

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH  
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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**Take Me to Church**

**Symphonic Wind Ensemble**

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi and Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductors*

Ashrey Shah, *clarinet*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL  
2024-25 SEASON

## **Symphonic Wind Ensemble**

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Imran Amarshi and Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductors*

Ashrey Shah, *clarinet*

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

### **Take Me to Church**

*Intrada 1631 (after Juan Perez Bocanegra) (2003)*      **Stephen Montague**

*Black Dog, Rhapsody for Clarinet (2002)*      **Scott McAllister**

Ashrey Shah, *clarinet*

*2024 Concerto Competition Winner*

Imran Amarshi, *doctoral assistant conductor*

INTERMISSION

*The Promise of Living from  
The Tender Land (1954/2002)*

**Aaron Copland**

(1900–1990)

*trans. Kenneth Singleton*

*Spiritual Suite (1930-1940/2024)*

*Valley of the Bones*

*The Bells*

*Troubled Water*

**Margaret Bonds**

(1913–1972)

*arr. Tyler Ehrlich*

Sheldon Frazier, *doctoral assistant conductor*

*Come Sunday (2018)*

*Testimony*

*Shout!*

**Omar Thomas**

## 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, 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.

Originating from rural New Mexico, clarinetist **Ashrey Shah** enjoys a multifaceted career as a soloist, chamber musician, teacher, and orchestral player. He currently studies with Yehuda Gilad, the preeminent clarinet pedagogue of his generation. Prior to his studies with Maestro Gilad, Shah received a Bachelor of Music from The Eastman School of Music, and a Master of Music from Northwestern University. Shah was the E-flat clarinetist for the Santa Fe Opera in its 2024 season and has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony, The Cleveland Orchestra, and the New World Symphony. As a soloist he has been a prizewinner in the Schubert Club's Bruce P. Carlson Student Scholarship Competition, Evanston Music Club Scholarship Competition, King's Peak, and Małopolska International solo competitions. His primary teachers include Todd Levy, Stephen Williamson, Dean LeBlanc, Kenneth Grant, and Michael Wayne. Along with his primary studies, Shah has played in masterclasses for renowned clarinetists including Wenzel Fuchs, Afendi Yusuf, and Elsa-Ludwig Verdehr.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### *Intrada 1631 (after Juan Perez Bocanegra)*

**Montague**

Although he was born and educated in the United States, Stephen Montague has lived and worked in England for the last forty years and holds dual citizenship. Montague studied piano and composition at Florida State University and later earned a doctorate in composition from Ohio State University. In 1972 he received a two-year Fulbright Fellowship to study in Poland and has since been based in London. Montague has been a guest performer at the University of Texas and the University of New Zealand and has performed throughout the Americas and Europe. Citing inspiration from American composers Ives, Cowell, and Cage, his compositions often fall outside traditional categorizations. He has written electronic music, spatial compositions, works for outdoor performance, theater pieces, and, with the sculptor Maurice Agis, a series of works that combine music and sculpture. Montague writes of *Intrada 1631*:

*Intrada 1631* was inspired by a concert of early South American liturgical music directed by Jeffery Skidmore at the Darlington International Summer Music School in the summer of 2001. One of the most moving and memorable works in the program was a *Hanacpachap cussicuinin*, a 17th century Catholic liturgical chant written in Quechua, the native language of the Incas. The music was composed by a Franciscan missionary priest called Juan Pérez Bocanegra who lived and worked in Cuzco (Peru), a small village east of Lima in the Jauja Valley during the early 17th century. *Intrada 1631* uses Bocanegra's 20-bar hymn as the basis for an expanded processional scored for the modern forces of a symphonic winds with field drums. The first complete performance of *Intrada 1631* was in Bath Abbey, England, 1 June 2003. It was the opening processional for the late-night multi-media event called Abbey Mode: A Sonic Light Event commissioned for the finale of the 2003 Bath International Music Festival. The long shadows of the darkened Abbey were illuminated by special lighting effects on the giant arches while multiple video projections on the high ribbed vaulting gave the illusion of a roof open to the night sky with flying creatures overhead. The 120 performers were masked and in special costume.

### *Black Dog, Rhapsody for Clarinet*

**McAllister**

Scott McAllister completed his undergraduate degrees in performance and composition from Florida State University and his doctorate in composi-

tion from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His music has been featured at the Aspen, Chautauqua, and Prague/American Institute Summer Festivals, and has been performed by notable ensembles and soloists including the American Composers Orchestra, Rascher Quartet, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, I Musici de Montreal, Charles Neidich, Richard Stoltzman, Verdehr Trio, Jacksonville Symphony, Da Camera, Waco Symphony, United States New Music Ensemble, and “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band. McAllister was awarded first prize in the Ladislav Kubik International Composition Competition and was a winner of an ASCAP Fellowship award. Scott McAllister’s music is recorded on the Naxos, Albany, Centaur, and Summit Records labels. He currently serves as Professor of Composition at Baylor University.

Commissioned in 2001, *Black Dog* is dedicated to James Croft, the former director of bands at Florida State University, and Frank Kowalsky, professor of clarinet. The work draws inspiration from many different sources that speak to McAllister’s huge variety of musical experiences, from the clarinet concerti of Carl Maria von Weber to modern popular music. A dream-like slow section is based on the hymn tune *Grace Greater Than Our Sin*, written like the layered progressive-rock of Led Zeppelin’s *Stairway to Heaven*. Textures pay tribute to the opening of the Copland Clarinet Concerto, but not moving too far into the classical world, with melodic motives and solos inspired by the classic hard rock music of Led Zeppelin and performance style of Jimi Hendrix. *Black Dog*, titled in tribute to the Led Zeppelin song of the same name, is truly a work in which the solo clarinet takes the role of the lead guitarist of a hard rock band and juxtaposes moments of sheer classical refinement with the pyrotechnic solos that will “surely make you groove.”

### ***The Promise of Living from The Tender Land***

### **Copland**

Aaron Copland is often referred to as “the dean of American composers.” His music represents a nostalgic and somewhat idyllic view of American life, striking a unique balance between the modern classical music of his time and American folk styles. The open intervals in his works have also been said to evoke images of the vast American landscape. His only full-length opera, *The Tender Land*, was completed in 1954 with a libretto by Erik Johns (using the pen name Horace Everett). The opera contains some of Copland’s most lyrical and heartfelt music, and in 1958 he extracted a three-movement orchestral suite from the original. It premiered the following year by the Boston Symphony Orchestra with the composer conducting. He later recalled: “the reviews were far better than they had been for the opera.”

*The Tender Land* tells the story of a young Midwestern farm girl on the eve of her high school graduation. *The Promise of Living*, a vocal quintet that concludes Act I, is a song of thanks that unites the family and farmhands in a celebration of the harvest. The song is based largely on the folk song *Zion's Walls* and epitomizes Copland at his most lyrical. The original lyrics are as follows:

The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving  
Is born of our loving our friends and our labor.  
The promise of growing with faith and with knowing  
Is born of our sharing our love with our neighbor.  
The promise of loving, the promise of growing  
Is born of our singing in joy and thanksgiving.  
For many a year we've known these fields  
And know all the work that makes them yield.  
We're ready to work, we're ready to lend a hand.  
By working together we'll bring in the blessings of harvest.  
We plant each row with seeds of grain,  
And Providence sends us the sun and the rain.  
By lending a hand, by lending an arm

Bring out the blessings of harvest.  
Give thanks there was sunshine, give thanks there was rain,  
Give thanks we have hands to deliver the grain.  
O let us be joyful, O let us be grateful to the Lord for his blessing.  
The promise of living, the promise of growing  
The promise of ending is labor and sharing and loving.

### ***Spiritual Suite***

### **Bonds**

Margaret Allison Bonds was an American composer and pianist who championed classical works, arrangements of African-American spirituals, and popular music. During her high school years Bonds studied piano and composition and then attended Northwestern University where she was one of the few Black students. The environment was not favorable to Black students and although Bonds was allowed to attend the university, she was not allowed to live on campus. In spite of the hostile environment, Bonds won the prestigious National Wanamaker Foundation Prize with her composition, *Sea Ghost*, and became the first Black person to perform with the Chicago Symphony. In 1936 she opened the Allied Arts Academy where she taught art, ballet, and music. She also met the great African-American writer and poet, Langston Hughes, and set many of his verses to music.

Throughout the Civil Rights Movement, Bonds remained a staunch advocate for social justice. She founded The Margaret Bonds Chamber Music Society, whose mission was to establish a canon of music by African-American composers. She worked at the East Side House Settlement, a nonprofit for underprivileged youth, and presented concerts of Black composers there and around New York City. After a visit to Montgomery, Alabama in 1963, Bonds wrote *The Montgomery Variations*, a seven-movement work based on the spiritual *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*. She dedicated this piece and her Christmas Cantata *The Ballad of the Brown King to Martin Luther King, Jr.* A large portion of Bonds's body of work includes modern arrangements of African-American spirituals, many of which were performed by her friend, soprano Leontyne Price. Most popular was Bonds's 1962 settings of *He's Got the Whole World in His Hand* and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*.

*Spiritual Suite* for piano has existed in multiple editions since the third movement *Troubled Water* was first published as a standalone work by Sam Fox Publishing Company in 1967. Decades later, Louise Toppin uncovered the that *Troubled Water* was in fact the final movement by an arrangement of *Troubled Water* for cello and piano in 2023. This arrangement is primarily based upon the original piano version with several ideas borrowed from the arrangement for cello and piano.

### ***Come Sunday***

**Thomas**

Born to Guyanese parents in Brooklyn, New York, Omar Thomas has created music extensively in the contemporary jazz ensemble idiom. Thomas previously served as an Associate Professor of Harmony at Berklee College of Music and a Visiting Professor in Music Theory at The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. He has thrice been awarded the Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from Harvard University, where he served as a Teaching Fellow for four years. He was awarded the Boston Music Award's "Jazz Artist of the Year" in 2012. In 2017, he was selected to participate in the Cité Internationale des Arts residency in Paris, and in 2019 was the chosen recipient of the prestigious National Bandmasters Association/Revelli Award, honoring excellence in wind band composition. He currently serves as professor of composition at the University of Texas at Austin. Thomas writes of *Come Sunday*:



I played trombone in wind ensembles from the 4th grade through college. This experience has contributed significantly to the life I lead now. I had the pleasure of being exposed to sounds, colors, moods, rhythms, and melodies from all over the world. Curiously absent, however, was music told authentically from the African-American experience. In particular, I couldn't understand how it was that no composer ever thought to tell the story of a black worship experience through the lens of a wind ensemble. I realize now that a big part of this was an issue of representation. One of the joys and honors of writing music for wind ensemble is that I get to write music that I wish had existed when I was playing in these groups -- music that told the story of the black experience via black composers. I am so grateful to Dr. Tony Marinello and the Illinois State University Wind Symphony for leading an incredible consortium that brought this piece to life. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to hanging with Tony and the group for a week in about a month's time!

*Come Sunday* is a two-movement tribute to the Hammond organ's central role in black worship services. The first movement, *Testimony*, follows the Hammond organ as it readies the congregation's hearts, minds, and spirits to receive The Word via a magical union of Bach, blues, jazz, and R&B. The second movement, *Shout!*, is a virtuosic celebration - the frenzied and joyous climactic moments when The Spirit has taken over the service.

The title is a direct nod to Duke Ellington, who held an inspired love for classical music and allowed it to influence his own work in a multitude of ways. To all the black musicians in wind ensemble who were given opportunity after opportunity to celebrate everyone else's music but our own - I see you and I am you. This one's for the culture!

## **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*

Ashrey Shah, *clarinet*

## *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*

Brian Fadel  
Arthur Hu  
Colin Kurtz\*

## *Clarinet*

Elynn Chang\*  
Alvin Chen  
Jason Chen  
Chris Cui  
Minghao Liu  
Connor Myers  
Nathan Soto  
Daniel Spielman  
Jonah Stuckey

## *Saxophone*

Kolbe Chapman  
Haven Kahn  
Christopher Unumb  
Natalia Warthen\*

## *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*

Evan DeRicco  
Chrisjovan Masso\*  
Noah Vincent\*

## *Percussion*

Isaac Chiang\*  
Samuel Kim +  
Hila Kuperman +  
Adam Langs  
Ryan Lee +  
Simeon Lee +  
Ryan Payne\*  
Jeffrey Ryan +  
Christian Santos  
Jacob Scheidt +

## *String Bass*

Atulya Palacharla

## *Piano*

Sinhwa Lee  
Safei Wang

## *Harp*

Lynn Koschnitzke

\*Section Leader

+Clappers

## **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.