

# Minnesota Orchestra

Osmo Vänskä, conductor

Michael Collins, clarinet

Women of the Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Thursday, September 27, 2018, 11 am	Orchestra Hall
Friday, September 28, 2018, 8 pm	Orchestra Hall
Saturday, September 29, 2018, 8 pm	Orchestra Hall

<b>Kareem Roustom</b>	<i>Ramal</i>	ca. 13'
<b>John Adams</b>	<i>Gnarly Buttons</i> for Clarinet and Small Orchestra The Perilous Shore Hoedown (Mad Cow) Put Your Loving Arms Around Me <i>Michael Collins, clarinet</i>	ca. 26'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
<b>Gustav Holst</b>	<i>The Planets</i> , Suite for Large Orchestra, Opus 32 Mars, the Bringer of War: Allegro Venus, the Bringer of Peace: Adagio Mercury, the Winged Messenger: Vivace Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity: Allegro giocoso Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age: Adagio Uranus, the Magician: Allegro Neptune, the Mystic: Andante <i>Women of the Minnesota Chorale</i>	ca. 48'

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [Classical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.





**Osmo Vänskä**, conductor

Profile appears on page 8.



**Michael Collins**, clarinet

Clarinetist Michael Collins, who makes his Minnesota Orchestra debut in these concerts, has a distinguished career as a soloist, and in recent years he has also

become highly regarded as a conductor. His recent conducting and performance highlights have included engagements with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Zurich Chamber Orchestra. This year Collins will perform at the BBC Young Musician 40th Anniversary BBC Prom, make his conducting debut with the English Chamber Orchestra and perform with the London Mozart Players. He has premiered many works including John Adams' *Gnarly Buttons*, Elliott Carter's *Clarinet Concerto*, Brett Dean's *Ariel's Music* and Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Riffs and Refrains*. Collins is in great demand as a chamber musician, and his ensemble, London Winds, celebrates its 13th anniversary in 2018. During the 2019-20 season he will be an artist in residence at the Wigmore Hall. He is one of the world's most recorded clarinetists, with releases on the Chandos, Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, EMI and Sony labels. More: [ikonarts-editionpeters.com](http://ikonarts-editionpeters.com).

**Minnesota Chorale**

**Kathy Saltzman Romey**, artistic director

**Barbara Brooks**, accompanist and artistic advisor

The Minnesota Chorale, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal chorus since 2004, is now in its 24th season under the leadership of Kathy Saltzman Romey. Founded in 1972, the Chorale is the state's preeminent symphonic chorus, performing regularly with both this Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Among the Chorale's initiatives are its acclaimed Bridges community engagement program, the Minneapolis Youth Chorus and Prelude Children's Chorus, the Voices of Experience choir for older adults, Men in Music for high-school boys, InChoir open rehearsals and Emerging Conductor training program. More: [mnchorale.org](http://mnchorale.org).

**soprano 1**

- Laura Amos
- Anna Christofaro\*
- Monica deCausmeaker\*
- Hannah Demmer
- Kristin Elliott
- Katie Hoefler
- Vienna Lewin
- Anna Maher
- Mary Mann
- Kristine Parker
- Adriana Pohl
- Jennifer Sylvester\*
- Karen R. Wasiluk
- Jena Wilhelmi
- Keelin Yenney

- Katherine Muller
- Merilu Narum
- Alyssa Northrop
- Ann M. Sather
- Polly Strege
- Heather Worthington

**alto**

- Sabreena Cherrington
- Debra Gilroy\*
- Michelle Hackett
- Allyssa Haecker\*
- Froya Olson
- Joy E. Roellinger
- Kristina Rodel Sorum\*

**soprano 2**

- Kristi Bergland\*
- Alyssa K. Breece\*
- Deyhdra Dennis-Weiss\*
- Janine Ernsting\*
- Tricia Hanson
- Juliann Kunkel
- Molly Maillette
- Summer McInerney
- Jessica Mehlhoff
- Hannah Miller

- Kathleen Stuebner
- Katherine Thompson
- Julia Udell
- Marcia VanCamp
- Joanna Zawislak

**one-minute notes**

**Roustem: *Ramal***

*Ramal*, titled after a poetic meter used in pre-Islamic Arabic writing, is bold, colorful and rhythmically complex. The Syrian-American composer notes that "its emotional drive and changing meters reflect the unsettled state of the world."

**Adams: *Gnarly Buttons***

Adams drew on a wealth of musical influences and memories—including a Protestant hymn, hoe-down songs and, most importantly, his father's career as a New England swing band clarinetist—in this imaginative landscape starring solo clarinet.

**Holst: *The Planets***

Holst's seven-movement suite explores the astrological characteristics of Earth's planetary neighbors, from the violent, odd-metered *Mars* to the icy and ethereal *Neptune*. A highlight is the stately melody at the core of *Jupiter*.



## Kareem Roustom

**Born:** May 6, 1971,  
Damascus, Syria;  
now living in Sharon,  
Massachusetts

### *Ramal*

**Premiered:** August 11, 2014

Kareem Roustom is often referred to as a “musically bilingual” composer, and with good reason. Born in Damascus to an American mother and a Syrian father, he emigrated to the U.S. at age 13. His music combines influences from his Middle Eastern roots with western training—though he is primarily self-taught as a composer, aside from some lessons with Michael Gandolfi. Explaining the flexibility of his compositional voice, Roustom states: “I am equally comfortable writing in a completely ‘western’ language as well as a completely ‘near eastern’ language as well, or somewhere in between.”

### a wide-ranging career

Roustom has written for a broad range of musicians and ensembles such as the Kronos Quartet, West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Children’s Chorus, Apple Hill String Quartet and conductor-pianist Daniel Barenboim. This past summer, he was the first composer in residence at the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. His music has been performed at such prestigious festivals and venues as the BBC Proms, Lucerne Festival, Salzburg Festival, Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Verbier Festival in Switzerland and Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. His musical versatility extends to arrangements for such high-profile pop artists as Shakira, Beyoncé, Tina Turner and Wyclef Jean.

Roustom also plays a prominent role in the world of film. His award-winning narrative and documentary scores have been presented at major festivals including Sundance, Cannes and Tribeca. He is a faculty member at the Granoff Music Center of Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, where he teaches composition, orchestration, musicianship, and film and multimedia scoring. He also plays the oud—a lute-type string instrument common in Middle Eastern and North African music—performing it in the U.S. and Europe, and recording for groups such as the Boston Camerata.

One of Roustom’s recent large-scale projects is a trilogy comprising the clarinet concerto *Adrift on the Wine-dark Sea*; *Rage Against the Tyrant(s)*, a work for mixed chorus and chamber orchestra; and a

string quartet titled *Shades of Night*—a meditation on night as both a metaphor and a fact of nature. The three works were commissioned by the Grand Teton Music Festival and premiered there last August. Roustom’s Violin Concerto No. 1, commissioned by the Daniel Barenboim Foundation, will receive its world premiere in March 2019 in Berlin with Michael Barenboim (son of Daniel) as soloist.

### music inspired by poetic meter

*Ramal*, the work heard on today’s program, is also connected with Daniel Barenboim, who commissioned it for the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, and led that ensemble in the world premiere at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires on August 11, 2014. Subsequent performances of *Ramal* were given later that month at the Lucerne and Salzburg Festivals. Donald Runnicles conducted the American premiere at the Grand Teton Music Festival in 2016. The score is dedicated to the Palestinian-American Edward Said (1935-2003), professor of literature at Columbia University, cultural critic and co-founder (with his friend Daniel Barenboim) of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra.

Roustom explains the meaning of the title thus: “*Ramal* is the name of one of the sixteen pre-Islamic Arabic poetic meters used in classic Arabic poetry. Each of these poetic meters is comprised of multiple variations of the verb *fa’al*, which means ‘to do.’ These variants of *fa’al* are constructed by combining a series of unaccented [o] and [/] syllables. The variation of the *ramal* poetic meter used in this work follows this pattern.”

Translated into musical meter, this becomes a rhythmic pattern of 7–5–7–8, not one most listeners are likely to perceive, especially upon first encounter. Adding to the complexity of the score is the fact that the meter often shifts to other patterns as well. One might regard the *ramal* as a kind of rhythmic scaffolding.

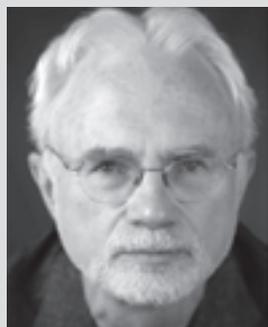
Roustom continues: “The opening section expands the metric cycle by gradually adding rests to each measure, while the closing section contracts by gradually removing the added rests. The middle, and largest, section of the piece develops the rhythmic and melodic motifs with contrasting moods that range from intimate and reflective to declamatory and strident. Although the work is not programmatic in its design, its emotional drive and changing meters reflect the unsettled state of the world, specifically the devastating current situation in Syria.”

Explosive power, raw energy and nervous excitability inform much of the 12-minute score. Alternating with this hostile environment are passages of relative calm, though an ominous undercurrent is ever-present. Kaleidoscopic orchestration and contrasts of density, textures and colors are among the elements that will keep listeners’ ears alert.



*Ramal* has quickly become one of Roustom's most frequently performed orchestral scores. Critical response has been invariably favorable. *The New York Times* called it "propulsive, colorful and [an] immediately appealing creation." *The Guardian* described it as "music with lots of personality." *The Independent* described it as "a sort of anti-*Boléro* whose jagged rhythms and fretful unease spoke of conflict."

**Instrumentation:** 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, brake drum, china cymbal, 3 suspended cymbals, tamtam, 3 triangles, crotales, chimes, xylophone, marimba, harp, celesta and strings



### John Adams

**Born:** February 15, 1947,  
Worcester, Massachusetts;  
now living in Berkeley,  
California

### ***Gnarly Buttons* for Clarinet and Small Orchestra**

**Premiered:** October 19, 1996

John Adams is one of the biggest success stories among today's "classical" composers, a success boosted in its earliest stages by one of the Minnesota Orchestra's former music directors, Edo de Waart, and by one of the Orchestra's program annotators, Michael Steinberg. In one such nexus, the Orchestra co-commissioned and premiered one of Adams' most important compositions, the Violin Concerto, with de Waart conducting and then-Concertmaster Jorja Fleezanis as soloist at the 1994 premiere. Steinberg later wrote about this work in his highly-regarded book *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide*—with Adams being one of just four living composers spotlighted in the volume.

### a leading figure in contemporary music

Virtually every major orchestra in the world, from Stockholm to Sydney and from Singapore to Syracuse, has played Adams' music. In fact, in some years he is the most frequently-programmed contemporary American composer on the schedules of major orchestras. Musical institutions around the globe recently celebrated his 70th birthday year of 2017 with hundreds of performances of his music; highlights included a residency with

the Berlin Philharmonic and the world premiere of his latest opera, *Girls of the Golden West*, in San Francisco.

Audiences invariably are seduced by his music's rhythmic energy, hypnotic pulsations, brilliant orchestration, and the imaginative ways in which he incorporates familiar concepts and materials into music uniquely his own and undeniably American. His music even turns up in award-winning films such as *I Am Love*, *Barfly*, *Birdman* and *Call Me by Your Name*. All his important works have been recorded (mostly on the Nonesuch label), and several of these recordings have enjoyed extended time on *Billboard* charts.

Adams' list of major prizes, awards and honors goes back to 1988 when he won his first Grammy for his first opera, *Nixon in China*. More Grammys followed: in 1997 for *El Dorado*, and three in 2004 for *On the Transmigration of Souls*, the work commemorating those who lost their lives in the September 11 attacks; this work also won him a Pulitzer Prize. Honorary doctorates have been conferred on him by Harvard, Yale, Northwestern, the Juilliard School and Cambridge University.

In addition to his work as a composer, Adams is much in demand as a conductor with the world's great orchestras in repertory combining his own works and an enormous spectrum of others from Mozart and Beethoven to Ives and Carter to Zappa and Ellington. (He conducted the Minnesota Orchestra in a set of subscription performances in 1992.) Adams is as articulate in words as he is in sound, writing often for *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker* and *The London Times*. His anthology of memoirs and commentary on American musical life, *Hallelujah Junction*, was named one of the "most notable books of the year" by *The New York Times*.

### an unusual title

The first thing most people want to know about Adams' clarinet showpiece *Gnarly Buttons* is "What does the title mean?" Adams explains: "'Gnarly' means knotty, twisted or covered with gnarls... your basic village elder's walking stick. In American school kid parlance it takes on additional connotations of something to be admired: 'awesome,' 'neat,' 'fresh,' etc. The 'buttons' are probably lingering in my mind from Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*, but my evoking them here also acknowledges our lives at the end of the 20th century as being largely given over to pressing buttons of one sort or another."

The clarinet was the instrument Adams learned as a child from his father, who played in New England swing bands. As a teenager, John sometimes joined his father in local marching bands and community orchestras, and later proceeded to learn the standard classical repertory for his instrument. Adams



eventually became proficient to the degree that he was called on several occasions during his college years at Harvard to substitute in the Boston Symphony. Yet he was nearly 50 before he composed anything featuring solo clarinet. This was *Gnarly Buttons*. “The intimate history [the instrument] embodied,” writes Adams, “stretching from Benny Goodman through Mozart, the marching band, the State Hospital [where Adams once performed] to my father’s final illness, became deeply embedded in the piece.”

The premiere performance of *Gnarly Buttons* was given on October 19, 1996, at London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall by clarinetist Michael Collins, for whom the work was written, with the London Sinfonietta under the composer’s direction. In addition to the soloist, the 25-minute work is scored for strings plus English horn, bassoon, trombone, two keyboard samplers, and a trio of string instruments (guitar, banjo, mandolin) handled by one player—an ensemble that to Adams “underlines the folk and vernacular roots of the music.”

### “imagined” musical models

Adams notes that each of the three movements of *Gnarly Buttons* is based on what he calls a “forgery,” or an “imagined musical model.” He explains, in his own words, that “in this spirit, we may believe the genuine articles of *Gnarly Buttons* to be” as follows:

**The Perilous Shore.** “A trope on a Protestant shape-note hymn found in a 19th-century volume, *The Footsteps of Jesus*, the first line of which is ‘Oh Lord, steer me from that Perilous Shore.’ The melodic line is twisted and embellished from the start, appearing first in monody and eventually providing both micro and macro material for the ensuing musical structures.”

**Hoe-down (Mad Cow).** “Normally associated with horses, this version of the traditional Western hoe-down takes the perspective of the other animal. Written for my British friends who gave the first performance during a time of quarantine.” [Editor’s note: The containment of mad cow disease was a leading story in British news at the time of *Gnarly Buttons*’ London premiere in 1996.]

**Put Your Loving Arms Around Me.** “A simple song, quiet and tender up front, gnarled and crabbed at the end.”

**Instrumentation:** solo clarinet with orchestra comprising English horn, bassoon, trombone, 2 keyboard samplers, banjo, mandolin, guitar and strings



### Gustav Holst

**Born:** September 21, 1874,  
Cheltenham, England

**Died:** May 25, 1934,  
London, England

### *The Planets, Suite for Large Orchestra, Opus 32*

**Premiered:** September 29, 1918

Since time immemorial, humans have looked upon the heavens with a sense of awe, wonder, imagination and mystery. It was inevitable that interpretations of outer space would find their way into artistic endeavors, including our music. Thus we find works such as Hindemith’s *Harmony of the Universe* Symphony, Karl-Birger Blomdahl’s space-travel opera *Aniara*, Rued Langgaard’s *Music of the Spheres*, Alex Pauk’s *Cosmos*, André Jolivet’s *Cosmologie* and Gunther Schuller’s *Journey to the Stars*. The signs of the Zodiac have inspired a symphony by Gian Francesco Malipiero, a symphonic poem by Richard Rodney Bennett, a trio by William Mathias and a choral work by Jean Absil. Individual constellations and aspects of the moon have also been depicted in countless songs and larger works.

### singular and sensational: a tribute to the solar system

Yet there is but a single musical tribute to our solar system by a well-known composer, Holst’s *Planets*—and even that is incomplete. Holst omitted Earth, and Pluto had not yet been discovered when he was writing, though in retrospect he may have taken the right course: Pluto was downsized to a “dwarf planet” in 2006. This has not prevented other composers, including Colin Matthews, Thomas Oboe Lee, Margaret Brouwer and Richard Burdick, from “finishing” Holst’s *Planets* with their renditions of “Pluto.” (In 2007, the Minnesota Orchestra performed Matthew’s *Pluto: The renewer* at the conclusion of Holst’s *Planets*.)

Composing *The Planets* occupied Holst from 1914 to 1917. Its unveiling is a story in itself. A private performance was given in 1918, as a “gift” from a wealthy friend of the composer; in 1919 came a public performance led by Adrian Boult, who, however, conducted only five of the seven movements. The first complete public performance, on November 15, 1920, was conducted by Albert Coates—and it caused such a sensation that two major orchestras competed for the privilege of giving the American premiere. Both were accorded the honor on the same evening, December 31, 1920: Frederick Stock conducted in Chicago, Albert Coates in New York.

Such is the originality, imagination and sensationalism of this music that audiences have been looking ever since into Holst's catalogue for more works of this nature—in vain. Atypical as it may be, *The Planets* remains by far Holst's most popular work.

### the movements in brief

Holst claimed that the individual titles of his *Planets* “were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; there is no program music,” he wrote; “neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology.”

**Mars.** *Mars* has come to represent the brutish, unfeeling, inhuman nature of mechanized warfare, sounding “unpleasant and terrifying,” as Holst put it. The relentless pounding set up in the opening bars carries through the entire movement. For this music Holst chose an unusual time signature, 5/4, which creates its own opportunities for musical warfare, and various smaller patterns (3 + 2; 2 + 3; 5 x 2) do battle with it. But nothing really suits the unflinching regularity of this irregular meter.

**Venus.** The antidote to the cruel, terrible oppression of Mars is Venus, in music of soothing melodic contours, predictable rhythmic patterns and pastel colors. Calmness and serenity pervade the music, which rises just once, briefly, to *forte*.

**Mercury.** Motion resumes for the next planet, portrayed in music of scintillating brilliance, sparkling colors and rapidly pulsating shifts of light and shade. To astrologers, Mercury is the thinker, but Holst's *Mercury*, despite his disclaimer about classical mythology, is clearly the winged messenger, darting about with feathery lightness.

**Jupiter.** Astrologer Noel Tyl tells us that Jupiter “symbolizes expansiveness, scope of enthusiasm, knowledge, honor and opportunity.” Holst's *Jupiter* corresponds in all these respects, depicting the quintessence of the plump, jovial fellow who knows how to enjoy life and lives it to the fullest. As a hedonist indulges in many pleasures, so does Holst lavish upon this planet a wealth of musical ideas—five of them, in fact, every one heard initially in the horns.

**Saturn.** A greater contrast with jollity could scarcely be imagined than the grey, mournful sounds that greet our ears at the beginning of *Saturn*. Like the inexorable ticking of some cosmic clock, flutes (four of them, including a bass flute) and harps mark the unstoppable passage of time. A strange, cold air seems to hover over the opening pages, as a two-note motif swells and recedes in various instruments. A solemn dirge, heard initially in the trombones, underscores the despair and weariness of the grim scenario. Bells clang, clashing in angry syncopation with the booming clock. The frenzy reaches a climax, then subsides as the

wisdom, serenity, resignation and acceptance of old age settle over the music. This was Holst's favorite planet in his suite.

**Uranus.** In astrology, Uranus rules over astrologers themselves. It also rules inventors; hence it is entirely appropriate to imagine in Holst's music a kind of “sorcerer's apprentice” scenario, with a mad magician racing about his dungeon workshop and, at the climactic moment, exulting in some arcane discovery about the nature of the universe. The four-note motif brazenly announced by trumpets and trombones, then echoed by tubas at double speed and by timpani at quadruple speed, constitutes the molecular matter from which Holst constructs his musical formula. The climax is truly fearsome—a massive sound from the huge orchestra playing *ffff*, to which is added a glissando in the organ. Our magician has obviously unlocked some terrible power.

**Neptune.** Nearly tuneless, often without any kind of metrical pulse, and played *pianissimo* throughout, the music of *Neptune* takes on at times an ethereal beauty, at others terrifying mystery. The icy sounds of flutes, celesta, harps and, eventually, a wordless female chorus add to the aura of remoteness and haunting visions of empty space. By the end, the listener has been transported not only to the limits of audibility but to the edge of infinity.

**Instrumentation:** 4 flutes (1 doubling piccolo, 1 doubling piccolo and bass flute), 3 oboes (1 doubling bass oboe), English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tenor tuba, timpani (2 players), bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, gong, snare drum, bells, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, celesta, organ, 2 harps, strings and women's chorus

Program notes by **Robert Markow**.

coda

This week's performances of **Roustop's *Ramal*** mark the first time the Minnesota Orchestra has played Roustop's music. On January 18, 2019, the Orchestra will present an entire Future Classics program of works by composers whose music has never been heard at Orchestra Hall.

Audiences this week are also hearing the Orchestra's initial performance of **Adams' *Gnarly Buttons***. Adams has visited Orchestra Hall on several occasions; in May 1992 he conducted subscription concerts, and in January 1994 he attended the world premiere of his Violin Concerto.

The Orchestra first performed **Holst's *Planets*** on January 22, 1925, at the St. Paul Auditorium Theater, with Henri Verbrugghen conducting. Among the Orchestra's many subsequent playings of the work was an outer-spaced themed program in June 1970 that capitalized on interest in the Apollo lunar landings.