Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Constellations

Symphonic Wind Ensemble
Robert Taylor, *conductor*
Gregory Sisco, *doctoral assistant conductor*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL
2026–27 SEASON

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF NORTHWESTERN BANDS

For one hundred years, **Northwestern Bands** has enriched the lives of students through exceptional musical experiences and a shared pursuit of excellence. Since the establishment of the Department of Bands in 1926 under Glenn Cliffe Bainum, students and faculty have built one of the nation's premier collegiate band programs.

A defining feature of Northwestern Bands has been its extraordinary continuity of leadership. Bainum's student, John P. Paynter, led the program for forty-five years, shaping the modern wind band through influential performances, publications, and artistic vision. He was succeeded by his student, Mallory Thompson, whose twenty-eight years at the helm brought international recognition through acclaimed recordings and mentorship of generations of performers and conductors. In 2024, Robert Taylor, a former student of Thompson and Bienen School alumnus, became Northwestern's fourth Director of Bands, continuing a teacher-student legacy spanning four generations.

Today, Northwestern Bands serves students from across the University through the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and Athletic Bands, including the renowned Wildcat Marching Band, "The Finest Band in the Land." Alumni of these ensembles perform, teach, create, and lead in major musical and educational institutions around the world.

As the program enters its second century, Northwestern Bands continues to evolve through multimedia presentations, interdisciplinary and community-centered collaborations, performances of works by student composers, and appearances by distinguished alumni as soloists and guest artists. These initiatives reflect the same spirit of creativity and exploration that has defined the program since its founding.

This centennial season celebrates not only a remarkable history, but also the people who made it possible: the students, faculty, alumni, families, and friends whose dedication and generosity have sustained Northwestern Bands for a century. As we honor our first hundred years, we look forward to the next century of artistry, innovation, and impact.

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2026, AT 7:30 P.M.

Constellations

***River of Stars* (2026)** **Reena Esmail**

Gregory Sisco, *doctoral assistant conductor*

***that secret from the river* (2016)** **Joel Puckett**

INTERMISSION

***A Child's Garden of Dreams* (1981)** **David Maslanka**
(1943–2017)

I. There is a desert on the moon where the dreamer sinks so deeply into the ground that she reaches hell.

II. A drunken woman falls into the water and comes out renewed and sober.

III. A horde of small animals frightens the dreamer. The animals increase to a tremendous size, and one of them devours the little girl.

IV. A drop of water is seen as it appears when looked at through a microscope. The girl sees that the drop is full of tree branches. This portrays the origin of the world.

V. An ascent into heaven where pagan dances are being celebrated; and a descent into hell where angels are doing good deeds.

Northwestern Bands is grateful to the Maslanka Foundation for providing digital scans of artwork by David Maslanka to accompany tonight's performance of *A Child's Garden of Dreams*. www.maslanka.org

SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

Robert Taylor, *conductor*
Gregory Sisco, *doctoral assistant conductor*
Oliver F. Stark, *graduate assistant conductor*

Flute
Benjamin Hosking
Claire Kim*
Eunice Kim
Grace Kim
Katelyn Lee

Oboe
Sophie Reader
Marty Redmyer*
Alain Shi

Bassoon
Dhruva Balan
Jason Capozucca*
Max Walaszek
Ethan Worthen

Clarinet
Dylan Addonizio
Jose Aguilar
Christopher Cui
Aydin Iqbal
Andrew Kang
Leah Kang
Daniel Sanders
Nathan Soto*
Toby Tse*

Saxophone
Aryan Avadhanam
David Bennette*
Miguel Flores-Padilla*
Everest Li
Dillon Martin

Trumpet
Brendan Breen
Sam Ferguson
William Lewis*
Rachael McKay
Calvin Pfund
Paul Stancampiano
Jonathan Taylor

Horn
Caiden Follmer
Claire Marquardt
Katy Meffert
Jordan Petan
Samantha Strickland*
Baran Zolfaghari

Trombone
AJ Abbey
Kean Adair*
Ian Boggs
Arlo Hollander

Euphonium
Will Claudius*
Joey Kim

Tuba
Mitch Brady*
Leo Kunjan

Percussion
Harrison Buck
Hila Kuperman
Sam Kim
Ellie Lebovich
Ryan Lee*
Zoe Li

String Bass
Erik Oswald

Piano
Kate Park
Kyungmin Yang

Organ
Kyungmin Yang

Celeste
Kate Park

Harp
Madeleine Worrall

PROFILES

Robert Taylor is Professor of Conducting and Director of Bands at Northwestern University, where he holds the Paynter and Anderson Families Professorship in Conducting. 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 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.

PROGRAM NOTES

River of Stars **Esmail**

Reena Esmail is known for blending Hindustani and western classical music in her compositions. A graduate of The Juilliard School and Yale School of Music, Esmail also studied Hindustani music in India as part of a Fulbright-Nehru grant. Her doctoral thesis, *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians*, explores the processes and challenges for bringing together these two traditions. Early in her compositional career, Esmail says many colleagues encouraged her to incorporate her Indian heritage into her works, but it wasn't until after her time studying in India when she felt comfortable merging these two worlds. In recent years, Esmail has written works for choral groups, orchestras, wind ensembles, and chamber ensembles. She has also served as Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2025 Swan Family Artist in Residence and was Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence.

River of Stars was commissioned by a consortium of schools and universities for the 25th Annual Chicago Invitational Concert Band Festival and was premiered in April of 2026. Of the piece, Esmail says the following:

> This piece evokes the image of a river of stars sweeping across the sky. Based in the Hindustani raag Vachaspati, *River of Stars* combines soaring melodies, roiling figuration and sparkling percussion to create a bold and shimmering sound world.

The raag Vachaspati comes from a South Indian tradition of vocal music or music performed in a singing style. Vachaspati is characterized by the raised fourth and lowered seventh scale degrees of a major scale. Western musicians might recognize it as a lydian-dominant or acoustic scale. This raag is typically played during the 4th Prahar of the day, from 3:00pm to 6:00pm in the evening. The melodies in *River of Stars* sing over sparkling woodwind flourishes and percussion flashes, imitating brilliant flashes of the night sky.

that secret from the river **Puckett**

> "Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time?"
> That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current,
> in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past nor the shadow of the future?
>
> –Hermann Hesse, *Siddartha*

Hesse's poetic words inspire a compelling philosophical quandary on the nature of reality and the perception of reality through time. The observation harkens back to the flux doctrine of the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, who noted that someone stepping into the same river twice was surrounded by changed waters.

In *that secret from the river,* Puckett deals with this concept in a personally meaningful way through a lengthy study in motivic reference and thick, mystical-sounding harmonies. The work as a whole is cast in two large sections: first, an exploration of pure harmonies that are distorted and made hazy through glissandi into sound masses; and second, a series of variants on a familiar harmonic motive. For much of the later portions of the piece,

sections of the Hesse quotation appear in the score in quasi-programmatic fashion. These fragments, positioned out of order, further illuminate Hesse's concept of universal existence outside of time.

The piece opens with a flash of keyboard instruments and thick clouds of harmony orchestrated into large alternating consorts of wind instruments, building to a tremendous sonority that combines elements of both A major and minor. Out of the resonance emerges a solitary D that brings a sense of placidity after the previous tumult. The first large section begins in earnest here, as the pitch is expanded through its natural harmonic series. This meditation on D comes in and out of focus, increasingly distorted by intense neighboring dissonance (first by microtonal adjustment, and subsequently through ever-multiplying collections of semitones). With each sequence, more instruments join and enrich the texture until the full ensemble contributes. Two repetitions of this contour follow, albeit with altered pitch content and order of entry, before receding into an expansive largo bearing the quotation fragment "...there is no such thing as time." In this transitional segment, which concludes the first half of the piece, glacially paced chords slowly sink by half-steps, while a gentle canon between flute and trumpet provides another ambiguous hint of both minor and major modalities.

The work's second half, accompanied in the score by the Hesse fragment "...not the shadow of the past," begins with the keyboards' statement of a ringing harmonic progression. These harmonies hauntingly call to mind the principal harmonic motive in the "Eye of Shadow" movement from Puckett's flute concerto *The Shadow of Sirius*. The ensemble joins in and grows in intensity and dissonance through a nearly direct repetition of the piece's opening measures before cascading into a series of variants on this harmonic idea. A return to the glissando clusters from early in the piece closes the section, this time accompanied by the Sirius chord progression. A brief coda continues the descent, adding to the dissonance until it is swept away to frame a tender D-flat major consonance.

Commissioned by Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music in celebration of the completion of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Center for the Musical Arts, *that secret from the river* is dedicated to Mallory Thompson and the members, past and present, of the Northwestern University Symphonic Wind Ensemble. The ensemble premiered the work under Thompson's direction on February 5th, 2016.

A Child's Garden of Dreams **Maslanka**

A native of New Bedford, Massachusetts, David Maslanka attended the Oberlin College-Conservatory, where he earned a bachelor's degree in music education. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria and earned graduate degrees in composition from Michigan State University, where he studied with H. Owen Reed. Maslanka served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and the City University of New York in Kingsborough.

After establishing himself as a teacher of composition for many years, David Maslanka eventually settled in Missoula, Montana where he was able to dedicate his life to full-time composition. His prolific output for winds includes multiple symphonies, a Mass, concerti, and many concert pieces. Throughout his life, Maslanka kept a close relatiomship with Northwestern University and the Symphonic Wind Ensemble. *A Child's Garden of Dreams* was written for and dedicated to Marietta and John P. Paynter and the Symphonic Wind Ensemble in 1982 and was then recorded on the band's first album, *Heroes, Dreams, and Icons*, with Mallory Thompson conducting. The piece has become a standard in the wind band repertoire and is performed regularly by university ensembles around the world.

A Child's Garden of Dreams draws inspiration from the writings of Carl Jung in his book *Man and His Symbols*. Jung writes:

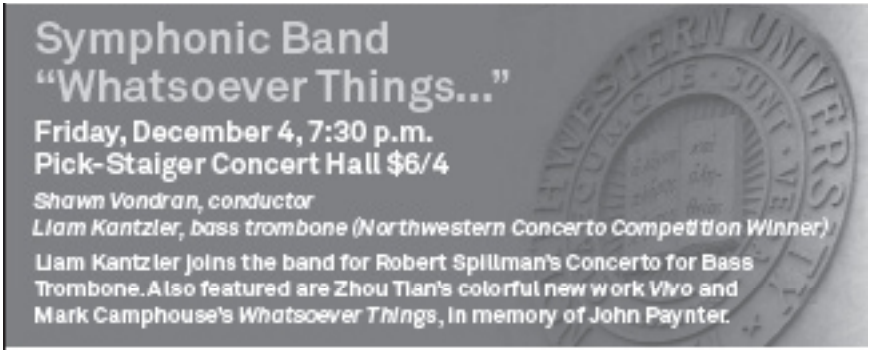
> A very important case came to me from a man who was himself a psychiatrist. One day he brought me a handwritten booklet he had received as a Christmas present from his 10-year-old daughter. It contained a whole series of dreams she had had when she was eight. They made up the weirdest series of dreams I have ever seen, and I could well understand why her father was more than just puzzled by them. Though childlike, they were uncanny, and they contained images whose origin was wholly incomprehensible to the father… In the unabridged German original, each dream begins with the words of the old fairy tale: "Once upon a time." By these words the little dreamer suggests that she feels as if each dream were a sort of fairy tale, which she wants to tell her father as a Christmas present. The father tried to explain the dreams in terms of their context. But he could not do so because there appeared to be no personal associations to them… The little girl died of an infectious disease about a year after that Christmas… The dreams were a preparation for death, expressed through short stories, like the tales told at primitive initiations… The little girl was approach-

ing puberty, and at the same time, the end of her life. Little or nothing in the symbolism of her dreams points to the beginning of a normal adult life. When I first read her dreams, I had the uncanny feeling that they suggested impending disaster. These dreams open up a new and rather terrifying aspect of life and death. One would expect to find such images in an aging person who looks back on life, rather than to be given them by a child. Their atmosphere recalls the old Roman saying, "Life is a short dream," rather than the joy and exuberance of its springtime. Experience shows that the unknown approach of death casts an *adumbratio* (an anticipatory shadow) over the life and dreams of the victim. Even the altar in Christian churches represents, on one hand, a tomb and, on the other, a place of resurrection—the transformation of death into eternal life.

Maslanka selected five of the little girl's twelve dreams, and each forms the programmatic basis for a movement of the work. The work celebrates the child's life while alluding to her tragic disparate aspects of life's journey: horrific, heavenly, pure, and constantly evolving.

BAND PROGRAM

Director of Bands	Robert Taylor *Paynter and Anderson Families Professor in Conducting*
Associate Director of Bands	Shawn Vondran
Director of Athletic Bands	Michael Parker
Department Assistant	Emily Whittaker
Doctoral Assistants	Gregory Sisco, Maggie Whiteman
Graduate Assistants	Alexander Gray, Mickaela Pasch, Oliver F. Stark
Stage Managers	Neil Advant, Sadie Becht, Brian Cao, Anna Li, Katy Meffert, Declan Messner, Daniel Navarrette
Ensemble Librarians	Ally Donnelly, Boss Lee, Toby Tse
AV Managers	Mitchell Brady, Cole Zelman
Equipment Manager	Benjamin Hosking



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

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.



Celebrating the Centennial of NORTHWESTERN BANDS

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