

PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Jensen, conductor

with the GIRSKY STRING QUARTET

joined by guest speaker GWYNNE BROWN

RESOUNDING

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

SCHNEEBECK CONCERT HALL | 7:30 P.M. | FREE

OR TUNE IN AT
PUGETSOUND.EDU/SCHNEEBECKLIVE



PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Jensen, conductor

Featuring the Girsky String Quartet

and guest speaker Gwynne Kuhner Brown

PROGRAM

Banner for String Quartet and.....Jessie Montgomery
Chamber Orchestra (b. 1981)

Girsky String Quartet

Artur Girsky and Natasha Bazhanova, violins;

Timothy Christie, viola; Rowena Hammill, cello

Danzas de Panama.....William Grant Still

1. Tamborito (1895–1978)

2. Mejorana y Socavon

3. Punto

4. Cumbia y Congo

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95,.....Antonín Dvořák

"From the New World" (1841–1904)

I. Adagio – Allegro molto

II. Largo

III. Molto vivace

IV. Allegro con fuoco

PUGET SOUND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Anna Jensen, conductor

Flute/Piccolo

Levin Kapur '28
Katy Wade '28
Alex Westervelt '25, P

Oboe/English horn

Clara Gibbs '25, P
Athena Schaefer '26

Clarinet

Emma Dubowitz '28
Hailey Matas '25, CP
Mireia Pujol '26, CP

Bassoon

Alex Kirner '26, CP
Sahaj Olivar '26
Sara Ponsioen '26, CP

Horn

Elias Albertson '27
Maddy Miller '27
Elliott Schunk '27
Caitlin Yoder '27

Trumpet

Wyatt Ethan Logan '25, P
Alyssa Shane '25

Trombone

Sam Dossa '25, P
Coda Scott '25

Timpani/Percussion

Carter Fouts '27
Skyler Hedblom '25, P

Violin 1

Sarah Choi '28
Ashlyn Collado '26
Eli Connolly '25, CM
Ruby Gunter '26
Liv Hauge '25
Mozea Havens '27, ACM
Madison Henning '26
Nikki Hindman '25
Sarah Kaczmarek '27
Aaron Levi '28
Sam McBride '27
Everett Skubinna '27

Violin 2

Ethan Chythlook '26, P
Jackson Jay '26
Anabel Moore '28
Hailey Yang '26, AP
Silvana Byram '25
Oliver Eels '28
Ayli Horvath '26
Katy McCullough '27
Grace Shirley '28
Elise Wadle '27
Oliver Wright '27

Viola

Rowan Brune '27
Amelia Calderon-Henes '26
Avery Choi '28
Ela Escobar '24
Maeve Gregory '28
Mika Shor '28
Ava Strasser '27, CP
Keola Tabisola '25, CP

Cello

Liam Abbott '26, AP
Connor Adams '25, CP
Isabella Brady '24
Madeleine Coleman '28
Sarah Galpern '28
Avi Graf '25, CP
Bronwyn McKasson '28
Sydney Pederson '28
Olivia Putz, '27
Jordan Verkh-Haskell '25

Bass

Jordan Pilla '25, P
Lucille Hamilton '28
Marie Hoffman, guest

Orchestra Manager

Mozea Havens '27

CM = concertmaster

ACM = assistant concertmaster

P = principal

CP = co-principal

AP = assistant principal

BIOGRAPHIES



ANNA JENSEN'S passion for music translates to her deep involvement in music education. In addition to instructing at the University of Puget Sound and Pacific Lutheran University, she is the executive director of the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association. During the summer, she teaches at The Evergreen Music Festival and The Hammond Ashley Bass Workshop. Jensen has also taught at Central

Washington University, Bowling Green State University, and was a graduate student instructor at the University of Michigan. In recent years, Jensen was awarded the *Outstanding Master Studio Teacher Award* from the American String Teachers Association, WA Chapter and the Washington State Music Educators Association "Friend of Music" award.

As a conductor, Jensen is a frequent clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor for contests, festivals, and workshops across the Pacific Northwest, including Alaska. She has conducted numerous All-State orchestras, regional honor groups, summer music festival orchestras, and citywide orchestra festivals. During the year, Jensen conducts the University of Puget Sound Symphony Orchestra, the Tacoma String Philharmonic at the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, and is the director of orchestras at the Annie Wright Schools.

Jensen is the assistant principal bassist of Symphony Tacoma and regularly performs with orchestras and chamber ensembles across the region including the Paramount Theater Orchestra. She has performed with the Second City Chamber Music Series, the Icicle Creek Chamber Music Festival, the Kairos Music Festival and Lyceum, the Rackham Chamber Music Series, and the All Rivers at Once contemporary music series. Her vast interest in contemporary music has brought about numerous new chamber music works for the double bass and she has presented the world premieres of these works. She can be heard on William Bolcom's Grammy Award winning recording of his "Songs of Innocence and Experience," conducted by Leonard Slatkin.

Over the years, Jensen has been the featured double bass soloist with the Everett Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lake Chelan Bach Festival Orchestra, the Pacific Lutheran University Symphony Orchestra, the Wenatchee Symphony Orchestra, and the Tacoma Young Artists Orchestra. Jensen has won the Spokane Allied Arts Young Artist Competition, the Helen Snelling Crowe Competition, and was a finalist in the American String Teachers Association National Solo Competition.

Receiving her doctorate in musical arts degree in double bass performance at the University of Michigan, she studied with Dr. Diana Gannett and was a graduate student instructor. She holds degrees from the University of Michigan (DMA and MM) and Central Washington University (BM) and has been the recipient of the Mildred Tuttle Fellowship, the Farrell Merit Scholarship-Grant and was awarded the Presser Scholar.

When not performing or teaching, Jensen can be found exploring the outdoors with her spouse and four children, hiking in the woods, or encouraging her own family's improvisational skills and joy of music!

Jensen is a Pierce County Arts Commissioner, where she represents District 7. She also serves on the Equity Review Team for the Tacoma Public Schools and the Finance Committee for the International Society of Bassists.



Originally founded with the purpose of playing a cycle of the 15 Shostakovich string quartets, the **GIRSKY STRING QUARTET** has evolved in the decade since its founding. Like the Beatles refining their sound in Hamburg, the Girsky's forged their identity in the Shostakovich cycle. Comprised of violinists Artur Girsky and Natasha Bazhanova, violist Timothy Christie and cellist

Rowena Hammill, the Girsky String Quartet has concertized up and down the west coast of the United States from Los Angeles, Calif., to Bellingham, Wash., with a repertoire spanning the Baroque to wet-ink compositions by living composers and yes, plenty of Shostakovich. When not playing as a quartet, Artur & Natasha are members of the Seattle Symphony, Rowena is Principal Cello of the Los Angeles Opera and Timothy is the Founder & Artistic Director of the Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival.



GWYNNE KUHNER BROWN is the author of *William L. Dawson* (2024), the first musicological book on the African American composer and educator, and editor of the G. Schirmer edition of Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony*. On the faculty since 2005, she is also a proud graduate of the Puget Sound School of Music. As a student, she seriously pursued her pianistic ambition while also feeding her intellectual curiosity about topics including history, politics, and art. She delights in creating inclusive and inspiring music courses for all Puget Sound students, regardless of major or background. Her teaching seeks to foster creativity, curiosity, compassion, alertness to inequity, and meaningful human connections.

PROGRAM NOTES



***Banner* for String Quartet and Chamber Orchestra by Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)**

Banner is a tribute to the 200th anniversary of “The Star Spangled Banner,” [the lyrics of which were written by Francis Scott Key in 1814]. *Banner* is a rhapsody on the theme of “The Star Spangled Banner.” Drawing on musical and historical sources from various world anthems and patriotic songs, I’ve made an attempt to answer the question: “What does an anthem for the 21st century sound like in today’s multi-cultural environment?”

In 2009, I was commissioned by the Providence String Quartet and Community MusicWorks to write *Anthem*, a tribute to the historical election of Barack Obama. In that piece, I wove together the theme from “The Star Spangled Banner” with the commonly named Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by James Weldon Johnson (which coincidentally share the exact same phrase structure).

Banner picks up where *Anthem* left off by using a similar backbone source in its middle section, but expands further both in the amount of references and also in the role played by the string quartet as the individual voice working both with and against the larger community of the orchestra behind them. The structure is loosely based on traditional marching band form, where there are several strains or contrasting sections, preceded by an introduction, and I have drawn on the drum line chorus as a source for the rhythmic underpinning in the finale. Within the same tradition, I have attempted to evoke the breathing of a large brass choir as it approaches the climax of the “trio” section. A variety of other cultural anthems and American folk songs and popular idioms interact to form various textures in the finale section, contributing to a multi-layered fanfare.

“The Star Spangled Banner” is an ideal subject for exploration in contradictions. For most Americans, the song represents a paradigm of liberty and solidarity against fierce odds, and for others it implies a contradiction between the ideals of freedom and the realities of injustice and oppression. As a culture, it is my opinion that we Americans are perpetually in search of ways to express and celebrate our ideals of freedom — a way to proclaim, “we’ve made it!” as if the very action of saying it aloud makes it so. And for many of our nation’s people, that was the case: through work songs and spirituals, enslaved Africans promised themselves a way out and built up the nerve to endure the most abominable treatment for the promise

of a free life. Immigrants from Europe, Central America, and the Pacific have sought out a safe haven here and though met with the trials of building a multi-cultured democracy, continue to find rooting in our nation and make significant contributions to our cultural landscape. In 2014, a tribute to the U.S. National Anthem means acknowledging the contradictions, leaps and bounds, and milestones that allow us to celebrate and maintain the tradition of our ideals.

— Jessie Montgomery

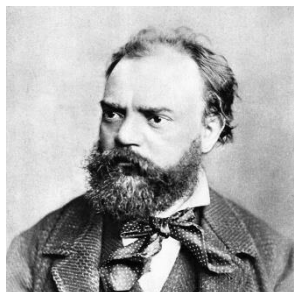


Danzas de Panama by William Grant Still (1895–1978)

William Grant Still's *Danzas de Panama* date from 1948 and are based on a collection of Panamanian folk tunes that were collected by Elisabeth Waldo in the 1940s. Although there are putatively only four dances presented, each movement has at least two and sometimes three separate dances within it. The opening movement, *Tamborito*, immediately captures the

listener's attention with the players percussively striking the sides of their instruments, creating the rhythm for this highly chromatic introduction which immediately leads to a sadder and slower dance that is also quite chromatic. For the rest of the movement, Still ingeniously juxtaposes these two dances, one after the other seamlessly. When the faster dance returns, it is in two sections, the first fast and upbeat, the second more melancholy and sounding like a close relative of the tango. The movement ends surprisingly on a soft glissando. Next comes *Mejorana*, which sounds like a carefree Panamanian waltz. The forceful middle section is a somewhat ominous dance in two. The slowish third movement, *Punto*, has a gentle and very familiar Mexican sound to it. It is the kind of thing one hears in the movies when Mexican cowboys return to their hacienda at the end of a day's work. The middle section in 6/8 is in the minor and more robust. The last movement, *Cumbia y Congo*, begins again with a percussive hand-pounding to a high-spirited and fast dance. At first, it sounds purely African but very quickly a heavy dose of Latin melody is added to the mix. The coda is brilliant and exciting. Any one of these movements could serve as a very effective encore. Together, they form an impressive *tour de force*.

— LAPhil.com



Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World," by Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Has there ever been a work so beloved, so recognized, and yet so impossible to give a fair hearing as the "New World" Symphony? By the mid-20th century, it was so much a part of American culture that it was familiar to people who had never even heard it. So much in it has been quoted and rehashed that it now sounds like

a cliché.

This ultimate piece of Americana actually grew out of an attempt to create an American style of composition. To this end, a visionary patron of the arts named Jeannette Thurber founded a National Conservatory in New York and engaged Dvořák as its director. Dvořák arrived with his wife and two eldest children in September 1892 and threw himself into teaching, composing, and absorbing America.

Since Dvořák was a "nationalist" who grounded his own music in Czech folk tradition, he was naturally curious about the folk music of America. In interviews with New York newspapers, he opined that the music of native Americans and Black people would be the real source of folk music on which to base an American national style. His knowledge of "Indian" music would have come from published collections, filtered through the ears of white editors. He would have come to know Black music from more varied sources. He made a special point of having Harry Burleigh, a Black National Conservatory student who later became famous as a publisher of spirituals, sing real Black music to him.

Dvořák began the symphony in late 1892 and finished it the following May. The first performance, in New York on Dec. 16, 1893, was a major event, with a public rehearsal and much advance press attention. Its reception was a major triumph, and it occasioned much enthusiastic discussion from the musical intelligentsia about just how American it really was. In the ensuing century and beyond, little has changed: the symphony's popularity has endured, and talking about how much the "New World" Symphony sounded like what American music was before American music started to sound like the "New World" Symphony remains a favorite pastime.

Clearly, there is a lot of Bohemia in the Symphony. Dvořák was not going to change his style in nine months. But it also sounds different from his previous works. Dvořák wrote to a friend in Bohemia that the Symphony "will be fundamentally different from my earlier ones. Anyone with a 'nose' for these things will detect the influence of America."

But many observers, nasally challenged or not, have disagreed. Perhaps the most extreme view was voiced by Leonard Bernstein, who devoted a chapter of his 1966 book *The Infinite Variety of Music* to arguing that there was virtually nothing American about the Symphony. Bernstein examined each theme of the symphony, identified whatever aspect of it that was thought to be American, and pointed out that there was nothing exclusively American about that aspect. The argument proves too much: Bernstein could similarly have “proved” that there is nothing American about hot dogs because they are made from a sausage that originated in Frankfurt. But his views were, as always, insightful and provocative.

Dvořák insisted that while he took inspiration from folk music, he borrowed no actual melodies. The Symphony is remarkable for its sheer number of memorable tunes, nearly all of them are the sort that you hum going home from the concert. For just this reason, the Symphony sometimes gives short shrift to symphonic development; it needs less compositional craft because the sheer melodic invention is so inspired.

Everything Dvořák touched here turned to gold. Even when he dealt with a practical structural problem—how to go from E minor, the key in which the first movement ends, to the Largo’s distant D-flat major without jolting the listener’s ear—his solution was haunting: the seven magical chords that begin the second movement are unforgettable, though they appear only four times, including a curtain call in the finale. It’s easy to conclude that Dvořák kept bringing themes back in later movements not for purposes of unity, but because he couldn’t bear to part with them.

Several sources close to Dvořák said that the slow movement was inspired by episodes in Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha*, which Dvořák had read in a Czech translation and, at Mrs. Thurber’s suggestion, was considering as the subject of an opera. Some of the movement may even have started as sketches for such an opera. But the sources do not agree on which part(s) of *Hiawatha* Dvořák may have had in mind, and the principal theme, the English horn’s famous song, is not “Indian” at all. It has the character of a Black spiritual, but it betrays its high-art origins when it modulates into the subdominant, a bit of harmonic sophistication uncommon in real spirituals. Years later, one of Dvořák’s National Conservatory students, a white man named William Fisher, gave it words and turned it into a song called “Goin’ Home” that was popular for many years. Bernstein, again overstating his case, noted: “It evokes for us the picture of field hands, plantation workers crooning in the moonlight, *Gone with the Wind*, what have you—but only because we have heard it so constantly played or sung, in the movies or on the radio or wherever, in practically every southern situation. (If we were to put Czech words to it, it would sound fully as Czech as American, or with Chinese words it would sound Chinese.)”

Dvořák said that the Scherzo was inspired by Longfellow's description of the dance at Hiawatha's wedding feast. But its material is the most characteristically Czech in the symphony. The rhythm of the woodwinds' perky first theme is typical of the Czech language and is found in Czech folk songs. (There is nothing folky about the insistent rhythmic pull of three against two that yanks the theme along.) The lilting middle section could pass for one of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*.

The finale begins as a normal sonata movement but somewhere in the development becomes something else. Much of what it develops is thematic material from the first three movements. Finally, there's that unmistakable boogie-woogie walking bass just before the final chords: is it a transformation of the first movement's main theme, or had Dvořák actually heard some ragtime pianist? Either explanation is possible, historically speaking, but neither is probable. Genius is often hard to explain.

—Howard Posner, LA Phil

UPCOMING SCHOOL OF MUSIC EVENTS

Admission is free for these events. Most performances are live-streamed at pugetsound.edu/schneebecklive.

SUNDAY, APRIL 13

Haley Storey '25 Senior Voice Recital

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 6 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 14

Clarinet Master Class with Guest Artist Cris Inguanti

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

Wind Ensemble Percussion Fest

Gerard Morris, conductor

Schneebeck Concert Hall, 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.

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

