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Campus Band and Concert Band

Postcards from...

Monday, April 6, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

PROGRAM

CAMPUS BAND

Balatro

Minoo Dixon (b. 1999)

Ashley Hawk, conductor

Abracadabra

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

Adrian Holton, conductor

Inland Ocean

Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

Catherine Ryan, conductor

Tripwire

JaRod Hall (b. 1991)

Andrew Stein, conductor

Valiant Skies

Chris Pilsner (b. 1986)

Adrian Holton, conductor

Seis Manuel

Shelley Hanson (b. 1951)

Adrian Holton, conductor

Intermission

CONCERT BAND

Reckoning

Michael Markowski (b. 1986)

Elizabeth Peterson, conductor

Our Cast Aways

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

Elizabeth Peterson, conductor

Selections from Wicked

Stephen Schwartz (b. 1948)

arr. Jay Bocook (b. 1953)

Lexi Bixler, conductor

La Fiera Asturiana

Michele Fernandez (b. 1973)

Kirsten Hoogstraten Rivera, conductor

Italian Rhapsody

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

Kirsten Hoogstraten Rivera, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

Balatro

Minoo Dixon (b. 1999)

Winner of the 2024 NBA Young Band Composition Contest, *Balatro*, by Minoo Dixon, is a bold and eccentric work that invites students and listeners into the mind of a “balatro” —the Latin word for joker. This imaginative piece introduces young musicians to the intriguing octatonic scale in a way that’s both thoughtful and accessible, providing a fast-paced, captivating journey through fluid tonal shifts. Despite its tonal playfulness, the piece remains anchored to the familiar comfort of concert B-flat, offering an ideal blend of exploration and stability. *Balatro* is a fresh, innovative addition to the concert band repertoire—one that’s sure to surprise and delight all.

—Program note from publisher

Abracadabra

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

Abracadabra was composed in the summer of 2004, and was orchestrated the following November during a residency at the MacDowell Colony. *Abracadabra* was commissioned by the Driscoll Middle School Band in San Antonio Texas under the direction of Richard Gonzales.

The piece is dedicated to my son, and is at once playful and serious, innocent and mischievous. A sense of mystery pervades as the dark key of G minor is balanced by sudden shifts to bright and sunny major keys. Throughout the composition I was thinking about magic, not in an evil or frightening sense, but as a source of

fun and fantasy. My wonderfully playful, sometimes mischievous young son was always in the back of mind, as were images of Halloween with its costumes and jack-o'-lanterns. As the piece nears its conclusion, the music rushes toward what seems to be an explosive finish. But the woodwinds interrupt, fanning out to a questioning whole-tone cluster. They are answered by a puff of sound, a final disappearing act.

In strictly musical terms, the piece is as clear an example of musical economy as anything I've composed. Almost everything is derived from the opening bars of the main theme. Indeed, virtually every note can be traced to the main melody or its accompaniment. Because of this heightened sense of unity, I had to choose other ways to achieve musical variety. The most important solution was through the sudden and frequent shifts of mood, mode and tonality.

—Program note by composer

Inland Ocean

Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

I recently began teaching at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and I've been struck by the natural beauty of the city's surroundings, which are often overshadowed by the Strip. About an hour outside of Vegas is the Valley of Fire, a state park with magnificent cliffs and bright red sandstone structures. It's a humbling sight, and there are even petroglyphs on the rocks dating back 2,000 years! And what's even more fascinating is that the whole area was once underwater. It's hard to believe that this area in the middle of the Mojave Desert—the driest region in America—used to be an inland ocean. Over hundreds of millions of years,

the sea subsided as the land rose, resulting in the spectacular sight we see there today. *Inland Ocean* is inspired by this imagery, and I strove to musically capture the swirling of water, wind, and sand that patiently formed this region.

Inland Ocean was commissioned by the Beyond The Notes Music Festival, Inc., Chris Gleason, president. Many thanks to the Chequamegon Middle School Band from Glidden, Wisconsin, and their teacher Kristen Kirch for the world premiere performance on May 10, 2023.

^Program note by composer

Tripwire

JaRod Hall (b. 1991)

A spy attempts to infiltrate the defenses of an arch enemy.

Take caution, though, for every step can trigger an alarm because tripwires are everywhere!

Tripwire offers some extraordinary colors, from the sneaky sound of the beginning melody to the loud and raucous rips that follow later in the work.

—Program note from publisher

Valiant Skies

Chris Pilsner (b. 1986)

If I was to find a common element that ties together my favorite pieces of music, it's a great melody that is able to transform itself over the entirety of its work. My goal with *Valiant Skies* was to do exactly that.

In order to create a melody that could transform as it moved through various styles and tempi, I knew it had to have a simple structure to it. After trying hundreds of ideas, I finally came upon one that struck a balance between beauty and simplicity that I was looking for. This allowed me to not only create a lush, lyrical opening, but also use that same melody in different variations and forms to unify the piece's moments of joy, conflict, and ultimately triumph.

As is my usual process, the *Valiant Skies* came from the music as I wrote it. Throughout the entire work, I felt the music had an enduring and courageous spirit that kept whispering “valiant” in my ears. Simultaneously, I kept coming back to a motive that ascends up the Lydian scale, giving the entire piece a feeling of taking off into the sky.

—Program note from publisher

Seis Manuel

Shelley Hanson (b. 1951)

The seis is the traditional song and dance form of the Jibaro people, the peasant farmers of the mountains of Puerto Rico. At least 50 distinctive types of seis have been identified, “Seis” means “six” in Spanish; the term originally meant a dance for six men or six couples. The movement Seis Manuel is based on a traditional recurring harmonic pattern called the seis mapeye over which a singer improvises a melody.

Because of the very long history of military bands in Puerto Rico, with a particular importance placed on low brass and clarinets, those instruments are given solos. In keeping with the Puerto

Rican tradition of naming a seis after someone important to its creation, this seis was re-named in honor of conductor Manny Laureano, who commissioned and premiered the piece. This work is part three of the four-movement suite *Islas y Montañas*.

—Program note from publisher

Reckoning

Michael Markowski (b. 1986)

Reckoning began as a musical underdog story: an unlikely hero's determination to right certain wrongs that had been brought upon him or her in the past and that hero's ambition to prove that they are "a force to be reckoned with." I often liken it to a David and Goliath type of story: small versus big, poor versus rich. For example, the piece opens in a dark and oppressive world full of despair and anguish, but from within that darkness comes a very beautiful, very fragile, very hopeful oboe solo. However, this hope quickly transforms into a more active, kinetic energy—a musical uprising. Several families of instruments join the dialogue, voicing their grievances, adding to the collective resistance. By measure 90, the ensemble fully pledges their allegiance as a more majestic and heroic French horn theme ascends to the fore, literally rising quarter note by quarter note above the anxious eighth-note theme. From here, they plot their next move. But will it be enough?

Reckoning was commissioned by the Florida Bandmasters Association for the 2017 All-State Concert Band. It was premiered on Jan. 14, 2017, in Tampa, Florida, conducted by Captain Shanti C. Simon.

—Program note by composer

Our Cast Aways

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

6.5 million companion animals enter animal shelters every year and 2.4 million of these adoptable animals are put down. These numbers do not include the thousands who suffer in silence.

Thanks to thousands of caring people, these numbers are steadily decreasing, but we still have a long way to go. This work is dedicated to all those who work hard in the fight to end puppy mills, to rescue suffering pets and to provide care and medical attention to all those rescued. It is dedicated to those companions who get rescued and for those whose rescue never comes.

We are all shepherds. Every living creature is in our care. Hopefully mankind will someday uphold his responsibility and become caretaker of all living things on earth. Maybe someday all humans will be humane and mankind will be kind.

The pictures of the rescued animals belong to people who are my friends on Facebook. Apparently, I keep great company when it comes to people who rescue and adopt animals who have been cast away. My own rescues are also in the photos. The published score will feature these beautiful rescues in full color.

—Program note by composer

Selections from *Wicked*

Stephen Schwartz (b. 1948)

arr. Jay Bocook (b. 1953)

Rarely has a musical in modern times taken Broadway by storm the way this huge hit from Stephen Schwartz has done. The story line of the *Wicked Witch of the West* is intriguing, and the music is filled with depth and beauty. This powerful medley includes

“No One Mourns the Wicked,” “Dancing Through Life,” “No Good Deed,” For Good” and “Defying Gravity.”

—Program note from publisher

La Fiera Asturiana

Michele Fernandez (b. 1973)

In my mid-20s (30+ years ago while still a new high school band teacher), I promised my father, Jorge, that I would someday write a piece for his mother who succumbed to cancer at age 34 (when he was only 6 years old). Our grandmother, Armanda Martinez Pajares, was a flamenco dancer in Asturias, Spain, and mother to three young children. She had a generous, loving, yet fiery personality, and struggled quite valiantly to stay. The whole family traveled from Spain to Cuba to secure her surgery with a renowned specialist, even with bare financial means...

After finally retiring and devoting my all professional efforts to composing, I decided it was finally time to keep that promise and share part of our family’s story of devotion and resilience through a passionate 3/4 Spanish march with a flamenco flavor and a paso doble spirit.

I hope this work can bring joy to both players and audiences, and especially our students. In that way, a grandmother I never met, and who did not get the chance to stay and raise her own children—might still be able to contribute smiles to someone else’s kids. It’s never too late to keep your word.

—Program note by composer

Italian Rhapsody

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

Italian Rhapsody is a collection of Italian folk songs and a few operatic excerpts scored with Italian gusto! Solo clarinet opens this work with a certain Mafioso flair developing into a devious rendition of *The Italian Wedding Song #2* (The Wedding Tarantella). Caderna, composed by A.D. Arcangelo, is presented in both an Italian street band and contemporary march style. Giacomo Puccini's *La Boheme Quando m'en vo* (Musetta's Waltz) makes an appearance as an accordion player serenading young lovers in the moonlight. The finale features Luigi Denza's *Funiculi! Funicula!*, Giuseppe Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (Act II - Anvil Chorus) and Gioacchino Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. Italian operatic and folk song musical quotes are interlaced throughout the work. See if you can find them all! Scored with an Italian passion for family and feasting, *Italian Rhapsody* is definitely one very spicy meatball!

—Program note by composer

Commissioned by Colonel Arnald D. Gabriel (né Arnaldo Domenico Antonio Gabriele). Dedicated to Ferdinando and Filomena Gabriele, my loving parents.

PERSONNEL

Kirsten Hoogstraten Rivera, conductor

Lexi Bixler

Lexi Bixler is a graduate part-time instructor, pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in wind conducting and literature at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Previously, she served for nine years as the Elementary/Middle School director of bands in the Midd-West School District, as well as the assistant director of the Midd-West High School Marching Band in Middleburg, Pennsylvania. Bixler was recognized and awarded by the Midd-West School District as “Internally Motivated” and “Results and Process Oriented.” She was a grant recipient of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees in 2018 and 2019, where she utilized the funds for instrument purchases, benefiting students in need.

Bixler holds a Master of Arts Degree in music performance in instrumental conducting and clarinet performance and a Master of Arts Degree in music education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). Bixler also holds a Bachelor of Music in Music education from Susquehanna University, where she received the Outstanding Student Teacher Award. Bixler’s primary conducting teachers include Shanti Simon, Timothy Paul, Eric Hinton, and Gregory Grabowski.

Outside of conducting/teaching/performing, Bixler is an official in both Soccer and Girls Lacrosse.

Adrian Holton

Adrian Holton is a doctoral student studying wind conducting and literature and serves as principal trumpet of Colorado Springs Philharmonic. He previously served as the music director of National Concert Band of America and Maryland Band Directors Band at Montgomery College. He also conducted the 2022 Middleburg Film Festival Orchestra, collaborating with award-winning composers Michael Abels, Kris Bowers and Mark Isham. Holton served 12 years as a trumpet player in The United States Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. and Colorado Springs. He performed with The National Symphony, The Colorado Symphony, Boulder Philharmonic, Opera Colorado, American Chamber Winds, Brass of the Potomac and The Airmen of Note. He also toured Japan twice with the Broadway shows *Blast!* and *Blast II: MIX*, and spent two years performing aboard Royal Caribbean Cruises.

Holton currently resides in Littleton with his wife and two children. He holds trumpet performance degrees from Indiana University and University of Florida. Current and former instructors include Shanti Simon, John Rommel, Jay Coble, Gary Langford and Roger Steward.

Elizabeth Peterson

Elizabeth Peterson, emeritus professor, retired from her position as associate director of bands at the University of Illinois School of Music in May of 2022. Peterson conducted the Illinois Wind Orchestra, served as the placement coordinator for student teachers and taught several courses in instrumental conducting. Prior to her appointment at the University of Illinois, Peterson was a tenured professor of music education at the Ithaca

College School of Music. During the 17 years she spent at Ithaca College, Peterson conducted numerous ensembles including the Symphonic Band, Brass Choir and All-Campus Band. She taught courses in conducting, undergraduate and graduate courses in music education, and supervised student teachers. Peterson was the co-conductor of the Ithaca Concert Band, an adult community band for fifteen years.

Peterson continues to be active as a guest conductor, adjudicator and school music consultant. Peterson has served as interim conductor of the Interlochen Arts Academy Wind Ensemble, the Penn State University Wind Ensemble and the Colorado State University Symphonic Band. She presents clinics at the local, state and national levels in the field of music education and has published two books: *The Music Teacher's First Year: Tales of Challenge Joy and Triumph*, and *The Music Teacher's Later Years: Reflection with Wisdom*.

Peterson is a graduate of the University of Michigan where she received a Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Arts in English and studied trumpet with Armando Ghitalla. She received a Master of Music in music education and trumpet performance from Northwestern University, where she studied trumpet with Vincent Cichowicz. She earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in music education from Shenandoah Conservatory. Prior to her appointment at Ithaca College, Peterson was an arts administrator and director of bands in the public schools of Ohio and Illinois. She played trumpet in the North Shore Community Band under the direction of John P. Paynter. Peterson is a member of the American Bandmasters Association and serves on the Board of Directors for

the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. She currently lives in Fort Collins with her husband, Steve and their golden retriever, Stanley.

Catherine Ryan

Catherine Ryan is currently a second-year master's student studying saxophone performance, and a graduate assistant with the bands department. Prior to attending the University of Colorado Boulder, she completed her undergraduate studies in music education and performance at the University of Arkansas. An active member of the saxophone community, she has performed at numerous workshops and conferences as both a soloist and chamber musician, and has placed in multiple state competitions. In her free time, she enjoys drawing, reading and spending time with friends.

Andrew Stein

Andrew Stein is a junior at CU Boulder studying music education. He has previously conducted for the CU Middle School Ensembles program, working with seventh and eighth grade musicians from the greater Boulder area. Additionally, he has taught alongside other music teachers at the elementary through high school levels in the Denver-Boulder area and his home of Northern California. Primarily a flute player, he has performed with the Campus Band as a bass clarinetist and now joins the percussion section in addition to conducting.

Campus Band

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Kristina Adams
Lily Burns
Laina Eskins
Sydney Jaarsma
Anisha Kashyap
Carina McCartney
Lana Novogoratz
Caitlyn Pimentel

Oboe

Erin Stucky

Clarinet

Jason Born
Tristan Dornbusch
Lucy Forde
Amelia Kelly
Ava Kim
Kyla McGregor
Campbell Stoughton
Nic Woods

Alto saxophone

Ian Gruszczynski
Nathan Kerr
Isaac Mitchell
Rae Sweeney

Baritone saxophone

EJ Coombe
Spencer Edson
Ren Hotzfeld

Trumpet

Kaitlyn Brown
Xander DuBois
Egan Heisey-Grove
Logan Hernacki
Ava Kaelin
Kyra Larivee
Jackson Murphy
Rachel Nugent
August Rivero

Horn

Alexis Johnson
Sean Marketos
Alexandra Neil
Abigail Schlomer

Trombone

Brennan Faires

Andrew Johnston

Abigail Schlomer

Ashley Stuhlsat

Tuba

Ellis Bieringer

Abby Kamprath

Allison Zulkoski

Percussion

Meilani Cano

Rithvik Raghunath

Ryan Schwartz

Victoria Shook

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Avery Cutright

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Ava Flake

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Economics and Mathematics

Evey Thacker

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Alexander Schreurs*

Physics

Kierra Simmons (piccolo)

Integrative Physiology

Clarinet

Ashley Bass

Sociology and Queer and Trans Studies

Paul Burke

Music Education

Dani Concelman

Chemistry, Secondary Degree Education

Grace Cooke

Aerospace Engineering

Megan Davis*

Mechanical Engineering

Madison Monroe

Computer Science

Joseph Pagano

Neuroscience and Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology

Sam Weslake

Aerospace Engineering

Bass clarinet

Nina Low

English

Swaraj Patnaik*

Law

Bassoon

Amelia Dundon

Electrical Engineering

Kody Fung*

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Alto saxophone

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Biochemistry

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Architectural Engineering

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Aerospace Engineering

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Applied Mathematics

Molly McHale

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