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Sonoma State University
Department of Music
2023 - 24 Concert Series



SPRING 2024 CONCERTS

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JAN 28	2:00 PM	Navarro Trio	Schroeder
FEB 9	ALL DAY	SSU/Redwood Empire Jazz Festival	Weill
FEB 9, 10	7:30PM	<i>In the Heights</i>	Evert B. Person Theatre
FEB 11	2:00 PM		
FEB 13	6:30 PM	Bassoon Masterclass with Jeff Robinson	Schroeder
FEB 16, 17	7:30 PM	<i>In the Heights</i>	Evert B. Person Theatre
FEB 18	2:00 PM		
FEB 24	ALL DAY	2024 NATS Vocal Festival	Schroeder
FEB 27	7:30 PM	An Evening of Saxophone Chamber Music	Schroeder
FEB 28	1:00 PM	Vocal Repertory Recital	Schroeder
MAR 5	7:30 PM	SSU Jazz Combos	Schroeder
MAR 6	1:00 PM	Department Repertory Recital	Schroeder
MAR 7	7:30 PM	SSU Jazz Orchestra	Weill
MAR 11	7:30 PM	SSU Concert Band	Weill
MAR 13-15	ALL DAY	Sonoma Invitational Wind Band & Orchestra Fest	Weill
APRIL 7	7:30 PM	SSU Concerto Competition	Schroeder
APRIL 9	7:30 PM	Faculty Recital featuring Ian Carey	Schroeder
APRIL 17	1:00 PM	Department Repertory Recital	Schroeder
APRIL 19	7:30 PM	Concert Choir & SonoVoce	Schroeder
APRIL 20	7:30 PM	Brass Ensemble: Full Fathom Five	Schroeder
APRIL 21	2:00 PM	Navarro Trio	Schroeder
APRIL 26	ALL DAY	CMEA State Choral Festival	Green Music Center
APRIL 27	7:30 PM	Symphony Orchestra Season Finale	Weill
MAY 1	7:30 PM	Concert Band & Diablo Valley Winds	Weill
MAY 2	7:30 PM	SSU Jazz Combos	Schroeder
MAY 3	7:30 PM	Chamber Music Ensembles	Schroeder
MAY 4	7:30 PM	SSU Wind Ensemble and CSU Fullerton	Weill
MAY 6	7:30 PM	SSU Jazz Orchestra	Weill
MAY 7	7:30 PM	SSU Guitar Ensemble	Schroeder
MAY 8	1:00 PM	Instrumental Repertory Recital	Schroeder
MAY 9	7:30 PM	Music Theatre Scenes	Schroeder
MAY 11	7:30 PM	Rock Collegium	Schroeder
MAY 12	2:00 PM	Student Composers	Schroeder
MAY 15	7:30 PM	Vocal Repertory Recital	Schroeder

Sonoma State University
Department of Music
Presents

Symphony Orchestra
Season Finale:
Perspectives on America

Alexander Kahn, Music Director

Saturday, April 27, 2024
7:30 pm
Joan and Sanford I. Weill Hall

CONCERT PROGRAM

The Tempered Valley Charlie Gomez (b. 2001)
(2024 Composition Contest winner; world premiere)

Charlie Gomez, guest conductor

Annual Composition Contest generously underwritten by Amy and Joel Levine

Selections from *Old American Songs* Sets One and Two Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)
The Dodger
Long Time Ago
Simple Gifts
I Bought Me a Cat
The Little Horses
Zion's Walls
The Golden Willow Tree
At the River

Charlie Whitaker, vocal soloist and 2023 Concerto Competition winner

- INTERMISSION -

Suite from *Appalachian Spring* Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Umoja: Anthem of Unity Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

PROGRAM NOTES

The Tempered Valley (2024)

The Tempered Valley is a story about resilience in hard times and the power of one good deed to bring people together. It seeks to address the problems of the present by reflecting on voices of the past, taking inspiration from the works of Aaron Copland and a combination of 20th century composers including Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Shostavovich. This work was written to accentuate and celebrate the unique talents of this orchestra and its members utilizing multiple soloists to tell its story from its pastoral opening to the rousing finale.

- Program Note by Charlie Gomez

Old American Songs (1950-1952)

Originally written for piano and voice, Aaron Copland finished the first set of *Old American Songs* in 1950, the same year he completed another major song set, *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Another well known composer and friend Benjamin Britten was granted the premier, playing the piano while tenor Peter Pears sang at the Aldeburgh Festival in London on October 17, 1950. This set was so well received that Copland set another five songs in 1952, this time premiering at the Castle Hill Concerts in Massachusetts with baritone William Warfield and Copland himself at the piano. It was not until later in 1955 that Copland orchestrated both sets for medium voice and orchestra, with Warfield again premiering the first set with the L.A. Philharmonic. The second set's orchestral premier had Copland conducting the Ojai Festival Orchestra with mezzo-soprano Grace Bumbry, who in 1961 was the first African-American opera singer to appear at the Bayreuth Festival in Germany.

The Sonoma State University Orchestra has decided not to perform *The Boatmen's Dance* from the first set, and *Ching-a-ring Chaw* from the second set. Although the content of these songs are not overtly racist, both songs were originally minstrel songs. Minstrel shows were a form of entertainment in which actors wearing blackface makeup would portray racial stereotypes of African Americans. Most notably *The Boatmen's Dance* was originally written by Dan Emmett, composer of Dixie and founder of the first blackface minstrel troupe. Although the Orchestra recognizes the historical significance of these songs, as well as Copland efforts to remove racist undertones by modifying the dialect, we believe that performing music is a celebration and would elevate the songs in a way that disagrees with our values.

- Program Note by Charlie Whitaker

Appalachian Spring (1943)

Some of Copland's most populist "American" music was produced during the Depression and war years, including the overtly patriotic morale boosters *Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*. *Appalachian Spring* capped a trilogy of dance interpretations of the American frontier spirit, beginning with *Billy the Kid* (1938) and continuing with *Rodeo* (1942). This was music that created the concert and theater equivalent of the poignant "high lonesome" bluegrass sound emerging at the same time, music of open chords and spare textures that often drew on traditional sources.

Appalachian Spring was commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for Martha Graham. Copland began work on Graham's then-untitled scenario in Hollywood in June 1943, completing the ballet a year later in Cambridge, MA. "After Martha gave me this bare outline, I knew certain crucial things—that it had to do with the pioneer American spirit, with youth and spring, with optimism and hope," Copland later wrote.

Graham took the eventual title from a poem by Hart Crane, though not the narrative of an Appalachian housewarming for a pioneer and his bride. Copland originally scored the ballet for an ensemble of 13 instruments, since the premiere was in the small Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress (with Graham herself as the Bride, Erick Hawkins as the Husbandman, and Merce Cunningham as the Revivalist). In the spring of 1945 he arranged a suite from the ballet for full orchestra, which won the Pulitzer Prize for music that year.

The Suite is cast in eight uninterrupted sections. It opens with a slowly blooming introduction, which unison strings burst into in an elated Allegro. The scenes that follow move from a warm, gentle duet for the pioneering couple, through fleetly fiddling dances for a revivalist preacher and his followers, to an animated dance of anticipation for the bride. A transitional interlude recalls the opening before the Suite's climax, a set of variations on the Shaker hymn "Simple Gifts," which supported scenes of rustic domesticity in the choreography. In the coda, the married couple are left alone in their new home, with tender music that bookends and fulfills the opening expectations.

Graham told Copland that she wanted the dance to be "a legend of American living, like a bone structure, the inner frame that holds together a people," and the ballet and its music were immediately understood as reflections of a national identity, of hope and fulfillment in a difficult time. "... the Spring that is being celebrated is not just any Spring but the Spring of America; and the celebrants are not just half a dozen individuals but ourselves in different phases," John Martin wrote in his *New York Times* review.

-Program note by John Henken

Umoja (2019)

In its original form, *Umoja*, the Swahili word for unity and the first principle of the African diaspora holiday Kwanzaa, was composed as a simple song for women's choir. It embodied a sense of 'tribal unity', through the feel of a drum circle, the sharing of history through traditional "call and response" form and the repetition of a memorable sing-song melody. It was rearranged into woodwind quintet form during the genesis of Coleman's chamber music ensemble, Imani Winds, with the intent of providing an anthem that celebrated the diverse heritages of the ensemble itself.

Almost two decades later from the original, the orchestral version brings an expansion and sophistication to the short and sweet melody, beginning with sustained ethereal passages that float and shift from a bowed vibraphone, supporting the introduction of the melody by solo violin. Here the melody is a sweetly singing in its simplest form with an earnest reminiscent of Appalachian style music. From there, the melody dances and weaves throughout the instrument families, interrupted by dissonant viewpoints led by the brass and percussion sections, which represent the clash of injustices, racism and hate that threatens to gain a foothold in the world today. Spiky textures turn into an aggressive exchange between upper woodwinds and percussion, before a return to the melody as a gentle reminder of kindness and humanity. Through the brass led ensemble tutti, the journey ends with a bold call of unity that harkens back to the original anthem.

Umoja has seen the seen the creation of many versions, that are like siblings to one another, similar in many ways, but each with a unique voice that is informed by Coleman's ever-evolving creativity and perspective.

This version honors the simple melody that ever was, but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, *Umoja* has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today.

-Program note by Valerie Coleman

SONOMA STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ROSTER

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Alexander Kahn

LIBRARIAN, ORCHESTRA MANAGER AND EQUIPMENT MANAGER

Emma Becker

Alex Brown

FLUTE/PICCOLO

Sungdu Bae (p)

Katie Mason

Sierra Smith

Theo Hayse

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Elias Ramos (p)

Aidan Williams

Ash McDonald

CLARINET

Emma Hofhenke (p)

Paulina Vaclav

Amelie Guerrero

BASS CLARINET

Emma Becker

BASSOON

Cooper Ysais (p)

Zoe Leibinger

HORN

Jason Whitney (p)

Ryan Ristine

Ezra Costa

TRUMPET

Miriam Bozman (p)

Robert Springer

Hikaru Hallberg

Madison Lechman

TROMBONE

Hunter Richison (p)

Ruby Goshert

Oscar Bautista

TUBA

Johanna Klapstein

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION

Charles Gomez (p)

Connor Canavan

Colin Bartlett

Ethan Dierauf

PIANO

Mira Portnoy

HARP

Wendy Tamis

VIOLIN 1

Miranda Ronan (concertmaster)

Samuel Strong

Katie Bjornstrom

Zander Voge

Sean Carnahan

Diane Peterson

VIOLIN 2

Jeffrey Alcaraz (p)

Erin Garcia-Norris

Sofia Fichera

Linnea Strathdee

Sarai Camarena

Ellie Lyle

Renato E Francisco

VIOLA

Andy Ting (p)

Ben Robbins

Omar Diaz

Colin Hathorn

Susan Lauenstein

VIOLONCELLO

Christopher Fromm (p)

Ella Hoffman

Sumithra Smith

Abigail Summers

Vickie Sutton

Carol Vines

BASS

Leif Dering (p)

Joel Kruzic

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Charlie Gomez is a fifth-year Music education student at Sonoma State University. He Studies Percussion with Jennifer Wilsey and has served as the percussion section leader for the Sonoma State Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra for three years. Charlie Graduated From Rancho Cotate High School in 2019 where he was a Section Leader and Drum Major for three years, receiving the John Philip Sousa award in his senior year. After graduation, he participated in the Santa Rosa Junior College Symphonic Band from 2019-2021. Charlie has been featured as a student conductor in the Rancho Cotate High school Symphonic Band in 2019, Santa Rosa Junior College Symphonic Band in 2020, and Noma Winds in 2023; This is his first composition for symphony orchestra.

Charlie Whitaker was born and raised in the Philippines, migrating to California in 2016. Although she only began formal voice studies at 22 years old, her mother says she could sing before she could talk. Charlie earned her Associates in Vocal Performance from Santa Rosa Junior College, graduating with highest honors in 2021. She is also graduating with honors from Sonoma State University this spring with a Bachelors in Music Composition. She owes much of her progress to her teachers Carol Menke, Chen Han-Lin, Christa Durand, and Krista Wigle. Charlie is a proud member of many ensembles in the department including Jazz Orchestra, Rock Collegium, and SonoVoce where she also serves as the Alto section leader. She loves to perform in various genres of music, including choral, jazz, rock and roll, pop, opera, and art song.

Alexander Kahn is Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at Sonoma State University. At Sonoma State he directs the Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra and teaches courses in conducting, music history, musicianship, and general education. Alexander comes to Sonoma State from Gettysburg College, where he was Associate Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music. He is also the Founder and former Music Director of the UC Berkeley Chamber Orchestra and the former Assistant Conductor UC Berkeley Symphony.

Alexander has worked with a variety of orchestras across the United States and throughout Europe. Currently he serves as Assistant and Cover Conductor for the Santa Rosa Symphony, as well as Music Director of the Vintner's Chamber Orchestra, a professional chamber orchestra that performs at wineries throughout Sonoma and Napa counties. Previous positions he has held include Music Director of the Metta Ensemble (Gettysburg, PA), Cover Conductor for the Baltimore Symphony, Staff Conductor for the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC, Assistant Conductor of the Bamberg Symphony, and Music Director of the Bamberg Collegium Musicum. Recent guest conducting engagements have included work with the Winchester Orchestra of San Jose, Mill Valley Philharmonic, Festival Opera of Walnut Creek, Encore Coda and Cazadero Performing Arts Camps, and middle school and high school honor orchestras throughout California. He serves on the Advisory Board for the California Orchestra Director's Association (CODA).

Alexander earned a PhD in Music History from UC Berkeley and remains active as a scholar. His dissertation entitled "Double Lives: Exile Composers in Los Angeles" focused on the community of European exiles who fled to Los Angeles during the Third Reich. He has lectured and published on this topic and other issues related to World-War II-era music history, as well on a variety of topics including music and mindfulness meditation, the history of film music, and the history of amateur music-making in America. He is a frequent pre-concert lecturer at Sonoma State's Green Music Center and regularly gives talks on the Met Opera Live series at the Sebastopol Library. His book *Caring for the Whole Musician*, co-authored with Larry Hensel, was published by Routledge Press in May 2023.

Alexander's love of music was inherited from his father, Eugene Kahn, a conductor and educator on Long Island. His primary conducting studies were at UC Berkeley with David Milnes and at the Peabody Institute with Marin Alsop, Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar. He has also participated in workshops with teachers including Larry Rachleff, Kenneth Kiesler, Daniel Lewis and Peter Gülke.

When not conducting, Alexander enjoys cooking, hiking, reading, and traveling, and spending time with his wonderful wife and daughter.

About the Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra

The Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra is comprised of the finest string, wind, brass, and percussion students at Sonoma State and of musicians from the broader Sonoma County community. Under the direction of Dr. Alexander Kahn, the Symphony Orchestra performs a diverse array of orchestral literature, ranging from the Baroque period to world premieres and from classical repertoire to film, opera, and educational works. Soloists are regularly featured, including guest artists, faculty soloists, and student soloists chosen through the annual concerto competition.

Membership is through audition only and is open to all students regardless of major as well as community members. Auditions are held during the first week of each semester. For more information regarding the audition process, please visit the orchestra homepage at <http://music.sonoma.edu/ensembles/symphony-orchestra> or email Dr. Kahn at kahnale@sonoma.edu

SUPPORT US!

The Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra is generously funded through the Department of Music at Sonoma State University. However, donations are gratefully received to support our various initiatives, including our annual Concerto Competition, Composition Competition, Family Concert series, and our Lesson Scholarship Fund for Non-Majors. Please consider making a gift to support us! Donations can be made online here:



For more information please contact Dr. Alexander Kahn (kahnale@sonoma.edu) and/or Kris Berger, Director of Development for the Green Music Center (bergerk@sonoma.edu)

Thank you to our donors!

The Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra offers its heartfelt thanks the following individuals and organizations who have supported our work in recent years.

Corrick Brown

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THE SONOMA STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Proudly announces its

2024-2025 CONCERT SEASON (10TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON)

(all repertoire subject to change)

Concert One: Saturday, October 5, 2024, 7:30pm

Gabriella Smith, *Field Guide*

John Mackey, Percussion Concerto (Colin Bartlett, soloist and 2024 Concert Competition Winner)

Antonin Dvorak, "New World" Symphony

Concert Two: *Viva Mexico*: Friday November 22, 2024, 7:30pm

Collaboration with the Luther Burbank Center Mariachi program
(Matthew Bowker, Director)

Elizondo, Marquez, Ortiz, and traditional works for mariachi ensemble

Band & Orchestra Festival, March 11, 12, and 13, 2025

Composition contest winner TBD

Ravel, *Daphnis and Chloe Suite*

Season Finale: Saturday, April 26, 2025, 7:30pm:

Side-by-Side with Santa Rosa Junior College Orchestra

Work(s) TBD (SRJC Symphony Orchestra, Cindy Weichel, conductor)

Mahler, Symphony 1, "Titan" (SSU Orchestra)

We want you to become a Seawolf Musician

You'll find a home here at Sonoma State University. What you can expect as a music major here at SSU is personalized attention to your individual needs as an artist. Our faculty are here to help you develop your voice as a musician, provide you with a sound foundation in musicianship, and to help guide your path toward a career in music. Each student is assigned a faculty Advisor to assist with your academic progress. You'll find the vibe here between students and between faculty is welcoming, genuine, and caring. The SSU Music Department is a dynamic environment where you can thrive.

World Class Facilities

The Green Music Center is an outstanding place to immerse yourself in music and to develop your career path as a performing artist, music educator or composer. The GMC is home to world-class concert venues, including 1400-seat Weill Hall and 250-seat Schroeder Recital Hall. The GMC features dozens of performances and masterclasses by guest artists from around the globe each year, making our campus one of the crown jewels in the CSU system.

Outstanding Faculty

Our award-winning faculty are recognized as leading artists, scholars and educators in their fields. Our instructional faculty comprise professional musicians who perform with the top professional ensembles in the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Opera and Ballet, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the American Bach Soloists, the Grammy-nominated Agave Ensemble, the Santa Rosa Symphony, and Bay Area Jazz venues.

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- Bachelor of Music, Composition
- Bachelor of Music, Jazz Studies
- Bachelor of Music, Vocal Performance
- Bachelor of Music, Instrumental Performance
- Bachelor of Music, Music Education (Pre-Certification), Choral Track
- Bachelor of Music, Music Education (Pre-Certification), Instrumental Track
- Bachelor of Music, Music Education (Pre-Certification), Jazz Track

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- Bachelor of Music in Performance
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- Bachelor of Music in Composition
- Bachelor of Arts in Music
- Minor in Music Liberal Arts
- Minor in Music Jazz Studies

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Ensemble, Guitar Methods

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Daniel Levitan, Harp

Mark Wallace, Classical Bass

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Jazz

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Concert Jazz Ensemble

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