

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Tributes

Northwestern University Symphonic Band

Shawn D. Vondran, *conductor*

Rachel Stiles, *graduate assistant conductor*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL

2024–25 SEASON

Northwestern University Symphonic Band

Shawn D. Vondran, *conductor*

Rachel Stiles, *graduate assistant conductor*

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

Tributes

Medieval Suite (1983)

II. *Homage to Pérotin*

Ron Nelson

(1929–2023)

Rachel Stiles, *graduate assistant conductor*

***And Sings the Tune Without the Words* (2019)**

Aaron Perrine

***Fanfares for Friends* (2019)**

A Fanfare for Gary

A Fanfare for Joe

Joel Puckett

INTERMISSION

Concerto for Wind Ensemble (2021)

Flow

Riff

Vibe

Soul

Jam

Kevin Day

PROFILE

Shawn D. Vondran is in his eleventh year as the Associate Director of Bands at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music. His responsibilities include conducting the Symphonic Band along with teaching courses in conducting, wind repertoire, orchestral repertoire, and other courses in the music performance and education curricula. During his tenure at Northwestern, the Symphonic Band was selected to perform at the 2020 College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) North Central Division Conference. The ensemble frequently engages with a number of composers and participates in consortia to support the creation and performance of new music for the wind band medium.

Dr. Vondran served on the faculties at Ball State University, Western Illinois University, and Youngstown State University prior to his appointment at Northwestern University. He began his career as a band director at Mentor High School in Ohio, where his ensembles consistently received accolades for their performances.

Recently, Vondran was elected by his peers to the prestigious American Bandmasters Association. He also received the College of Fine Arts Dean's Teaching Award while at Ball State University for excellence in teaching and dedication to his students. Additionally, the Ball State University Symphony Band was selected to perform at the 2012 and 2014 Indiana Music Education Association Conference during his tenure.

Vondran maintains an active schedule with engagements throughout the United States as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator. In addition to performance engagements, he is an on-going contributor to the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series published by GIA and appeared in the *National Band Association Journal*. He has also presented a clinic at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. Dr. Vondran has worked with a number of composers in the preparation, performance, and/or recording of their works for the wind band medium. These artistic collaborations include John Corigliano, Christopher Rouse, David Maslanka, Michael Daugherty, Steven Bryant, Joel Puckett, and Jennifer Higdon. He is a member of the College Band Directors National Association, where he serves as the Illinois state chair, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

Vondran received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in instrumental conducting, with an emphasis in music education, from the University of Miami (FL). Vondran completed a Master of Music degree in instrumental conducting at Youngstown State University and earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree (magna cum laude) at The Ohio State University.

PROGRAM NOTES

Medieval Suite

Nelson

A native of Joliet, Illinois, Ron Nelson received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. He also studied in France at the Ecole Normale de Musique and at the Paris Conservatory under a Fulbright Grant in 1955. Dr. Nelson joined the Brown University faculty the following year, and he taught there until his retirement in 1993. *Homage to Pérotin* is the second of three works in Nelson's Medieval Suite. Written in 1983, Ron Nelson explains that:

The suite was composed in homage to three great masters of the Middle Ages: Leonin (middle 12th century), Pérotin (c. 1155–1200), and Machaut (c. 1300–1377). These are neither transcriptions of their works nor attempts at emulating their respective styles. Rather, their music served as a sort of launching pad for three pieces which draw on some of the stylistic characteristics of music from that period, e.g. repetition of rhythmic patterns or modes, modules of sound, proportions that produce octaves, fourths and fifths, use of Gregorian chant, syncopation, and long points where a sustained tone regulates melodic progression.

Homage to Pérotin springs from his (Pérotin's) *Viderunt* – with its driving rhythmic intensity, repetition, and pedal points. The opening section features insistent dissonances in alternation with brass fanfare passages. A second theme, played by unison brass, is written in the Aeolian (minor) mode. The work was premiered on March 18, 1983, at the National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association by the Western Michigan University Symphonic Band.

And Sings the Tune Without the Words

Perrine

Aaron Perrine is a Minnesota-based composer known for his compositions for wind instruments. Perrine earned degrees from the University of Minnesota and the University of Iowa. He is a two-time winner of the

American Bandmasters Association Sousa/Ostwald Award and the winner of the 2017 CBDNA Young Band Composition Contest for his piece, *Temperance*. Perrine is an active conductor and educator, working with many all-state and honor bands throughout the country.

Premiered in 2020, *And Sings the Tune Without the Words* was commissioned for Jason and Melissa Nam in honor of their late daughter, Evelyn Nam. During the composition process, Perrine proposed writing a choral work that would later be transcribed for winds. The Nams supported this idea and decided Emily Dickinson's *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers* would be the text for the piece. Within this poem, Dickinson compares the idea of hope to a bird. This connected to Evelyn through her name which means "little bird" and "hoped for child." When Perrine asked the Nams to expand upon the elusive feeling of hope, they explained:

Our relationship with hope has been layered and complicated for a long time. Throughout our family-building journey, we had hope and lost hope many times, disappointed and distraught by the process and outcomes time and again, year in and year out. But we'd always manage to find our way back to hope, clinging to it, desperate for it in particularly challenging moments.

When Evelyn was born, even though the odds were stacked against her, we still hoped, forcing ourselves to see the possibility of her survival as the eventual probability as opposed to the narrow possibility. Because after all, she was the living proof that hope could endure through the unlikeliest of scenarios. When Evie died, it was the first time that we truly felt abandoned by hope, that it had failed us, our trusted friend and comrade in arms all those years. It felt personal. We were so angry and couldn't see how we could ever allow ourselves to be hopeful again, lured in by its siren song. And yet, somehow, little by little, hope found its way back into our hearts, and we allowed ourselves to believe that happiness could be possible, that joy could be possible, that our family could grow, that both pain and sorrow, contentedness and longing could exist side-by-side, not "either/or" but "and" -- despite the pain we had suffered and the devastating loss we had endured that had forever changed us.

And that hope brought us to our son, Davis, ushered in by the beautiful birdsong of his sister, Evelyn, who is forever perched on our souls as our little family's guardian angel. Our little bird, love and hope personified.

–Jason Nam

Fanfares for Friends

Puckett

Hailed by the *Washington Post* as “visionary,” as well as “an astonishingly original voice” by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Joel Puckett’s music has been recognized by organizations such as the American Composers Forum, Broadcast Music Inc., Chorus America, National Public Radio, and the American Bandmasters Association. He received a Grammy nomination in 2016 for the Naxos recording of his flute concerto, *The Shadow of Sirius*. In March 2019, the Minnesota Opera premiered Puckett’s first opera, *The Fix*, which received critical acclaim. Puckett is currently on the faculty at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, and he holds graduate degrees from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Michael Daugherty, William Bolcom, and Bright Sheng. *Fanfares for Friends* was commissioned by Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma for the 2019 National Intercollegiate Band. The composer offers the following thoughts about this work:

In thinking about the nature of both Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma, it occurred to me that honoring the service of those who mentored and inspired each subsequent generation is at the very core of their missions. In that spirit, I have written fanfares to celebrate two people who have profoundly influenced my life.

The first fanfare is entitled, *A Fanfare for Gary*. Gary Green has devoted his entire life to the belief that a group of people chasing a beautiful musical moment is one of the things that makes life worth living. He radiates goodness and possesses a perpetually curious spirit. I am so grateful that he is my friend.

The second fanfare is entitled, *A Fanfare for Joe*. I know that Shoeless Joe Jackson—who has been dead since 1951—seems an unlikely friend for a 21st-century composer from Atlanta. But Joe, who was banned from major league baseball as part of the 1919 Chicago Black Sox scandal and served as the protagonist of my opera, *The Fix*, has long inspired me with his sheer greatness and his tragic downfall. While his life may serve as a kind of requiem for the American dream, this fanfare imagines him at the height of his greatness and the dream that might have been.

–Joel Puckett

Concerto for Wind Ensemble

Day

Kevin Day is an award-winning, multi-disciplinary composer, jazz pianist, and conductor. A unique voice in the world of classical music, Day takes inspiration from a broad range of sources, including romanticism, late 20th-century music, jazz fusion, and gospel. Day burst onto the musical scene in 2018 with his Concerto for Euphonium, and many of his works are now performed internationally including *Ignition*, commissioned by the Boston Symphony Low Brass, and *Unquiet Waters*, commissioned by Jordan Van-Hemert. Outside of his compositions, Day enjoys an active career as a jazz pianist and works as Lecturer of Music Theory and Musicianship at the University of California San Diego Department of Music.

Emerging from a conversation with Dr. Cynthia Johnston Turner, former director of bands at the University of Georgia, Day's Concerto for Wind Ensemble explores his upbringing as a young black man and the musical culture that surrounded him.

My experience and the inspiration for this work come from a world of various intersections. My father, born in West Virginia, was a hip-hop producer in the late 1980s who worked in Southern California, and my mother (also from West Virginia) was a gospel singer. During my childhood, I grew up listening to hip-hop, R&B, jazz, and gospel music. Simultaneously, I was learning classical music through playing in band, and later orchestra. I was playing jazz and gospel music on piano, while also playing classical music on euphonium and tuba. This dual learning environment had a huge impact on my musicianship and my development as a composer. While these worlds had been separated in my head when I was growing up, in this work I intentionally wanted to merge them together in new fusions, paying homage to my parents, the culture I grew up in, and to the wind band world.

What came from this concept is this Concerto for Wind Ensemble, a five-movement work for band that is my most ambitious composition to date, and a work that took almost two years to compose. The movements entitled *Flow*, *Riff*, *Vibe*, *Soul*, and *Jam* reflect the various musical styles that I have been immersed in. *Vibe* and *Soul* are specifically dedicated to my parents, without whom I could not have made it this far. I am immensely grateful to Dr. Turner and to the consortium members of this work, who believed in my vision and sought to bring this work to life. I'm happy to share this contribution and love letter to the wind band and to the culture.

-Kevin Day

BAND PROGRAM

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 BAND

Dr. Shawn Vondran, *conductor*

Rachel Stiles and Michael Witt, *graduate assistant conductors*

Flute/Piccolo

Dylan Abbott
Amara Ahalt
Emily Kim
Riona Kim
Katelyn Lee
Julianna Wang

Oboe/English Horn

Tanya Ganesh
Orly Lindner
Ezequiel-Alain Navarro

Clarinet

Jose Aguilar
Gavin Boudreau
Josie InTham
Aydin Iqbal
Casey Li
Peter Platosh
Leo Shen
Hannah Webb

Bassoon

Wilson Aron
Elizabeth Myers
Bowie Wu

Saxophone

Seth Alexander
Miguel Flores-Padilla
Hari Maheswaran
Audrey Zhou

Trumpet

Brendan Breen
Sam Ferguson
Braxton Leek
Rachael McKay
Lilie Shlyak
Jonathan Taylor
Sam VanLoo

Horn

Samuel Bangert
Anton Fernandez
Michael James
Jordan Petan
Elizabeth Smith
Molly Sullivan

Trombone

Madi Bayaca
Tim George
Ian Lilly

Lola Stevenson
Adam Uliassi

Euphonium

Brandon Baade
Will Claudius
Rohan Venkatesan

Tuba

Nolan Fallon
Avery Li

Percussion

Sam Kim
Jonathan Kravchuk
Ellie Lebovich
Ryan Lee
Mark Li
Jacob Scheidt
Charlize Yeh

Harp

Marin Trendel

Piano

Yance Zheng

Double Bass

Alex Wallack

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.