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ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS
**THE PLANETS AND THE
MANY MOODS OF
MUSIC**



APRIL 26, 2025
7 P.M.
HATHEWAY CULTURAL CENTER, LCCC



Wm. Shane Williams
Conductor

Maestro Wm. Shane Williams is celebrating his 12th season as Music Director/Conductor of the Alton Symphony. He is a charismatic and versatile conductor, versed in wide gamut of musical styles, carrying a vision to Make Music Come Alive for All playing under his baton.

His skills and gifting have allowed him conducting opportunities in the United States and abroad: the Zapadocesky Symphony Orchestra of the Czech Republic, the St. Louis Philharmonic, the Illinois Symphony, the Kirkwood Symphony, the Alton Symphony, the

University City Orchestra, and the Gateway Chamber Orchestra, to name a few. Maestro Williams has had the privilege of working with Grammy Award winning violinist Mark O'Connor. Shane is a regular guest conductor, performer, clinician, and adjudicator throughout the region.

His previous conducting posts include the Alton Summer Chamber Series, the Young People's Concert Orchestra at the Webster Community Music School, the Sangamon Valley Youth Symphony, Pops Conductor of the Alton Symphony and Resident Conductor of the Award-winning St. Louis Brass Band.

As a professional musician, Maestro Williams has performed with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (noted performances at Carnegie Hall), Opera Theater St. Louis, the Illinois Symphony, the Nashville Symphony, Winter Opera St. Louis, the Joffrey Ballet, Ice Capades, Moody Blues, the Elvis Show, the Three Irish Tenors, Opryland USA, Burt Bacharach, Roger Williams, Dionne Warwick, Tommy Tune, Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith and many others.

Maestro Williams serves on the music faculty at Missouri Baptist University where he teaches conducting and oversees the instrumental programs. As an educator, Mr. Williams has taught public, private, and homeschool. In 2002, he founded the SCCYO Summer String and Woodwind Workshops and Audition Preparation Workshops (APW). Also, he has previously served on the music faculty of the Masterworks Music Festival for many years.

Maestro Williams holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education from Austin Peay State University, a Master of Percussion Performance from the St. Louis Conservatory of Music, and a Master of Music degree in Conducting from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has completed doctoral studies at Lindenwood University.

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ASO 2025—2026 Season

“Symphony No. 5—Tchaikovsky”

October 18, 2025 Saturday 7 pm

Join ASO for an evening of passion and playfulness as we perform Rossini’s “Barber of Seville,” Sibelius’ “Finlandia,” and the emotional journey from darkness to triumph of Tchaikovsky’s “Symphony No. 5!”

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

December 7, 2025 Sunday 3pm

Evoke the spirit of the season with the quiet wonder of Holst’s “In the Bleak Midwinter” and warm your heart with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra’s “Mad Russian’s Christmas,” “Christmas Eve/Sarajevo 12/24” and “Sleigh Ride!”

“Variations on Americana”

February 28, 2026 Saturday—3 pm

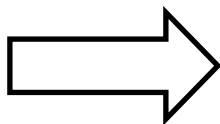
A lively tribute to American music featuring Bernstein’s “Candide Overture,” Ives’ “Variations on America,” Copland’s timeless “Appalachian Spring” and more!

“Pirates and Other Songs of the Sea”

April 25, 2026 Saturday—7 pm

Set sail with ASO as we close the season with a musical voyage that captures the mystery, majesty, and mischief of the sea! Featuring Debussy’s “La Mer,” Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Scheherazade,” and “Pirates of the Caribbean!”

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Vincent Piazza
Concertmaster

A native of Alton, IL, Vincent Piazza began studying violin at the age of nine in the Alton public school system. After studying with Elizabeth Jankowski through high school, he enrolled at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, studying with Peter Schaffer and Pacifica

Quartet member Sibbi Bernhardsson. Also, during his years at the University of Illinois, Vincent was a student of Italian, receiving a minor and studying in Catania, Sicily. Vincent also holds a Master’s degree from Boston University studying violin with Bayla Keyes.

Vincent’s summer highlights have included the National Repertory Orchestra, the Round Top Festival Institute and the Tónlistarhátíðar unga fólksins string quartet seminar in Iceland. In 2007 he toured China as a member of the Sinfonia da Camera.

Vincent has a long history with the Alton Symphony Orchestra. He was a member of the Alton Junior Youth Symphony, the Alton Youth Symphony, and, during high school, the Alton Symphony. He enjoyed playing in many ensembles. While playing with the Alton Symphony in high school, he also performed with the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Alton High School Symphonic Orchestra.

Today, Vincent works at St. Louis College of Pharmacy in the Office of Institutional Advancement. He freelances in the St. Louis area and teaches privately. He resides in Edwardsville with his wife Jenna and their five children, Rachel, Allegra, Luca, Giuliana and Matteo. Rachel, Luca, and Matteo play violin, Allegra plays cello, and Gigi plays piano.

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ABOUT US



Riverbend Community Orchestra is an orchestra for aspiring young musicians or seasoned performers. We have a flexible commitment that allows musicians to commit to concerts as their time allows.

Not sure if you're ready to audition for ASO? Check out the Riverbend Community Orchestra! This group was formed by ASO and Alton Youth Symphony to create a space for casual musicians of high school age and older! Visit our website for more details!

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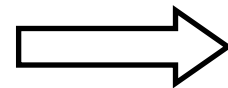
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Alton Symphony Orchestra like to acknowledge memorial contributions from Melanie Collins & Claire Scheele and the Uthe Family for Milton Reinert, former violin with ASO.



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additions; those who knew C.A.E. will understand this reference to one whose life was a romantic and delicate inspiration." The ninth variation, the one that has achieved the most popularity of the variations and which has gained something of a life of its own, is dedicated to a friend of Elgar's without whom the piece might not have been composed. Jaeger was a rare voice in Elgar's circle, both offering useful advice but also severe criticism, both of which were appreciated by Elgar. Despite Elgar's own struggles with depression throughout his life, Jaeger was a constant advocate and supporter of the composer, the support of which proved to be invaluable. As the composer wrote at his memorial in 1910, "Jaeger was for years the dear friend, the valued adviser, and the stern critic of many musicians besides the writer; his place has been occupied, but never filled."

In the final pages of the score, there is an inscription from Elgar; a quote from Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (1595), though altered to be in the first person: "I long for much, I hope for little, I ask for nothing."

The Planets (1914-17) - Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)

The Planets was Holst's answer to a problem that had long plagued his creative output. As his daughter, Imogen, wrote in her biography of Gustav Holst: "He was continually being defeated by the technical problems of extended form: years later, he was still unable to grapple with the difficulties of writing a symphony." Further, there was a mounting insistence of his ideas accrued during the twenty years of searching for the idiom that would allow him to write a large-scale work. Instead of the symphony he instead took to the orchestral suite. As scholars like Michael Short and David Lambourn have pointed out, Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* were another major influence on *The Planets* - indeed, the original title of the work was to be *Seven Pieces for Large Orchestra*, mirroring the title of the Schoenberg suite. As Gustav Holst described, *The Planets* are a "series of mood pictures which act as foils to one another with very little contrast in any one of them." This series of pictures would be somewhat influenced by astrology, primarily through Alan Leo's booklet *What is a Horoscope and How is it Cast?*, with some of the movements named directly after their respective chapters. Despite the astrological starting point, the ultimate arrangement of the movements is one that Holst used to maximize their musical effectiveness rather than other possible orders.

An interesting interpretation of the suite, published in 2023 in *Intégral* by Tâhirih Motazedian and Scott Murphy in their article "*Holst's Planets, the Final Frontier: Interplanetary Voyage as Intrapersonal Escape*", casts the totality of the work as an imagined interplanetary voyage undertaken by the composer. The impetus of a desire for isolation and a powerful longing and love for travel may have been a powerful motivator for Holst to undertake this journey, one that would take him far into the isolation of the cosmos. These planets, now ports-of-call for the adventure, were not simply a series of moods generated from the influence of astronomy or astrology; they are intensely reflective of the composer's personal moods. Mars, in this sense, is no longer attached to war, but to the point of escape from an oppressive stress generating from the overbearing nature of the society that Holst found himself surrounded by as well as the turbulence of a newly started voyage among the seas of stars.

Program Notes by Anthony Jensen

Fanfare for the Common Man (1942) - Aaron Copland (1900 - 1990)

Aaron Copland's "*Fanfare for the Common Man*" was a piece written for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Eugene Goossens. Goossens and Copland were in correspondence during August 1942 in regards to the upcoming concert season. During World War I, the orchestra had been commissioning British composers to write fanfares as the preludes to their concerts, which had been wildly successful. With the advent of the United States' entry into World War II in December 1941, the director thought to repeat this success to boost the wartime American morale. This outreach led to the submission of 10 fanfares submitted by composers like Walter Piston, Henry Cowell, William Grant Still, and Aaron Copland, though only Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* entered the standard repertoire after its premiere.

Despite the call, Copland was hesitant to submit anything; money was particularly tight and this was an unpaid request. However, the success of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's premiere of Copland's piece *Lincoln Portrait* under André Kostelanetz was enough of a prompt for Copland to submit his fanfare. Even after its composition, the piece was late for its scheduled premiere and increasingly so as Copland struggled to name it. However, a speech given by Vice President Henry A. Wallace on May 8th, 1942, "The Price of Free World Victory" from *The Century of the Common Man*, became its ultimate inspiration and dedication. Goossens received the completed score in November and proclaimed that it deserved a special occasion for its performance, leading to its premiere on March 12th, 1943 to coincide with income tax time. Copland's response: "I am all for honoring the common man at income tax time." Roughly 11% of the United States' population fought in the war, and when the piece was premiered, nine of its members were currently on leave from the orchestra while serving in the Armed Forces.

Variations on an Original Theme (1898-99) - Edward Elgar (1857 - 1934)

Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme*, perhaps best known by its popular name *Enigma Variations*, were composed as a set of dedications to several of Elgar's closest friends. The piece started as an improvisation on a theme that he improvised at the piano with his wife that turned into variations based on the character of some of his friends. These improvisations were expanded and orchestrated, resulting in the *Variations* we know today. The theme, in Elgar's own words, was written as a counterpoint to another theme which does not appear directly in the *Variations*, and which Elgar refers to as the "Enigma" in the 1929 pianola rolls of the piece, in a photo album published alongside the rolls titled *My Friends Pictured Within*, as well as other publications on the work. The framing of the hidden melody in this light has been somewhat of a flashpoint among analysts and historians since the piece's inception, and while many answers were proposed in Elgar's lifetime, none of them were accepted as a solution to the riddle by the composer himself. He took the information to the grave with him, and no manuscripts of the work shed any light on the mystery.

Of the fourteen variations, Elgar drew attention to three in particular: variation 1 for his wife, Caroline Alice Elgar, variation 9 for Nimrod, a music publisher and close personal friend to Elgar's by the name of Augustus J. Jaeger, and variation 14 for himself that heavily develops material from the first and ninth variations. From *My Friends Pictured Within*, he writes: "The variation is really a prolongation of the theme with what I wished to be romantic and delicate

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“The Planets and the Many Moods of Music”

April 26, 2025

National Anthem

Francis Scott Key
John Stafford Smith

Fanfare for the Common Man

Aaron Copland
(1900—1990)

Enigma Variations, Op. 36

Edward Elgar
(1857—1934)

- I. Andante
- II. L'istesso tempo
- III. Allegro
- IV. Allegretto
- V. Allegro di molto
- VI. Moderato
- VII. Andantino
- VIII. Presto
- IX. Allegretto
- X. Adagio
- XI. Allegretto
- XII. Allegro di molto
- XII. Andante
- XIV. Moderato
- XV. Allegro

*****INTERMISSION*****

Refreshments served in upstairs lobby

The Planets

Gustav Holst
(1874—1934)

- I. Mars, the Bringer of War
- II. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
- III. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
- IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity

Librarian—Gary Lee

Technical Coordinator, Hatheway Hall—Brian McKinney

Properties—Natalie O’Rando, Isaiah Christner

Musicians

Violin I

Vincent Piazza, *Concertmaster*
Dr. Frank M. Boals Chair

Kelsey Booth
Nicholas Monahan
Rachel Piazza
Sr. Marie-Therese Swiezynski
Tressa Zimmerman

Violin II

Tom Winter, *Principal*
John Simmons Chair

Connie Clayton
David Gillam
Casey Hansen
Natalie O’Rando
Pat Rowold

Viola

Anne Branch, *Principal*
Jean Heil
Anthony Jensen

Cello

Gary Lee, *Principal*
Henry Swanger Chair

Robert Flick
Sam Mundell
Elyse Tillman

Jerre Honke Chair

Bass

Andrew Tinge

Flute

Tami Flick, *Principal*
Corrina Pohlman

Oboe / English Horn

Cathy Woelbling Paul, *Principal*
Dr. Scott Hawley Chair

Brandon Thompson

Clarinet

Jenna Piazza, *Principal*
Anthony Lordi Chair

Melissa Bock
Leah Cook
Erica Kennington

Bassoon

Sheila Acuncius, *Principal*
Greg Van Asch

Horn

John Lindley, *Principal*
Allen Biggs Chair

David Williams, *Assistant*
Matt Geary
Caiti Corradini
Jessica Poddig
Anne Lovelace
Sandy Keuther

Trumpet

Chris Dressler, *Principal*
Dr. Christopher Langdon Chair

Rick Acuncius
Isaiah Christner
Jeff Steinheimer

Trombone

Marquita Reef, *Principal*
Chris Galloway

Trombone/Euphonium

Aiden Jay

Tuba

Ben Duane

Percussion

Gary Morris, *Principal*
Connor Caporal
Wade Cermak-Hernandez

Tympani

Brad Rushton