

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Sonic Tales

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

Michael Witt, *graduate assistant conductor*

Tanner Carlson-Huber, *composer*

Casey Lyons, *narrator*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL
2025–26 SEASON

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026, AT 7:30 P.M.

Sonic Tales

***Bravado* (2023)**

Gala Flagello

Michael Witt, *graduate assistant conductor*

Divertimento for Band, Op. 42 (1949)

Vincent Persichetti

Prologue

(1915–1987)

Song

Dance

Burlesque

Soliloquy

March

Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

“*Yes Day!*” (2025)

Tanner Carlson-Huber

World Premiere honoring the Frano Family

Casey Lyons, *narrator*

INTERMISSION

***Firefly* (2008)**

Ryan George

***The Frozen Cathedral* (2013)**

John Mackey

SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarashi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

Michael Witt, *graduate assistant conductor*

Flute/Piccolo

Emma Cranford
Andy Hanks
Claire Kim
Alice Oh
Hanna Oyasu

Oboe/English Horn

Jordan Boymel
Tanner Carlson-Huber
Sarah Perry
Nia Suresh

Bassoon

Brian Fadel
Elizabeth Myers
Adrian Wittmer

Clarinet

Dylan Addonizio
Jose Aguilar
Gavin Boudreau
Ian Dodd
David Hilt
Yunhoo Jeong
Andrew Kang
Sophia Ross
Daniel Spielman

Saxophone

Haven Kahn
Hudson O'Reilly
Seth Alexander
Christopher Unumb

Trumpet

Paul Stancampiano
Ziyu Shang
Braxton Leek
Parisa Tofigh
Oliver Zhang
Brendan Breen

Horn

Kyle Cho
Connor Cowart
Zoe Heim
Micah Northam
Baran Zolfaghari

Trombone

Ellie Abbott
Madi Bayaca
Harry Guan
Arlo Hollander
Liam Kantzler
Adam Uliassi

Euphonium

Brandon Baade
Rohan Venkatesan

Tuba

Luke Interrante
Leo Kunjan
Chrisjovan Masso

Percussion

Harrison Buck
Isaac Chiang
Ivan Mendoza
Ryan Payne
Jacob Scheidt*

String Bass

Duo Chen

Piano/Celeste

Amy Bao
Kyungmin Yang

Harp

Lynn Koschnitzke

Percussion

Harrison Buck
Adam Langs
Ellie Lebovich
Avery Mitchell
Ryan Payne
Charlize Yeh
Sam Carpenter
Jonathan Kravchuk
Hila Kuperman
Zoe Li

PROFILES

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, Shrutti 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. He has contributed to numerous leading publications and is a co-author of *The Horizon Leans Forward*.

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.

Tanner Carlson-Huber is a composer, oboist, and tap dancer based in Evanston Illinois, currently pursuing their Bachelor's of Music in Composition and Oboe Performance at Northwestern University, studying composition with Kelley Sheehan and oboe with Robert Morgan. A musician in all environments, Carlson-Huber draws musical inspiration from their past experience in dance, theatre, and video game spaces in addition to their classical training to create expressive works that blur the lines of "concert music" as a genre, while also incorporating a more contemporary compositional language into their dance, theatre, and video game scores. Their works are often (but not always) propelled by narrative, like their original score for the 2024 Illinois High School Theatre Festival's all-state production of Qui Nguyen's *She Kills Monsters*, and *Epiphanies* for solo violin and electronics (2025), a musical biography of their mother's relationship with spirituality after escaping the oppressive religion she was raised in. Their future endeavors include working with other composers and tap dancers to foster connection between the two fields, with the goals of encouraging tap dancers to commission original music for tap performances and opening composers' access to tap dance as a concert instrument.

Casey Lyons has been performing professionally from a young age, most notably appearing as Gustave in the first national tour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies*, sequel to *The Phantom of the Opera*. While on tour, Lyons recorded "The Beauty Underneath" from *Love Never Dies* for Andrew Lloyd Webber's career retrospective album *Unmasked*. Lyons' other theatrical credits include Harry in Chicago Opera Theater's *Albert Herring*, the First Spirit in Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Die Zauberflöte*, and the Valletto in the Northwestern University Opera Theater's *l'Incoronazione di Poppea*. He is a senior at Northwestern University pursuing a dual degree in Voice and Opera Performance & Theatre. "Blessed be God in all His designs."

PROGRAM NOTES

Bravado

Flagello

Gala Flagello is a composer, educator, and nonprofit director whose work is driven by a passion for lyricism, rhythmic vitality, and meaningful collaboration. *Cleveland Classical* describes her music as "at times endearingly whimsical, at times ominous, but always moving," resonating with audiences through its emotional depth and dynamic expression. Flagello's collaborations with leading ensembles, artists, and institutions on national and international stages, create impactful projects for audiences and performers alike.

Bravado was originally composed for orchestra and premiered at the Tanglewood Festival in 2023. This arrangement for wind ensemble was commissioned by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. Flagello writes of her work:

Bravado explores the many connotations of the word "bravado," a descendant of the old Italian adjective "bravo," meaning wild or courageous. A person with bravado can be seen as bold or reckless, daring or arrogant, confident or overbearing. The (ensemble) musically embodies this range of traits through transformations of the piece's primary melody.

Bravado opens with a lilting theme accented in unexpected places, punctuated by bell tones throughout the ensemble. After three statements of this melody, a whirling transition introduces a new theme in the French horn. This second theme starts with a gesture reminiscent of *West Side Story*—

perhaps a nod to Leonard Bernstein, a fixture at Tanglewood for 50 years—before breaking into a series of intervallic leaps that propel the music forward.

At the halfway point, marked “slyly, fearlessly” in the score, the interplay between flurries of notes in the woodwinds and rhythmic exclamations in the brass introduces a more somber mood. The Bernstein-like secondary theme reemerges from the texture, leading into a bold augmentation of the primary theme from the trumpets and horns. The work concludes with a final, jubilant statement of the lilting rhythm from the opening measure.

Divertimento for Band, Op. 42

Persichetti

Vincent Persichetti was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1915, the city in which he lived most of his life and where he died in 1987. He began studying music at age five, and by age eleven he was paying for his own musical education through his work as an organist and accompanist. He served on the faculties of the Combs College of Music in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Conservatory, and The Juilliard School in New York.

Persichetti’s *Divertimento for Band, Op. 42*, showcases his lyricism, playfulness, striking harmonic language, and superb skill in orchestration. The work was written in a log cabin schoolhouse in El Dorado, Kansas during the summer of 1949 and was premiered on June 16, 1950, by The Goldman Band, with the composer conducting. Persichetti began writing the work with a clash between choirs of woodwinds and brass, with timpani “arguing” with them. He soon realized that the strings were not going to become a part of this piece.

Written in six short character movements, the work features Persichetti’s tongue-in-cheek humor and lyrical nostalgia. Often performed, the *Divertimento of Band* is one of the cornerstone works for the wind band medium.

“Yes Day!”

Carlson-Huber

We are honored to share a very special piece with you this evening. This project began with The Sing Me a Story Foundation, an organization that transforms the imaginative stories of children facing significant challenges into original music. This project was made possible through the generous support of the Tullman Family Office.

“*Yes Day!*” adapts a true story from the lives of the Frano family into a musical journey with narration, brimming with childlike joy, curiosity, and the power of community. The piece begins by painting innocent, ram-bunctious scenes from the kids’ perfect day as their parents take them to whatever fun places they desire. Musical motives that are linked to each child are introduced one by one, then combined and juxtaposed as the kids move between settings, conversing and frolicking to their hearts’ content. After Riley wins a softball game for her team, the kids all go to Bodie’s favorite toy store and run around with glee. Each of their musical motives making up a different layer inspired by the toys they choose during their explorations. At Reese’s request they round off their day of fun at Dave and Busters, with the percussion section taking the lead in barely-controlled chaos as the children run around hitting buttons and pulling levers, hearing all kinds different music and sound effects from every part of the room. The following day, their mother tells Riley and Reese a story, breaking the disheartening news that their younger brother Bodie has been diagnosed with cancer. Their mother’s story is represented by an aching solo in the English horn as she tries to convey the essence of such an ancient, unfair struggle to children that won’t fully understand and shouldn’t have to reckon with such things. Only silence accompanies the remainder of the text as the reality of the news sinks in and the future remains uncertain. As the final movement of the piece begins, the only sound is the quiet clicking of Legos, one of Bodie’s favorite toys—such a tiny sound holds a surprising amount of meaning as it emerges from the silence. To me, it means growth—from something small and seemingly insignificant to something much bigger than the sum of its parts. It means determination and persistence—to be faced with no clear answers and to continue pushing forward towards hope in spite of it, one brick at a time. And when that sound of colorful plastic blocks builds from one person, to two people, and on and on until thirty-two members of an ensemble are playing one pitch each on colorful plastic tubes, it means a community coming together, giving what they have to offer to create something spectacular.

—*Tanner Carlson–Huber*

Firefly

George

Ryan George currently resides in Austin, Texas where he is active as an arranger and composer. His work, ranging from music for the concert stage to music for marching ensembles is performed regularly throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

The composer writes the following note about *Firefly*:

I'm amazed at how children use their imaginations to transform the ordinary and normal into the extraordinary and fantastic. Just about anything they come across can be used to spark their fantasies and usher their minds into unseen worlds. A stick on the ground becomes a wand with magical powers or a sword to fight off bad guys. A collection of rocks turns into buried treasure, and a blanket stretched over two chairs becomes a cave to hide in. And things found in nature—birds, waterfalls, flowers, and even insects—can take on mythic identities when viewed through the eyes of a child.

The idea for *Firefly* was born one night as I watched my four-year-old become mesmerized by a firefly that had wandered into our front yard. When I asked her what she thought of the “firefly” she looked at me with a puzzled look and said with a corrective tone, “Dad, that is not a firefly... that’s Tinkerbelle, and she’s come to take me with her on an adventure!”

The Frozen Cathedral

Mackey

John Mackey has written for orchestras, theater, and extensively for dance, but the majority of his work for the past decade has been for wind ensembles. His band catalog now receives annual performances numbering in the thousands. Mackey holds degrees from The Juilliard School and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with John Corigliano and Donald Erb, respectively. Recent commissions include works for the BBC Singers, the Dallas Wind Symphony, military, high school, middle school, and university bands across America and Japan, and concertos for Joseph Alessi, Christopher Martin, and Julian Bliss. In 2014, he became the youngest composer ever inducted into the American Bandmasters Association. In 2018, he received the Wladimir & Rhoda Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

The Koyukon call it “Denali,” meaning “the great one,” and it is great. It stands at more than twenty thousand feet above sea level, a towering mass over the Alaskan wilderness. Measured from its base to its peak, it is the tallest mountain on land in the world—a full two thousand feet taller than Mount Everest. It is Mount McKinley, and it is an awesome spectacle. And it is the inspiration behind John Mackey’s *The Frozen Cathedral*.

The piece was born of the collaboration between Mackey and John Locke, Director of Bands at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Locke asked Mackey if he would dedicate the piece to the memory of his late son, J.P., who had a particular fascination with Alaska and the scenery of Denali National Park.

The most immediately distinct aural feature of the work is the quality (and geographic location) of intriguing instrumental colors. The stark, glacial opening is colored almost exclusively by a crystalline twinkling of metallic percussion that surrounds the audience. Although the percussion orchestration carries a number of traditional sounds, there are a host of unconventional timbres as well, such as crystal glasses, crotales on timpani, tam-tam resonated with superball mallets, and the waterphone, an instrument used by Mackey to great effect on his earlier work *Turning*. The initial sonic environment is an icy and alien one, a cold and distant landscape whose mystery is only heightened by a longing, modal solo for bass flute—made dissonant by a contrasting key, and more insistent by the eventual addition of alto flute, English horn, and bassoon. This collection expands to encompass more of the winds, slowly and surely, with their chorale building in intensity and rage. Just as it seems their wailing despair can drive no further, however, it shatters like glass, dissipating once again into the timbres of the introductory percussion.

The second half of the piece begins in a manner that sounds remarkably similar to the first. In reality, it has been transposed into a new key and this time, when the bass flute takes up the long solo again, it resonates with far more compatible consonance. The only momentary clash is a Lydian influence in the melody, which brings a brightness to the tune that will remain until the end. Now, instead of anger and bitter conflict, the melody projects an aura of warmth, nostalgia, and even joy. This bright spirit pervades the ensemble, and the twinkling colors of the metallic percussion inspire a similar percolation through the upper woodwinds as the remaining winds and brass present various fragmented motives based on the bass flute's melody. This new chorale, led in particular by the trombones, is a statement of catharsis, at once banishing the earlier darkness in a moment of spiritual transcendence and celebrating the grandeur of the surroundings. A triumphant conclusion in E-flat major is made all the more jubilant by the ecstatic clattering of the antiphonal percussion, which ring into the silence like voices across the ice.

—Jake Wallace

BAND PROGRAM

Director of Bands	Robert Taylor John W. Beattie Chair of Music
Associate Director of Bands	Shawn Vondran
Director of Athletic Bands	Daniel Farris
Department Assistant	Emily Whittaker
Doctoral Assistants	Imran Amarshi, Maggie Whiteman
Graduate Assistants	Oliver Stark, Rachel Stiles, Michael Witt
Stage Managers	Stewart Bridgeforth, Kolbe Chapman, Andy Hankes, Henry Lazzaro, Cameron Leonardi
Ensemble Librarians	Sarah Perry, Toby Tse, Maggie Umanetz-Lertprasopsak
AV/Equipment Manager	Micah Northam

CONCERT MANAGEMENT OFFICE STAFF

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

Supervisor of Keyboard Maintenance	Wesley Owen
Piano Technician	Chris Scroggins

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 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.