a propulsive rhythmic drive and bold gestures that reflect both a celebration of forward motion and the optimistic spirit suggested by its title. Throughout, you'll hear repeated rhythmic figures, striking brass and percussion fanfares, and contrasting lyrical melodic lines — especially in the strings — that provide relief and balance to the energetic outer sections.

Day's title was inspired by his love of science-fiction staples like Star Trek and Doctor Who, and the music itself embodies that sense of speed, optimism, and exploration. While brief in duration (about 3 minutes), *Lightspeed* makes a vivid impression through its combination of rhythmic vitality, orchestral brilliance, and melodic contrast.

-Sean Murphy

### **Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana* - Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)**

Pietro Mascagni, born in Tuscany in 1863, composed fifteen operas, an operetta, orchestral and vocal works, as well as songs and piano music. He is best known for his opera *Cavalleria rusticana* (Rustic Chivalry), a one-act verismo (“true”) opera. Verismo opera emerged from increasingly post-Romantic depictions of natural realism. It established a new tradition distinct from earlier centuries' *opera buffa* (“comic opera”), which juxtaposes acts of *opera seria* (“serious opera”) with *buffa* intermezzi to comedic effect. Mascagni is one of the earliest composers of verismo opera in Italy, and it is fitting that this is the medium for which he is best known. The Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana* was most famously used in the finale of Francis Ford Coppola's 1990 film *The Godfather Part III*.

### **Claire de lune - Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

Achille-Claude Debussy began attending the prestigious Conservatoire de Paris at the age of ten, where he studied piano and composition. He won the Prix de Rome in 1884 for his cantata *L'enfant prodigue* (The Prodigal Son), but he is perhaps best known for his 1894 orchestral work *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun), the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1893–1902), and his piano suite *Suite bergamasque* (1890/1905), from which *Clair de lune* is drawn.

## Program Notes - Continued

Debussy's music explores chordal construction and orchestral colors that rely less on the tonal strictures of more formalist styles, resulting in works that often obscure meter and stable tonality in favor of richer textures and luxuriously complex harmonies.

In *Debussy Orchestral Music* (1974), David Cox writes that Debussy "created a...dreamlike world of music...a kind of art, in fact, which seemed to reach out into all aspects of experience." The title *Clair de lune* is drawn from a poem by Paul Verlaine of the same name. The opening stanza reads:

Your soul is like a landscape fantasy,  
Where masks and bergamasks, in charming wise,  
Strum lutes and dance, just a bit sad to be  
Hidden beneath their fanciful disguise.

-Dalton Guin

### **Danza del Sol – Kevin Day (b. 1996)**

*Danza Del Sol* for Orchestra (2018) is an energetic work that features elements of romantic and Latin music. The piece also has a woodwind chamber music section and a very cinematic slow section. The piece ends tying all of the previously heard motifs together and ends triumphant and climactic. The inspiration to the piece came very quickly to me just sitting at a table at home and with this "out-of-the-blue" inspiration, I composed the work in three days and then went back later to make edits. I had a lot of fun writing this and chose to dedicate the work to my friend and mentor Dr. Germán Gutiérrez, Director of Orchestras at Texas Christian University.

-Kevin Day

### **The Planets – Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934)**

The composer Gustav Holst became acquainted with the science and wonder of astrology in 1913, which later became a lifelong interest. Holst's daughter, Imogen, recalled that her father once said, "As a rule, I only study things which suggest music to me...Recently I became acquainted with astrology, and the character of each planet suggested music to me, and I have been studying astrology fairly closely." Holst completed *The Planets* in 1917.

## Program Notes - Continued

*Mars, the Bringer of War* is composed in an irregular 5/4 meter, first heard in the strings using the technique of *col legno battuto*, striking the wood of the bow against the strings. The movement builds in density and texture as the winds and brass enter, culminating in a violent and relentless depiction of battle. The music is filled with rage and intensity, propelled by an unceasing drive forward that evokes chaos, terror, and devastating destruction.

*Venus, the Bringer of Peace* opens with a serene solo horn melody, answered by gentle flutes and a solo violin. This quiet invocation is tenderly carried by delicate winds and strings, intertwining their voices in music of remarkable grace and transparency. Harp, celesta, and glockenspiel add a soft, shimmering halo, while muted strings cushion the texture with sustained, gentle harmonies. In striking contrast to the relentless fury of *Mars*, *Venus* offers a moment of profound stillness and inward reflection. Holst paints not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of true peace—calm, radiant, and restorative.

*Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity* begins with buoyant, sparkling motifs in the strings, soon joined by bold, jubilant statements in the horns and the rest of the brass. Though it represents the largest planet, Jupiter's grandeur is expressed not through overwhelming force, but through radiant warmth, vitality, and a spirit of generous, expansive joy.

-Noelle Singleton and Kira Omelchenko

## Biography

**Kevin Day** (b. 1996) is an internationally acclaimed composer, conductor, and jazz pianist based in San Diego, California. Known for his exuberant, introspective, and groove-oriented composition style, Mr. Day's music fuses genres such as jazz, contemporary classical, R&B, Soul, and more. He has been performed by some of the world's top instrumental soloists, wind bands, chamber ensembles, and symphony orchestras. He has composed over 250 works, nine concerti, and has had performances throughout the United States, Canada, Austria, Taiwan, South Africa, Australia, Japan, and more.

Mr. Day is the recipient of a MacDowell Fellowship for Music Composition, a winner of the BMI Composer Award, the TCU Alumni Outstanding Young Professional Award, a three-time ASCAP Morton Gould Finalist, a finalist for the ABA Sousa-Oswald Award, and a finalist for the NBA Revelli Award. His most recent works include his acclaimed *Concerto for Wind Ensemble*, as well as a double concerto for trombone and piano entitled *Departures*, which will be premiered later this year by the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.

Cincinnati Opera recently announced the launch of The Black Opera Project, a ground-breaking three-opera commissioning initiative that engages Black creators to develop new works celebrating Black stories. Mr. Day's original opera, *LALOVAVI: An Afro-Futurist opera in Three Acts*, will be the first work to be featured. A native of Arlington, Texas, Mr. Day holds degrees from Texas Christian University (TCU), the University of Georgia, and is ABD completing his doctorate in composition from the University of Miami Frost School of Music. He has studied composition with Dorothy Hindman, Charles Norman Mason, Peter Van Zandt Lane, Emily Koh, Gabriela Lena Frank, and Neil Anderson-Himmelspach.

-Visit Kevin Day's website, <https://www.kevindaymusic.com/about>

### Acknowledgement

Our sincere gratitude to the JMU CVPA Cultural Connections Grant for supporting Kevin Day's guest composer residency. Throughout the week, Kevin worked closely with JMU music students and faculty, visiting ensemble rehearsals, offering composition lessons, presenting conducting seminars, and teaching an orchestration class—creating meaningful artistic and educational experiences across the School of Music.

# JMU Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Dr. Kira Omelchenko, Director  
Noelle Singleton, Orchestra Manager TA, Graduate Conductor  
Dalton Guin, Graduate Conductor  
Danny Postlethwait, Librarian  
Joshua Brancalone, Poster Design and Logo Creative  
Gussie Nafziger, creator of slides and projections operator  
Ying Ying Pan, Concert Video and Graphics Editor

## **Violin I**

Victor Winterstein\*  
Evelyn Page\*  
Erin Choi  
Zike Qi  
Ella Patterson  
Roman Rousek

## **Violin II**

Felicity Banner\*  
Anthony Parone\*  
Zoe Lovelace  
Anna Alderson  
Amy Poxon  
Anniah Craun  
Noelle Singleton

## **Viola**

Julia Johnson\*  
Elliot Drew\*  
Sawyer Degregori  
Ana Mooney  
Thien Phan  
Sunny Robertello

## **Cello**

Hailey Hotek\*  
John Meshreky\*  
Danny Postlethwait  
Tessa Kuta  
Will Hayes  
Christopher Hall  
Marlie Dela Cruz  
Augusta McNulty  
Jeniffer Castellon--  
Rivera

## **Bass**

Gabriella Bieberich\*  
Frankie Sellars\*  
Jack Choi  
Michael Dean  
Grey Sheridan

Kaylin Yates  
Jolie Prasad

## **Flute**

Daniel Esperante\*  
Joshua Brancalone  
Emma Lisson  
Vanessa Britton

## **Oboe/English horn**

Cady Litteral\*  
Azaleigh Smith  
Kayn Goetz

## **Clarinet**

Geneva Maldonado\*  
Jeanette Gilson  
Emerson Garmendia-  
Arevalo  
David Kriete

## **Bass Clarinet**

David Kriete

## **Bassoons**

Michael Ross\*  
Hannah Gerick  
David Kang

## **Contrabassoon**

Charlie Address

## **Horn**

Jacob Taylor\*  
Joshua Short\*  
Isabel Ricciuto  
Chloe Starling  
Kendall Hicks  
Riley Truong

## **Trumpet**

Allie Woodbury\*  
Taylor Lowry  
Jocelyn Moyer  
Noah Shea

## **Trombone**

Adriana Dryden\*  
William Shanahan

## **Bass Trombone**

Blake Downs

## **Euphonium**

Hannah Caraker

## **Tuba**

Anders Helvey

## **Percussion**

Levi Rosenberry\*  
Logan Douglas  
Grayson Creekmore  
Tommy Crossley  
Andrew Harper

## **Piano/Celesta**

Ryan Walker

## **Harp**

Elspeth McNulty

\*denotes section leader/co-section leader player

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Thank you for attending this School of Music performance, we appreciate your support! The QR code below will take you to a page where you can donate to the Marlon Foster Scholarship. Marlon Foster ('82, '95) served in the United States Air Force, taught in Harrisonburg City Public Schools for 26 years, and taught percussion in the JMU School of Music. Marlon was awarded Teacher of the Year from Harrisonburg City Public Schools, and he was inducted into the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association's Hall of Fame.

