

# Noteworthy

MARCH 2026



## PERFORMANCE MEETING MARCH 4, 2026

### Program

Program Leader: Melanie Richards

Song Leader: Charles Palmer

Accompanist: Kathryn Govier

Song: What Wondrous Love (UUA 18)

#### Native American Songs

"Autumn" a poem by

A. Posey (1873-1908, Muscogee)

set to music by C. Shadle (living, Choctow)

"This Luminous Loss" by T. Long (b. 1967, Muscogee)

"Tádídíín Béé Atiin" (Corn Pollen Road) by Connor

Chee (b. 1987 Diné (Navajo))

Performed by Mikaela Pace, guest soprano, and

Marti Mortenson Ahern, guest pianist

"Dove sono i bei momenti" from *Marriage of Figaro*

by W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Performed by Katharine Shields, soprano, and

Andrei Zimbalist, guest pianist

From *Summer Dreams*, Op. 47,

by Amy Beach (1867 - 1944)

"The Brownies" Op. 47, No. 1

"Through the house give glimmering light,

By the dead and drowsy fire:

Every elf and fairy sprite

Hop as light as bird from brier." Shakespeare

"Robin Redbreast" Op. 47, No. 2

'In country lanes the robins sing,

Clear-throated, joyous, swift of wing,

From misty dawn to dewy eve

(Though cares of nesting vex and grieve)

Their little heart-bells ring and ring." C. H. Lüders

"Twilight" Op. 47, No. 3

"The birds have hushed themselves to rest,

And night comes fast, to drop her pall

Till morn brings life to all." H. H. A. B.

Kathryn Govier and Marcia Edwards, pianists

"Allegretto grazioso" and "Andantino sognando"

from *Sonatina for Flute and Piano* by Eldin Burton

(1913-1979)

Performed by Pat Yingst, flutist, and Brian Grothues,

pianist

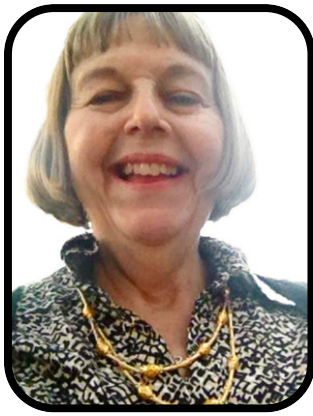
"First Movement" from *Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and*

*Piano in A minor*, Op. 40

by Carl Fruhling (1868-1937)

Performed by Peiju Chang, guest clarinetist, Annette

Eicker, guest cellist, and Susan Groves, guest pianist



## President's Musings

### Origins of Ravel's *Boléro* . . .they may not be what you think they are

by Elisabeth Moreno

At the conclusion of last month's program, Brian Grothues and I were chatting briefly about the relationship of mental health to music, illustrated so well by Edie Elkjer's presentation on the Love Notes Chorus and the importance of musical experiences for patients with dementia. For some reason, the link between dementia and music jogged in my memory an episode of Radio Lab\* I heard a number of years ago in which the origins of Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*, with its obsessive rhythmic motifs, were tentatively linked to the onset of a fronto-temporal dementia which ultimately took Ravel's life seven years later. The idea that such an iconic masterpiece could have had a pathological origin is both dark and fascinating but merits further explanation.

As the Radio Lab episode reveals, the most prominent proponent of this theory is Arbie Ornstein, Professor at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queen's College, New York City. He has spent the better part of his life studying Ravel's compositions and can trace with great precision the composer's decline from the height of his musical powers (when he composed *Boléro* in 1928) to his tragic diminishment, unable to either speak or compose, which presaged his death in 1937. To be sure, Ravel's friends had noticed something was wrong in those intervening years, as had Ravel himself, which led him to insist on a surgical intervention late in 1937. The results of that brain operation revealed that most of Ravel's left frontal cortex, which controls language, had disintegrated. He died a few days after the procedure. But how would the loss of language be connected to musical creativity?

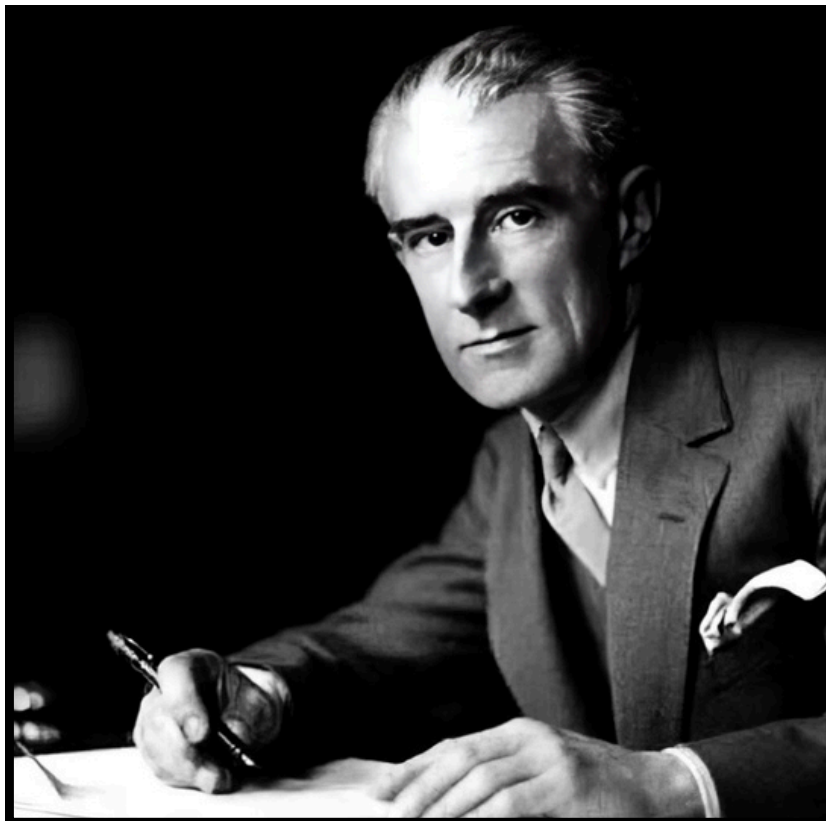
According to Dr. Bruce Miller, the University of California at San Francisco neurologist cited in the podcast, the left frontal cortex controls language and in that capacity, as an extremely dominant circuit in a healthy cortex, has the ability to "quiet" other parts of the brain, like daydreaming or thinking in images, which might interfere with our ability to express ourselves verbally. But if that circuitry is compromised, the cortex is flooded with information from other parts of the brain, including visual imagery or auditory experiences, which express themselves obsessively. The creative expression which results, be it paintings or in Ravel's case, music, is not necessarily free flowing. In fact, it is characterized by mechanical repetition and appears very early in the disease process. As for the repetition, one hypothesis is that motor commands from the basal ganglia also filter up when the left cortex is damaged, resulting in a primitive kinetic drive to repeat the same behavior over and over again.

## President's Musings continued

Of course, making a posthumous diagnosis is tricky business. After all, Ravel was a brilliant orchestrator and maybe *Boléro* is just a virtuosic example of what can be done with minimal thematic material left radically undeveloped. Ravel himself described the piece as a “composition without music in it.” But many neurologists would agree that the single-minded hypnotic repetition which characterizes the work, is a good example of “perseveration,” a hallmark of a potentially degenerative brain disease which may unleash other creative talents that compensate for the brain’s declining verbal function. If so, how ironic that a condition which ultimately undid Ravel should have yielded such memorable music.

I hope this brief medical overview hasn’t spoiled your enjoyment of *Boléro*. Frankly, I have had quite the opposite experience. I find that my pleasure in the propulsive repetition of the themes is deepened by their possible connection to Ravel’s poignant personal decline. In addition, I have it on good authority that *Boléro* appears frequently on the playlists broadcast in medical operating theaters. (Who knew surgeons were listening to music during the long tedious hours when they are rearranging our innards?) My guess is the steady, rising dynamic of the music, which culminates in triumphant, iconoclastic dissonance, has “success” written all over it. Let’s just hope they’ve finished suturing you up before the big conclusion.

For a more nuanced discussion of this hypothesis, check out this Radio Lab link: <https://radiolab.org/podcast/unraveling-bolero>.



**Maurice Ravel 1875 - 1937**



## Member Highlight

### Michele Rodrigues

Michele's parents purchased a piano for their home with the intention that her mother and older sister would take piano lessons. In spite of her adamant protests, Michele was told that she was too young for lessons because she was only 4 1/2 years old. After her mother and sister would practice their lessons, Michele would go to the piano and play their pieces by ear without reading a single note. This convinced her parents as well as their piano teacher that she should have lessons.

At the age of 16, Michele began attending the High School of Music and Art in New York City, and she later received her B.S. degree in piano performance from the Mannes College of Music, studying with John Goldmark. She continued her studies with Grete Hinterhofer in Vienna, Austria, at the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. She then returned to New York City and received her M.A. from Queens College of the City University while studying with Bruce Hungerford.

Michele married Peter, and after having moved to Westchester County, thirty miles north of New York City, she gave birth to a son. When he entered elementary school, Michele became very interested in the Orff Schulwerk method, which he was learning in his music classes. It seemed like the most natural method of teaching music to children, while promoting language development. It produced wonderful results. Enrolling in Hofstra University, Michele gained certification in Levels I and II of the Orff Schulwerk method and went to work teaching music in Westchester public schools while maintaining her private piano studio.

After her son finished university, Michele retired from public school teaching and devoted herself to playing the piano. She studied in New York City with Zelma Bodzin, took piano performance classes with David Dubal at Julliard, and spent summers in Vermont participating in the master classes of John O'Connor and Andre LaPlante.

Michele and her husband Peter, who have now been married 48 years, moved to Westminster CCRC in Austin less than two years ago. They moved to be with their son, an emergency room physician; daughter-in-law, an artist; and new granddaughter who is 2 ½. On Zoom, Michele continues to play for her performance group in New York City.

Michele and Peter continue to be delighted by the wonderful classical music scene here in Austin, and they attend many concerts. They love walking in the Grove across from Westminster. This helps them to burn off some of the calories they are taking in at their favorite restaurants. Also, they are making many new friends and enjoying sightseeing. Michele sings in the Voices of Light Chorus at Westminster, and Peter is finally working on the book he always wanted to write. Life is good!



## In Memory of Gloria Hooper

We are sad to report the death of former WMMC member Gloria Hooper. Gloria passed away on Dec. 30, 2025 at her home in Temple, Texas with her daughter Ami and close friends by her side. Gloria was an active member of our club from 2009 until 2017, when she moved to Temple.

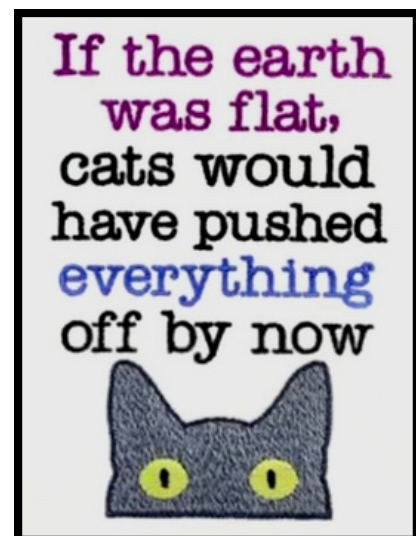
## Music Club Austin Tour of KMFA Studio on March 11

A private tour of KMFA's studio has been scheduled for interested members on Wednesday, March 11, at 11 am. If you are interested in participating, make sure your name is on the sign-up list which will be on the registration table before the next meeting on March 4. We need to give KMFA a reasonably accurate head-count. More details to follow. (Thanks to Sara Schneider and Anne Dooley for making this tour possible.)

## FORM AND INFORMATION Paintings by Pam Mayes Opening Saturday, March 7

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin will host an exhibit of abstract acrylic paintings by Music Club Austin member Pam Mayes in the Sharon and Brian Moore Gallery, beginning March 7 and ending April 3. These paintings have been selected by the artist as examples that demonstrate the result of her process for creating abstract art.

Music club members, as well as the general public, are invited to attend the opening reception, 6 - 8 p.m. Saturday, March 7. The artist will give a short talk that explains the show title. She will speak about her artistic process. "It's all exploration—similar to jazz—that starts with a mood or idea that's not necessarily representational."



## Dear March—Come in

(Emily Dickinson, 1830 –1886)

Dear March—Come in—  
How glad I am—  
I hoped for you before—  
Put down your Hat—  
You must have walked—  
How out of Breath you are—  
Dear March, how are you, and the Rest—  
Did you leave Nature well—  
Oh March, Come right upstairs with me—  
I have so much to tell—  
I got your Letter, and the Birds—  
The Maples never knew that you were coming—  
I declare - how Red their Faces grew—  
But March, forgive me—  
And all those Hills you left for me to Hue—  
There was no Purple suitable—  
You took it all with you—  
Who knocks? That April—  
Lock the Door—  
I will not be pursued—  
He stayed away a Year to call  
When I am occupied—  
But trifles look so trivial  
As soon as you have come  
That blame is just as dear as Praise  
And Praise as mere as Blame—

Emily Dickinson was born on December 10, 1830, in Amherst, Massachusetts. While she was extremely prolific as a poet and regularly enclosed poems in letters to friends, she was not publicly recognized during her lifetime. She died in Amherst in 1886, and the first volume of her work was published posthumously in 1890. (From [poets.org](http://poets.org)). This poem is in the public domain.

# EVENT CALENDAR

Arts On Alexander

<https://www.artsonalexander.org/events> DANU (from Ireland!) - St. Patrick's Day Tour: Friday, March 6th.  
Holbrook Organ Series - Seth Nelson: Friday, March 13th.  
Philharmonie Austin Chorus - Hear My Prayer | Lenten Reflections: Friday, March 27th.

Austin Chamber Music Center

<https://austinchambermusic.org> The 13th Annual Coltman Chamber Music Competition: Saturday, March, 7th and Sunday, 8th.

Austin Civic Orchestra

<https://austincivicorchestra.org/events> Texas Rising Stars - winners from the UT Butler School of Music's String Concerto Competition: Saturday, March 28th.

Austin Classical Guitar

<https://austinclassicalguitar.org/events> Live at The Rosette: French guitarist, Gaelle Solal: Saturday, March 7th and Sunday, 8th. Puerto Rican guitarist, Leonela Alejandro: Saturday, March 28th and Sunday, 29th.

Austin Girl's Choir <https://www.girlschoir.com> \*\*\*  
Madrigal Dinner Theatre at the Parish Hall of St. Richard's Episcopal Church, 1420 Palm Valley Blvd. Round Rock: Saturday, March 7th from 6 - 8:15pm.

Austin Symphony

<https://my.austinsymphony.org/events?view=list> Mind Warp - Masterworks Series: Friday, March 6th and Saturday, 7th.

Ballet Austin

<https://balletaustin.org/performances/seasontickets>  
Marie Antoinette - Vampire Queen of Versailles. A world premiere by Stephen Mills: Friday, March 27th, Saturday, 28th and Sunday, 29th.

Chorus Austin <https://www.chorusaustin.org/events-calendar.html> Opening Hearts: Saturday, February 28th and Sunday, March 1st.

KMFA <https://www.kmfa.org/events> Many area events are listed on their calendar, including their Offbeat Concert Series and their Midday Concert series. KMFA Midday Concert Series - IL TRITTICO, featuring The Butler Opera Center: Tuesday, March 31st.

The Long Center <https://thelongcenter.org/upcoming-calendar> Many events including Itzhak Perlman in Recital: Sunday, March 22nd.

The Metropolitan Opera Events:

<https://www.metopera.org/calendar/#/on-stage?year=2025&month=4> On Demand: <https://ondemand.metopera.org/>

Salon Concerts <https://www.salonconcerts.org>  
March Concert: Sunday, March 1st.

UT Butler School of Music

<https://music.utexas.edu/events> Seraph Brass - Winners of the American Prize in Chamber Music and an all women brass ensemble: Thursday, March 12th.  
Symphony Orchestra and Combined Choirs @ The Long Center - Resurrection Mahler's Symphony No. 2: Tuesday, March 31st. Also many other events and many are free.

Williamson County Symphony Orchestra

<https://wilcosymphony.org> March Concert: Friday, March 6th.

Sometimes events are left out because they are not posted on their websites in time to make our calendar. PLEASE let me know of any arts listings that you think should be included in our monthly calendar. Joy [joygooden@austin.rr.com](mailto:joygooden@austin.rr.com)



**AUSTIN GIRLS' CHOIR**  
*presents its annual*  
**MADRIGAL DINNER THEATRE SHOW**

**Saturday, March 7, 6:00 p.m.**

*in the Parish Hall of*  
**St. Richard's Episcopal Church**  
**1420 E. Palm Valley Blvd., Round Rock**

*Travel back in time to Elizabethan England circa 1590  
for a family-friendly musical dinner and play replete with  
dastardly conniving, copious second-guessing and possible true love!*

**Nobles' Circle \$31 all ages ♦ Gallery Seating \$21, all ages**  
**Advance ticket purchase recommended.**

**(512) 453-0884 ♦ [www.girlschoir.com](http://www.girlschoir.com)**

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*Thanks for reading*