



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

**TCU Symphony Orchestra**

Dr. Germán Gutiérrez, Music Director and Conductor

Pre-concert Talk by Dr. Stuart Cheney

April 23rd, 2026

7:00pm

Van Cliburn Concert Hall at TCU

**Program**

Greeting

Gustav Holst  
(1874 – 1934)

Stephanie Morera, Conductor  
DMA Graduate Student

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*
- V. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age*
- VI. Uranus, the Magician*
- VII. Neptune, the Mystic*

## Dr. Germán Augusto Gutiérrez

Dr. Germán Augusto Gutiérrez has served as the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Studies at Texas Christian University (TCU) since 1996. His career as a guest conductor spans almost three decades with performances on six continents. Since 2000, Dr. Gutiérrez has also served as Music Director of the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra (FWYO), elevating the ensemble to new artistic heights and expanding its international reach.

Notable engagements include the Lebanon National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra in New Zealand, a performance of *Carmina Burana* with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra at the Smetana Hall in Prague and a CD recording and televised performance of tango music with the Binelli-Ferman Duo and City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. Further guest appearances in Spain, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Mainland China are testament to his global versatility and artistic reach.

For twelve consecutive years Germán Augusto Gutiérrez served as the guest conductor for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Hispanic Festival where he built a reputation for championing Latin American music and fostering cultural inclusion.

His academic and artistic achievements at TCU have garnered numerous accolades and include the Dean's Teaching Award and the Dean's Award for Research and Creative Activity. In 2024 the TCU Symphony Orchestra earned national recognition as the American Prize's Best College/University Orchestra of 2024.

His academic excellence has been recognized with numerous honors, including induction into the Illinois State University Hall of Fame and an invitation to deliver the 2018 Commencement Address. At TCU, his accolades include the Dean's Teaching Award, Dean's Award for Research and Creative Activity, and the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Research and Creative Activity.

## Dr. Stuart Cheney

Stuart Cheney teaches music history and viola da gamba and co-directs the Collegium Musicum at Texas Christian University. His articles and reviews have appeared in *Early Music*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Historical Performance in Music*, *Historic Brass Society Journal*, *Opera News*, *Notes*, *Consort*, *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, and the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Tablature*. He was for seven years Editor of the *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* and has published editions of seventeenth-century chamber music for Minkoff and Dovehouse.

Before joining the Musicology Division at TCU in 2009, Dr. Cheney taught music history and directed early music ensembles at Southern Methodist University, Goucher College, the University of Maryland, and Vanderbilt University. He has performed on viola da gamba, Baroque cello, and



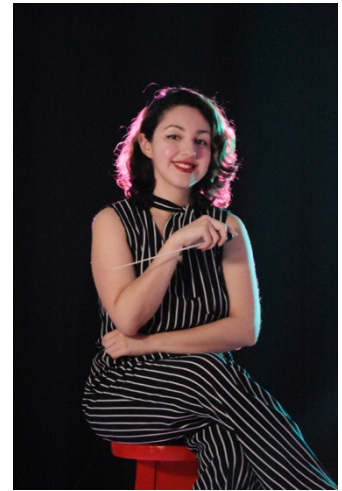
mandolin with the Smithsonian Chamber Players, Dallas Bach Society, Bach Sinfonia, Orchestra of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Maryland Handel Festival, Denton Bach Players, and others.

## **Stephanie Morera Cordoba**

Stephanie Morera is a Costa Rican conductor whose work spans orchestral performance, education, and artistic collaboration across international settings. From 2023 to 2025, she served as Assistant Conductor of the Georgia Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta, and conducted the Georgia State University Campus Orchestra while completing her graduate studies. She has also worked with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Education Department through its early childhood outreach initiatives and coached chamber ensembles within youth orchestra programs.

Morera holds a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from Georgia State University (2025), where she studied with Dr. Tamara Dworetz. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting at Texas Christian University and serves as Assistant Conductor of the Fort Worth Youth Symphony Orchestra. Her professional development includes masterclasses with distinguished conductors such as Carl St. Clair, Giancarlo Guerrero, Gary Lewis, Farkhad Khudiyev, Ankush Kumar Bahl, and Alejandro Gutiérrez, and participation in the 2025 *CODA Conference Masterclass* and the *Girls Who Conduct + Atlanta Symphony Orchestra* Conducting Masterclass.

Morera continues to build a multifaceted career as a conductor and educator, recognized for her expressive leadership and commitment to musical excellence.



# TCU Symphony Orchestra

## Violin I

Dustin Cunningham *Houston, TX*  
 Liz Valentina Muñoz Morales *Colombia*  
 Oriana González *Venezuela*  
 Laura Pollack *Edmond, OK*  
 Danielle Barbosa *São Paulo, Brasil*  
 Arnaldo Figueroa *Venezuela*  
 Eden Agabs *NJ*  
 Emma Swank *Tulsa, OK*  
 Chase Morrison *Argyle, TX*

## Violin II

June Kim *South Korea*  
 Muyan Xin *China*  
 Alejandro Sánchez *Colombia*  
 Eva Renaudat *Colombia*  
 Victoria Phan *Fort Worth, TX*  
 Kate Johnson *Long Beach, CA*  
 Gabriela Cruz *Dallas TX*  
 Amalia Torrealba Adames *Houston, TX*  
 Angelene Ku *Norman, OK*

## Viola

Abby Douglas *Granbury, TX*  
 Juan Duran Chang *Venezuela*  
 Kaylan Walker *Tomball, TX*  
 Sarah Fuentes *Mansfield, TX*  
 Joey Tullis *Fort Worth, TX*  
 Naiomy Jimenez Alba *Puerto Rico*  
 Daniel Compton *Frisco, TX*  
 Lina Gomez *Colombia*

## Cello

Jacob MacDonald *Nova Scotia, Canada*  
 Nathan Hoang *Murphy, TX*  
 Caio De Godoy Sousa *Brazil*  
 Grady O'Gara *San Ramon, CA*  
 Daniela Herrera Garcia *Colombia*  
 Nancy Olivares *Mexico*  
 Giuliano Bucheli *San Antonio, TX*  
 Jayme Eck *Albuquerque, NM*  
 Jason Vierra *Ewa Beach, Hawaii*  
 Arnav Agarwal *Plano, TX*  
 Bentley Altman *Anchorage, Alaska*  
 Kurt Kowar *CO*

## Double Bass

Arturo Zamora *San Antonio, TX*  
 Sixto Elizondo V *San Antonio, TX*  
 James Tsang *Naples, FL*  
 David Gutierrez *Mesquite, TX*  
 Kaleb Comstock *San Antonio, TX*  
 Graysen Malek *McKinney, TX*  
 Preston Quintero *McKinney, TX*  
 Quinn Judge *Saint Louis, MO*

## Flute

Abby Losos *Aledo, TX*  
 Derek Smilowski *Philadelphia, PA*  
 Autum Bell *Melissa, TX*  
 Lucinda Gatesman *Allen, TX*

## Oboe

Lauren Hanifan *The Colony, TX*  
 Chloe Caudill *Fort Worth, TX*  
 Bella Evans *Richardson, TX*  
 Lincoln Orwosky *Mt. Vernon, TX*  
 Edgar Vazquez *Fort Worth, TX*

## Clarinet

Pablo Albert *Keller, TX*  
 Samuel Brown *Philadelphia, PA*  
 Dawson Bauman-Herl *Hurst, TX*  
 Ryan Rodarte *Wylie, TX*

## Bassoon

Diego Llamas *Crowley, TX*  
 Landon Peugh *Arlington, TX*  
 Javier Flores. *Fort Worth, TX*  
 Ethan Peel *North Richland Hills, TX*

## Horn

Cole Reed *Flower Mound, TX*  
 Nicolas Hernandez *Fort Worth, TX*  
 Roger Gonzalez *Palestine, TX*  
 Claire Nelson *Frisco, TX*  
 Nick Spires *Burleson, TX*  
 Ethan Hildebrand *Eules, TX*

## Trumpet

Emanuel Arellano *Fort Worth, TX*  
 Eric Liu *Suzhou, China*  
 Dhruv Patel *Roanoke, TX*  
 Ethan Vinson *Mansfield, TX*

## Trombone

Paul Duhon *Hurst, TX*  
 Nick Shea *Mansfield, TX*

## Bass Trombone

Zach Long *San Antonio, TX*

## Tuba

Maritza Gonzales *Rio Grande City, TX*  
 Ricardo Gonzales *Rio Grande City, TX*

## Timpani/Percussion

Logan Scott *Georgetown, TX*  
 Matthew Bartley *Canton, TX*  
 Leighann Crockett *Forney, TX*  
 Jaden Guinto *Cypress, TX*  
 Ahmad Elijah *Spring, TX*  
 Matthew Hroch *Arlington, TX*  
 Haley Bruns *McKinney, TX*  
 Chaya Bray *Burleson, TX*  
 Brandon Davidson *Flower Mound, TX*  
 Christian Maakestad *Robins, IA*

## Harp

Silvia Torres Rodarte *Mexico*  
 Lauren Holder

## Treble Choir from TCU Choral

Mary Grace Abney  
 Rashaad Calaham  
 Casey Caldwell  
 Hannah Chapman  
 Kimy Coe  
 Kaylyn Davis  
 Karolina Flores  
 Jordana Garcia

Sarah Gould  
 Samantha Irvin  
 Kaylyn Langham  
 Sara Lwin  
 Golda Marcello  
 Cate McCorquodale  
 Dory McDonald  
 Danna Melendez

Michelle Pearce  
 Emily Spretz  
 Sarah Squires  
 Taliyah Thomas  
 Jaydn Thompson  
 Cassie Westlund

## Program Notes

### Holst - Greeting

Gustav Holst (1874-1934) was born in Cheltenham, England and spent his formative years there. His father, Adolph, was a professional musician, conducting orchestra concerts at the Rotunda, directing the choir at All Saints Church, and seeing to it that Gustav had sufficient musical training, first on piano and violin, then later on trombone. In 1892, recognizing his son's musical talent, Adolph borrowed money to allow him to take advantage of a scholarship offered by the Royal College of Music in London.

After five years of study, Holst left the Royal College of Music and set out on a music career. He was a fairly successful trombonist, having landing a position with the (Royal) Scottish Orchestra, yet the strain of the weekly commute to Glasgow (he had since married) took its toll and Holst decided to shift course, turning instead to music teaching in the London area. It was during his early years of teaching, at James Allen's Girl's School and Passmore Edwards Settlement, that some of Holst's earlier works were published.

The undated Greeting [H54] was originally composed for violin and piano. For reasons unknown, perhaps for his father's orchestra at the Cheltenham Rotunda or in memory of it, Holst transcribed the work for small (chamber) orchestra. Holst's orchestration was for two flutes, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, and strings. He dedicated this version to his aunt, Nina von Holst. Novello published both versions of the work, the violin and piano original in 1903 and the composer's orchestral arrangement in 1904.

### Holst - The Planets

In 1913, Gustav Holst visited Majorca. While there he became acquainted with astrology, which became a lifelong interest. He wrote to a friend:

“As a rule, I only study things which suggest music to me....recently I became acquainted with astrology and the character of each planet suggested logs to me, and I have been studying astrology fairly closely.” Imogen Holst, the composer's daughter, recalled that Alan Leo's *What is a Horoscope* was one of her father's favorite books. In the book, Leo described the planets, giving each a small description, and expanding upon the astrological significance of each. *The Planets*, Holst's most popular work, reflect his characterization of the planets, with the exception of The earth and Pluto (which had not yet been discovered.)

Central to astrological thought is the power of divination, forecasting, and fateful determination via the character and placement of the planets, following the maxim “as above, so below.” Today many call it a pseudoscience because of its non-empirical basis, putting far more reliance on the science of astronomy, which developed from astrological inquiries. Stephen Hawking, a British theoretical physicist, cosmologist, and professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, stated that “Most scientist don't believe in astrology because it is not consistent with our theories that have been tested by experiment.” However, the allure of astrology has continued despite such debunking, and it continues to draw us into its system and mystery. Holst was very taken by astrology, and in private parties liked to give “astrological readings” and casting horoscopes for his friends. He stands in a long continuum of philosophers, musicians, scientists, and artists who have pondered the mysteries of the cosmos and man's relationship to it.

Holst characterizes *The Planets* as follows:

The first planet, Mars, the Bringer of War, was completed in August 1914. The entire Suite was completed in 1917. Its aggressive, wild nature marches in with an insistent (ostinato) 5/4 rhythm proclaimed by the strings

playing *col legno battuto*, with the wood of the bow on a single tone. The Planets is known to have a low atmospheric pressure, which creates turbulent, vast windstorms. Horns and brass fanfares add to the military aspects of the planet's characterization, and the movement is filled with gigantic climaxes as the scene violently depicts battles, rage, and produces a triumphal march. D flat and C tonalities are sometimes combined to give an edgy polytonality. One of the highlights is the solo accorded to the euphonium. The movement closes with heavy brass and percussion.

Conductor Sir Adrian Boult remembered; "I well remember (Holst) saying that he wanted the stupidity of war to stand out...I say definitely that rushing Mars is not putting its stupidity first." (Interview with Trevor Harvey in 1974)

Venus, the Bringer of Peace, arrives via a solo horn with a small theme answered by soft flutes. A second theme is sung by solo violin. Everything is at peace, colored "by delicate orchestral pastels", oscillating chords from flutes and harps, and the sweet sound of the tinkling celesta.

Mercury, the winged messenger, was the last planet to be composed. The planet via solo violin scurries about amid fast orchestral figurations and light, darting gestures from muted violins. Holst considered this movement to reflect the "process of human thought."

Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity, arrives with blaring horns. The music continually rejoices and dances, possibly influenced by Holst's interest in English folk dances. In the central section, the strings sing a stately tune (sometimes extracted for a patriotic hymn titled "I vow to thee my country, an event which displeased the composer) before closing in a flashing coda. The abundance of happiness and good will is palpable throughout.

Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age, was Holst's favorite movement. The music begins with a restless portrayal of the beginning of human life (26 measures of sharp syncopated chords,) continuing into a march-like section for middle age, and finally arriving at a dirge-like melody depicting the ravages of old age. Subsequently, however, the music assumes a resigned serenity, a peaceful maturity, which is one of the experiences of old age as well. Holst commented, "Saturn not only brings physical decay but also a vision of fulfillment."

The magician Uranus arrives with a four note spell, a musical representation of Holst's name, declaimed by the brass. The music opens with spooky chords, colored by unstable major/minor tonalities. Holst churns the orchestra through high drama and turbulence, including a manic dance. The close is quiet and sinister.

Neptune, the Mystic, offers a chilling conclusion. This is the only title that Holst took from Leo's book in which the planet is described a "subtle and mysterious", occupying at that time the far edges of the solar system. Holst marks it to be played 'sempre pp throughout', calling for the sound to be softly evoked by cymbals played with felt sticks and the timpani with wooden one. Basically, there is no real melody or reliable rhythm to hang on to. Rippling harp figuration and high-pitched violins create an atmosphere of enormous distance to the planet. At midpoint, a female chorus sings a wordless song, from offstage, "beckoning as it recedes into the infinite unknown." (Paul Serotsky) Holst indicated that the door to the chorus be silently closed at the ending.

Holst was amazed and even dismayed by the worldwide success of *The Planets*, and at one point commented, "Every artist ought to pray that he may not be a success."

An Addendum:

Pluto was discovered in 1930, four years before Holst's death, but he never wrote a part for it. The British composer Colin Matthews later composed *Pluto, the Renewer* to "round out the set", connecting his contribution to the final bars of *Neptune*, changing a few bars of *Neptune* for the connection. Mr. Matthews explained: "When Kent Nagano asked me to add *Pluto* to *The Planets* I had mixed feelings. To begin with, *The*

Planets is a very satisfying whole, and one, which makes perfect musical sense. Neptune ends the work in a way wholly appropriate for Holst — an enigmatic composer, always likely to avoid the grand gesture if he could do something unpredictable instead. How could I begin again, after the music has completely faded away as if into outer space? And, even though Pluto was discovered four years before Holst's death in 1934, I am certain that he never once thought to write an additional movement (he was in any case decidedly ambivalent about the work's huge popularity). In addition, the matter of Pluto's status as a planet has for some time been in doubt — it may well be reclassified (together with its tiny satellite Charon) as no more than an asteroid, thrown way out of the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, or 'captured' by the sun's gravitational field... The only possible way to carry on from where Neptune leaves off is not to make a break at all, and so Pluto begins before Neptune has quite faded, necessitating a slight change to the ending. The movement soon took on an identity of its own, following a path, which I seemed to be simply allowing to proceed as it would: in the process I came perhaps closer to Holst than I had expected, although at no point did I think to write pastiche. At the end the music disappears, almost as if Neptune had been quietly continuing in the background. Pluto is dedicated to the memory of Holst's daughter Imogen, with whom I worked for many years until her death in 1984, and who I suspect would have been both amused and dismayed by this venture."

"Mr. Matthews' Pluto takes as its starting point solar winds, and the music is full of swift, swirling passages. It ends quietly." Pluto has since been de-classified as a "full status" planet in 2006, receiving the new status of "dwarf planet" and given the number 134340.

- *Marianne Williams Tobias*

*The TCU Symphony Orchestra extends its deepest gratitude to Dr. Christopher Aspaas and the TCU Choirs for their exceptional collaboration, commitment, and artistry. It has been a true privilege to work together on this performance.*