UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, December 5, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.
HOLIDAY GALA
Join us for our annual holiday gala! This family event benefits the Hospital Hospitality House, and features numerous VCU Music ensembles, faculty and students. **Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children under 12.**

Sunday, January 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.
VCU GUITAR SERIES: THE ROBINSON GUITAR DUO
Over the past 19 years, the Robinson Guitar Duo of David and Kathy Robinson has been serving the community at weddings, parties, special events, and concerts. They have performed at the first Alexandria Guitar Festival, The Gellman Room, The Glen Allen Cultural Arts Center, and Center Stage. The Robinson Guitar Duo has also performed extensively with the Latin Ballet of Virginia. **Tickets are $15 General Admission and $10 for students.**

Saturday, January 24, 2015 at 8 p.m.
MARY ANN RENNOLES CHAMBER CONCERTS:
RACHEL BARTON PINE, VIOLIN
In both art and life, violinist Rachel Barton Pine has an extraordinary ability to connect with people. Celebrated as a great interpreter of classical works, her performances combine her innate gift for emotional communication and her scholarly fascination with historical research. She plays with passion and conviction across an extensive repertoire and has appeared as soloist with many of the world's most prestigious orchestras. Audiences are thrilled by her dazzling technique, lustrous tone, and infectious joy in music-making. **Tickets are $34.**

WOMEN'S CHOIR
ERIN FREEMAN, conductor

and

VCU SYMPHONY
DANIEL MYSSYK, conductor

Thursday, December 4, 2014 | 7:30 p.m.
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts
922 Park Avenue | Richmond, Virginia

artsvcu.edu/music

For more information and additional listings, visit artsvcu.edu/music.
To purchase tickets online, visit vcumusic.showclix.com.
Box Office: (804) 828-6776 | musictix@vcu.edu
VCU WOMEN’S CHOIR AND
VCU SYMPHONY
Thursday, December 4, 2014 | 7:30 p.m.
Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall

VCU WOMEN’S CHOIR
Erin Freeman, conductor

The Young Galileo .................................................. Mark Gresham (b. 1956)

Nuit d’étoiles ................................................... Claudio Debussy (1862-1918), arr. Alan Raines
Danielle Gibbons, Pianist

Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda, Set 3 ............ Gustav Holst (1874-1934)
1. Hymn to the Dawn
2. Hymn to the Waters
3. Hymn to Vena (The Sun Rising Through the Mist)
4. Hymn of the Travellers

Small Ensemble: Erin Bolden, Laura Butler, Georgia Cotter, Taylor DaCosta,
Samantha John, Rachel Kessinger, Precious Mackey, and Hayleigh Wilson
Alicia Romeo, Harp

El Vito ................................................................. Trad., arr. Joni Jensen
Erika Straus, Soprano
Danielle Gibbons, Pianist

INTERMISSION

VCU SYMPHONY
Daniel Myssyk, conductor

The Planets, Op. 32 ................................................ Gustav Holst
Mars, the Bringer of War
Venus, the Bringer of Peace
Mercury, the Winged Messenger
Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
Uranus, the Magician
Neptune, the Mystic

patterns, often through use of contrastingly oscillating chords - the top line
of one set in the flutes may move up, while at the very same time the top line
of another set in the horns moves down, and improbably high melodic lines in
the upper strings section overarch everything. Peaceful, indeed.

III. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
Mercury is, appropriately, incredibly mercurial and very subtle in its rhythmic
development, as Holst’s division of the beats is almost arbitrary and boasts
layers of double and triple subdivision, woven in and out of the instruments in
a giddy, swift kind of chase across the bar lines. If the peace can be thought
of as a story, Mercury could be considered the news of peace being swiftly
delivered by this fleet-footed messenger.

IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
Revisiting our idea of musical storytelling, Jupiter seems undecided as to
where it wants to go. Certainly with the news of peace would come jollity, but
even in the very beginning of this movement, the audience’s expectations are
swept out from under them with the exhibition of unexpected rhythm division
in the theme. All seems to be well with the development of the second theme,
a broad, sweeping, almost imperial melodic line that could easily be used as a
finale had the composer wanted to do so, but after several musical attempts
to conclude it there, Holst suddenly moves once again to more percussive and
martial elements almost reminiscent of Mars, making it very clear that
majestic Imperial grandeur isn’t the idea he wants to leave us with.

V. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
Beginning with a soft, rhythmic, chordal oscillation between the flutes and
harp, Saturn again surprises the listener by quickly showing us that this
pulsation is in fact off the beat, but this time there are no grand, jolly themes
to immediately usher the audience back into the realms of ease and harmonic
familiarity. If there are any, they are quickly swallowed in the strange and
dissonant retreat back into the bowels of darkness and uncertainty—which
 begs the question: what is Holst’s perception of old age?

VI. Uranus, the Magician
Mischievous and fantastical, Uranus’ plodding introduction suggests
inspiration by Dukas’ Sorcerer’s Apprentice, creating a strange, swaggering
kind of dance that crescendos quickly into an awe-inspiring climax. The
piece is figuratively cleaved in two by a massive chord played by the whole
ensemble, freezing the movement in place precariously, and then suddenly
pulled back to make room for the final movement.

VII. Neptune, the Mystic
Likely to be considered the strangest movement of the piece, Holst actually
writes a note at the top of the page that instructs the orchestra to play the
entire movement, again in 5/4 meter, completely pianissimo. The movement,
instead of moving confidently towards a resolution, sort of deconstructs itself
further and further towards the end, into rising and falling dissonant
repetitions that are, while much less chaotic, certainly reminiscent of the
darkness in the first movement. Holst leaves us with a haunting choral line,
which starts on a single note and seems at first to be a sort of light shining in
the darkness after a decidedly more hopeful passage, but quickly succumbs
to the dissolute fate of the rest of the theme, fading slowly but surely into
silence, one of the first instances of a fade-out ending in classical music.

—Notes by Patrick Keese, Class of 2018
EL VITO | traditional folk song

Chorus:
With the vito, vito, vito,
With the vito, vito, it goes.

Verses:
I don't want them to look at me for I blush.
I don't want them to look at me for I blush.

Chorus:
With the vito, vito, vito,
With the vito, vito, it goes.

Verses:
Don't look straight at my face
For I blush.

No me mires a la cara que me pongo colorá.
Yo no quiero que me mires que me vas a enamorar.

Una malagueña fue a Sevilla a ver los toros.
Y en la mitad del camino
La cautivaron los moros.

NOTES ON GUSTAV HOLST'S THE PLANETS

Written by Gustav Holst between 1914 and 1916, The Planets is a riveting seven-movement suite for orchestra and choir that can be considered one of the most influential pieces of the century; it is certainly one of the more popular, and was in its time revolutionary in its orchestration. Just a year before its composition, Holst became fascinated with the subject of Astrology, and while some of the sub-titles of the movements indicate association with their counterpart Roman deities, they were primarily intended to describe the astrological characteristics of the celestial bodies, which is why Earth is not included.

I. Mars, the Bringer of War

Dark, chromatic and percussive themes abounding, the composition of this introduction is incredibly striking—not only because of the unusual five beats to a bar, as opposed to the more traditional two, three, or four—but also because of the orchestra, which aids in the depiction of tumultuous and often inhuman depiction of war present in this movement. Holst's choice of instruments includes equally unusual members of the orchestra, such as the Bass Oboe, Alto Flute, and Tenor Tuba, and the beginning of the movement features an entire complement of string instruments playing, not as they normally do with the hair of the bow, but instead percussively with the wood of the bow against the string—a technique called Col Legno, or against wood.

II. Venus, the Bringer of Peace

Not much could be in greater contrast to the disturbing, apocalyptic sounds of the first movement than Venus, the Bringer of Peace; subtle, smooth and ethereal in its orchestration, Holst focuses much less here on musical movement, and instead creates stillness through intricate textures and

VCU WOMEN'S CHOIR
Erin Freeman, conductor
Danielle Gibbons, piano

Minh Duong
Kristen Eno
Kirsten Ferguson
Robyn Freidin
Taylor Gaines
Danielle Gibbons
Alexandra Goia
Holly Haynes
Samantha John

Rachel Kessinger
Marie Kreck
Precious Mackey
Arianna Rose
Charlotte Roth
Erika Straus
Kimberly Strother
Anna Webster
Hayleigh Wilson

VCU SYMPHONY
Daniel Myssyk, conductor

FLUTE
Kayla Hanvey†
Madison Bunch
Taylor Jennings (piccolo)

Kayla Charles

(piccolo and alto flute)

OBOE
David Munro†
Samantha Hoster
Amanda Hanlon
(English horn)
Daniel Edwards†
(bass oboe)

CLARINET
Michael Saunders†
Lydia Newton
Julia Lougheed
Nathan Frost
(bass clarinet)

BASSOON
Ashley Pitzer†
Jonathan Carr
Dr. Bruce Hammel†

HORN
Kevin Newton†
Noah Fotis
Gloria Ramirez
Valerie Perham

BASS
Neil Walters†
Andrew Brunson
Chris Harrison

Whitney Morelli

TRUMPET
Jackson Shurlds†
Brandon Hess
Jonathan Forbes
Heidi Rechin

TROMBONE
Gabriel Luciano-Carson†
Jason Garland
Michael Dickinso
(bass trombone)

TUBA
Brian Harold
(tenor tuba)
Jon Murphy

PERCUSSION
Alex Cahen (timpani)
Gilson Fearnon
Erik Schmidt
David Brawley
David Chung

CELESTE
Lanjiaobao Ge

HARP
Alicia Romeo†
Grace Bauson†

*principal

†principal
TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

THE YOUNG GALILEO | text by Ray Bradbury

O child, they said, avert your eyes
Avert my eyes, I said, what, from wild skies
Where stars appear and wheel,
And fill my heart and make me feel
As if this night, and then another, and another
I might live forever, and not die?
Turn off my gaze, shut off my will and soul from this,
This fiery bliss and joy that tempts me to go forth
At 2 am and lie upon the lawn?
A boy alone with Universe
Where song and verse of God lie overhead
For me to read and know and sing,
Not know all this, go blind?
Why, God minds me to be so
He put the bright sparks in my blood

Which spirit, lighten, flare and frighten me to love.
Small sparks, large Sun,
All one, they are the same,
Large flame or small
I know and keep it all in eye, in heart, in mind.

The flavour of the night lies on my tongue
I speak it so,
That others, uninviting of themselves
Abed. Not brave. May know.
What this boy knows, and will forever know.
The Universe is thronged with fire and light
And we but smaller suns
Which, skinned and trapped and kept
Enshrined in blood and precious bones
Hold back the night.

NUIT D’ETOILES | text by Théodore de Banville, translation by Alan Raines

Nuit d’étoiles, sous tes voiles,
Sous ta brise et tes parfums,
Triste lyre qui soupire
Je rêve aux amours défunt.
La sereine mélanchole
Vient éclorer au fond de mon Coeur,
Et j’entends l’aïme de ma mie
Tressaillir dans le bois rêveur.

Je revois à notre fontaine
Tes regards bleus comme les cieux;
Cette rose, c’est ton haleine,
Et ces étoiles sont tes yeux.

HYMNS FROM THE RIG VEDA | translated from Sanskrit by Gustav Holst

1. Hymn to the Dawn
Hear our hymn O Goddess,
Rich in wealth and wisdom,
Ever young yet ancient,
True to Law Eternal.

Walk’ner of the songbirds,
Ensign of th’Eternal,

Draw thou near O Fair one,
In thy radiant Chariot.

Bring to her your off’ring,
Humbly bow before her,
Raise your songs of welcome,
As she comes in splendour.

2. Hymn to the Waters
Flowing from the firmament, Forth to the ocean,
Healing all in earth and air, never halting
Indra, Lord of Heav’n formed their courses,
Indra’s mighty laws can never be broken.
Cleansing waters flow ye on, hasten and help us.

Lo, in the waters, dwelleth One,
Knower of all on earth and sea.
Whose dread command no man may shun,
Varuna, sovereign Lord is He.
Onward ye waters onward hie,

(Cleansing waters, flow ye on, Hasten and help us.)
Dance in the bright beams of the sun,
(Cleansing waters, flow ye on, Hasten and help us.)
Obey the ruler of the sky Who dug the path for you to run.

Flowing from the firmament, Forth to the ocean,
Healing all in earth and air, never halting
Indra, Lord of Heav’n formed their courses,
Indra’s mighty laws can never be broken.
Cleansing waters flow ye on, hasten and help us.

3. Hymn to Vena (The Sun Rising Though the Mist)
Vena comes, born of light,
He drives the many colour’d clouds onward
Here, where the sunlight and the waters mingle
Our songs float up and caress the newborn infant
Vena comes.

The child of cloud and mist appeareth
On the ridge of the sky,
He shines on the summit of creation.
The hosts proclaim the glory of our Common Father.
Vena comes.

He hath come to the bosom of his beloved
Smiling on him, She beareth him to highest heav’n.
With yearning heart, On thee we gaze,
O gold-wing’d messenger of mighty gods.

Wise men see him in their libations
As the sacrifice mounts to the eternal heights,
Mingling with our solemn chant.
He stands erect in highest heav’n,
Clad in noble raiment,
Arm’d with shining weapons,
Hurling light to the farthest region,
Rejoicing in his radiant splendour.

4. Hymn of the Travellers
Go thou on before us, Guide us on our way, Mighty One.
Make our journey pleasant, Never let us stray.
Wonder-worker hearken,
Come in thy splendour, come in the mighty pow’r.

Trample on the wicked, All who would oppose, Mighty One.
Drive away the robber,
Drive away our foes.
Wonder-worker hearken,
Come in thy splendour, come in the mighty pow’r.

As we journey onward, Songs to thee we raise, Mighty One.
Thou didst aid our fathers, Guard us all our days.
Wonder-worker hearken,
Come in thy splendour, come in the mighty pow’r.

Feed us and inspired us, Keep us in they care, Mighty One.
Lead us past pursuers Unto meadows fair.
Wonder-worker hearken,
Come in thy splendour, come in the mighty pow’r.