

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH  
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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**Love & Loss**

**Symphonic Wind Ensemble**

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi and Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductors*

Philip Kleutgens, *saxophone*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL  
2024-25 SEASON

# **Symphonic Wind Ensemble**

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi and Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductors*

Philip Kleutgens, *saxophone*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2025, AT 7:30 P.M.

## **Love & Loss**

**Overture to *Candide* (1956/1986)**

**Leonard Bernstein**

(1918–1990)

*trans. Clare Grundman*

Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

**Concerto for Soprano Saxophone  
and Wind Ensemble (2007)**

**John Mackey**

*Prelude*

*Felt*

*Metal*

*Wood*

*Finale*

Philip Kleutgens, *saxophone*

*2024 Concerto Competition Winner*

INTERMISSION

***Heart on Fire* (2022)**

**Viet Cuong**

Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductor*

***Winter Blossom: In Memory of Steven Stucky* (2017)**

**Xi Wang**

I.

II.

III.

***Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral* (1846-48/1938)**

**Richard Wagner**

(1813–1883)

*trans. Lucien Cailliet*

## PROFILES

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**Robert Taylor** is Professor of Conducting and Director of Bands at Northwestern University, where he holds the John W. Beattie Chair of Music. As the fourth person in the university's history to hold the Director of Bands position, Taylor conducts the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, teaches graduate and undergraduate conducting, and leads all aspects of the band program. With a career in music education spanning over thirty years, previous appointments include the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC, University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, and Eureka High School in Northern California, where ensembles under his direction earned recognition by *Downbeat Magazine*, the Selmer Corporation, and Grammy Signature Schools.

Known for innovative and immersive concert programming, Taylor maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor. Past engagements include performances with the Vancouver Brass Orchestra, U.S. Army Field Band, Pacific Symphonic Wind Ensemble, and Chicago-based contemporary music group, the Maverick Ensemble. Collaborations span a wide range of international artists—from virtuosi performers Barbara Butler (trumpet), Jose Franch-Ballester (clarinet), Larry Knopp (trumpet), Julia Nolan (saxophone), Daniel Perantoni (tuba), Jeff Nelsen (horn), Gail Williams (horn), and Allen Vizzutti (trumpet); to composers Mason Bates, Jodie Blackshaw, Steven Bryant, Raven Chacon, Michael Colgrass, John Corigliano, David Maslanka, Cait Nishimura, Joel Puckett, Alex Shapiro, Frank Ticheli, and Dana Wilson; to jazz, pop, and crossover performers Ingrid Jensen, Shruti Ramani, Manhattan Transfer, Kenny Werner, and Big Bad Voodoo Daddy. As a passionate advocate of music in the schools, Dr. Taylor is in high demand as a festival adjudicator, rehearsal clinician, and guest conductor throughout North America and internationally. His frequent appearances with young musicians include serving as principal conductor of the Puget Sound Youth Wind Ensemble and guest conductor of numerous honor groups, such as the Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall, National Youth Band of Canada, AMIS Asia Honor Band, California Orchestra Directors Association Honor Symphony, and many provincial and all-state bands across Australia, Canada, and the United States.

Taylor received the Master of Music and Doctor of Music degrees in conducting from Northwestern University, where he studied with Mallory Thompson, and the Bachelor of Arts degree in Trumpet and Music Education

from Humboldt State University. His research on wind literature, rehearsal techniques, integration of cutting-edge technology, and application of Ashtanga Yoga to improve body awareness and injury prevention in the training of nascent conductors and performing musicians, has been featured in presentations at regional, national, and international music conferences, including appearances at the Midwest Clinic, College Band Directors National Association, and on several popular podcasts. Among numerous contributions in leading publications, recent research focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, through contemporary, socially-conscious programming and as co-author of *The Horizon Leans Forward*, a book that amplifies the talent and voices of underrepresented communities in the wind band field.

Dr. Taylor is a Killam Laureate, Jacob K. Javits Fellow, and Thomas A. Davis Teaching Prize Winner, and has served as on the executive boards of the British Columbia Music Educators Association and College Band Directors National Association (Northwest Region). He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Kappa Lambda National Honor Societies, World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, and National Association for Music Education.

**Philip Kleutgens** is an emerging artist and educator based in Chicago, IL. A versatile and accomplished saxophonist, he has earned top prizes at prestigious competitions such as the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, MTNA National Competitions, NASA Collegiate Competitions, and the NOLA Chamber Music Competition. Kleutgens' performance experience includes a wide range of ensembles, featuring engagements with the Evanston Symphony Orchestra, Festival City Orchestra, Lima Symphony, Grand Rapids Symphony, and the Chicago Metropolitan Symphony. Recent concerto performances include appearances with the Desert Winds and the Las Vegas Academy of the Arts.

A passionate advocate for new music, Kleutgens has organized commissions and premiered works by composers such as Stacy Garrop, Karolyn Schubring, Garrett Schumann, and Andrew Mead. Most recently Philip participated in a collaboration with Chicago based quartet ~Nois and Viet Cuong in their string of premiere performances of Cuong's new saxophone quartet concerto entitled Second Nature.

As an educator, Kleutgens maintains a private studio in the Chicagoland area, serves as saxophone instructor at Evanston High School, and is an adjunct instructor of saxophone at South Suburban College in Holland, Illinois.

Philip is a graduate of the University of Michigan and recently graduated with program honors from Northwestern University. His primary teachers are Taimur Sullivan, Timothy McAllister and John Seaton.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Overture to *Candide***

**Bernstein**

Opening on Broadway on December 1, 1956, *Candide*, was perhaps too intellectually weighty for its first audiences and closed after just 73 performances. Bernstein was less concerned over the money lost than the failure of the work he cared about deeply. The critics had rightly noted a marvelous score and Bernstein and others kept tinkering with the show over the years. With each revival, *Candide* won bigger audiences. In 1989, the already seriously ill Bernstein spent his last ounces of vital energy recording a new concert version of the work. “There’s more of me in that piece than anything else I’ve done,” he said.

The sparkling overture captures the frenetic activity of the operetta, with its twists and turns, along with *Candide*’s simple honesty. From the very beginning, though, the overture was a hit and swiftly became one of the most popular of all concert curtain raisers. Brilliantly written and scored, flying at breakneck speed, it pumps adrenaline of players and listeners alike.

### **Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Wind Ensemble**

**Mackey**

Known for his music’s thrilling energy, unconventional use of percussion, and rhythmic vitality, John Mackey holds degrees from the Juilliard School and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with John Corigliano and Donald Erb, respectively. He has received commissions from the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Parsons Dance Company, the New York Youth Symphony, New York City Ballet, the Dallas Wind Symphony, the American Bandmasters Association, and several universities, high schools, middle schools, and military bands. Mackey was inducted into the American Bandmasters Association in 2013.

Mackey’s Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Wind Ensemble was premiered by and dedicated to the Dallas Wind Symphony. The composer provides the following note on the piece:

To me, the saxophone is a kind of hybrid instrument; it's essentially a brass instrument with a woodwind reed on it. Instead of valves like a brass instrument has, the sax has keys like a woodwind. So, I had an instrument made of three materials: felt (the pads of the keys), metal (the body), and wood (the reed). In fact, every instrument in the band can be placed into one or more of those "categories." The brass section is made of metal, the harp is made of metal and wood, the wind section has keys, and so on. This realization gave me the central idea for the piece: a multi-movement work with the inner movements called *Felt*, *Metal*, and *Wood*, and with instrumentation chosen to essentially match those materials for each movement. The outer movements would be scored for the entire ensemble.

The piece starts with *Prelude*, a very brief overture to the concerto, with material that foreshadows each of the movements to come. If you hear something you like in the *Prelude*, you'll probably hear it more developed in the following movements. (Conversely, if you hear absolutely nothing you like in the *Prelude*, you may be in for a long night.)

Movement two is *Felt*. This movement is a study of the keys of the instrument, so it includes lots of runs, lots of pitch bending, and a bit of alternate fingering. On the saxophone, the player can play the same pitch by using different combinations of keys, and each fingering combination results in a slightly different color. In this movement, you'll hear repeated notes that are accomplished with changing fingerings, so the color will shift from note to note, even as the pitch stays the same. The other question – besides "what is a sax made of" – that I wanted to consider when writing the concerto was, "what does a sax do?" Movement 2, *Felt*, answers that question with, "well, the sax can play some weird sounds." With that pitch bending and crazy fingering, it's a peculiar five minutes.

Movement three, *Metal*, answers that same question with, "the sax can play high and pretty." This movement, scored primarily for metal percussion and brass, is a calm, lyrical contrast to the weirdness that preceded it. It seemed silly to write a sax concerto and not deal with the fact that the sax is often heard simply playing a song in an intimate setting – say, at a jazz club. Movement four, *Wood*, is really just that: a simple song. The scoring here is, as you'd expect, woodwinds, double bass, harp, piano, marimba, and – as in every movement – the sax section. The piece of mine that led to the commission of the sax concerto

was a piece called *Redline Tango*, and specifically, the soprano sax solo that anchors that work. To acknowledge that, this movement, yes, is a tango.

Finally we reach the *Finale*. First, just a little background. My teacher in college was a composer named John Corigliano. Before I ever studied with him, one of my favorite pieces was his Clarinet Concerto. It's not just a spectacular piece, but it's easily one of the greatest wind concertos ever written. When I got this commission, Corigliano's concerto cast a pretty intense shadow over me. How could I possibly write a concerto anywhere near the quality of that work?

Well, I couldn't – so I stole his. *Finale* starts with a nearly direct quote of John Corigliano's Clarinet Concerto. In order to make it as meta as possible, my quote is in fact a quote of a quote. I'm quoting the Corigliano, which was, in these 6 bars, quoting a work by 16th century composer Giovanni Gabrieli, *Sonata Pian e Forte*. After my little tribute to my teacher, the solo part takes off for roughly four minutes of non-stop virtuosity. Here my answer to the question "what does a sax do?" was simply, "well, the sax can play some monster-difficult stuff."

### ***Heart on Fire***

**Cuong**

Called "alluring" and "wildly inventive" by *The New York Times*, the music of American composer Viet Cuong has been performed on six continents by musicians and ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, Eighth Blackbird, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Alarm Will Sound, Atlanta Symphony, Sandbox Percussion, Albany Symphony, PRISM Quartet, and Dallas Winds, among many others. Cuong's music has been featured in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center, and his works for wind ensemble have amassed several hundreds of performances worldwide. Passionate about bringing these different facets of the contemporary music community together, his recent projects include a concerto for Eighth Blackbird with the United States Navy Band. He is currently the Pacific Symphony's Composer-in-Residence and serves as Assistant Professor of Music Composition at The University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Cuong holds degrees from Princeton University (MFA/PhD), the Curtis Institute of Music (AD), and Peabody Conservatory (BM/MM).

Inspired by Mary Oliver's poem *Walking to Oak-Head Pond*, and *Thinking of the Ponds I Will Visit in the Next Days and Weeks*, *Heart on Fire* communicates a sense of hope in the face of hardship and living everyday to the fullest.

What is so utterly invisible  
as tomorrow?  
Not love,  
not the wind,  
not the inside of a stone.  
Not anything.  
And yet, how often I'm fooled—  
I'm wading along

in the sunlight—  
and I'm sure I can see the fields and the ponds shining  
days ahead—  
I can see the light spilling

like a shower of meteors  
into next week's trees,  
and I plan to be there soon—  
and, so far, I am

just that lucky,  
my legs splashing  
over the edge of darkness,  
my heart on fire.

I don't know where  
such certainty comes from—  
the brave flesh  
or the theater of the mind—

but if I had to guess  
I would say that only  
what the soul is supposed to be  
could send us forth

with such cheer  
as even the leaf must wear  
as it unfurls  
its fragrant body, and shines



## *Winter Blossom: In Memory of Steven Stucky*

Wang

Currently serving on the composition faculty at the Meadows School of Arts at Southern Methodist University, Xi Wang has built a reputation as one of the most sought-after composers of concert music today. Building an international reputation with performances by ensembles such as the Shanghai Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra among many others, Wang's compositional output spans from music for children's chorus to large-scale symphonic works for orchestra and winds. Wang began her musical training at the age of five, and holds degrees from the Shanghai Conservatory, the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Cornell University.

While at Cornell, Wang was a student of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky. Stucky not only built a reputation as one of the most important American composers of the 20th and 21st century, but also as one of the foremost composition teachers in the United States. His prestigious list of students includes Marc Mellits, Robert Paterson, Fang Man, and David Conte. The relationships he built with his composition students and colleagues in the field led to a huge musical outpouring upon the news of his untimely death in 2016. With works written in-memoriam by composers such as Christopher Rouse, William Kraft, Gloria Cheng, and Esa-Pekka Salonen, *Winter Blossom* is Wang's contribution to the musical festschrift that commemorates her teacher. About *Winter Blossom*, the composer writes:

Stucky's death was a shock to the musical world. The composing process of *Winter Blossom* is a journey of me going through stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages are not necessarily linear. An outcry of enormous sorrow, the first movement is a profound lament. Two melodic motives are quoted from Stucky's music—the opening melody from his Symphony, and the minor second descending motive from his *Elegy* of August 4, 1964. The movement arrives at its climax with heavy and dark harmonies. The second movement juxtaposes multiple musical ideas and contrasting characters vertically while each idea evolves and develops horizontally. This reflects the richness and depth of Stucky's personality and spirit. The last movement, beginning with chimes, is an adagio that unfolds patiently. The turbulent and anguished motives from the second movement eventually evolve to tranquility and the serene.

This substantial work for winds is an expression of Wang's love and gratitude for her teacher as well as a musical expression of what one might experience following the loss of a beloved teacher and mentor.

### *Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral*

**Wagner**

Despite great controversy over his discriminatory ideologies and behaviors, Richard Wagner created a body of work that represents the zenith of both nineteenth-century opera and the harmonic vocabulary of the Romantic period. Born in Leipzig, he studied in Dresden and toiled in relative obscurity until his opera *Rienzi* premiered in 1842. A series of triumphs followed over the next decade, including *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. Most of Wagner's operas deal with legendary characters and supernatural struggles between good and evil; later in his career he used the terms "music drama" and "festival play" to describe his works that he believed surpassed the traditional conception of a romantic opera.

Like many of Wagner's operas, *Lohengrin* finds its sources in medieval legend and folklore. Central to the story is the conflict between Christian and Pagan forces. The character of Elsa represents the weakness of humanity, unable to faithfully receive the blessings offered to her. Elsa's procession occurs at the close of Act II, as Lohengrin, mystic knight of the Holy Grail, leads Elsa into the cathedral for their wedding. The Cailliet arrangement of this excerpt remains faithful to the original in its use of the same solo woodwind instruments and its representations of the double chorus in the brass. This much beloved transcription has become a staple of the wind repertoire.

## **BAND PROGRAM**

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Director of Bands	Robert Taylor <i>John W. Beattie Chair of Music</i>
Associate Director of Bands	Shawn Vondran
Director of Athletic Bands	Daniel Farris
Department Assistant	Maggie Whiteman
Doctoral Assistants	Imran Amarshi, Sheldon Frazier
Graduate Assistants	Rachel Stiles, Michael Witt
Stage Managers	Troy Archer, Stewart Bridgeforth, Chris Carrigg, Arlo Hollander, Zachary Hommel, Raúl Orellana, Sarah Perry
Ensemble Librarians	Maggie Umanetz-Lertprasopsak, Kevin Acuña
Equipment Managers	Brian Kachur, Micah Northam
AV Manager & Outreach Coordinator	Oliver Stark

## SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

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Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi and Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductors*

Philip Kleutgens, *saxophone*

### *Flute*

Sydney Feldman  
Abby Katje  
Alice Oh  
Miguel Rodriguez  
Maggie Umanetz-  
Lertprasopsak  
Holly Venkitaswaran\*

### *Oboe/English Horn*

Ryan Ha\*  
Emerald Lewis  
Sarah Perry  
Nia Suresh

### *Bassoon*

Dhruva Balan  
Brian Fadel\*  
Arthur Hu  
Colin Kurtz

### *Clarinet*

Elynn Chang  
Alvin Chen  
Chris Cui  
Andrew Guo\*  
Chengze Li  
Minghao Liu  
Connor Myers  
Nathan Soto

### *Saxophone*

Antonio Jarvey  
Haven Kahn\*  
Hudson O'Reily  
Carson Zhong

### *Trumpet*

Troy Archer\*  
Isaac Brown  
Stefan Filip  
Raul Orellana\*  
Parisa Tofigh  
Oliver Zhang

### *Horn*

Colin Akers  
Connor Cowart  
Yui Ginther  
Erin Harrigan  
Lily Kern\*  
Eden Stargardt

### *Trombone*

Kean Adair  
Wesley Connor  
Noah Eder\*  
Dylan Halliday  
Liam Kantzler  
Liam Melvin  
Andrew Ng

### *Euphonium*

Chris Carrigg\*  
Oliver Stark

### *Tuba*

Sam Swiercek  
Noah Vincent\*

### *Percussion*

Isaac Chiang\*  
Hila Kuperman  
Adam Langs  
Simeon Lee  
Ryan Payne\*  
Jeffrey Ryan

### *String Bass*

Atulya Palacharla

### *Piano*

Sinhwa Lee  
Hannah Zhang

### *Harp*

Raquel Coleman  
Lynn Koschnitzke

\*Section leader

## Take Me to Church

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Friday, March 14, 7:30 p.m.

Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, \$8/5

Robert Taylor, conductor; Ashrey Shah, clarinet  
(Northwestern Concerto Competition winner)

A program inspired by hymns, spiritual songs, and gospel music, featuring works by Omar Thomas, Margaret Bonds, Stephen Montague, and Scott McAllister.

## Earth and Heaven

Symphonic Band

Sunday, March 16, 3 p.m.

Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, \$6/4

Shawn D. Vondran, conductor

Featuring works by Steven Bryant, Viet Cuong, Roshanne Etezady, David Gillingham, and Omar Thomas.

## **CONCERT MANAGEMENT OFFICE STAFF**

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Director of Concert Management	Jerry Tietz
Concert Operations Manager	Kait Samuels
Ticketing Manager	Maxwell A. Johnson
Marketing Manager	Laura Nielsen
Marketing Coordinator	Elizabeth Avery
Technical Services Manager	Bill Milgram
Technical Services Manager	Zachary Lovitch
Concert Business Manager	Meg Lindsey
Supporting Staff	150 Northwestern Students
Dean, Bienen School of Music	Jonathan Bailey Holland

## **KEYBOARD MAINTENANCE**

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Supervisor of Keyboard Maintenance	Wesley Owen
Piano Technician	Chris Scroggins

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

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- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager. In consideration of the artists and other members of the audience, patrons who must leave before the end of the concert are asked to do so between pieces.
- Photography and audio/video recording of performances is strictly prohibited without prior written consent of the Concert Management Office.
- A limited number of assisted listening devices are available for the hearing impaired. Inquire at the box office.
- Smoking is prohibited by law in all Bienen School of Music performance venues.
- Every patron who will be occupying a seat must have a ticket in order to be admitted into the concert.
- The presenter reserves the right to ask any patron who is disrupting the event in any way to leave the concert hall.
- In the event of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- When joining us for upcoming concerts, please leave the Concert Management Office phone number (847-491-5441) with anyone who might need to reach you in case of emergency.