

GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL / UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

THE RALPH OPERA PROGRAM PRESENTS

THE WANDERING SCHOLAR

an opera by **GUSTAV HOLST** libretto by **CLIFFORD BAX**



ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES H. HARRIS



Colorado State University

an opera by **RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

RIDERS TO THE SEA

Colorado State University

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

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APRIL 4 – 7, 2019 / GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

The Wandering Scholar

GUSTAV HOLST

Thursday, 4/4
Saturday, 4/6

Friday, 4/5
Sunday, 4/7

PIERRE (a scholar)	Santiago Gutierrez-Herrera	Santiago Gutierrez-Herrera
FATHER PHILLIPE (a priest)	Trevor Halder	Trevor Halder
LOUIS (a farmer)	Eric Paricio	Eric Paricio
ALISON (his wife)	Bridget Perez	Alexandra Young

Riders to the Sea

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Thursday, 4/4
Saturday, 4/6

Friday, 4/5
Sunday, 4/7

MAURYA (a widow)	Maria Gesicki	Genevieve Sullivan
CATHLEEN (her eldest daughter)	Kassidy King	Andrea Weidemann
NORA (her youngest daughter)	Chelsea LaJoye	Chelsea LaJoye
BARTLEY (her only living son)	Eric Paricio	Eric Paricio
A WOMAN	Emily Gehman	Angela Lamar

CHORUS: Kinsey Anderson, Katie Beyer, Anna Bonjour, Samantha Brewer, Tess Collins, Ashley Eckroth, Mikayla Findley, Emily Gehman, Angela Lamar Madeline Roaldson, Ivy Taylor, Hayley Voss, Montana Waters

PRODUCTION TEAM:

STAGE DIRECTORS:	Dana Kinney (The Wandering Scholar) and Dr. Tiffany Blake (Riders to the Sea)
CONDUCTOR:	Wes Kenney
GUEST CONDUCTOR	Kevin Poelking
MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CHORUS MASTER:	Dr. Chris Crans
REHEARSAL PIANIST:	Gloria Choi
SCENIC DESIGNER:	Roger Hanna
PROP MASTER:	Michael Dold
LIGHTING DESIGNER:	Lachlan Fordyce
COSTUME DESIGNER:	Elise Kulovany
MAKEUP DESIGNER:	Annabel Wall
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER:	Megan Ross
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER:	Zac Carter

ELECTRICS SHOP: Lachlan Fordyce, Yasmin Sethna, Shaye Evans, Alana Corrigan, Rachel Bennett, Anthony DeCosmo, Ryan Stabler, Morgan Lessman, Julia Battagliese, Lily Fordyce

SCENIC SHOP: Duncan Port, Ryan Volkert, Ryan Stabler, Hannah VanderWal, Kristina Clark, Alexandra Ruth, Nicole Gardner

PAINT SHOP: Tara Spencer, Tara Tolar-Payne, Megan Ross, Kaitlin Kennedy, Kathleen Wright, Lauren Boesch

COSTUME SHOP: Jessica Kroupa, Stephanie Wachter, Laura Myers, Ryan Wilke-Braun, Annabel Wall, Cassie Eron, Holli Kellogg, Heather Braun, Jeff Taylor

AUDIO SHOP: Jorrey Calvo, Ryan Stabler

PROP SHOP: Xander Korbin, Frances Fedele, Dominique Mickelson, Jacob Bielmaier, Nicole Young, Mya Coca

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR: Sarah LePiere

PROJECTIONS OPERATOR: Dominika Rubio

WARDROBE CREW: Kyle Phibbs, Annabel Wall

DECK CREW: Sophia Gali

SUPERTITLES: Andrea Weidemann

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY SINFONIA

WES KENNEY, CONDUCTOR

KEVIN POELKING, GUEST CONDUCTOR (*RIDERS TO THE SEA*, 4/7)

HALEY FUNKHOUSER, GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT

VIOLIN I

Krystian Salva, concertmaster
Nancy Hernandez, asst. concertmaster
Dmitri Ascarrunz

VIOLIN II

Corban Green, principal
Brooke Der, asst. principal
Tabitha Lindahl

VIOLA

Regan DeRossett, principal
Garret Durie, asst. principal
Hailey Moy
Xareny Polanco

CELLO

Mitch Smith, principal
Sarah Souders, asst. principal
Annie Koppes

BASS

Zuri Kargbo, principal
Zachary Niswender, asst. principal

FLUTE

Carmen Chavez
Katherine Miswell, piccolo

OBOE

Beatrice Lincke
Rebecca Kopacz, English Horn

CLARINET

Omar Calixto
Kate Gelsinger, Bass Clarinet

BASSOON

Joseph Hoffarth
Blaine Lee
John Parker

HORN

Ayo Derbyshire
Miranda Deblauwe

TRUMPET

Karla Rogers

PERCUSSION

John Andretsos
Danny Moore

PROGRAM NOTES

THE TALE OF THE WANDERING SCHOLAR, OP. 50

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Although many composers influenced Gustav Holst, he compiled his work in an ingenious and original way. Growing up, like his father, Holst played piano pieces by Liszt and Chopin. Holst and his father also spent time listening to the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. His favorite composer was Grieg, which he could play only when his father was out of the house, because of the elder's dislike of the composer. After leaving home, Holst attended the Royal College of Music in London. During college, he heard his colleagues raving about Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Mahler, and Wagner. He spent his time studying counterpoint. The subject frustrated him because he felt it dominating his compositions. Holst eventually used counterpoint primarily as an accent, rather than letting it take over his music. Two-part counterpoint and ground bass, along with Chopin, Wagner, and Gilbert and Sullivan, appear as obvious influences on the music of *The Tale of the Wandering Scholar*. Holst was inspired by a short story within the book, *The Wandering Scholars*, and asked Clifford Bax to write a libretto based upon it. Bax writes, "the story came from 'The Wandering Scholars', a more than a delightful book by Miss Helen Waddell. It was too, a book of which Gustav became immeasurably fond not without cause." Bax states that he and Holst dined together on one occasion with the author, and the lady's brilliance and story telling enamored both gentlemen. In the book, Waddell provides historical information about wandering clergy poets (the Vagantes), and their stories, translated from Latin to English. The Vagantes were educated in the Roman Catholic Church but became disgruntled. These musical radicals travelled across Europe to further their learning, inhabiting Germany, England, and France with an aim to cultivate literacy. They wrote stories and poems with satirical themes about love and wine, and scandalized as they mocked society and the church.

When Holst started composing his opera, his goal was to write in a *Bel Canto* style, similar to Italian composers such as Bellini or Donizetti. However, he found that his work was too complicated. Holst's daughter Imogen describes his frustration, "At the time when he was writing *The Planets*, he had to rely on the primitive insistence of repeated rhythms and alternating block harmonies in his struggles to express what he wanted to say." Perhaps this is also what motivated Holst while composing *The Tale of the Wandering Scholar*. This opera was a breakthrough for Holst, in that he finally mastered merging compositional styles. Within the opera, the composer relies upon ground bass, romanticism, bitonality, and speech with song. Although the premiere was successful, Holst harbored plans to further revise the score. As his daughter recounts, "He has penciled in half a dozen queries in the manuscript score, and the words 'More?', 'More harmony?', 'Longer?', 'More space for movement?' appear several times in his handwriting." Unfortunately, Holst was unable to make any revisions. The opera was performed within the last three months of his life and he was too sick to attend. British composer Benjamin Britten arranged the chamber orchestra version performed today. Then, together, Britten and Imogen edited the opera and the work was published in 1968.

— notes by Naomi R. Wright

RIDERS TO THE SEA

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born on October 12, 1872. When he was just two years old, his father died, and his mother Margaret brought her three sons to live with her family in Surrey at Leith Hill Place. It was there that young Ralph [pronounced Rayf] began taking music lessons from his aunt. This is also where

his love of literature began, as his mother would read aloud to him the works of Shakespeare. Later on, he used Shakespeare's text, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, for his opera *Sir John in Love*. Like Holst, in 1890 he entered the Royal College of Music where he studied under Sir Hubert Parry, who introduced him to the strong English style of choral music. As he began his own musical career, Vaughan Williams collected many English folk songs, which he incorporated into many of his larger works. This was the beginning of his development of a distinctly British musical style. During the First World War, at the age of forty-two, Vaughan Williams enlisted as a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving as a wagon orderly. Years on the front had a lasting impact on his imagination, and would come back to influence compositions such as *A Pastoral Symphony*. Vaughan Williams composed two consecutive operas following the First World War. They were drastically different from each other. Premiering in 1936, *The Poisoned Kiss* is an energetic and even humorous work with strong romantic themes. In a strikingly different style, the opera that followed conveys musical themes of distress and unrest, perhaps heightened by a prophetic sense of an imminent Second World War. *Riders to the Sea* was performed at the Royal College of Music in 1937. This opera is known as a "literaturoper," because it is a nearly word-for-word setting of John Millington Synge's play of the same title. The one-act opera closely follows the story of Maurya, who has lost her father, husband, and four sons to the sea. Her fifth son, Michael, has been lost for days, and her youngest son Bartley soon takes to the sea to bring horses to the Galway Fair. In the course of this somber opera, Maurya realizes, in a sort of vision and mother's intuition, that her sons will not return home.

Vaughan William's music depicts Synge's text in a way that is sharp and jarring at times. Percussive elements paint a picture of waves crashing against the rocky shore. Drums and cymbals are used less as rhythmic drivers and more as sound effects throughout. The winds and strings pass around musical lines with a distinct rise and fall, almost as an ebb and flow of waves, or the conversational pattern of speech. The chorus is employed as an effect in several scenes. They do not use words, but rather alternations of "oohs" and "ahs," adding to the scenery, and giving several moments a wailing, even supernatural sense. For the singers, this seemingly simplistic setting has its share of technical challenges. Rather than taking moments out of time to expound upon a single thought, like in an aria, the opera follows the text, moving swiftly between moods. The focus on dialogue gives the music a recitative feel throughout, except for a final blessing delivered by Maurya. Although the notes and rhythms are explicitly written out for the singers, certain liberties within timing are taken when the text requires. Artistically, there are moments when a performer does not feel the rhythmic text setting naturally matching their own inflections, in which case they may adjust accordingly. There are also sections of unaccompanied singing, which can be daunting. The singer must be diligent with pitches in order to return to the accompanied sections seamlessly.

Albeit a short work, *Riders to the Sea* offers a somewhat divine theme upon which to reflect. Vaughan Williams himself stated in 1920, "the object of an art is to obtain a partial revelation of that which is beyond human senses and human faculties—of that, in fact, which is spiritual." If listeners consider this sentiment when approaching *Riders to the Sea*, perhaps they will find their own meanings in this story, even today. As stated in Maurya's final blessing, may there be, "mercy...on the soul of everyone is left living in the world."

— notes by Chelsea LaJoye

U P C O M I N G P E R F O R M A N C E S

MUSIC PERFORMANCES

Virtuoso Series Concert / Faculty Chamber Music	April 8, 7:30 p.m.	ORH
Music in the Museum Concert Series / FREE	April 9, noon and 6 p.m.	GAMA
Jazz Ensembles Concert	April 9, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
University Chorus Concert	April 11, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
Graduate String Quartet Recital / FREE	April 16, 7:30 p.m.	ORH
Student Chamber Music Showcase / FREE	April 18, 7:30 p.m.	ORH
Jazz Combos Concert	April 23, 7:30 p.m.	GCH

RALPH OPERA PROGRAM PERFORMANCES

<i>Two British One-Acts</i> / Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams	April 4, 5, 6, 7:30 p.m.	GCH
<i>Two British One-Acts</i> / Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams	April 7, 2 p.m.	GCH

DANCE PERFORMANCES

Spring Dance Concert	April 26, 27, 7:30 p.m.	UDT
Spring Dance Concert	April 27, 2 p.m.	UDT
Spring Capstone Concert	May 10, 11, 7:30 p.m.	UDT
Spring Capstone Concert	May 11, 2 p.m.	UDT
Dance Special Event / <i>Embodiment</i>	June 1, 2 p.m.	UDT

THEATRE PERFORMANCES

<i>A Man of No Importance</i> , a musical by Terrence McNally	April 26, 27, May 2, 3, 4, 7:30 p.m.	UT
<i>A Man of No Importance</i> , a musical by Terrence McNally	April 28, May 5, 2 p.m.	UT
<i>Rockband Project Concert</i> / FREE	May 16, 6:30 p.m.	UT

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