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Photo credit: Owen Zhou.

Symphonic Band

Thursday, April 9, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

PROGRAM

Love and Nature

Gala Flagello (b. 1994)

1. Flower Power (2:46)
2. Star-Crossed (4:00)
3. Slow Burn (2:45)

Pageant (7:45)

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

Elias Gillespie, graduate conductor

One Life Beautiful (5:40)

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

Lexi Bixler, graduate conductor

Symphony No. 1 “New Day Rising”

Steven Reineke (b. 1970)

1. City of Gold (8:28)
2. Nocturne (6:37)
3. And the Earth Trembled (9:32)
4. New Day Rising (7:32)

PROGRAM NOTES

Love and Nature

Gala Flagello (b. 1994)

Love and Nature (2024) was commissioned by a consortium of wind bands led by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and explores how love prevails through cosmic lore, social movements, and mercurial mythos.

Each of the work's three movements connects a different instrumental sound world to the concepts of earth, air and fire, depicting a blossoming of kindness and hope for the future of our planet. The first movement, Flower Power, is inspired by the titular social movement of the 1960s/1970s and sonically critiques the juxtaposition of fragility and strength, beauty and utility, and nonviolence and force. Flower Power reflects the ethos of Marc Riboud's iconic photograph *The Ultimate Confrontation: The Flower and the Bayonet* and incorporates a musical Easter egg—a countermelody for counterculture. The second movement, Star-Crossed, summons the hope, whimsy and longing of its ill-fated protagonists through celestial textures and luminous scoring. The third and final movement, Slow Burn, explores both versions of the titular literary trope—romantic and anger-fueled—through the arboraceous lens of controlled fire, an originally indigenous practice that mitigates the drought-driven effects of climate change. Slow Burn foregrounds bright and wooden sounds to pay homage to our forests and the necessity of ecological restoration.

Special thanks to Kim Fleming, Christi Blahnik, Rachel Zephir, Ashley Killam, Ancel "Fitz" Neeley, Michael Avitabile, Sagar

Anupindi, Allison Chu and Hannah Hickman for their guidance during the writing of this work. And Pete Williams: to the moon and back. Endless gratitude to the bands whose support has made *Love and Nature* a reality.

—Program note by composer

Pageant (7:45)

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

Pageant, Op. 59 (1953) is the composer's third work for band, commissioned by Edwin Franko Goldman for performance at the 19th annual convention of the American Bandmasters Association. The premiere was on March 7, 1953, by the University of Miami Band with Persichetti conducting.

The composer's manuscript sketches show that Persichetti had originally intended to title the work *Morning Music for Band*—the opening horn motive and the first theme in the clarinet choir have a serene, pastoral quality that evokes thoughts of sunrise. The opening horn call provides the motivic basis for the rest of the work, germinating long phrases supported by chordal harmonies. The phrases are passed around amongst various small choirs of instruments, exploiting the plethora of timbral and textural combinations possible in an ensemble of wind and percussion instruments. The tonal centers shift as often as the instrumentation, landing on a B-flat major chord that transitions into the second part of the work, the “parade.” In the *Allegro* second section, the snare drum provides a rhythmic version of the melodic material to follow. This section utilizes polytonality with multiple key centers existing in the music at the same time.

—Program note from University of North Carolina Charlotte Wind Ensemble

One Life Beautiful (5:40)

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

One Life Beautiful was written in memory of Heather Cramer Reu for her “one life beautiful” that brought so much love and joy to our lives. The piece was commissioned by Ray and Molly Cramer, husband Phillip Reu and children, and brother Jeremy, his wife, Michelle and children.

—Program note by composer

Symphony No. 1 “New Day Rising”

Steven Reineke (b. 1970)

In 2005, I had the distinct pleasure of spending several months writing my first symphony. I am forever in debt to Duane Carroll and the Contra Costa Wind Symphony for asking me to undertake such a daunting task. Symphony No. 1, “New Day Rising” was written to commemorate the centennial of the great 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, and I was fortunate enough to conduct the premiere of the piece on April 18, 2006, in that beautiful city, exactly 100 years to the day.

The piece begins with an ominous and foreboding prologue that signifies the danger beneath the Earth and the destruction that will soon ensue. The music soon fades into a glorious picture of San Francisco at the turn of the 20th century. It is a vibrant, colorful place where we hear the sounds of ragtime and trolley cars and the city is bustling with life and commerce.

The second movement depicts the city on the evening of April 17th, 1906. The frenetic pace of the day has given way to a more peaceful, relaxed atmosphere. Once the city is lulled to sleep, we

hear the distant sound of church bells tolling 5 a.m., the hour the earthquake struck the city. This movement is segue attacca into the third movement.

The third movement begins in the early morning hours of April 18th, 1906. The city (San Francisco) sleeps. Suddenly the fault line rips and the earth begins to tear apart. Devastation and destruction ensue as the city turns to chaos caused by the tremors and aftershocks of the earthquake. Once the waves of aftershocks subdue, we enter a mysterious, dreamlike state of shock. Everything seems to be in slow motion as the city crumbles around us. An odd-metered march develops that signifies the soldiers marching in to take control of the city as it burns in the aftermath of the quake.

The fourth and final movement of the symphony depicts the rebuilding of shattered lives and restoring civilization. It begins in peaceful sadness, then grows from despair into restored faith and renewed hope. On the Sunday following the great earthquake, a minister gathered his flock for an impromptu church service on a grassy knoll in Golden Gate Park. Beside the minister stood a young man with a battered cornet. His melody drew hundreds of refugees of all denominations and creeds. They repeated in solemn voice “Other refuge I have none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee; leave, oh, leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.” After the glorious and majestic finale, the coda, or epilogue, ends quietly with the final unresolved chord signifying the danger that still lurks beneath the earth. It can and will strike again someday.

—Program note by composer

PERSONNEL

Lexi Bixler, graduate conductor

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.

Elias Gillespie, graduate conductor

Elias (Eli) Gillespie is a conductor, educator, and scholar currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in wind conducting and literature at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he studies with Shanti Simon. He previously earned a Master of Music in wind band conducting at CU Boulder, studying with Donald McKinney and Matthew Dockendorf, and holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Kansas State University.

His development as a conductor has been shaped through extensive study at leading national conducting symposia and through broad experiences in both professional and academic settings. He has served as a graduate part-time instructor at CU Boulder, where his responsibilities span large ensemble conducting, undergraduate conducting instruction, and leadership within the Golden Buffalo Marching Band. He also serves as assistant director of the CU Summer Music Academy. Prior to his graduate studies, he was Director of Bands and Orchestras at Lincoln Northeast High School in Nebraska, where he was recognized as the 2022 Nebraska Young Music Educator of the Year.

As a clinician and presenter, Gillespie has been active at state and national conferences, with his work also featured internationally at the Cultural Diversity in Music Education Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal. Gillespie's research and personal interests center on the ways conductors serve as both artists and educators. His work continues to explore how culturally responsive teaching and thoughtful artistry intersect to create meaningful and lasting musical experiences.

Symphonic Band

Flute

Lily Arndt
Mallory Deneau
Joyce Hoyer
Caera Knowles
Louise Larsen
Jacob Rubin
Clara Walker

Oboe

Christopher Brady
Thomas Goodwin
David Paull

Bassoon

Rylan Denby
Carl Gustafson
Ciela Heiles

Clarinet

Timothy Aguilar
Maxwell Allington
Paul Burke
Sophia Eyl
Leo Hall
Lilly Hickson
Luke Kneller
Karla Perez
Yliana Perez
Advaith Ravindran

Alto saxophone

Curtis Liu
Ashley Sanchez
Carys Vaughan
Morgan White

Tenor saxophone

Casey Coleman
Katelyn Garmon

Baritone saxophone

Sydney Bellora
Ryan Weisberg

Trumpet

Kaden Blake
Garrett Goemans
Anthony Kunz
Gwendolyn Milette
Ehryn Myatt
Charlie Smith

Horn

Jennifer Cirrincione
Basia Klos
Sammy Rees
Barrett Teston

Trombone

Noah Burak
Zeppo Castellano
Jace Drew
Jack Harper
Logan Hicks
Luke Meredith

Euphonium

Charlie Chisholm
Elyse Cutforth
Arie Dekkers
Sydnie Notter

Tuba

Sean Gaffney
Kiera Layne
Sophia Perez
Liam Ryan

Percussion

Max Adams
Angelia Castilleja
Sabrina Klinker
Reid Pleuss
Connor Stitzel

String bass

Jacob Kaminski

Harp

Lydia Krason

Piano

Gabrielle Lowman

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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).
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