

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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

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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

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

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

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

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

Saifei Wang
Hannah Zhang

Harp

Raquel Coleman
Lynn Koschnitzke

*Section leader

CONCERT MANAGEMENT OFFICE STAFF

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Piano Technician	Christina Scroggins

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