

LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TIMOTHY MUFFITT • MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

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LANSING SYMPHONY TO PRESENT “THE PLANETS” IN MASTERWORKS 2: INTO THE HEAVENS

October 20, 2009 – Lansing, MI – The Lansing Symphony Orchestra will ascend “**Into the Heavens**” for its next MasterWorks Series concert. On **Saturday, November 7th at 8:00pm**, the LSO will perform **Gustav Holst’s *The Planets*** suite and **Francis Poulenc’s *Gloria***. The **MSU Choral Union, Chorale and State Singers** and Soprano **Nancy Allen Lundy** will join the LSO for the *Gloria*. Music

Director **Timothy Muffitt** will lead the orchestra for the performance at the Wharton Center’s Great Hall. A PreView Conversation hosted by WKAR’s Jody Knol will be held in the Grand Tier Lounge from 7:15-7:45pm. **Single tickets range from \$12.00-\$45.00**, with student prices available. Four-concert MasterWorks Sampler subscriptions are also available, starting at just \$44.00. First-time subscribers save 25% on their order. **Tickets are available by calling (517) 487-5001 or online at www.LansingSymphony.org**. *MasterWorks 2: Into the Heavens* is generously sponsored by the MSU Federal Credit Union. Media Partner: AM Lansing.

Gustav Holst’s *The Planets* is a much-loved suite of character sketches, each depicting one of seven planets. (He skipped Earth, and in 1914 Pluto had not yet been discovered, much less classified and declassified as a planet.) “Mars, the Bringer of War” develops a military drumbeat and ends with a thrilling crash. “Venus, the Bringer of Peace” does just that with a beautiful horn solo (to be performed by the LSO’s Principal Horn Janine Gaboury) and lush strings. The orchestra’s speedy flight in the third movement represents “Mercury, the Winged Messenger.” The fourth movement, “Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity,” features the beautiful “I Vow to Thee My

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Country” melody enclosed by two fast and exciting sections. The last three movements each have mystic qualities to them. “Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age” begins with ethereal chords and develops into a dignified march that becomes worrisome and ominous. “Uranus, the Magician” features a bewitching dance and builds in to a frightening climax and then a sudden quiet, which carries into “Neptune, the Mystic.” The final movement has little theme at all, ending with the women from the MSU Chorale singing offstage, without words. Holst’s journey through our solar system ends by simply dissolving into nothingness.

Francis Poulenc’s *Gloria* will open the concert. The familiar sacred Latin text is used repeatedly in choral works. Poulenc’s setting, however, plays interestingly with melody, rhythm and the application of the text for a work that will keep the orchestra, chorus and audience on their toes. Poulenc separates the text of the Gloria, usually occupying one movement of a mass, into six sections. Though this is one of Poulenc’s more serious works, it still demonstrates some of the irreverence and flippancy that is representative of his earlier work.



The 2009/2010 season marks **Music Director Timothy Muffitt’s** fourth season with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. In addition to his role with the LSO, Muffitt is in his 11th season as Music Director & Conductor of the Baton Rouge Symphony. In the summer, he also serves as Music Director of the Chautauqua Institution’s Music School Festival Orchestra, one of the country’s premier orchestral training ensembles. Previously, Muffitt served as the Associate Conductor of the Austin Symphony and as Artistic Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic’s Casual Classics Series, for which he was awarded a Certificate of Meritorious Service from the American Federation of Musicians. Muffitt has appeared with leading orchestras throughout the country and is recognized as a strong proponent of community arts education. He also has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Long Beach Symphony, Columbus Ohio’s Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Virginia Symphony, the Grant Park Music Festival Orchestra in Chicago, and the Symphonies of Houston, Phoenix, Edmonton, Harrisburg, and Spokane. He has worked with many prominent performers, including Renee Fleming, Yo Yo Ma, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Andre Watts, Alicia de Larrocha, Pinchas Zukerman, Van Cliburn, Lynn Harrell, and Itzhak Perlman; and many prominent composers, including John Cage, Joseph Schwantner, Ellen Taffe Zwilich, John Harbison, Joan Tower, and Bernard Rands. Born in Bridgeport,

Connecticut, Timothy Muffitt studied at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

Nancy Allen Lundy has earned critical acclaim throughout the world for her unique vocal beauty, skillful musicianship and theatrical prowess in a wide variety of classical and contemporary styles. Ms. Lundy has graced the stages of the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, The Washington National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Cincinnati Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater, Minnesota Opera, Opera Pacific, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Portland Opera, Spoleto, U.S.A, Teatro Municipal de Santiago de Chile, the Bregenzer Festspiele in Austria, Festival Euro Mediterraneo in Rome, The Netherlands Opera and Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Japan. Her operatic repertoire encompasses more than thirty roles, of which she has earned particular acclaim for her portrayals of Poppea in Handel's *Agrippina*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Curley's Wife in *Of Mice and Men*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Musetta in *La Boheme*, Ann Trulove in *The Rake's Progress* and Cunegonde in *Candide*, to name a few. Notable concert engagements include the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal for *Messiah* and Strauss *Brentano Lieder* with Charles Dutoit, Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the Flemish Radio Orchestra, Mendelssohn's *Elias* with the Duisburger Philharmoniker, Bruno Weil conducting, and Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasilieras* in Taiwan and with the Richmond Symphony. The demand for her portrayal of the soprano role in *Carmina Burana* led her to performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Philadelphia and Saratoga Springs, NHK Symphony Orchestra (Tokyo), National Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan and Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal at New York's Carnegie Hall.



The **Michigan State University Choral Union** is a 200-voice “town and gown” chorus led by MSU Director of Choral Activities **Dr. David Rayl**. Under Dr. Rayl’s predecessor, Dr. Charles K. Smith, the Choral Union performed much of the choral-orchestral repertoire with the MSU and Lansing Symphony Orchestras. Members of the Choral Union reside throughout central Michigan and represent a wide spectrum of professions and musical backgrounds with a common love of choral singing. The ensemble rehearses once a week and typically performs twice each semester. The Choral Union's recent performances with the LSO include Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Haydn's *Creation*, and Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

The **State Singers** and **University Chorale** are two of eight choral ensembles at Michigan State University. The 65-member State Singers, conducted by **Jonathan Reed**, is an auditioned undergraduate ensemble comprised of mostly music majors, with some talented non-music majors. This choir has the proud heritage of being the oldest



singing organization on campus. They frequently join the Chorale and Choral Union for major works. The **University Chorale** is the university's premier choral ensemble, comprised of the best graduate and upper-level undergraduate singers in the College of Music. The Chorale sang for the 2002 National Meeting of the College Music Society and the 2007 American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Convention. It also appeared at the 1983 and 1989 ACDA National Conventions under the baton of Charles Smith. In recent years, the Chorale has performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Mass in B-Minor* and Mozart's *Requiem*, and in the spring of 2009 they appeared with the LSO in a performance of Bach's Cantata 131 and Handel's *Dixit Dominus*.

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra was established in 1929 and is currently celebrating its 80th season. More than 20,000 people attend LSO concerts each year, and more than 50,000 listeners are able to hear broadcasts of the orchestra's performances by NPR affiliate WKAR-FM Radio. The Symphony's highly acclaimed education programs reach 15,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade in five counties. More information can be found at www.LansingSymphony.org.

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