



The Music Department presents

Skidmore Orchestra

Georgia Mills, conductor

Wednesday, April 29th, 2026, 7:00PM
Arthur Zankel Music Center
Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall

Program

Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten

Arvo Pärt
(b. 1935)

Hymn for Everyone

Jessie Montgomery
(b. 1981)

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Program Notes

Arvo Pärt, *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten* (1977)

Written for strings and a singular bell, this tribute to composer Benjamin Britten inhabits a ritualistic atmosphere filled with chant-like gestures that return in patterns. Pärt explores dynamic extremes, opening the piece at *pianississimo* and patiently building to *fortississimo*. What may first appear spare or static becomes, in repeated listening, multi-dimensional. Central to the work is Pärt's *tintinnabuli* (Latin for 'little bells') style, in which the music is organized around a careful relationship between two complementary musical voices; the melodic voice moves stepwise diatonically and the *tintinnabuli* voice moves by patterned triadic movement. Pärt's system insists on rigid musical parameters around pitch and rhythm, but also departs from principles of Serialism by aiming to reduce all possible parameters of music "to

the primordial elements of the language of sound,” as the Arvo Pärt Centre describes. Pärt has summarized his philosophy as “‘spiritual fasting,’ an ‘escape into voluntary poverty’ filled with humility and prayerful concentration.”

Jessie Montgomery, *Hymn for Everyone* (2021)

“*Hymn for Everyone* is based on a hymn that I wrote during the spring of 2021 that was a reflection on personal and collective challenges happening at the time. Up until that point, I had resisted composing “response pieces” to the pandemic and social-political upheaval, and had been experiencing an intense writer’s block.

But one day, after a long hike, this hymn just came to me – a rare occurrence. The melody traverses through different orchestral “choirs,” and is accompanied by the rest of the ensemble. It is a kind of meditation for orchestra, exploring various washes of color and timbre through each repetition of the melody.”

— Jessie Montgomery

Antonín Dvořák, *Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88* (1889)

Known for its broad lyricism, rhythmic vitality, and bright warmth, this symphony quickly established itself as one of the Czech composer’s masterworks. Born in the countryside outside of Prague during a period of national liberation movements across Europe, Dvořák’s cultural identity was core to his compositional voice, and his eighth symphony served as an homage to the music of his Bohemian homeland. While German and Austrian music dominated in the nineteenth century, representing the highest peak of musical achievement at the time, Dvořák persistently navigated his own

cultural departures from symphonic trends. He was quickly pigeonholed as a “nationalist” composer, a term rarely applied to Beethoven, Schubert, or Brahms, who employed folk elements as well.

Although, at a glance, Dvořák adheres to the structures of the classical symphony (four movements with established tempos), the work is filled with surprising thematic development. The soaring, elegiac cello theme that introduces the symphony quickly journeys to more buoyant, rhythm-forward themes. The second movement, reminiscent of the funeral march in Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony, incorporates uncomfortable moments of silence juxtaposed with striking romantic themes. The third “scherzo” movement incorporates the Czech *furiant*, a dance in triple time with stark character changes, followed by a resounding trumpet fanfare announcing the final movement of the symphony.

Personnel

Violin I

Rebecca Merber (Pärt,
Montgomery) / Marlowe Jacques
(Dvořák)
Michael Emery**
Heather Buchanan-Wise
Michelle Stewart*
Sruti Ramaswamy
Aili Teittinen-Gordon
Lia Howley
Brooke Vincent*
Virginia Kyle
Mia Snorek-Yates
Anika Scherer

Violin II

Zach DeGennaro (Pärt,
Montgomery) / Clara Frost
(Dvořák)
Josh Rodriguez**
Clara Frost (Pärt, Montgomery),
Zach DeGennaro (Dvořák)
Sophia Todd
Jessica Hindson*
Elaina Schlesinger
Amalia Pellecer
Olev Viro*
George Agwaife
Della Huntley
Betsy Kagey*

Viola

Sophia Ma
Stephani Emery**
Rebecca Perl
Adam Warner*
Timothy Nickerson
Keegan Donlon*
Harper Lemle
Sue Nazzaro*
Ray Bunkovske*

Cello

Bea Kelzenberg
Jameson Platte**
Callista Koon
Kara Duffy
Catherine Hackert*
Cathie-Jo Brun*
Mike Gasparovic*

Bass

Noanddi Manigat
Luke Baker**
Ben Rosan

Trumpet

Betsy Baker*
Sean Boyd*

Flute / Piccolo

Elise Hinrichs
Sofia Peck
Amalia Inhofe
Ellie Catalfo
Anna Hwang

Oboe / E.H.

Jacqueline Burk*
Kelly Lockwood*

Clarinet

Joel Egozy
Jackson Paley
Jackson Turner
Suyana Crespo Weil

Bassoon / Contrabassoon

Jerry Lanoue**
William Safford*

Horn

Josh Feldman
Nate Hopper
Micah Malone
Patrice Malatestinic**

Trombone

Amanda Middleton
Charlie Packer
Dan Cordell**

Tuba

Mike Silvagnoli**

Percussion

Jackson Giumarro
Charlie Martin
Andrew Bockman*
Greg Auffredou*

* Guest Artist

** Skidmore faculty