

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

BEYOND THE SILENCE

JMU Symphony Orchestra

Dr. Kira Omelchenko,
director and conductor

Dalton Guin & Noelle Singleton,
graduate conductors

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

7:30 pm

Concert Hall

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

There will be one 15-minute intermission.



Program

Overture to Coriolan, op. 62, C minor Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770 - 1827)

Noelle Singleton, *graduate conductor*

Pavane in F-sharp minor, op. 50 Gabriel Fauré
(1845 - 1924)

Dalton Guin, *graduate conductor*

The Lark Ascending Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872 - 1958)

Dr. Beth Cahill, *flute*

Mestizo Waltz Gabriela Lena Frank
from *Three Latin American Dances* (b. 1972)

Dalton Guin, *graduate conductor*

15-Minute Intermission

Má Vlast ("My Homeland") Bedřich Smetana
(1824-1884)

II. Vltava (*The Moldau*)

III. Šárka

IV. Z českých luhů a hájů (*From Bohemia's Woods and Fields*)

Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones,
personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

The unauthorized videotaping or any other recording
of this production is strictly prohibited

Program Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Coriolan Overture, Op. 62 (1807)

Beethoven composed the *Coriolan Overture* in 1807 as an introduction to Heinrich Joseph von Collin's tragedy *Coriolan*, written three years earlier. Von Collin's play retells the ancient Roman legend of Gaius Marcius Coriolanus, a proud general who leads his army to victory but cannot win the favor of the Roman people. Exiled for his arrogance, Coriolanus faces inner torment and ultimately takes his own life — a tragic end driven by pride, isolation, and despair.

The overture vividly captures this dramatic struggle. Beethoven's music contrasts stern, powerful chords with moments of hushed introspection, evoking both Coriolanus's strength and his mounting internal conflict. The stark opening chords suggest determination and pride, while the tender, lyrical passages reflect his mother's pleas for peace and his own emotional collapse.

Composed around the same time Beethoven was coming to terms with his worsening deafness, the *Coriolan Overture* resonates with personal as well as dramatic conflict. Its tragic power and brooding intensity make it one of Beethoven's most gripping concert overtures — a miniature drama of defiance, struggle, and ultimate surrender.

— program note by Noelle Singleton

Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924)

Pavane in F-sharp minor, op. 50

Gabriel Fauré was a leading influence for both French composers and 20th-century composers writ large. Born in Pamiers, Ariège, in France, Fauré attended the École Niedermeyer music college in Paris at the age of 9. While there, he studied with Louis Niedermeyer and another renowned French composer, Camille Saint-Saëns. Fauré's friendship with Saint-Saëns would endure until the latter's death in 1921. Fauré was a founding member of the Société Nationale de Musique, an organization for promoting new French music while also included Georges Bizet, Jules Massenet, and Emmanuel Chabrier. In 1896, Fauré was appointed as professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, where his students included Maurice Ravel, Jean Roger-Ducasse, and Nadia Boulanger. He was appointed head of the Conservatory in 1905, a position he would hold for 15 years. Suffering from advanced hearing loss, he died in Paris from pneumonia in 1924, at the age of 79.

Fauré's Pavane in F-sharp minor, Op. 50, was composed in 1887. A Pavane is the name for both a Spanish court dance that was popular in European courts and the music that accompanied it. Originally composed for piano and chorus, Fauré orchestrated the work for a modest orchestra. During its initial production, the work's complexity grew, with an added invisible chorus (a part which remains optional today), and the allowance for accompanying dancers. In Jean-Michel Nectoux's *Gabriel Fauré – A Musical Life* (1991), Nectoux describes the choral text as inconsequential verses on the romantic helplessness of man. Fauré's Pavane remains one of the most popular of his lesser works today, both with and without chorus.

— program note by Dalton Guin

Program Notes - *continued*

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

The Lark Ascending

*He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.
For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup
And he the wine which overflows
to lift us with him as he goes.
Till lost on his aerial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.*

(from George Meredith's poem, *The Lark Ascending*)

Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* was inspired by George Meredith's poem 'The Lark Ascending' from his *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*, published in 1883. In the music, the English composer uses modal harmony and folk tunes to depict the skylark's gentle, ascending flight. The work is lyrical and flowing, blending English folk music with the impressionistic style of Vaughan Williams. The orchestration allows the solo violin to rise above the orchestra on delicate, ethereal phrases that float effortlessly through the air.

In his program notes, Vaughan Williams describes work a pastoral tone poem with music full of Rhapsodic, soaring cadenzas. The solo violin is the lark, which by its bright, sparkling brilliance, reveals the delicate song of the lark. The orchestra represents not only the earth but also humanity with its warm, rustic melody. Together they form a deeply expressive world where the melody flows boundless, just as in a single, unbroken breath of air. The result is a deep sense of tranquility and freedom. As the piece draws to its close, the lark's song ascends higher until it vanishes into the serene light.

Originally written for violin and piano in 1914, *The Lark Ascending* was later reworked for violin and orchestra after World War I. It premiered in December 1920 in Bristol, England. There in the work is a gentle kind of nostalgia and a desire for a simple, more pastoral world—an emotional manifestation of the war's lingering effect.

— program note by Kira Omelchenko

Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)

Three Latin American Dances (2004)

Currently serving as Composer-in-Residence with the storied Philadelphia Orchestra and included in the *Washington Post's* list of the most significant women composers in history (August, 2017), identity has always been at the center of composer/pianist Gabriela Lena Frank's music. Born in Berkeley, California (September, 1972), to a mother of mixed Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and a father of Lithuanian/Jewish descent, Gabriela explores her multicultural heritage through her compositions. Inspired by the works of Bela Bartók and Alberto Ginastera, Gabriela has traveled extensively throughout South America in creative exploration. Her music often reflects not only her own personal experience as a multi-racial Latina, but also refract her studies of Latin American cultures, incorporating poetry, mythology, and native musical styles into a western classical framework that is uniquely her own. Composer's full biography:

<https://www.glfcam.com/people/gabriela>

Program Notes - *continued*

The “Mestizo Waltz” from *Three Latin American Dances*, as if in relief to the gravity of the previous movement, this final movement is a lighthearted tribute to the “mestizo” or mixed-race music of the South American Pacific coast. In particular, it evokes the “romancero” tradition of popular songs and dances that mix influences from indigenous Indian cultures, African slave cultures, and western brass bands. “I realized that I had found my mission,” Frank explained. “I wanted to, in a very general way, be as mestiza* in my music as I was in my person: I’m multiracial, I’m multicultural, and I think that that’s something deeply American.”

*Mestiza: A woman of mixed race or ethnic ancestry, especially in Latin America, of mixed American Indian and European descent.—Dictionary.com

— Gabriela Lena Frank

Bedřich Smetana (1824 – 1884)

Má Vlast (“My Homeland”) selections

The Moldau (“Vltava” in Czech) is the principal river of Czechoslovakia, rising in the hills in the south and flowing north through Prague to join with the Elbe. Smetana’s tone poem seems to trace its inspiration to a country trip he took along the river in 1870, a junket that included an exhilarating boat ride through the churning waters of the St. John Rapids. The *Moldau* is disposed in several sections intended to convey both the sense of a journey down the river and some of the sights seen along the way, as Smetana noted in his preface to the score: “Two springs pour forth in the shade of the Bohemian Forest, one warm and gushing, the other cold and peaceful. The forest brook, hastening on, becomes the river *Moldau*. Through thick woods it flows, as the gay sounds of the hunt and the notes of the hunter’s horn are heard ever nearer. It flows through grass-grown pastures and lowlands where a wedding feast is being celebrated with song and dance. At night, wood and water nymphs revel in its sparkling waves. Reflected on its surface are fortresses and castles — witnesses of bygone days of knightly splendor and the vanished glory of fighting times. At the St.

John Rapids, the stream races ahead, winding through the cataracts, hewing out a path with its foaming waves through the rocky chasm into the broad riverbed — finally, flowing on in majestic peace toward Prague and welcomed by the time-honored castle Vyšehrad. [At this point, Smetana recalled the theme from the preceding tone poem.] Then it vanishes far beyond the poet’s gaze.”

Of the third movement of *Má Vlast*, the composer noted, “This poem depicts the story of *Šárka*. It begins with the enraged *Šárka* [one of the girls at the court of the Přemysl, the founding family of Bohemia, who rebelled at being ruled by men after the death of Queen Libuše] swearing vengeance on the whole male race for the infidelity of her lover. From afar is heard the arrival of armed men led by Ctirad, who has come to punish *Šárka* and her rebellious maidens. In the distance, Ctirad hears the feigned cries of a girl (*Šárka*) bound to a tree. On seeing her, he is overcome by her beauty and so inflamed with love that he frees her. By means of a previously prepared potion, she intoxicates Ctirad and his men, who fall asleep. As she sounds her horn (a pre-arranged signal), the rebel maidens, hidden in nearby rocks, rush to commit the bloody deed. The horror of general slaughter and the passion and fury of *Šárka*’s fulfilled revenge form the end of the composition.”

Šárka, the most graphically detailed movement of *Má Vlast*, is divided into five continuous, almost cinematic, sequences. The first section (marked “with fire” in the score) portrays the fury of the avowed man-hater. Next comes a swaggering march to accompany the entry of Ctirad and his knights. A solo clarinet intones the duplicitous cry

Program Notes - *continued*

of Šárka, to which Ctirad (solo cello) gives an impassioned response as he loosens her bonds. An episode of warmly lyrical music suggests Ctirad's wooing of the cunning maid before a soft, trilled string chord introduces the scherzo-like fourth section, which depicts the drunken revels of the warriors. Šárka's philter has its effect, and the festive music dies away as the men fall asleep (the low C's on the bassoon suggest their snoring). Šárka sounds her horn and exhorts her followers (another clarinet solo) to undertake the slaughter that fills the last chapter of this dramatic tone poem.

Smetana wrote of *From Bohemia's Woods and Meadows*, "This is a general impression of the feelings aroused on seeing the Czech countryside. Here, from all directions, fervently sung songs, some cheerful and others melancholy, resound from the groves and meadows. The woodlands (in solos for the horns), the gay, fertile Elbe lowlands and various other parts besides, are all celebrating." The composer himself provided some of the music's poetic details in a conversation with his friend V.V. Zeleny: "The opening resembles the strong impression experienced on going into the countryside; hence the powerful beginning with the emphatic chord of G minor. Then comes G major, as if a naïve country girl were going out. [The following music depicts] the beauty of being in the woods in summer during the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead. Twilight prevails in the woods, and the sun's bright beams seldom penetrate between the tops of the trees. An ever-present phrase indicates the twittering of birds. [The closing section represents] the harvest, or at least a festival of some kind."

- (selections from Chicago Symphony Orchestra program notes,

https://assets.culturaldistrict.org/culturaldistrict/system/assets/12402/original/Nov_13-15_2015.pdf)

Bedřich Smetana was a prodigy, turning heads as a promising pianist by the time he was six and confounding his early teachers by always seeming to be a step ahead of them. He managed to get himself transferred briefly to a high school in Prague, where he immersed himself in as much music as he could, composed a string quartet for friends to play, and marveled at a piano recital Liszt performed when passing through on an 1840 tour. In 1866, he was named principal conductor of the Provisional Theater, where he built an orchestra that included among its ranks the violist—and fledgling composer—Antonín Dvořák.

In 1874, the year he composed the tone poem, *Má Vlast*, he began losing his hearing, and within a few months he grew substantially deaf. An immediate upshot was that he had to curtail his conducting activities, and in a letter that September he informed the Provisional Theatre's management of what was happening: "It was in July. . . that I noticed that in one of my ears the notes in the higher octaves were pitched differently than in the other and that at times I had a tingling feeling in my ears and heard a noise as though I was standing by a mighty waterfall. My condition changed continuously up to the end of July when it became a permanent state of affairs and it was accompanied by spells of giddiness so that I staggered to and fro and could walk straight only with the greatest concentration." In August, he began to experience aural hallucinations and then, he reported to his devoted friend Josef Srb-Debrnov, "on the 20th of October I lost my hearing completely." [He composed *Má Vlast*, the following month in November and completed the work in December 1874.]

-(excerpts from San Francisco Symphony program notes,

<https://www.sfsymphony.org/Data/Event-Data/Program-Notes/S/Smetana-Vltava-from-Ma-Vlast>)

Biography



Flutist **Beth Chandler Cahill** enjoys a varied performance career as soloist and chamber musician. Praised for her musical versatility and colorful sound, she has been featured at major venues, universities, and festivals throughout the U.S. and abroad. In demand as a pedagogue, she is the Professor of Flute at James Madison University and a recipient of both the JMU College of Visual and Performing Arts Distinguished Teacher and Distinguished Service Awards. This year she celebrates her 25th year on the JMU faculty. Her former students perform, teach, and advocate all over the world. A native Texan, Dr. Cahill earned degrees from the University of

Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, New England Conservatory, and Baylor University, and she was a Fulbright Scholar to the United Kingdom. Her mentors include Paula Robison, Trevor Wye, Jack Wellbaum, and Helen Ann Shanley. She is a past president of the National Flute Association and can be heard on **TIME PLACE SPIRIT** (MSR Classics), an album of music for flute and piano with pianist Paulo Steinberg, which is widely available to stream. Dr. Cahill enjoys living in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley with her husband and close to her college-aged twin sons. bethchandlercahill.com

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JMU Symphony Orchestra Personnel

Dr. Kira Omelchenko, Director and Conductor
Noelle Singleton, Orchestra Manager TA, Graduate Conductor
Dalton Guin, Graduate Conductor
Danny Postlethwait and Johnny Park, Librarians
Joshua Brancaleone, Poster Design and Logo creative

Violin I

Johnny Parks*
Victor Winterstein*
Zike Qi
Felicity Banner
Nick Poxon
Noelle Singleton

Violin II

Roman Rousek*
Alexandra Goodell*
Erin Choi
Anthony Parone
Zoe Lovelace
Anniah Craun
Aidan Coleman

Viola

Elliot Dew*
Sunny Robertello*
Ana Mooney
Julia Johnson
Thien Phan
Rose Guevara
Sawyer Degregori

Cello

Danny
Postlethwait*
John Meshreky*
Christopher Hall
Hailey Hotek
Marlie Dela Cruz
Will Hayes
Theron Rath
Tessa Kuta
Diego Hernandez
Augusta McNulty

Bass

Gabriella Bieberich*
Frankie Sellars*
Grey Sheridan
Michael Dean
Kaylin Yates
Kiki Protopsaltis
Jolie Prasad

Flute

Joshua
Brancaleone*
Daniel Esperante*
Emma Lisson

Oboe/English horn

Cady Litteral*
Azaleigh Smith*

Clarinet

Geneva
Maldonado*
David Kriete
Valerie Alvarado

Bass Clarinet

David Kriete

Bassoons

Charlie Andress*
Michael Ross*

Contrabassoon

Charlie Andress

Horn

Joshua Short*
Chloe Starling
Isabel Ricciuto
Kendall Hicks

Trumpet

Allie Woodbury*
Taylor Lowry
Charlotte Connolly

Trombone

William Shanahan*
Adriana Dryden*

Bass Trombone

James Colmie
Wilson

Tuba

Ian Wallace

Percussion

Emily Stevens*
Thomas Creighton
VI
Logan Douglas
Ryan Secrist
Lizbeth Stephan

Piano

Ryan Walker

Harp

Elspeth McNulty

*denotes section leader/co-section leader