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Bea Griffin Memorial Concert

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHAMBER CHOIR, James Kim

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UNIVERSITY CHORUS, Stuart Dameron

BEHOLD THE SEA

Wes Kenney, *Conductor*

WITH CSU FACULTY

Tiffany Blake, *Soprano*

John Seesholtz, *Baritone*

PROGRAM

Opening Comments

INTERMISSION

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(b. 1872, d. 1958)

Symphony No. 1, A Sea Symphony
(1909)

- I. A Song for All Seas, All Ships*
- II. On the Beach at Night, Alone*
- III. Scherzo: The Waves*
- IV. The Explorers*

Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2, 2015 • 7:30pm

GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL, UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

PROGRAM NOTES

English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) began writing *A Sea Symphony*, or Symphony No. 1, in 1903 but did not finish until 1909. As he neared completion, the composer studied in Paris for several months with Maurice Ravel. Ravel's influence is especially apparent in the work's textures that emulate nature. The symphony is scored for soloists, full chorus, and a very large orchestra. The chorus sings throughout the entire piece, which was quite uncommon at the time. Before this, composers such as Beethoven and Mahler had utilized chorus in their full-length symphonies, but usually only in the final movement. For his text, Vaughan Williams set sections of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman's texts would become favorite source material for later American composers, but in the early twentieth century, English composers had already discovered the American poet and paid tribute to him, each in his own way. In 1899, Gustav Holst unveiled the orchestral *Whitman Overture* to proclaim the coming of an enlightened new century and in 1904, produced a setting of Whitman's most musically inspired poem, "The Mystic Trumpeter," for soprano and orchestra. Frederick Delius premiered *Sea-Drift* in 1904, a shorter work based on the same section of *Leaves of Grass* that Vaughan Williams would use, with just as grand an orchestration. Since that time, composers across the globe have produced over 500 settings of poetry from *Leaves of Grass*. More recently, the volume of transcendental poetry has reached an entirely new generation through popular references in movies such as *Dead Poet's Society* and, more recently, in its important context in the television series *Breaking Bad*.

The first movement of *A Sea Symphony*, "A Song for All Seas, All Ships," expresses tribute to the vast and powerful sea. Soloists and choir exchange textual motives, creating a collective response to the dividing green and blue abyss. The movement begins with a fanfare in B-flat minor that undergoes an abrupt change to a glorious D major upon the word "Sea." The baritone soloist paints a picture of the nation's flags spread across the sea in a sea shanty-like jaunt. As the choir sings of the spreading waves, their sound lengthens with elongated rhythms. This is just one example of the immense text painting included throughout the entire symphony. The mood shifts from glorious visual grandeur to a sorrowful acknowledgment of the heroic men whose lives were taken by the sea. The fanfare reoccurs several times before the soloist sings, "Flaunt out, as visible as ever, the various flags and signals!" This movement encompasses the magnificence of the water and the human souls who praise its power.

Entitled "On the Beach at Night Alone," the second movement takes on a darker, more introspective mood while incorporating some of the musical motives from the first movement. The baritone sings of being alone on the beach, looking at dark waters, and reflects on how all human souls are connected to each other, as well as to nature and the universe. Vaughan Williams uses a wide range of orchestral colors to illuminate this point. Opening the movement with the basses and low brass, he illustrates calm, dark waters, allowing the music to convey a sense of mystery and loneliness. The baritone seems to be singing to himself as he reflects on the overwhelming vastness of the water before him. Later, as upper strings and female voices join in major tonalities, a feeling of rapture is achieved—one connected with the realization that, simply by being human, we are deeply connected to the world around us.

Vaughan Williams's proclivity for text painting shines through in the Scherzo: *The Waves*. The movement opens with a minor brass fanfare that recalls the first movement, but continues to transform throughout the scherzo. The orchestra becomes the waves. With the use of many descending and ascending chromatic themes, the choir sounds as if they are riding in a vessel upon the rise and fall of those waves. The first section ends with the line, "Toward the whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves," which is supplemented with an aria-like vocal line that gives the impression of a hearty laugh. Like most scherzos, there are three sections, though Vaughan Williams plays with a reprise of the middle section at the end, showing his willingness to create a form all his own.

The final movement, "The Explorers," consists of two large sections. The first opens with the choir singing a description of the earth in all its beauty, surrounded by the universe. The accompanying music is beautiful and moving, illustrating the perfection of untouched nature. After this inspiring opening, the music darkens, describing the first humans to explore uncharted lands and their insatiable, and often destructive, curiosity. The male voices sing of explorers' anxieties and confusion, accompanied by almost death march-like pizzicati in the lower strings. The second section returns to the metaphysical, comparing sailors to the soul and the ocean to the vast uncharted universe. The soloists dominate this section, singing of the soul's freedom. The music relaxes as the baritone and soprano muse on the human experience in nature, accompanied by solo strings. A climax builds shortly after this, with the realization that humanity transcends its own bodies. The movement quietly closes with the choir bidding the soul goodbye, as it sets out to adventure.

~Program Notes by Noelle Bauman, Julia Castellanos, and Tom Holdener

Text from *A Sea Symphony* by Walt Whitman

I. A Song for all Seas, all Ships

Book XIII: Song of the Exposition

[from verse 8]

Behold, the sea itself,
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue,
See, the steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of smoke.

Book XIX: Sea-Drift: Song for All Seas, All Ships

Today a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships -- of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,
Fitful, like a surge.

Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay.
Pick'd sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

Flaunt out O sea your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,
And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old,
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

II. On the Beach at Night, Alone

Book XIX: Sea-Drift: On the Beach at Night Alone

On the beach at night alone,
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,
All distances of place however wide,
All distances of time,
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different,
All nations,
All identities that have existed or may exist
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd,
And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.

III. (Scherzo) The Waves

Book XIX: Sea-Drift: After the Sea-Ship

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves,
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing,
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under the sun,
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

IV. The Explorers

Book XXVI: Passage to India:

[from verse 5]

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty,
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,
Unspeaking high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, mountains, trees,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending radiating,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, curious, with restless explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts,
With that sad incessant refrain, Wherefore unsatisfied soul? and Whither O mocking life?

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who Justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?
Who bind it to us? what is this separate Nature so unnatural?
What is this earth to our affections? (unloving earth, without a throb to answer ours, Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors, after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

[from verse 8]

O we can wait no longer,
We too take ship O soul,
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,)
Caroling free, singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;

[from verse 9]

Away O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers -- haul out -- shake out every sail!

Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
Sail forth -- steer for the deep waters only,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!
O farther farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

Concert Choir

Soprano

Sopranos
Anyaleen Bradley
Blair Carpenter
Jordan Brudos-Nockels
Nina Forsyth
Andria Hall
Sara Hines
Nicole Luchetta
Madeline Morris
Perri Peterson
Melissa Rubin
Marissa Rudd
Johanna Schillemat
Jackline Valdez
Ziyu (Arwen) Wang

Alto

Eva Bacmeister
Sariah Despain
Arika Drake
Talia Fischer
Logan Gannon
Emma Genell
Ashleigh Janda
Jessica Lauer
Lauren Migliaccio
Kelsey Peterson
Madison Propp
Annie Schoephoerster
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Josh Horner
Nick Louis
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Dale Rickell
Luke Thatcher

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Matthew Chanlynn
Jacob Gantz
Bryan Kettlewell
Ryan McPeek
Zac Quesenberry
Taylor Tougaw
Andrew Wallace
Jack Wheeler

University Chorus

Soprano I

Jenny Boehs
Purna Chandramouli
Holly Huggins
Emma Kett
Katie Jordan
Melissa Rubin
Abigail Strand
Kelly Walker

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Hayley Hermstad
Madelyn Johnson
Rebecca Legg
Katherine Miswell
Samantha Post
Mallory Purnell
Katie Raabe
Julie Stiewig
Lindsay Williams

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Melissa Headley
Grace Hyde
Megan Khasawneh
Mary Kitsmiller
Shelby Lavery
Baylee Moench
Marissa Sanchez
Laura Vilaret-Tuma
Meagan Weaver
Kara Zehner
Tessa Welch

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Caroline Cuthsall
Mackensie Feit
Amy Borngrebe
Stephanie Luthye
Becky Nelson
Sarah Robinson
Alexa Stringer
Karen Tran
Caitlin Tuminello
Rena Wall

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Josh Horner
Trevor Lombardi
Jeremy Naeve
Akiya Yoshigazawa
Josh Fuller
Jakob Mueller
Albert Wang

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Chandler Hunter
Ben Swall-Yarrington

Bass II

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Monroe Peck
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Bryan Kettlewell
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Jackson Watkins

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Blaine Lemanski, *Bass*

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Christopher Van Hof

Tuba

Stephen Dombrowski

Percussion

Eric Hollenbeck
Shilo Stroman

Harp

Rachel Ellins

Piano

Janet Landreth

Organ

Joel Bacon



Dr. Tiffany Blake

Praised by Opera News Online for her "...truly virtuoso performance...immaculate tone, good support and breath to spare.," soprano, Dr. Tiffany Blake, received her DMA in Vocal Performance with a minor in Opera Stage Direction from the Eastman School of Music, where she also earned her MM and was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate. Dr. Blake's operatic roles include Marguerite in *Faust* and the title role in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*. Dr. Blake has a special interest in song literature, and has given several recitals across the U.S., and in Scotland, France and Salzburg.

Wes Kenney

Named the 2009 Outstanding Teacher by the Colorado American String Teachers Association, Wes Kenney is now in his twelfth year as Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras at Colorado State University. Mr. Kenney has led the orchestras to many new milestones, including first ever performances at CSU of Mahler symphonies No. 1 and 5, two Strauss tone poems, the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra, and the Bruckner Symphony No. 5. Mr. Kenney is also Music Director of the fully professional Fort Collins Symphony as well as Opera Fort Collins. He concurrently holds the post of Music Director of the Denver Young Artists Orchestra. He is a winner of the Carmen Dragon Award and Varna International Conducting Competition. He is a frequent guest conductor of both professional and high school All-State ensembles.



John Seesholtz

John Seesholtz, baritone, was awarded the MM in vocal performance from the University of Michigan in 2003 and DMA in vocal performance with a secondary emphasis in vocal pedagogy from University of North Texas in 2009. His most recent operatic performances include; *Faust* (Valentin), *Così fan tutte* (Guglielmo), *Silvio* (Pagliacci), Verdi's *Falstaff* (Ford), and *Gianni Schicchi* (title role). Some of his solo concert works include *Camina Burana*, Brahms's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, *Five Mystical Songs* and *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Vaughn Williams. He recently toured Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and Germany performing "The Old American Songs" by Copland in 2014. Two of his awards include the *Irwin Bushman Award* as a finalist in the NATSAA competition and finalist for the Merola San Francisco Opera program. *The Journal of Singing* published his article, "The Uncollected Works of the AIDS Quilt Songbook," in March 2011 and his article, "The Origin of the Verdi Baritone" in May 2012. He is published as collector of the "Lost Songs of the AIDS Quilt Songbook Project" under Classical Vocal Reprints Publishing in 2013.



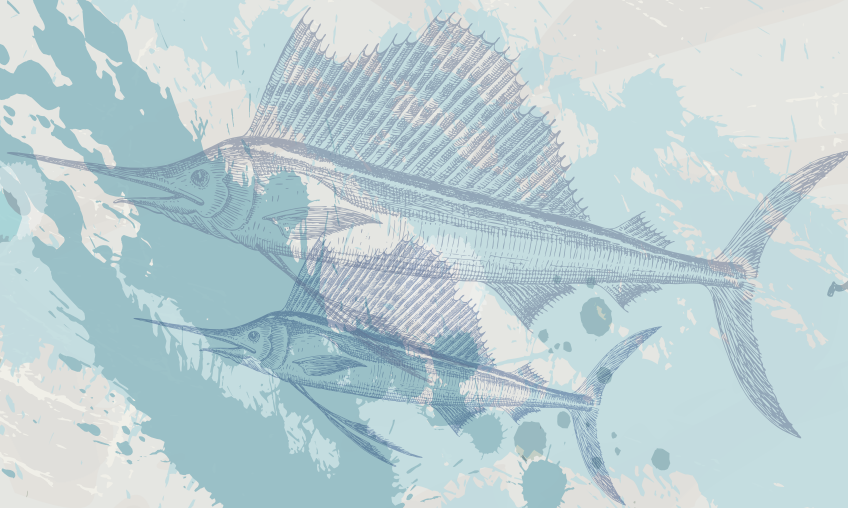
Behold THE SEA

Bea Griffin Memorial Concert



As vice president and member of the Board of Directors of the Griffin Foundation, Bea played an integral role in the existence of the Edna Rizley Griffin Concert Hall at CSU's University Center for the Arts. The Griffin Foundation's generosity has overflowed into other areas of campus as well, including a recent gift to the University Art Museum expansion. Bea was also most fond of the Griffin Scholars Program, which has supported many CSU students in realizing their dream to receive a university degree. Needless to say, the arts have thrived in Northern Colo. because of Bea Griffin and the Griffin Foundation.

Bea's enthusiasm for her philanthropy was contagious, and everyone at Colorado State University who had the pleasure of working with her immediately recognized the passion she had for her work and for life. Bea passed away in Dec. 2014. For her dedication to the university and to the arts, the College of Liberal Arts at Colorado State dedicates this concert in her memory.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

THEATRE: THE HOBBIT

by Patricia Gray. Based on the classic by J.R.R. Tolkien

4/23, 24, 25, 26 and 5/1, 2, 3 • 7:30 pm

4/25, 26 and 5/2, 3 • 2:00 pm

CONCERT ORCHESTRA & CONCERT BAND CONCERT

With CSU Faculty Rachel Ellins, Harp

5/3 • Griffin Concert Hall • 7:30 pm • FREE

VIRTUOSO SERIES CONCERT: Faculty Chamber Ensemble

5/4 • Griffin Concert Hall • 7:30 pm

SYMPHONIC BAND CONCERT: Variations on Red, White and Blue

With Chase Morin, Graduate Conducting Assistant

5/6 • Griffin Concert Hall • 7:30 pm

VOICE STUDIO RECITAL

5/6, 7 • Organ Recital Hall • 7:30 pm • FREE

AMERICAN OPERA ONE ACTS

The Medium by G.C. Menotti & *Signor Deluso* by T. Pasatier

Presented by the Charles & Reta Ralph Opera Center

5/8, 9 • Runyan Hall • 7:30 pm • FREE

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