

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

presents

My Sister's Voice

A Pan-Asian Contemporary Music Celebration

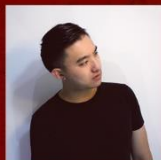
conducted by Anna Wittstruck



Reena Esmail



Oswald Huynh



Wenbin Lyu



Salli Oak



Dawn Padula



Music
Asian Studies

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Wittstruck, conductor

Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023
Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

- Gia Đình (2021–22).....Oswald Huỳnh
I. Cha nào con nấy
II. Không có gì bằng cơm với cá, không có gì bằng má với con
III. Blood is thicker than water
- Terracotta Army (2018).....Wenbin Lyu

INTERMISSION

- Meri Sakhi ki Avaaz (My Sister's Voice) (2018).....Reena Esmail
I. Dō Kaliyaan / Two Flowers
II. Meri Sakhi ki Avaaz / Sweet is the Voice
III. Mirror | Opposite / Aks aur Saaya

Saili Oak, Hindustani singer
Dawn Padula, mezzo-soprano

This concert is sponsored by the School of Music and
Asian Studies Program and is part of the 2023 Society of Composers, Inc.
National Conference

Reena Esmail and Saili Oak's residency at University of Puget Sound is
supported by the Catharine Gould Chism Fund for the Humanities.

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Wittstruck, conductor
Jules Tan '23, orchestra manager

Violin 1

Jules Tan '23, concertmaster
Paige Franklin '26
Ela Escobar '24
Madison Hening '26
Maura Lake '23
Else Mayo '24
Silvana Byram '25
Ruby Gunter '26
Jackson Jay '26
Ayliana Horvath '26

Violin 2

Ethan Chythlook '26, principal
Eli Connolly '25
Hailey Yang '26
Nikki Hindman '25
Christina Nguyen '23
Ashley Garman '26
Liv Hauge '25
Holland Mueller '23

Viola

Keola Tabisola '25, principal
Ryan Chernyavsky '25
Kianna Davis '25
Jadyn Barrio '26
Amelia Calderon Henes '26

Cello

Connor Adams '25, principal
Liam Kimball '24
Avi Graf '25
Seren Hawtrey '24
Isabella Brady '24
Aiden Higgens '24
Mandy Ausman '24
Liam Abbott '26
Angela Ronces-Cortes '24
Phoenix Stoker-Graham '24
Jordan Verkh-Haskell '25
Tom Angstadt '26

Bass

Chris East '23, principal

Harp

Ellen Yamanaka, guest artist

Flute and piccolo

Jonah Kembel '26
Eliza Koch '24
Grace Playstead '24
Julia Vahey '24
Alex Westervelt '25

Oboe

Mariah Canton '24
Clara Gibbs '25
Athena Schaefer '26

English horn

Mariah Canton '24

Clarinet

Hailey Matas '25
Mireia Pujol '26
Levi Walsh '24

Bass Clarinet

Mireia Pujol '26

Bassoon

Alex Kirner '26
Sahaj Oliver '26
Sara Ponsioen '26

Contrabassoon

Sara Ponsioen '26

UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (CONT.)

Horn

Rachel Ball '24
Rosa Dale-Moore,
alumnus
Nalin Richardson,
alumnus
Sam Sherwood,
community member

Trumpet

Olivia Fross '23
Abbey Hansen '24
Alyssa Shane '25

Trombone

Brock Salatino '25
Miguel Ledezma MAT '23

Tuba

Ian Dunlap '24

Timpani and Percussion

Ray Carlsen '25
Scott Farkas, guest artist
Katie Hayhurst '24
Skyler Hedblom '25
Dylan Petersen '23

Piano and Celesta

Bennett Baynham '23

PROGRAM NOTES

Oswald Huỳnh, *Gia Đình*

Gia Đình, meaning “family” in Vietnamese, is an exploration of intergenerational trauma, cultural inheritance, and what is lost between eras. Specifically, I am focusing on the greater Vietnamese diaspora and the Vietnamese boat people, who traveled across the ocean and makeshift boats in search of a future for their families. Many of my own family members were a part of this generation, and only within recent years have they chosen to share their stories with me. Each movement acts as a musical portrait of the various aspects and roots of intergenerational trauma and is titled with a Vietnamese proverb that describes the value of family and the perceived relationship between parent and child in Vietnamese culture.

I. Cha nào con nấy

(Like father, like child)

The opening movement observes heritage, tradition, and culture as trauma. Conflicting generational values often create rifts between parent and child, particularly in Western countries. What should we pass down and teach? And at what cost? Borrowing thematic material from the Vietnamese folk song *Lý Kéo Chài*, I present fragments of this song without ever presenting the melody in its entirety. These musical splinters are introduced clearly, but quickly disintegrate into the orchestral texture.

II. Không có gì bằng cơm với cá, không có gì bằng má với con

(There is nothing like rice with fish, there is nothing like mother with child)

The second movement considers colonization and war as a source of trauma. Vietnam was colonized by the French in the mid-1800s, which played a large part in the spread of Catholicism among Vietnamese people. Shortly after Vietnam gained independence from France, the Vietnam war broke out, which ultimately led to the mass exodus from the country. A unique aspect of Vietnamese Catholic practice is the tradition of *đọc kinh*, in which all prayers and responses are song or chanted. I directly quote *Kinh Thú Nhận* (Penitential Act), which is preceded by a fragmented theme that slowly builds into the chant.

III. Blood is thicker than water

(Một giọt máu đầo hơn ao nước lã)

The final movement examines migration, displacement, and assimilation as forms of trauma. In addition to what is passed onto the next generation, this movement also explores what is lost. Language, culture, and history can all be lost within a single generation as a result of displacement. This is represented musically by two extremely contrasting themes: a slow, lyrical

melody inspired by Vietnamese folk melodies and a fractured, unrelenting section that cycles through the entire orchestra. I bounce between the two themes until the music melts into a coda that recalls the first movement.

Wenbin Lyu, *Terracotta Army*

This piece was inspired by the relic of the Emperor Qin's Terra Cotta Warriors (from around two-thousand years ago, a collection of terracotta sculptures depicting the armies of Qin Shi Huang). With this incredible historical artifact in mind, I immediately started conceiving of this piece after the visit there.

In order to blend the traditional Chinese music element with modern music aesthetic, I employed the Chinese folk song melody, pentatonic harmonic and modern orchestration techniques to express and "re-emerge" the magnificence of Qin dynasty. In this piece, I divided the music into four parts: Revival, Flourish, War and Legend. But for completeness, I didn't label them on the full score directly.

This piece was finished in the summer of 2018, right after I visited this one of the most significant archeological excavations of the 20th century.

Reena Esmail, *Meri Sakhi ki Avaaz (My Sister's Voice)*

Meri Sakhi Ki Avaaz, at its core, is a piece about sisterhood. Each movement's short text epitomizes one of the many facets of having and being a sister. It is also about what sisterhood looks like when expanded beyond a single family or a single culture—when two women, from two different musical cultures create space for one another's voices to be heard.

The first movement is a modern take on Delibes's famous Flower Duet from the opera *Lakme*. In the opera, Delibes depicts two Indian women singing by a river. In 1880s France, this orientalism was a point of entry into another culture far away. But today, that culture is easily accessible, and this is my attempt to show you what an 'updated' version of this duet might sound like with a Hindustani singer actually present to represent herself. So much of Western art music is about creating dialogue between the old and new, responding to our vast canon and musical tradition. And for the work I do, I couldn't think of a better jumping-off point than this classic duet.

For the second movement, I wrote a classical Hindustani bandish or 'fixed composition' in what they call *ati-vilambit*—a tempo that is so slow that the western metronome doesn't even have a setting for it. While Hindustani musicians would normally stay in one key for an entire piece (and, to be honest, for their entire professional career), this movement modulates once every *avartan*, or rhythmic cycle, and also allows space for

improvisation within a very rigid western orchestral structure. Additionally, the singers are singing in two different raags — the Hindustani singer is in Charukeshi, while the soprano is in Vachaspati – and as the movement goes on, the switches between the raags get closer and closer.

The third movement is about mirrors and opposites. I used two different raags that are actual mirror images of one another: Bhup, a light and sweet raag, and Malkauns, a dark, heavy raag. You will hear the shifts in tonality as the phrases cross from one into the other. Also embedded in this piece is a classic Hindustani jugalbandi (a musical competition) that is done completely in mirror image, and with both Indian and Western solfege systems, and it ends with both women crossing into one another's musical cultures: the Hindustani singer begins singing phrases in English and the soprano joins in for ataranain harmony.

This piece has been almost a decade in the making. In 2009, I wrote a piece called Aria, for Hindustani vocalist and orchestra – it was the first time I had ever attempted to put a Hindustani musician in my work, and it was the beginning of a long journey of discovery between these two musical cultures. This piece is the result of what I've found along that journey — an encyclopedia of sorts, of the many points of resonance I've discovered between these musical cultures. One of the greatest things I've learned is that I cannot do it alone. These ideas are as much mine as they are Saili's. We have spent hours and hours over many summers sitting at my kitchen table, drinking chai and dreaming up the ideas that have become this piece. And as Saili is quick to point out: this is a culmination, but also a beginning of everything that is yet to come. I might be a biological only-child, but I have found my musical soul sister in Saili.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

A native of Mumbai, **SAILI OAK** began studying music at the age of 3. A finalist on the popular reality TV series “Zee Marathi SaReGaMaPa,” Saili is a senior disciple of Dr. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande, a leading vocalist of the Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana. Saili won the All India Classical music competition when she was barely 17. She completed her Sangeet Visharad from the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal and has earned awards including the prestigious Pt. Jasraj Yuva Award, Pt Vasantrao Deshpande Yuva Award, and the Gaanwardhan Award. Her performances have been admired for her meticulous architecture of ‘khyal,’ her systematic and well-crafted raga exploration and impressive command over the ‘laya.’

Saili is also known for her distinguished work in the Indian/Western Classical music crossover space. She has performed with notable western music ensembles including the Albany Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Tonality choir, Salastina Music Society. She has been featured on several albums including ‘Beyond’, ‘American Mirror’, ‘Sing about it’ and ‘KALA’.

Saili serves as the Programs Director of a non-profit organization ‘Shastra,’ where she co-hosts the “Composing with Indian Voice” annual workshop in the U.S., and “Raga Meets Symphony” in India. She is also a Vocal Mentor for the non-profit organization Street Symphony in Los Angeles.

A passionate educator, Saili maintains a vocal studio ‘SailiMusic,’ where she trains the next generation of upcoming artists and is a frequent guest speaker, panelist and workshop participant at conferences and universities across America. She has presented her work at the Composition in Asia Conference at the University of South Florida, taught master classes at Salem State University, Smith College in Northampton MA, Kaufmann Music Center NY, and the University of Texas at Austin.

DAWN PADULA, (<http://dawnpadula.com>) mezzo-soprano, is a versatile performer of opera, oratorio, musical theatre, Jazz, and classical concert repertoire. Opera roles include Carmen in *Carmen*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Lady Jane in *Patience* (2018 Gregory Awards People’s Choice Nominee), Lady Blanche in *Princess Ida*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, The Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Isabella in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, Erika in *Vanessa*, and the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*. During the pandemic, she recorded the roles of Zita in *Gianni Schicchi* and Olga Olsen in *Street Scene* with the Social Distance Opera. Recent and upcoming operatic engagements include the roles of Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance* (Seattle Gilbert & Sullivan Society),

Dame Quickly in *Falstaff* (Puget Sound Concert Opera), Dryad in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Vashon Opera), Armelinde in *Cendrillon* (Puget Sound Concert Opera) and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (Vashon Opera). Notable classical concert work includes performing as a soloist in a concert version of *West Side Story* with the Tacoma Symphony, being the mezzo-soprano soloist in Penderecki's *Credo* with the Houston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Jahja Ling, and touring to Varna and Sofia, Bulgaria as the mezzo-soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with members of the Adelphian Concert Choir, the Portland Symphonic Choir, the Tucson Masterworks Chorale, the West Liberty University Singers, the West Liberty College Community Chorus, and the Pazardzhik Symphony. Her musical theatre roles include paying tribute to celebrities in *Forbidden Broadway's Greatest Hits*, Jack's Mother in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, Domina in Sondheim's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Woman 3 in the Kander and Ebb revue, *And the World Goes 'Round*. She has also performed as a jazz vocalist in venues such as Pacific Lutheran University's Jazz Under the Stars Series and the Puget Sound Jacobsen Series. Her classical solo album, *Gracious Moonlight*, is available on streaming platforms.

In the Pacific Northwest, she has performed as a principal artist with Seattle Gilbert & Sullivan Society, Tacoma Opera, Vashon Opera, Kitsap Opera, Puget Sound Concert Opera, Concert Opera of Seattle, the Tacoma Concert Band, the Oregon Symphony, the Portland Symphonic Choir, the Seattle Bach Choir, and Opera Pacifica. She has also performed with Seattle Opera as a member of the Supplementary Chorus, and has given solo recitals for the Second City Chamber Series and the Classical Tuesdays in Old Town Tacoma Concert Series.

Dr. Padula's research on training the tenor and baritone singing voice from the mezzo-soprano voice teacher perspective has been presented at the International Voice Foundation Symposium in Philadelphia, Penn., at the National Association of Teachers of Singing National Conference in Nashville, TN, and at the Art and Science of the Performing Voice Symposium in Seattle, WA. Dr. Padula is Professor of Voice and Director of Vocal Studies at the University of Puget Sound School of Music, where she is the Chair of the Vocal Studies Area, directs the Opera Theater, and will co-direct the newly established Songwriting major. In 2020, Dr. Padula was honored to receive Puget Sound's Tom A. Davis Teaching Award. She holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Houston Moores School of Music with a minor concentration in vocal pedagogy and voice science, a Master's of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, and both a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in media communications from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

ANNA WITTSTRUCK joined the University of Puget Sound School of Music in 2017 as Assistant Professor, Director of Orchestra. Before that, she spent two years at Stanford University as acting assistant professor, serving as interim music director and conductor of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra and Stanford Philharmonia. In 2019 she was appointed music director of the West Seattle Symphony Orchestra, and has also conducted the Federal Way Youth Symphonies.

Wittstruck has conducted concerts across the United States, in Latin America, Europe and in Asia. She has served as a guest conductor with the Harbin Symphony in China, the Northwest Sinfonietta, and the Eastern Sierra Symphony. She conducted concerts at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and Teatro Nacional de Cuba in Havana, where she performed with Liza Alfonso Dance Cuba and the Chamber Orchestra of Havana. She has conducted concerts at the Rudolfinum in Prague and the Musikzentrum Augarten (home of the Vienna Boys' Choir) in Vienna, as well as concerts in Berlin, Bad Elster, and Teplice.

Wittstruck is also an active orchestral musician whose performances as a cellist span from the Beijing Modern Music Festival to the 2011 YouTube Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. Her string quartet gave a concert tour of Thailand sponsored by the Yonok and American-Thai Foundations, in honor of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's sixtieth birthday celebrations. She won a blind audition at the age of fourteen to become the youngest contracted member of the Asheville Symphony Orchestra, and has participated in orchestra festivals such as Tanglewood, Round Top, and the National Symphony/Kennedy Center Institute. She has appeared as a soloist with the Charlotte and Hendersonville Symphonies, on the Public Radio International show, "From the Top."

She received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Princeton University with certificates in orchestral conducting and creative writing, and her Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University. While a graduate student, she conducted the Summer Stanford Symphony Orchestra and directed the Stanford Wind Symphony, the Stanford New Ensemble, and the Stanford Chinese Ensemble. She also helped create the Stanford Youth Orchestra, an international program for advanced high school students, and taught courses through Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies. At Princeton, she spent two years as assistant conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra and as associate conductor of the Princeton Sinfonia.

Wittstruck has attended the Pierre Monteux School of Conducting in Hancock, Maine, where she studied with Michael Jinbo, and the Conductor's Retreat at Medomak, where she studied with Kenneth Kiesler. Other conducting teachers include Michael Pratt, Ruth Ochs, Stephen Sano, Jindong Cai, and Edwin Outwater.

ABOUT THE GUEST COMPOSERS

OSWALD HUỠNH is a composer whose works navigate Vietnamese aesthetics and tradition, language and translation, and the relationship between heritage and identity. Huynh writes music that explores timbre and texture to create evocative soundscapes rooted in storytelling, culture, and memory. Huynh has collaborated with artists such as the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound, American Composers Orchestra, Akropolis Reed Quintet, Tacet(i) Ensemble, [Switch~ Ensemble], Del Sol String Quartet, and Fear No Music. He is the winner of the Musiqa Emerging Composer Commission, Classical Evolve Composer Competition, Black Bayou Composition Award, and Rena J. Ratte Memorial Award. He will serve as the Composer-in-Residence with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra for their 2023/24 season. Huynh holds a Bachelor of Arts from Lewis & Clark College and a Master's of Music from the University of Missouri. www.oswaldhuynh.com

WENBIN LYU is a U.S.-based Chinese composer and guitarist. The composition written by Wenbin Lyu combines contemporary western techniques with ancient oriental culture. He seeks inspiration from nature, science, and video games. Lyu has received fellowships from Tanglewood Music Center, Cabrillo Festival Composers Workshop, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme. Lyu received his degrees from China Conservatory (BA) and New England Conservatory (MM), and he is currently pursuing a Doctorate at Cincinnati- College Conservatory.

Indian-American composer **REENA ESMAIL** works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces.

Esmail's life and music was profiled on Season 3 of PBS Great Performances series Now Hear This, as well as Frame of Mind, a podcast from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Esmail divides her attention evenly between orchestral, chamber and choral work. She has written commissions for ensembles including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Kronos Quartet, and her music has featured on multiple Grammy-

nominated albums, including *The Singing Guitar* by Conspirare, *BRUITS* by Imani Winds, and *Healing Modes* by Brooklyn Rider. Many of her choral works are published by Oxford University Press.

Esmail is the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2025 Swan Family Artist in Residence, and was Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence. She also holds awards/fellowships from United States Artists, the S&R Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Kennedy Center.

Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School (BM'05) and the Yale School of Music (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18). Her primary teachers have included Susan Botti, Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Theofanidis, Christopher Rouse and Samuel Adler. She received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani music in India. Her Hindustani music teachers include Srimati Lakshmi Shankar and Gaurav Mazumdar, and she currently studies and collaborates with Saili Oak. Her doctoral thesis, entitled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians* explores the methods and challenges of the collaborative process between Hindustani musicians and Western composers.

Esmail was Composer-in-Residence for Street Symphony (2016-18) and is currently an artistic director of Shashtra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting music traditions of India and the West.

She currently resides in her hometown of Los Angeles, Calif.

Reena Esmail's residency at University of Puget Sound School of Music is supported by Catharine Gould Chism Fund for the Humanities.

UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

All events are free unless noted otherwise. Most performances are broadcast online at PUGETSOUND.EDU/SCHNEEBECKLIVE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

Violin Master Class with Melissa White

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

Concerto-Aria Final Round

Puget Sound student competition finalists
Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

All-Ukrainian Piano Recital

Featuring guest artist Dr. Timothy Hoft
Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 2 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 6

Piano Master Class featuring Dr. Timothy Hoft

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 1 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

Flute Master Class with Dr. Anastasia Petanova

School of Music building, Room L6, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

Flute recital featuring Dr. Anastasia Petanova with Timothy Christie, viola; and Ronaldo Rolim, piano

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 10

Adelphian Concert Choir Home Concert

Steven Zopfi, conductor
Kilworth Memorial Chapel, 7:30 p.m.

All listings are subject to change. For the most current information about upcoming arts events and lectures, visit pugetsound.edu/events.

Puget Sound is committed to being accessible to all people. If you have questions about event accessibility, please contact 25Live@pugetsound.edu, or visit pugetsound.edu/accessibility.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that this event takes place on the ancestral territory of the Puyallup Tribe and the Lushootseed-speaking people, whose relationship with the land continues to this day.

We respectfully acknowledge and honor the history and presence of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty here at Puget Sound. We who are guests on this land offer our gratitude for the opportunity to make music together here.

The School of Music strives to recognize, include, and respect all of the peoples and musical traditions that make up our community.

The School of Music at University of Puget Sound, situated within a nationally recognized liberal arts university, prepares students to be broad-minded, creative, arts-aware social leaders. We attract highly engaged student musicians and empower them to create the diverse musical offerings and effective educational programs of the future.

From the classroom to the concert hall, we cultivate students' self-expression, cultural competency, and critical engagement. Through a wide variety of public offerings and a vibrant Community Music program, the School of Music enriches the cultural life of both the Puget Sound campus and surrounding communities.

Community Music, a division of the School of Music, welcomes people of all ages and skill levels to participate in music lessons and classes throughout the year.
pugetsound.edu/communitymusic | 253.879.3575

