

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN
GAMER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PRESENTS

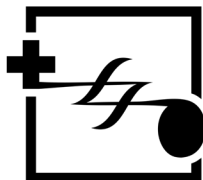
RISE TO THE CALL



RACHEL M. SCHLESINGER CONCERT HALL AND ARTS CENTER
AT NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ALEXANDRIA CAMPUS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2024
6:00 PM ET

LIVESTREAMING AT [TWITCH.TV/WMGSO](https://www.twitch.tv/wmgso)



WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN

Gamer Symphony Orchestra

The Washington Metropolitan Gamer Symphony Orchestra (WMGSO) is a community orchestra and choir whose mission is to share and celebrate video game music with a wide audience, primarily by putting on affordable, accessible concerts in the D.C. area.

Game music weaves a complex melodic thread through the traditions, shared memories, values, and myths of an entire international and intergenerational culture. WMGSO showcases this music that largely escapes recognition in professional circles.

The result: classical music with a 21st-century twist, drawing non-gamers to the artistic merits of video game soundtracks and attracting new audiences to orchestral concert halls.

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About Our Music Director



Jamin Morden attended Northwestern University, dual majoring in French Horn Performance and Music Education. After he completed a master's degree in French Horn Performance at Yale University, he moved to Maryland to teach instrumental music in Montgomery County Public Schools. Jamin is also involved with Symphony of the Potomac and the Maryland Band Directors' Band.

About Our Choir Director



Anthony Khong is an active musician, educator, and arts administrator and is native to the D.C. area. Prior to his work in community choirs, he served as a chorus teacher in Fairfax County. Anthony holds a master's in Arts Management from George Mason University, and a bachelor's in Music Education from James Madison University, where he studied voice and clarinet.

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START!

Spider Dance

UNDERTALE (2015)

Toby Fox

Arr. Nick DeGraba

Imagine you're surrounded by spiders. They gather around. They start to dance. It's a "spider bake sale." The cheapest item is 9999G, and the spider leader, Muffet, does not appreciate humans who are stingy with their money. Is the Spider Cider really worth it? She traps you in her webs as this eerie *UNDERTALE* tune starts to play...

"Spider Dance" uses the same leitmotif that fuels the "Ghost Fight" and "Dummy!" battle themes. With a spookier presentation, this song accompanies a sinister onslaught of Muffet's spiders. The game text even makes sure to mention that the spiders clap along to the music, and their claps certainly ring out in the percussive offbeats throughout the song.

To truly capture the playful and performative nature of the spiders, this arrangement pushes the dramatic dynamics, emphasizes a fun intersectional call and response style, and features many references to other parts of *UNDERTALE*.

Eggman's Vacation

Sonic Heroes (2023)

Jun Senoue

Arr. Thomas Ashcom

In most installments of the *Sonic the Hedgehog* franchise where Dr. Eggman serves as a main antagonist, there is a stage crafted by the Doctor himself that is themed like a resort, amusement park, or in the case of *Sonic Heroes*: a casino metropolis.

Funnily enough, it's assumed that Dr. Eggman doesn't use these parts of his empire for his own leisure. So in this arrangement, the musical themes from the Casino Park and Mystic Mansion stages are explored as a hypothetical on how relieved Dr. Eggman would feel in taking time off and then energized to get back to working on his devious schemes.

Arni Village

Chrono Cross (1999)

Yasunori Mitsuda

Arr. Anne Marie Porter

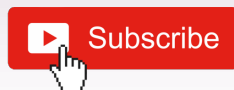
In *Chrono Cross*, Arni Village, the protagonist's hometown, is an idyllic and tropical seaside village in the island archipelago of El Nido. The village has thatched houses and colorful clothing inspired by fishing cultures in the South Pacific islands. For the musical theme, Yasunori Mitsuda composed a song of warmth and delight. You can visualize the sun in the sky, palm trees swaying in the breeze, waves brushing along the beach, and contented villagers going about their everyday lives.

As with all locations in *Chrono Cross*, there are two musical versions of the Arni Village theme. The first "Home" version, which this arrangement is mostly based on, has a brighter, more cheerful tone than the "Another" version, which sounds sleepier and more muted. As the plot of the game progresses, you learn that sometimes when you return home, it's a different place than you remembered...

The year 2024 celebrates the 25th anniversary of *Chrono Cross*. Please sit back, relax, and let the music transport you to the sunny beaches of Arni Village!

Keep an eye on WMGSO's YouTube channel for the latest in our professionally recorded video game music!

www.youtube.com/wmgso



Joli en Automne

Nobuo Uematsu

Final Fantasy V (1992), Lyrics: "Les Colchiques" by Guillaume Apollinaire, 1907
Final Fantasy VI (1994), and *Final Fantasy X* (2001) Arr. Thomas Ashcom

"The meadow is poisonous but pretty in autumn..."

There is no shortage of melodies across *Final Fantasy* that can be arranged and rearranged, but it's a bit different when weaving them across unrelated installments in the series, since there are many that don't get rehashed into another game.

This unique arrangement for choir and piano shines light through the addition of lyrics on some single-use originally lyric-less melodies: "Path of Repentance," "Music Box," and the more widely recognized theme for Kefka, from *Final Fantasy X*, *V*, and *VI*, respectively. Personal injection from the arranger helps connect and embellish the originals.

Lyrics:

*le pré est vénéneux mais joli en automne
les vaches y paissant
lentement s'empoisonnent
le colchique couleur de cerne et de lilas
y fleurit tes yeux sont comme cette fleur-là
violâtres comme leur cerne et comme cet automne
et ma vie pour tes yeux lentement s'empoisonnent*

*les enfants de l'école viennent avec fracas
vêtus de hoquetons et jouant de l'harmonica
ils cueillent les colchiques qui sont comme des mères
filles de leur filles et sont couleur de tes paupières
que battent comme les fleurs battent au vent dément*

*le gardien du troupeau chante tout doucement
tandis que lentes et meuglant les vaches abandonnent
pour toujours ce grand pré mal fleuri par l'automne*

English translation:

*the meadow is poisonous but pretty in autumn
the cows graze there
slowly poisoning themselves
the crocus color of dark circles and lilacs
blooms there your eyes are like that flower
purplish like their dark circles and this autumn
and my life for your eyes slowly poisons itself*

*the school children come out with a crash
dressed in smocks and playing harmonica
they pick the crocuses who are like mothers
daughters of their daughters and the color of your eyelids
beating like the flowers beating at demented wind*

*the guardian of the herd sings softly
while slow and mooing the cows abandon
forever this large meadow blooms evil by autumn*

WMGSO: The Album and WMGSO: The Album DLC

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A Funeral of Flowers

Takeru Kanazaki, Hiroki Morishita & Rei Kondoh

Fire Emblem: Three Houses (2019)

Arr. Douglas Eber

“A Funeral of Flowers” serves as the theme for the final map of the Silver Snow route in *Fire Emblem: Three Houses*. Since *Fire Emblem: Awakening*, the map music has been split between orchestral compositions for the general overworld and more intense arrangements that typically feature electric instruments when the player enters battle. However, “A Funeral of Flowers” upends this trend, where the battle version of the theme is reduced from a full orchestra and choir to solo piano, rather than augmented by additional instrumentation. This arrangement, played by Douglas Eber, is further reduced down to a bassoon, playing the lone melody and highlighting the range of the instrument.

Other themes included in this piece are “Song of the Nabateans” and “Life at Garreg Mach Monastery.”

Dire, Dire Docks

Super Mario 64 (1996)

Koji Kondo

Arr. Jacob Deaven

Super Mario 64 introduced many young gamers to the magic of 3D platforming. There is something magical about grabbing Mario’s flight cap, taking three jumps, and taking off to fly around Bob-omb Battlefield. But, just across from the castle is an equally if not more magical experience: diving into Jolly Roger Bay. Instead of taking to the skies, Mario can dive down to plunder a sunken ship, swim through a jet stream, play with a giant electric eel, and unlock magical treasure chests on his treacherous journey to the sea floor.

Mario’s first 3D underwater adventure was accompanied by one of the most memorable tracks of Koji Kondo’s masterful soundtrack. In “Dire, Dire Docks,” the interplay of electric piano, synthesized strings, drum machine, and subtle yet timeless reverb added the shimmer and radiance to water that the Nintendo 64’s graphics processor couldn’t quite muster on its own.

This arrangement is as much a study on the play of stacked delay and reverb pedals as it is a saxophone performance. The performer, Jacob Deaven, trades the analog thumbstick for a baritone saxophone to take a meditative journey from the wonder of a sonic ocean into the vastness of space, and then slowly fade into the beyond.

A Cup of Liber-Tea

Helldivers 2 (2024)

Wilbert Roget II

Arr. David Crisler & David Werner

“Deliver Managed Democracy and raise a cup of Liber-Tea!”

In *Helldivers 2*, players deploy from orbit onto hostile planets, heavily armed and ready to bring peace to humanity’s foes. Despite a survival time best measured in seconds, Super Earth’s finest face this danger enthusiastically, motivated by their unconditional love of Liberty, Prosperity, and Managed Democracy.

Gleeful references to everything from Orwell to *Star Wars* to international geopolitics, combined with excellent squad shooter gameplay, made the game a surprise breakout hit in early 2024. The music at the start of every dive, “A Cup of Liber-Tea,” is a thrilling experience, sure to inspire the hearts of Super Citizens everywhere.

*Dive down, fight for victory!
Dispense Peace with Super weaponry
Deliver Managed Democracy
And raise a cup of Liber-tea!*

Save the Date for WMGSO’s Spring Concerts



March 22, 2024

Chorus Concert

Washington, DC

May 17, 2024

Spring Concert

Alexandria, VA

Livestreamed on

Twitch

“I am a dwarf and I’m digging a hole.”

This song has its origins in *Minecraft* internet lore, but now it sings to the rocky heart of all games where you are a dwarf and you can dig a hole. It was inevitable. It’s in our very blood to dig deeper.

“Diggy Diggy Hole” began as a meme tune sung while Yogcast YouTubers were digging some holes in *Minecraft*—but that wasn’t deep enough. “Diggy Diggy Hole” was a music video single by the metal band WIND ROSE—but we could still dig deeper! Now, “Diggy Diggy Hole” is an expedition into the uncharted cavernous depths of symphonic metal, an exploration of harmonic expansion and electric color previously unknown in these realms. Grab your pick and hang on!

Our instrumental soloists are Elias Schwartzman on electric violin-axe, Alex Son on electric cello-shovel, Kara Welch on electric harp-ballista and Zeynep Dilli on alto recorder-pick. The lead dwarf vocals are performed by Jonathan Farrell.

*Brothers of the mine, rejoice!
Swing! Swing! Swing with me!
Raise your pick and raise your voice!
Sing! Sing! Sing with me!
Down and down into the deep
Who knows what we’ll find beneath?
Diamonds, rubies, gold, and more
Hidden in the mountain store?*

*Born underground, suckled from a teat of stone
Raised in the dark, the safety of our mountain home
Skin made of iron, steel in our bones
To dig and dig makes us free! Come on, brothers, sing with me!*

*I am a dwarf, and I’m digging a hole!
Diggy diggy hole! Diggy diggy hole!
I am a dwarf, and I’m digging a hole!
Diggy diggy hole! Digging a hole!*

*The sunlight will not reach this low
Deep! Deep! In the mine!
Never seen the blue moon glow
Dwarves won't fly so high!
Fill a glass and down some mead, stuff your bellies at the feast
Stumble home and fall asleep, dreaming in our mountain keep*

*Born underground, grown inside a rocky womb
The earth is our cradle, the mountain shall become our tomb
Face us on the battlefield, you will meet your doom
We do not fear what lies beneath! We can never dig too deep!*

PAUSE

Are you enjoying the show
so far?

- Yes.
- Of course!

Intermission is the perfect time to give your feedback (scan the QR code on the right or follow the URL) or make a donation at WMGSO's booth in the lobby!

Audience Feedback
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cafepress.com/wmgso



LEVEL 2 – START!

The Prince and the Muck

The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom (2023)

Manaka Kataoka, Maasa Miyoshi,

Masato Ohashi & Tsukasa Usui

Lyrics: Adapted from “Lorem Ipsum” by Cicero, 1 BC

Arr. Thomas Ashcom

Starting in *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, musical aspects became more spacious and underutilized, unlike previous games in the *Legend of Zelda* series. This technique continues in the subsequent *Tears of the Kingdom*, though it still rings true that characteristic dungeon and boss battle music are a consistent expectation in the series.

This arrangement takes from several themes related to the water-based side of the game. It is a story of Prince Sidon, an important figure of the fishlike Zora people, discovering how to stop the otherworldly muck that is raining down on his kingdom.

Rise

Chris Apple, Legend of Zelda theme by Koji Kondo

Inspired by *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998)

“Go back, be a child while you can! For when you become a man, the end of an age will come.”

What if *Ocarina of Time*'s soundtrack were reimagined as a concept album by a Scandinavian power metal band? It would surely feature epic lyrics, powerful orchestration, and original music carefully interwoven with classic themes from the game.

“Rise” is one track from this imaginary album. It tells the story of a simple boy who sneaks into the palace to catch a glimpse of royalty, only to learn that he will play a grander role in history. The princess in the palace has been haunted by visions of her family's downfall and had been expecting him to appear for some time—but not like this. Not as a boy. He was supposed to be a knight, a man who could save her family from the coming darkness... yet he is the Hero of prophecy. So the night must fall. She must find a way to keep him safe until he is old enough to fight. She must place all her faith in the Legend, which says that at the fatal hour, a Hero will rise to save the kingdom.

This song is a show of her faith. Shining with inspiration, never wavering, she stands against the coming darkness as a beacon of light. But hidden within the music is her grief. The Hero has seven years to grow up; the Princess must grow up within the space of this one song. When she realizes the Hero is too young, she must let go of her wish for her own family's salvation. Instead, she must take actions that will save the entire kingdom. She knows her house will fall and her family will perish. But to become a Queen, she must always be a leader first, no matter the cost.

Kayleigh Gallagher is the vocal soloist.

*Forest boy, what right have you to come and stand before me?
Go back to where you came from, play your pipes and fairy games
The head of a kingdom hangs low here
I know my time is near*

*Long ago three Goddesses brought light to all Creation
They laid a curse upon us, not to let the darkness grow
Soon will come the day when our great house will fall before me
I've seen it in my visions and yet I was not afraid
For in those dreams, a hero came to me
How can you be he?
And yet you are*

*The Legend says a Hero will arrive
And your strength will give us courage to survive
You're far too young to fight today
Find the ancient secret place, and hide away
Until it is your time*

*Every hero has a burden they must shoulder
You must end your childhood, you must grow older!
Through the night, as we fight, you will sleep for seven years
But you will rise
Yes, you will rise*

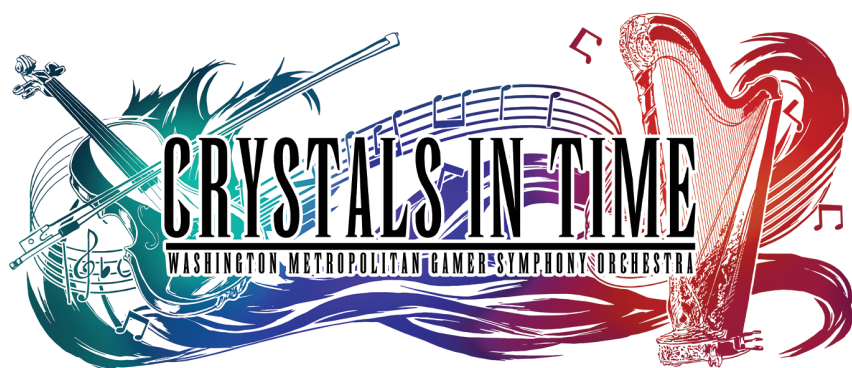
*For centuries my family has sworn to serve the kingdom
We've sacrificed so many so the light would never fade
What link have you to the brave who built these halls?
But when this castle falls, you will be here*

*Go back! Be a child while you can!
For when you become a man
The end of an age will come
When light fades away
And the darkness claims the land
We will fight the evil power
And until the promised hour
It is here we make our stand!*

*Go back! Don't let evil learn your name!
Precious moments still remain
Find the blade of evil's bane
Save the kingdom from this pain!*

*Every hero fights a battle deep inside
You must face the fear within, you must survive!
Through the night, as we pray, we'll be waiting for the day
When you will rise
When you will rise
When you shall rise!*

*Forest boy, what life have you who slumbers through the ages?
I've laid a curse upon you, not to let the darkness win
And in that sleep, I know not what dreams may come
But I hope that you will dream of home*



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Excerpts from *Traveler: A Journey Symphony* (2022)

Journey (2012)

Austin Wintory

Original Orchestration: Susan Seiler

WMGSO Orchestration: Zeynep Dilli

On March 16, 2012, the Smithsonian American Art Museum debuted their exhibition, “The Art of Video Games.” Among the 80 titles included, *Flower*, a short game by the independent game developer thatgamecompany, was showcased as one of only five games that were playable by visitors, next to game history giants *Super Mario Bros.* and *Myst*. It just so happened that four days earlier, thatgamecompany, whose stated game design philosophy is to design games that evoke a broad emotional response rather than to deliver a specific message, had released their third game, a game that might very well be the epitome of that philosophy: *Journey*.

Much has been written about *Journey*. The game has no dialogue. The player can, by chance, meet other players and interact with them, but communication is restricted to whistling sounds and limited body language. Yet even without words, players can form deep bonds with other chance-met players; journeying together and then possibly never seeing each other again once the game is over makes for a startling, unique experience.

As a video game, *Journey* is short and simplistic, with very limited mechanics and largely unvarying, albeit exquisitely beautiful, environments. It has been described as a meditation, a “pilgrimage,” therapy, and an “experience.” If it is an allegory, of what is unclear and likely very personal. The developers have been told that people with depression and anxiety find it helpful. Some people play *Journey* once a year; others set it aside and play it when they need it.

While part of the emotional response *Journey* evokes is due to its unique mode of multiplayer interaction and the careful environment and progression design, a huge part is undoubtedly built up by its music. Centered around a single cello melody that is meant to represent the player and their journey, the music follows the arc of the game stages, dynamically changing to flow with sound effects and player interactions. The game design and soundtrack composition processes were strongly iterative during the development of *Journey*; the result is an intense experience all woven of one piece. On the tenth anniversary of the game’s release, Austin Wintory, who says this soundtrack and in particular the piece “Apotheosis” changed his life, returned to expand the music into a ten-movement symphonic suite. WMGSO is proud to present four movements of *Traveler: A Journey Symphony*.

Hunter Evans is the alto/tenor recorder soloist.

Movement 1: Nascence

The main theme of the game is introduced in a solo cello line. More instruments are gradually added, and we are treated to Austin Wintory's excellent harmonic vocabulary. As more voices are added, some in support of the soloist, some in the background, a landscape eventually develops: expansive and colorful, with more to discover on the horizon.

For this movement, Elizabeth Young is the cello soloist.

Movement 8: Nadir

Wintory has described this arrangement of "Nadir" as a "reimagining of the tumultuous snowy mountain summit" for which he "truly let loose." The result is music that oscillates between many emotional states: beauty, fear, and eventually full-on violence.

Wintory uses a number of techniques in both orchestration (check out some of the fun toys the percussion are working with!) and individual instruments to create some truly otherworldly sounds. As the music rises to a terrifying conclusion, we take some solace in the composer's words: "The function here is to truly earn 'Apotheosis.'"

For this movement, Sandy Chilson is the cello soloist.

Movement 9: Apotheosis

And earn "Apotheosis" we shall! Out of the darkness, you burst into the light; out of the oppressive underground journey and struggle in the barren cold, with a companion if you are so lucky, there is now warmth and the glory of free, easy movement, as you reach the peak...and the end.

Musically, "Apotheosis" partakes in a favorite musical trope: a long, flowing melody overtop an active accompaniment. Introduced in the strings, the accompaniment bobs and weaves, occasionally stutter-stepping into three beats where there should be two. Over this, the cello soloist and orchestra perform a soaring melody.

For this movement, Diana Henry is the cello soloist.

Upcoming WMGSO Twitch Stream Events

December 3, 2024, 7:30 p.m. ET
Giving Tuesday Live Performances

December 22, 2024
2024 Year End Recap



twitch.tv/wmgso

Movement 10: I Was Born for This Lyrics compiled by: Jeremy Howard Beck

“I was born for this—do not pity me.”

The last movement is the closing song, or credits song, in the original soundtrack of *Journey*. After the fade-into-light of “Apotheosis,” “I Was Born for This” begins contemplatively. Wintory uses the high range of the strings as well as the colors of the woodwinds to create a bittersweet, yearning texture. As in “Nascence,” more voices enter, but this time, rather than diminishing into the shadows, the piece works itself into a majestic climax. This is accomplished not only through orchestration, but also through increased harmonic and rhythmic tension: Wintory’s harmonic language becomes ever more colorful, and our theme is presented with four beats in a bar, while the accompaniment has been providing six.

It is worth noting that while this closing song is performed by a single singer in the original game soundtrack, for *Traveler: A Journey Symphony*, Wintory reworked the composition and orchestration to feature multiple soloists; in the official recording, native singers of each language are featured.

The symphony, and our performance, closes in neither major nor minor, but an open fifth in the strings and choir, backed by percussion, fading into the horizon.

For this movement, Zeynep Dilli, Jasmine Marcelo, and Beth Feldstein are the vocal soloists. Erin Chester and Chris Tillman are the violin soloists, and Ben Cho is the cello soloist.

<i>Stat sua cuique dies</i> (Latin; from <i>The Aeneid</i> , 1st century BC)		<i>To each is given their day</i>
<i>Maél is mé tó féran</i> (Old English; from <i>Beowulf</i> , ~10th century)		<i>'Tis time that I fare from you</i>
<i>ᾠλετο μὲν μοι νόστος</i> (<i>Óleto mén moi nóstos</i>) (Homeric Greek; from <i>The Iliad</i> , 8th century BC)		<i>Lost is my homecoming</i>
<i>C'est pour cela que je suis née</i> (French, attr. Joan of Arc, 15th century)		<i>I was born for this</i>
此道や 行く人なしに 此道や 秋の暮 (Japanese, Matsuo Bashō, 17th century)	(<i>Kono michi ya</i>) (<i>Yuku hito nashi ni</i>) (<i>Kono michi ya</i>) (<i>Aki no kure</i>)	<i>On this road</i> <i>No one else goes</i> <i>On this road</i> <i>Autumn evening</i>
<i>C'est pour cela que je suis née</i> <i>Ne me plaignez pas</i> <i>C'est pour cela que je suis née</i>		<i>I was born for this</i> <i>Do not pity me</i> <i>I was born for this</i>

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