Ensemble Recital Series

NIU WIND SYMPHONY
NIU WIND ENSEMBLE

Thomas Bough, conductor
Leif Albertson, Graduate Assistant

Tuesday, November 28, 2023
7 p.m.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall

PROGRAM

NIU WIND SYMPHONY

Vesuvius
Leif Albertson, Conductor

Meditation
Leif Albertson, Conductor

The Seal Lullaby
Leif Albertson, Conductor

Give Us This Day (Short Symphony for Wind Ensemble)
Thomas Bough, Conductor

NIU WIND ENSEMBLE

Serenade, Op. 43
NIU Chamber Winds
1. Andante and Allegro Pastorale
4. Finale

William Byrd Suite
1. The Earle of Oxford’s March
2. Pavana
3. Jhon come kiss me now
4. The Mayden’s Song
5. Wolsey’s Wilde
6. The Bells

Hymn to a Blue Hour

Gale and Zephyr
**World Premiere, Commissioned by Northern Illinois University

Frank Ticheli
(b. 1958)

Dwayne S. Milburn
(b. 1963)

Eric Whitacre
(b. 1970)

David Maslanka
(1943 - 2017)

Emil Hartmann
(1836 - 1898)
ed. Joshua Kearney

freely transcribed by Gordon Jacob
(1895 - 1984)

John Mackey
(b. 1973)

Shawn Okpebholo
(b. 1981)
FALL 2023 WIND SYMPHONY

** Flute:**
Paisley Stevens
Angie Morgano
Breanna Negele
Anna Melik
Kaylin Lee
Brianna Trejo
Nick Ivanoff
Julia Lunsford

** Oboe:**
Amanda Fujii

** Clarinet:**
Katelyn Ackland
Mitchell Lucas
Mikaela Jackson
Kelly Nelson
Avi Divizio
Mar Ortega
Chris Benson
Ryann Coutee

** Bass Clarinet:**
Anna Lanz

** Saxophone:**
Andrew Stover
Logan Moreno
Ricky Pinzon-Torres
Teddy Malamis

** Horns:**
JonLuca LaPorte
Aubrey Hopper
Alexia Quinn
Adrian Patino
Giavanna Mayotte

** Trumpet:**
Axel Solorzano
Jaron Holder
Jareth Sullivan
Marlowe Galvez
Jazzmyn Bell
Niya Teague
Joanna Gonzalez

** Trombone:**
Colin Wunner
Eric Wahl
Aiden Ledbetter
Alex Coronel
Tessa Kerkman

** Bass Trombone:**
Dylan Witte

** Euphonium:**
Korbyn Ringer
Bri Fox
Hailey Fedderson
Lilly Benitez

** Tuba:**
Sam Okunnu
Jovanni LaPorte
Jonathan Schweitzer
Chris McGee

** Timpani:**
Emily Heller

FALL 2023 WIND ENSEMBLE

** Flute:**
Anna Rockman **
Gianna Capobianca (piccolo)
Segun Owele
Kaelyn Witt
Vicky Gonzalez

** Oboe:**
Nicole Riordan **
Amanda Fujii

** Bassoon:**
Yu-Yu Chang **
Carol Rosing

** Clarinet:**
Kamil Lebowa **
Anthony Devea (Eb Clarinet)
Eduardo Zamudio
Mikaela Jackson
Katelyn Ackland
Chris Benson

** Bass Clarinet:**
Mitchell Lucas
Anna Lanz

** Saxophone:**
ASX Daniel Smith
ASX Trevor Gonzalez
TSX Nathan Tague
ASX/BSX Sara Lang

** Horns:**
Emma Hinkle ** I
Liam Weber III
Ryan Sindburg II
Carmen Houde IV

** Trumpet:**
Nick Anderson **
Emma Anderson **
Dartagnan Stephen
Ryan Deliman
Luis Ortiz
Erica Bough

** Trombone:**
Daeglan Sullivan **
Isabella Rodriguez
Zaire Burks

** Bass Trombone:**
Cameron Elam-Guthrie

** Euphonium:**
Andrew Whitlock
Collin Davidenko
Logan Bryant

** Tuba:**
Logan Yugo **
Cody Toth

** Timpani:**
Michael Speziale

** Percussion:**
Jonathon Kurecki **
Karl Olsen
Will Pierce
Jenna Brown
Christopher Avila

** Cello:**
Andrea LaFranzo

** String Bass:**
Phoebe Shaughnessy
VESUVIUS

Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano that destroyed Pompeii in A.D. 79, is an icon of power and energy in this work. Originally I had in mind a wild and passionate dance such as might have been performed at an ancient Roman bacchanalia. During the compositional process, I began to envision something more explosive and fiery. With its driving rhythms, exotic modes, and quotations from the Dies Irae from the medieval Requiem Mass, it became evident that the bacchanalia I was writing could represent a dance from the final days of the doomed city of Pompeii.

- Program Note by composer

MEDITATION

From the composer of the best-seller American Hymnsong Suite comes Meditation. By combining two tunes, the Lutheran hymn If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee and the American folk song Poor Wayfarin' Stranger, the composer expertly crafts a moving tribute to the memory of those who have passed.

- Program Note from publisher

In early 2004, I was contacted by Mr. Jeff Looman, director of instrumental music for the Calvin Christian Schools in Michigan. Looman entrusted me to create a special composition in memory of a former student, Nick Stegeman, who had lost his life several years earlier. Meditation combines two tunes, the Lutheran hymn If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee and the American folk song Poor Wayfarin’ Stranger. It is actually the second of three movements that comprise a suite entitled Music for Bright Youth. The title refers not only to Nick, but all the young musicians with whom it has been my pleasure to work over the years as well. In February of 2005, the combined bands of the Calvin Christian Schools, under the direction of Mr. Looman, premiered the entire suite as a part of their annual winter concert.

- Program Note by composer

THE SEAL LULLABY

In the spring of 2004 I was lucky enough to have my show Paradise Lost: Shadows and Wings presented at the ASCAP Musical Theater Workshop. The workshop is the brain child of legendary composer Stephen Schwartz (Wicked, Godspell), and his insights about the creative process were profoundly helpful. He became a great mentor and friend to the show and, I am honored to say, to me personally. Soon after the workshop I received a call from a major film studio. Stephen had recommended me to them and they wanted to know if I might be interested in writing music for an animated feature. I was incredibly excited, said yes, and took the meeting.

The creative executives with whom I met explained that the studio heads had always wanted to make an epic adventure, a classic animated film based on Kipling’s The White Seal. I have always loved animation, (the early Disney films; Looney Tunes; everything Pixar makes) and I couldn’t believe that I might get a chance to work in that grand tradition on such great material. The White Seal is a beautiful story, classic Kipling, dark and rich and not at all condescending to kids. Best of all, Kipling begins his tale with the mother seal singing softly to her young pup. (The opening poem is called The Seal Lullaby).

Oh! Hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon, o’er the combers, looks downward to find us,
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.
Where billow meets billow, then soft be thy pillow,
Oh weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!

- Rudyard Kipling, 1865-1936
I was struck so deeply by those first beautiful words, and a simple, sweet Disney-esque song just came gushing out of me. I wrote it down as quickly as I could, had my wife record it while I accompanied her at the piano, and then dropped it off at the film studio. I didn’t hear anything from them for weeks and weeks, and I began to despair. Did they hate it? Was it too melodically complex? Did they even listen to it? Finally, I called them, begging to know the reason that they had rejected my tender little song. “Oh,” said the exec, “we decided to make *Kung Fu Panda* instead.”

So I didn’t do anything with it; just sang it to my baby son every night to get him to go to sleep. (Success rate: less than 50%.) A few years later the Towne Singers commissioned the choral arrangement of it, and in 2011 I transcribed the piece for concert band. I’m grateful to them for giving it a new life, and to the schools, colleges and directors listed who have believed in this new transcription. And I’m especially grateful to Stephen Schwartz, to whom the piece is dedicated. His friendship and invaluable tutelage has meant more to me than I could ever tell him.

- Program note by composer

**GIVE US THIS DAY**

American composer David Maslanka has published nearly 100 pieces for wind band, as well as music for choir, chamber ensemble and symphony orchestra. His compositional style includes complex rhythmic and harmonic content that remains consonant and tonal. Maslanka holds the Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory and the Master of Music and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Michigan State University. While at Michigan State, he studied with H. Owen Reed, an influential band composer from the late and middle period of the last century. Maslanka has served on the faculty of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, and New York University, among others. Later in life, he lived in Missoula, Montana and worked exclusively on commission as a freelance composer. A glimpse into his spiritual approach to music, composition and life can be seen in his introduction to the score, which follow:

> The words ‘give us this day’ are, of course, from the Lord’s Prayer, but the inspiration for this music is Buddhist. I have recently read a book by the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh entitled *For a Future to be Possible*. His premise is that a future for the planet is only possible if individuals become deeply mindful of themselves, deeply connected with who they really are. While this is not a new idea, and something that is an ongoing struggle for everyone, in my estimation it is the issue for world peace. For me, writing music, and working with people to perform music, are two of those points of deep mindfulness. Music makes the connection to reality, and by reality I mean true wakefulness and awareness. Give Us This Day….Give us this very moment of awakeness and aware aliveness so that we can build a future in the face of a most dangerous and difficult time. I chose the subtitle Short Symphony for Wind Ensemble because the music really isn’t programmatic in nature. It has a full-blown symphonic character, even though there are only two movements. The music of the slower first movement is deeply searching, while that of the highly energized second movement is at times both joyful and sternly sober. The piece ends with a modal setting of the chorale melody Vater Unser in Himmelreich

– David Maslanka

**SERENADE**

Emil Hartmann was a composer from the Danish Golden Age. He wrote seven symphonies, concertos for respectively violin, cello and piano, several overtures, a symphonic poem (*Hakon Jarl*), orchestral suites, serenades, ballets, operas and singspiels, incidental music and cantatas. He was also the author of multiple works of chamber music (nonet, piano quintet, string quartets, clarinet quartets, piano trios, serenade for clarinet, cello and piano, sonatas for violin and piano, etc), songs and piano music. His music is resolutely Nordic, colourful and melodic and won great popularity in his days when performed. At the time, his Nordic folk dances (from 1859-60) as well as his later arrangements of Scandinavian folk music became famous, in line with *Brahms’ Hungarian Dances* or *Dvorak’s Slavonic Dances*. Stylistically, his works form a Scandinavian pendant to the music of some of his more famous contemporaries such as *Dvorak* or *Tchaikovsky*. Most of his works were published by German editors. (Wikipedia)

*Serenade* likely received its premiere under the direction of famed flute virtuoso and conductor Paul Taffanel in March of 1891. Although the initial performance was met with lukewarm reviews, the four movements of this composition are now considered a delightful addition to the repertoire for chamber winds.
WILLIAM BYRD SUITE

Keyboard music formed one of Byrd's main compositional endeavors, and the fruit of these labors provided the impulse for an entire school of Elizabethan keyboard composition. Most of these works were intended for performance at the virginal, a small relative of the harpsichord in many timbral and mechanical aspects. Although Byrd's keyboard works first appear in the 1570s, they only circulated in manuscript until the publication of My Ladye Nevells Booke (1591) and Parthenia (1611). However, the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book languished in obscurity until 1899 before receiving publication. This collection comprises the largest set of Byrd's keyboard works -- around seventy -- and is also regarded as England's foremost collection of keyboard works. All of the movements Gordon Jacob set in William Byrd Suite have the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book as their source.

Gordon Jacob considered William Byrd Suite "freely transcribed," as virginal players had no means of creating dynamic shading or timbral contrast on their instrument. Composers created dynamic intensity by adding voices above and/or below the melody. Similarly, composers created musical intensity by adding lines of increasing complexity, ornamenting the melody. Jacob remained mostly faithful to Byrd's original melody, harmony, form and figuration, but added his own orchestrational color and dynamic shading to intensify the aforementioned expressive qualities of the music.

It is an overstatement to describe each movement simply as growing louder and more complex due to layers of ornamentation, variation and imitation. Although Byrd utilizes these compositional devices in all the works represented, his genius lies in how he utilizes these effects in varying degrees to avoid monotony. In The Earl of Oxford's March, devices of crescendo, ornamentation and imitation are clearly evident. This movement, marked un poco pomposo, begins its stately procession through the two iterations of its form simply and very quietly, growing steadily stronger and more complex into the climactic final sections. Although originally attributed to Byrd, the slow, stately "Pavana" is now placed within Anthony Holborne's works list. Jacob alters the harmonic scheme of this movement, beginning each phrase in a different tonality, yet emphasizing Bb-major in them all. Jhon come kisse me now, The Mayden's Song and Wolsey's Wilde are sets of variations upon an eight and two sixteen bar melodies, respectively. Imitation and ornamentation are the primary developmental tools in the first two, while the third follows a more conservative approach with far less figuration and only one variation. Jacob's orchestration of Wolsey's Wilde takes advantage of the instrumental forces, alternating loud and soft dynamics, and effectively utilizing the timbral possibilities of the winds. The Bells is structured in large musical paragraphs, a continuous motivic variation emanating from a single two-note ground in the bass. The work culminates with a tubular bell solo amidst a grandiose layering of contrapuntal texture.

- Program Note by Brian K. Doyle, taken from Wind Repertory Project

HYMN TO A BLUE HOUR

The blue hour is an oft-poeticized moment of the day – a lingering twilight that halos the sky after sundown but before complete darkness sets in. It is a time of day known for its romantic, spiritual, and ethereal connotations, and this magical moment has frequently inspired artists to attempt to capture its remarkable essence. This is the same essence that inhabits the sonic world of John Mackey’s Hymn to a Blue Hour.

Programmatic content aside, the title itself contains two strongly suggestive implications – first, the notion of hymnody, which implies a transcendent and perhaps even sacred tone; and second, the color blue, which has an inexorable tie to American music. Certainly Hymn to a Blue Hour is not directly influenced by the blues, per se, but there is frequently throughout the piece a sense of nostalgic remorse and longing – an overwhelming sadness that is the same as the typically morose jazz form. Blue also has a strong affiliation with nobility, authority, and calmness. All of these notions are woven into the fabric of the piece – perhaps a result of Mackey using what was, for him, an unconventional compositional method:

“I almost never write music ‘at the piano’ because I don’t have any piano technique. I can find chords, but I play piano like a bad typist: badly. If I write the music using an instrument where I can barely get by, the result will be very different than if I sit at the computer and just throw a zillion notes at my sample library, all of which will be executed perfectly and at any dynamic level I ask. We spent the summer at an apartment in New York that had a nice upright piano. I don’t have a piano at home in Austin – only a digital keyboard – and it was very different to sit and write at a real piano with a real pedals and a real action, and to do so in the middle of one of the most exciting and energetic (and loud) cities in America. The result – partially thanks to my lack of piano technique, and partially, I suspect, from a subconscious need to balance the noise and relentless energy of the city surrounding me at the time – is much simpler and lyrical music than I typically write.”
Though not composed as a companion work to his earlier *Aurora Awakes*, *Hymn to a Blue Hour* strikes at many of the same chords, only in a sort of programmatic inversion. While *Aurora Awakes* deals with the emergence of light from darkness, *Hymn to a Blue Hour* is thematically linked to the moments just after sundown – perhaps even representing the same moment half a world away. The opening slow section of *Aurora Awakes* does share some similar harmonic content, and the yearning within the melodic brushstrokes seem to be cast in the same light.

The piece is composed largely from three recurring motives – first, a cascade of falling thirds; second, a stepwise descent that provides a musical sigh; and third, the descent’s reverse: an ascent that imbues hopeful optimism. From the basic framework of these motives stated at the outset of the work, a beautiful duet emerges between horn and euphonium – creating a texture spun together into a pillowy blanket of sound, reminiscent of similar constructions elicited by great American melodists of the 20th century, such as Samuel Barber. This melody superimposes a sensation of joy over the otherwise “blue” emotive context – a melodic line that over a long period of time spins the work to a point of catharsis. In this climactic moment, the colors are at their brightest, enveloping their surroundings with an angelic glow. Alas, as is the case with the magical blue hour, the moment cannot last for long, and just as steadily as they arrived, the colors dissipate into the encroaching darkness, eventually succumbing at the work’s conclusion with a sense of peaceful repose.

- Program note by Jake Wallace

**GALE AND ZEPHYR**

Shawn E. Okpebholo is a Grammy-nominated, critically acclaimed, and widely performed composer whose music has been praised by critics worldwide. The Washington Post describes his work as "fresh, new, and fearless," as well as "devastatingly beautiful," while The Guardian hails it as "lyrical, complex, and singular." His artistry has garnered him many awards, including The Academy of Arts and Letters Walter Hinrichsen Award and the 2020 American Prize in Composition. Okpebholo has collaborated with some of today’s most renowned artists and ensembles, including Rhiannon Giddens, Lawrence Brownlee, J’Nai Bridges, Will Liverman, eighth blackbird, Copland House Ensemble, and the Cincinnati and Houston Symphony Orchestras. His music has been featured in prestigious performance venues, including Carnegie and Wigmore Halls, as well as the Lincoln, Kennedy, and Kimmel Centers, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Recently, Okpebholo completed a residency with the Chicago Opera Theater, culminating in the production of his opera “The Cook-Off,” in collaboration with acclaimed librettist Mark Campbell. He holds the position of Johnathan Blanchard Professor of Composition at Wheaton College-Conservatory of Music and also serves as the Saykaly Garbulinska Composer-in-Residence at the Lexington Philharmonic. For more information about Shawn E. Okpebholo and his work, please visit shawnokpebholo.com.

The composer writes: When I set out to create this work for wind ensemble, I decided to explore the idea of wind as a natural phenomenon, particularly its fluidity as both a dynamic and gentle force. The title of the piece, *Gale and Zephyr*, refers to this exploration and my ultimate artistic response to this duality: gale a strong wind, and zephyr, a gentle breeze. The composition begins with a powerful solo trumpet statement, embodying the forceful onset of a gale. I imagined this section as a musical squall that not only portrays a violent gust of wind but also expresses its command and beauty, realized with bold brass gestures, swirling winds, and vibrant percussion. As the piece progresses, it transitions into a slower, quasi-impressionistic middle section, reminiscent of a gentle breeze, or zephyr. Here, delicate melodies and soft harmonies take over. While I aimed to create a calmer and more tranquil soundscape, there are unexpected interruptions that calm winds can bring. The energetic return serves as a bold and exciting climax, featuring a fierce interplay of the full ensemble, exploring the wind ensemble’s versatility.

The Wind Ensemble is thrilled to present the world premiere of *Gale and Zephyr* tonight. We are grateful to the Northern Illinois University New Music Composition Commission for providing the funds to commission this work from Okpebholo, and for the gracious gift of his time both tonight, and during October when he spoke at a Music Department Convocation and worked with the Wind Ensemble in rehearsal. Most of all, we are grateful for his musical expertise and the wonderful music he has created for us!
BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES

Thomas Bough joined the faculty of Northern Illinois University in the fall of 2005 as the Director of Athletic Bands. He also conducts the Wind Ensemble and the Wind Symphony and teaches graduate conducting and instrumental arranging. Bough holds MM and DMA degrees in Tuba Performance from Arizona State University, where he was a student of Sam Pilafian and Dan Perantoni. He holds the degree Bachelor of Music Education from Missouri State University, where he was active in both vocal and instrumental music. From 1999 - 2005 Bough served as the Assistant Director of Bands and Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, and from 1992-1999 as the Band Director at Westwood High School in Mesa, Arizona. He served as the founding conductor and music director of the Fox Valley Brass Band in Aurora, Illinois from 2017 - 2021.

Bough’s diverse performance background includes wind bands, brass bands, orchestras, chamber music, jazz bands, Dixieland, the Walt Disney World All American College Band and the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps. He is a Yamaha sponsored artist, and performs on the Yamaha 822 CC tuba and Yamaha 822 F tuba. In this capacity, he served as a brass consultant and guest instructor with the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps for six years. He was also an instructor with the Phantom Regiment Alumni Corps in 2016. Bough has contributed over twenty articles and hundreds of new music reviews to the Instrumentalist magazine, School Band and Orchestra magazine, and DCI Today, as well as articles to five volumes of the Teaching Music Through Performance series as well as Teaching Music Through Performance in Jazz. He is also an ambassador for the Denis Wick company, and a lifetime performer on their mouthpieces and mutes.

Bough is an active conductor, arranger, composer, clinician, and adjudicator for concert band, marching band, and brass band, with dozens of appearances per year to his credit across the United States. His music is published by Alfred Publications, Cimarron Music and GPG Publications. He has served as a frequent masterclass clinician and/or conductor for the Music For All Summer Symposium and the Music For All National Concert Band Festival for over fifteen years. He has presented masterclasses at the Eastman School of Music, the Crane School of Music, Arizona State University, the University of Michigan, the University of Toledo, and UNC-Greensboro, among many others. Bough has presented four times at the Midwest Clinic and twice at the U.S. Army Band Tuba-Euphonium Conference, as well as the International Society for Music Education Conference in Beijing, China, four NAFME multi-state regional conventions, the International Horn Society Conference, the International Women’s Brass Conference, and the Midwest Regional Tuba Euphonium Conference. In addition, he has presented at Music Educators Association State Conventions in Illinois, Arizona, Texas, Iowa, Tennessee, Alaska, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, Colorado, Nebraska, Arkansas, North Carolina, Indiana, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Washington, Florida and the Texas Bandmasters Association.

In May of 2014, his first compact disc was released, entitled, Concertos for Brass: The Music of Thomas Bough. This disc features three original concerti for solo brass instruments and wind band, as well as a transcription of the Concerto in Eb by Neruda. It is available on the Summit Records label at www.summitrecords.com. Since then, recent commissions have included “Ring the Bell” for The University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley; “Esse Quam Videri” for Olivet Nazarene University; “Chester’s Diadem” for Hauser Junior High School; “Musings on Mahler” for Solo Trumpet and Band; “Legacy of Luther” for Concordia University in Chicago; “Air Mobility Fanfare” for the U.S. Air Force Band at Scott Air Force Base; and “Poorest of the Poor: Music for Mother Teresa”, for the University of San Diego.

Learn more about his work at www.TomBough.com.

Leif Albertson is the current graduate assistant for the NIU Huskie Bands and currently studies wind band conducting with Thomas Bough. Leif Albertson grew up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and holds a bachelor’s degree in music education from Iowa State University. Leif has attended conducting symposiums at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, the University of Kansas City Missouri, and at Northern Illinois University. Leif taught 6th-8th grade middle school band in Elkhorn, Nebraska for two years before coming to NIU to pursue a master’s degree.