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Symphonic Band Chamber Winds

Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

PROGRAM

Bulldog

Andrea Venet (b. 1983)

Percussion Ensemble

Coached by Adrian Holton

Caprice

Clare Grundman (1913-1996)

Clarinet Ensemble

Logan Sorey, conductor

Rhosymedre

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Matt Johnston

Clarinet Ensemble

Logan Sorey, conductor

More Old Wine in New Bottles

Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

1. Down Among the Dead Men
2. The Oak and the Ash
3. The Lincolnshire Poacher
4. Joan to the Maypole

Lexi Bixler, graduate conductor

All the Skies Above

Nicole Piunno (b. 1985)

- I. Gently
- II. With Energy

Tuba and Euphonium Ensemble

Kirsten Hoogstraten Rivera, guest conductor

Umoja

Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

Flute Ensemble

Elias Gillespie, graduate conductor

Adoration

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Michael Hawes (dates)

Brass Ensemble

Logan Sorey, conductor

Waves

Jenni Watson (b. 1985)

Saxophone Ensemble

Elias Gillespie, graduate conductor

Second Suite in F

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

ed. Colin Matthews

1. March
2. Song Without Words
3. Song of the Blacksmith
4. Fantasia on the 'Dargason'

Logan Sorey, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

Bulldog

Andrea Venet (b. 1983)

Bulldog is inspired by Shosti and our jam time. The content of the piece is based on paradiddles in various forms and includes rhythmic grooves and patterns that represent things I associate with the bulldog “freestyle”. Within paradiddle groupings of different lengths, there are variations of voicing, sticking and patterns. One versatile thing about paradiddle language are the funky grooves that emerge when extracting one voice/hand, especially when juxtaposing over a contrasting but steady pulse. Like an English bulldog, the piece is intended to be fun, sturdy, thick, short and sweet!

Bulldog (2021) was commissioned by Third Coast Percussion.
—Program note by composer

Caprice

Clare Grundman (1913-1996)

Caprice by Clare Grundman features the entire clarinet section performing as a clarinet choir. It is interesting to focus on just one section of the ensemble and to observe that it is capable of standing alone.

Clare Ewing Grundman was one of the most prolific and highly respected composers for band on the American scene. His activities include score and arrangements for radio, television, motion pictures, ballet and Broadway musicals.

—Program note by William V. Johnson

Rhosymedre

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

In 1920 Ralph Vaughan Williams composed three preludes for organ based on Welsh hymn tunes, a set that quickly established itself in the organ repertoire. Of the three, Rhosymedre, sometimes known as “Lovely,” has become the most popular. The hymn tune used in this prelude was written by a 19th-century Welsh composer, J.D. Edwards, and is a very simple melody made up almost entirely of scale tones and upbeat skips of a fourth. Yet, around this modest tune Vaughan Williams has constructed a piece of grand proportions, with a broad arc that soars with the gradual rise of the tune itself.

The hymn tune in long values is surrounded by a moving bass line and a treble obbligato in faster notes often characterized by descending sixths. Vaughan Williams has joined together hymn tune, bass and obbligato in such a way as to create an exceedingly fresh and ingratiating tonal language, which seems all the more remarkable when one discovers from the score that there is scarcely an accidental in the entire piece.

—Program notes by Walter Beeler

More Old Wine in New Bottles

Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

Matt Johnston

In 1976, 17 years after the premiere of the original *Old Wine in New Bottles* (1959) and now at the age of 81, Gordon Jacob began composing *More Old Wine in New Bottles* (1977). *More Old Wine in New Bottles* is based upon four British folk songs set in theme and variations form. The recognizable melodies, clear

formal structures and more traditional tertian harmonies allow contrasting styles coupled with unique instrumental combinations to jump to the forefront of the sound. *More Old Wine in New Bottles* has a playful quality that subtly celebrates the beauty of wind instruments and their ability to captivate an audience through orchestration and instrumental colors.

—Program note by Marc Decker

All the Skies Above

Nicole Piunno (b. 1985)

Originally written for trombone dectet and later arranged for tuba-euphonium ensemble, *All the Skies Above* is an excellent example of Nicole Piunno's beautiful brass writing. The first movement starts with a euphonium solo that fragments throughout the section, supported by lush quintal chords that evoke the open skies. The second part of the movement introduces a sixteenth-note motive that carries through the rest of the piece, driving it forward with layered, continuous motion until it reaches a peak and soars to its climax.

The second movement begins with an energetic build-up into the same 16th-note motive, which then unfolds into a lilting melody picked up by the tubas for a joyful unison section. The motive and melody combine and grow until the slow, soaring melody from the first movement returns with full ensemble force. The melody then fragments among the players until it fades to the end.

Umoja

Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

Umoja is the Swahili word for “unity” and is the first day in seven in the African-American celebration of Kwanzaa. The original composition calls for unity through the tradition of call and response and was first meant to be a simple family sing-along song for Kwanzaa.

—Program note from publisher

Adoration

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price was a prolific American composer whose race and gender made it difficult for her contributions to join the widely accepted musical canon in the decades following her life. A trailblazer, Price is considered the first Black woman recognized as a symphonic composer and was the first to have her music performed by a major American orchestra when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra gave the world premiere of her Symphony No. 1 in 1933.

Price’s catalog of works boasts an impressive array of symphonies, concertos, chamber music, various symphonic works, choral works, piano music and music for the organ.

Adoration in its original form is one of Price’s compositions for organ and fits within the genre of her semi-secular output.

Waves

Jenni Watson (b. 1985)

Waves is a meditative piece evocative of the lapping of ocean waves. No particular melody, just undulating sound weaving in and out of the various parts of the ensemble.

—Program note by the composer

Second Suite in F

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

The *Second Suite* consists of four movements, all based on specific English folk songs.

Movement I: March: Morris Dance, Swansea Town, Claudy Banks.

The march of the *Second Suite* begins with a simple five note motif between the low and high instruments of the band. The first folk tune is heard in the form of a traditional British brass band march using the Morris-dance tune *Glorishears*. After a brief climax, the second strain begins with a euphonium solo playing the second folk tune in the suite, *Swansea Town*. The theme is repeated by the full band before the trio. For the trio, Holst modulates to the unconventional sub-dominant minor of B-flat minor and changes the time signature to 6/8, thereby changing the meter. (Usually one would modulate to sub-dominant major in traditional march form. While Sousa, reputedly the “king of marches”, would sometimes change time signatures for the trio (most notably in *El Capitan*), it was not commonplace.) The third theme, called *Claudy Banks*, is heard in a low woodwind soli, as is standard march orchestration. Then the first strain is repeated da capo.

Movement II: Song Without Words, ‘I’ll Love My Love’.

Holst places the fourth folk song, *I’ll Love My Love*, in stark contrast to the first movement. The movement begins with a chord from French horns and moves into a solo of clarinet with oboe over a flowing accompaniment in F dorian. The solo is then repeated by the trumpet, forming an arc of intensity. The climax of the piece is a fermata in measure 32, followed by a trumpet pickup into the final measures of the piece.

Movement III: Song of the Blacksmith.

Again, Holst contrasts the slow second movement to the rather upbeat third movement which features the folk song *A Blacksmith Courted Me*. The brass section plays in a pointillistic style depicting a later Holst style. There are many time signature changes (4/4 to 3/4) making the movement increasingly difficult because the brass section has all of their accompaniment on the up-beats of each measure. The upper woodwinds and horns join on the melody around the body of the piece, and are accompanied with the sound of a blacksmith tempering metal with an anvil called for in the score. The final D major chord has a glorious, heavenly sound, which opens the way to the final movement. This chord works so effectively perhaps because it is unexpected: the entire movement is in F major when the music suddenly moves to the major of the relative minor.

Movement IV: Fantasia on the Dargason.

This movement is not based on any folk songs, but rather has two tunes from Playford’s *Dancing Master* of 1651. The finale of the suite opens with an alto saxophone solo based on the folk tune *Dargason*, a 16th century English dance tune included in

the first edition of *The Dancing Master*. The fantasia continues through several variations encompassing the full capabilities of the band. The final folk tune, *Greensleeves*, is cleverly woven into the fantasia by the use of hemiolas, with *Dargason* being in 6/8 and *Greensleeves* being in 3/4. At the climax of the movement, the two competing themes are placed in competing sections. As the movement dies down, a tuba and piccolo duet forms a call back to the beginning of the suite with the competition of low and high registers.

The name “dargason” may perhaps come from an Irish legend that tells of a monster resembling a large bear (although much of the description of the creature has been lost over time). The dargason tormented the Irish country side. During the Irish uprising of the late 18th century, the dargason is supposed to have attacked a British camp, killing many soldiers. This tale aside, “dargasn” is more likely derived from an Anglo-Saxon word for dwarf or fairy, and the tune has been considered English (or Welsh) since at least the 16th century. It is also known as ‘Sedony’ (or Sedany) or “Welsh Sedony.”

Holst later rewrote and re-scored this movement for string orchestra, as the final movement of his *St. Paul’s Suite* (1912), which he wrote for his music students at St. Paul’s Girls’ School.
—Program note by Imogen Holst

PERSONNEL

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 in music performance, instrumental conducting and clarinet performance and a Master of Arts 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 (Eli) Gillespie

Eli Gillespie is a conductor, educator and scholar 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.

Adrian Holton

Adrian Holton is a graduate teaching assistant pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in wind conducting and literature at University of Colorado Boulder, 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, 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.

Percussion Ensemble

Max Adams

Tryggvi Holt

Reid Pleuss

Reese Whitaker

Clarinet Ensemble

Timothy Aguilar

Maxwell Allinton

Paul Burke

Seth Ferrin

Kevin Halsey

Lilly Hickson

Liam Kiernan

Luke Kneller

Yilana Perez

Advaith Ravindran

Jade Vens

More Old Wine in New Bottles Ensemble

Mallory Deneau, flute

Joyce Hoyer, piccolo/flute

Christopher Brady, oboe

Thomas Goodwin, oboe/English horn

Rylan Denby, bassoon

Ciela Heiles, bassoon

Carl Gustafson, contrabassoon

Jade Vens, clarinet

Yliana Perez , clarinet

Anthony Kunz, trumpet

Charlie Smith, trumpet

Sammy Rees, French horn

Barrett Teston, French horn

Tuba and Euphonium Ensemble

Euphonium

Charlie Chisholm

Elyse Cutorth

Arie Dekkers

Nathan Kleve

Sydney Notter

Sam Webster

Tuba

Anton Akse

Sean Gaffney

Kiera Layne

Ian Madariaga

Brayden Metcalf

Sophia Perez

Liam Ryan

Flute Ensemble

Lilly Arndt

Mallory Deneau

Joyce Hoyer

Caera Knowles

Louise Larsen

Jacob Rubin

Andrew Stein

Clara Walker

Brass Ensemble

Kaden Blake, flugel horn

Toby Buss, trumpet

Gwendolyn Milette, trumpet

Ehryn Myatt, trumpet

Olivia Temme, French horn

Lilli Vincent, French horn

Noah Burak, trombone

Zeppo Castellano, trombone

Jace Drew, bass trombone

Sean Gaffney, tuba

Saxophone Ensemble

Sydney Bellora

Casey Coleman

Kate Garmon

Matthew Gross

Curtis Liu

Carys Vaughan

Ashley Sanchez

Ryan Weisberg

Morgan White

Second Suite in F Ensemble

Jacob Rubin, piccolo
Caera Knowles, flute
David Paull, oboe
Rylan Denby, bassoon
Carl Gustafson, bassoon
Yliana Perez, E-flat clarinet
Maxwell Allinton, clarinet
Sophia Eyl, clarinet
Liam Kiernan, clarinet
Matthew Gross, alto saxophone
Kate Garmon, tenor saxophone
Kaden Blake, cornet
Toby Buss, cornet
Gwendolyn Milette, cornet
Sammy Rees, French horn
Olivia Temme, French horn
Barrett Teston, French horn
Lilli Vincent, French horn
Jack Harper, trombone
Luke Meredith, trombone
Jace Drew, bass trombone
Elyse Cutorth, euphonium
Brayden Metcalf, tuba
Sawyer Kuhn, percussion
Angelia Castilleja, percussion
Connor Stitzel, percussion

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