



PROGRAM NOTES: THE PLANETS

The Cape Symphony Orchestra presents "[The Planets](#)" at the [Barnstable Performing Arts Center](#) on September 26, 2026 at 4:00 PM and September 27, 2026 at 3:00 PM. Ticketholders are invited to a discussion of the concert program led by scholar and retired Cape Symphony bass trombonist George Scharr one hour before each performance.

THE CAPE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Music Director Alyssa Wang, Conductor

VIOLIN I

Jae Cosmos Lee,
concertmaster
Nicole Wendl
Benjamin Carson
Jiuri Yu
Youngji Choi
Lino Tanaka
Maya Lynn
Norma Stiner
Fariba Hunold
Stephen Kim

VIOLIN II

Heather Goodchild Wade,
principal
Eun-Mi Lee
Leah Zelnick
Kaede Kobayashi-Kirker
Melissa Carter
Marc Benador
Igor Cherevko
Ming-hang Tam
Deborah Bradley
Lawrence Chaplan

VIOLA

Danielle Farina,
principal
Sachin Shukla,
asst. principal
Irina Naryshkova
Sara DeGraide
Susan Gable
Consuelo Sherba
Nissim Tseytlin
Ken Allen

CELLO

Jacques Lee Wood,
principal
Velléda Miragias,
asst. principal
Josephina Kim
Elizabeth Schultze
Michael Czitrom
Luigi Polcari
Alexander Badalov
Norma Kelley

DOUBLE BASS

Carion Chu,
principal
Nathan Varga
Caroline Samuels
Joseph Bentley
Moisés Carrasco

PICCOLO

Wendy Rolfe (*also flute*)
Ashley Addington (*also alto flute*)

FLUTE

Matthew Lee
Mariellen Sears

OBOE

Laura Pardee Schaefer
Catherine Weinfield-Zell
Elizabeth England
(*also bass oboe*)
Gaia Saetermoe-Howard

ENGLISH HORN

Mary Cicconetti

CLARINET

Mark Miller
Janice Smith
Yhasmin Valenzuela-Blanchard

BASS CLARINET

Marguerite Levin

BASSOON

Rachel Juszcak
Isaac Erb
Sam Childers

CONTRABASSOON

April Verser

FRENCH HORN

Neil Godwin
Rachel Daly
Laura Crook Brisson
Marina Krickler
Liam Lacey
Elisabeth Axtell

TRUMPET

Kyle Spraker,
principal
Tobias Monte
Mary-Lynne Bohn
Peter Everson

TROMBONE

Robert Hoveland,
principal
Matthew Wright

BASS TROMBONE

Gabriel Rice

EUPHONIUM

Michael Tybursky

TUBA

Jarrold Briley,
principal

TIMPANI

Michael Weinfield-Zell,
principal
Brandon Levesque
Bryan Round

PERCUSSION

Paul Gross,
principal
Daniel Hann
Piero Guimaraes
Eric Huber

HARP

Maria Spraker
Deanna Cirielli

ORGAN

David McGrory

CELESTA

Pei-yeh Tsai

This roster lists the musicians performing today's concert, and is subject to change.

The official Cape Symphony Orchestra roster, including recognition of our musician chair supporters, is [here](#).

NEPTUNE, THE MYSTIC CHORUS

Jean Croll	Judy Leamy	Maggie Molloy	Elizabeth Wharff
Beth Goldman Galer	Carolyn Kelley	Aislinn O'Keefe	Elyse Nelson Winger
Ariane Frank	Sharon McMillen	Jennifer Rabold	Victoria Wu
Faye Kalmbach	Aurora Milholin	Sarah Vandewalle	Ilana Zablow

CONCERT PROGRAM

KAIJA SAARIAHO (1952–2023)

Asteroid 4179: Toutatis

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 19

Nathan Olson, Soloist

Andantino

Scherzo: Vivacissimo

Moderato

INTERMISSION (20 minutes)

GUSTAV HOLST (1874–1934)

The Planets

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

ABOUT TODAY'S PROGRAM

The three works on our concert program share a fascination with forces larger than any one human. Written under the specter of war, Sergei Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 and Gustav Holst's *The Planets* emerged from a Europe undergoing extraordinary upheaval. Nearly 90 years later, Kaija Saariaho's *Asteroid 4179: Toutatis* looks outward from a world in which space is no longer the realm of myth alone, but a place we can observe, measure, and explore.

All three composers use the orchestra to express something beyond ordinary human scale: the unpredictable movement of an asteroid, the emotional range of a solo violin, character traits fancifully associated with the planets.

This program invites us to imagine worlds beyond the everyday, then brings them right to our hearts.

Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho** was already internationally acclaimed when she wrote ***Asteroid 4179: Toutatis***. The piece was commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, which premiered it in 2006 as part of a large orchestral project centered on Holst's *The Planets*.

"I first become interested in Toutatis when reading that it is the asteroid whose orbit passes closest to Earth," she wrote. "I started to find its unusual shape and complex rotation interesting... The stars viewed from Toutatis wouldn't repeatedly follow circular paths, but would crisscross the sky, never following the same path twice."

The music creates the sensation of something distant, elusive, and constantly shifting. Sounds appear, transform, and disappear; shifting patterns evoke spinning, turning, and tumbling. Intensity builds as Toutatis nears, and flares as it whizzes by. Disappearing into the endless void, we're left in silence once again.

Sergei Prokofiev began his **First Violin Concerto** in 1915, in his mid-20s and already known as one of Russia's most audacious young composers. He completed it in 1917, as Russia was being transformed by the Bolshevik Revolution. The concerto would not be premiered until 1923, in Paris. It was not an instant triumph; audiences expecting something aggressively modern seemed puzzled by its lyrical character. Over time, though, the concerto has proved one of Prokofiev's most enduring works.

Cape Symphony is honored to welcome Nathan Olson as our soloist for today's performance. "Prokofiev's First Concerto has held a special place in my heart since I first learned it in school," he says. "It is a uniquely creative and beautiful piece, and I'm thrilled to have the chance to present it to the Cape Symphony audience."

For listeners expecting a duel between soloist and orchestra, Prokofiev offers something different from the outset, with a melody that seems almost dreamlike. "Somewhat unusually for Prokofiev, the predominant mood of his First Concerto is lyrical and romantic," says Nathan Olson. "In certain sections, we feel we are witness to the composer's stream of consciousness, as in the opening theme presented by the solo violin, over hushed tremolos in the strings. This intoxicatingly lyrical theme, seemingly improvised in the moment, is in fact the soul of the piece. It returns in different textures at the close of the first movement, as well as the very end of the work."

The second movement is a startling contrast: fast, sharp, and playful. "This is Prokofiev at his most mischievous," says Nathan. "Featuring some devilishly difficult violin writing, this movement provides needed sardonic contrast to the sweeter, quieter outer movements."

The finale returns us to a lyrical world. Says Nathan Olson: "The third movement is essentially through-composed, without any obvious overarching structure. We venture tentatively through a few different atmospheres, reaching a low point halfway through. A slow and enormous buildup follows, the solo violin hypnotizing with trills and expansive scales up and down the instrument. The strain slowly builds, and just as it becomes too much to bear, the tension suddenly dissipates into... bliss. We now hear the final version of the opening theme, an enchantingly peaceful duet between flute and solo violin."

"I love the pairing of this magical piece with Holst's *The Planets*; large portions of the Prokofiev sound like they come from a different world. The end of the piece feels like we are floating through outer space, communing with whatever wisdom lies beyond."

INTERMISSION

CAPE SYMPHONY

Your Cape Symphony Orchestra will now perform English composer **Gustav Holst**'s most inventive, beloved, and famous work. "***The Planets*** is enormous in every way," says Music Director Alyssa Wang, "from its huge orchestration—including two tubas, a bass oboe, two timpani, and an expansive brass section—to the women's chorus that emerges in the final movement. It's thrilling, powerful, and unmistakably cinematic."

Holst was a person of broad extra-musical interests. A fascination with astrology inspired *The Planets*, a seven-part tone poem in which each movement portrays the mythological character of one of the planets. He began composing the piece in 1914, with Europe on the brink of catastrophe, and completed it during the First World War. While it is tempting to hear the opening movement as a reaction to the war—its ominous rhythm and relentless brutality feel prophetic in hindsight—"Mars" was actually completed before Britain entered the conflict.

The first private performance of *The Planets* took place in London in 1918; its first complete public performance followed in 1920. People loved it, bringing Holst a very uncomfortable fame. Though he didn't enjoy the spotlight, Holst recorded *The Planets* with the London Symphony Orchestra, making him one of the first major composers to leave recordings of his own music.

The movements of *The Planets* are arranged according to their dramatic relationships, rather than in astronomical order. The result is one of the great orchestral journeys of the 20th century: "Mars, the Bringer of War" advances with a mechanical menace that *Star Wars* fans are sure to recognize. "Venus, the Bringer of Peace" offers an almost startlingly gentle response. "Mercury, the Winged Messenger" darts by in a delightful blur, while "Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity" is some of Holst's most expansive and generous music. The mood darkens again with "Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age," whose slow procession has often been heard as a meditation on mortality. "Uranus, the Magician" brings swagger and eccentricity, and finally, "Neptune, the Mystic" seems to dissolve the boundaries of the orchestra itself, with a wordless women's chorus fading into the distance.

Thank you for attending today's concert.
We hope you enjoyed it and that we'll see you again soon.



BEHIND THE SCENES

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Assistant Stage Manager

Brendan Gallagher

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SUPPORT YOUR CAPE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Ticket sales cover only part of the cost to maintain a professional orchestra on Cape Cod. Generous donations and community support make the difference.

Donating is easy, online at www.capesymphony.org/donations or by mail to Cape Symphony, 2235 Iyannough Road, West Barnstable, MA 02668. For more information about ways to support Cape Symphony, please contact Director of Development Kevin McLain at kmclain@capesymphony.org or 774-470-2282. Thank you!

Program Notes by [Susan Sundermeyer](#), ©Cape Arts & Entertainment. References include: *Classical Music: The Rough Guide*; B. Grun, *The Timetables of History*; N. Olson, pers. comm.; saariaho.org; W. Thompson, *The Illustrated History of the Great Composers*; A. Wang, pers. comm.