



Rudi E. Scheidt
School of Music

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS Symphonic Band

presents,

ELEMENTS

Dr. Wilker Augusto, conductor
Jon Yopp, guest conductor

FEBRUARY 24, 2026 7:00 PM

PLOUGH CONCERT HALL

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music
Jacob Allen, Interim Director
College of Communication and Fine Arts
Debra Burns, Dean

PROGRAM

Mother Earth
A Fanfare

David Maslanka (1943-2017)

Red Rock Mountain

Rossano Galante (b. 1967)

Winds of Change

Randall Standridge (b. 1976)

Jon Yopp, guest conductor*

Diamond Tide
I. Moderato
II. Allegro

Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

Questions to Heaven

Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981)

For symphonic wind ensemble and fixed media

Vesuvius

Frank Ticheli (b.1958)

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Masters of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting

PERSONNEL

Flute

Natalie Severs*
Asa Pankewycz
Jennifer Perez
Miley Jaimez

Oboe

Quinn Milne*
Simon Craig**
Jesus Salazar**

Bassoon

Valeria Ramirez*
Avery Wiggs
Caiden Ross**

Clarinet

Isis Weaver*
Andrew Hofmann
Onyinye Igboanugo
Kaden Bailey
David Champlin
Chandler Golden
Hayden Mitchell
Shihao Zhu**

Alto Saxophone

Alan Blair*
Matthew Miner

Tenor Saxophone

Caleb Hunt

Baritone Saxophone

Blake Pelayo

Trumpet

Owen Kearney*
Mason Stinson
Jacob Turner
Logan Pack
Fausto Meja

Remington Hicks

Alise Jordan
Brenten Hopkins

French Horn

Dean Blish*
Rhys Roberts
Nicholas Cacolyris
Juan Garay

Trombone

Constance Robinson*
Mason Creekmore
Leslie Avila
Joseph Bischoff
Bilal Muhaimin
Xavier Haynes

Bass Trombone

Chandler Chrestman

Euphonium

Alexander Chan*
Skarlett Wahlquist
Kathryn Dacus
Marie Bice

Tuba

Alucard Simpson*
Christopher Blackston
Lyle Stephens
Bryce Cowell

Percussion

Willie Castellanos*
Daniel Padron
Mia Perez
Will Hankins
John Ungurait
Benjamin Gravatt
Mason Threlkeld

Piano

Sui Lin
JingYi Bai**

*Principal Player

**Guest musician

PROGRAM NOTES

Mother Earth

A Fanfare

David Maslanka (1943-2017)

*Praised by You, my Lord, for our sister, MOTHER EARTH,
Who nourishes us and teaches us,
Bringing forth all kinds of fruits and colored flowers and herbs.*

- St. Francis of Assisi

The commission was for a three-minute fanfare piece. Each piece takes on a reason for being all its own, and *Mother Earth* is no exception. It became an urgent message from Our Mother to treat her more kindly! My reading at the time of writing this music was *For a Future to be Possible* by the Vietnamese monk and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. He believes that the only way forward is to be extremely alive and aware in our present moment, to become awake to the needs of our beloved planet, and to respond to it as a living entity. Music making allows us to come immediately awake. It is an instant connection to the powerful wellspring of our creativity and opens our minds to the solution of any number of problems, including that of our damaged environment. My little piece does not solve the problem! But it is a living call to the wide-awake life, and it continues to be performed by young people around the world.

- Program Note by composer

Red Rock Mountain

Rossano Galante (b. 1967)

Red Rock Mountain refers to a geologic feature in Ricketts Glen State Park in Luzerne, Pennsylvania. Streams with occasional waterfalls frame the park's trails. A hiker reaching the summit of Red Rock Mountains is rewarded with vistas that include the undulating ridge of the Allegheny Front and Pocono Formation.

This composition is an episodic work that paints a musical portrait of a beautiful mountain landscape. Brass fanfares and soaring wind lines begin the piece, transitioning into an emotional section depicting the mountains at dusk. As the sun rises and sheds light on its peaks, the music becomes lyrical and rhythmically incisive, culminating in a heroic brass finale that depicts the full grandeur of the mountains.

- Program Note from publisher

Winds of Change

Randall Standridge (b. 1976)

In recent years, Oklahoma has seen a great increase in the development of wind energy. This development in sustainable energy sources and the winds that flow across the great state serve as the inspiration for this composition.

The piece begins by depicting the great open spaces that stretch for miles across the Oklahoma landscape. Small gusts of wind (represented by scalar and arpeggiated passages in the mallets and woodwinds) dance across the landscape. The piece picks up pace as the wind races across the land, turning the turbines and charging towards the future.

- Program Note by composer

Diamond Tide

Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

A 2010 article published in *Nature Physics* details an experiment in which scientists were able to successfully melt a diamond and, for the first time, measure the temperature and pressure necessary to do so. When diamonds are heated to very high temperatures, they don't melt; they simply turn into graphite, which then melts (and the thought of liquid graphite isn't nearly as appealing or beautiful as liquid diamond.) Therefore, the addition of extremely high pressure -- 40 million times the pressure we feel on earth at sea level -- is crucial to melt a diamond.

The extreme temperature and pressure used in this experiment are found on Neptune and Uranus, and scientists therefore believe that seas of liquid diamond are possible on these two planets. Oceans of diamond may also account for these planets' peculiar magnetic and geographic poles, which do not line up like they do here on earth. Lastly, as the scientists were melting the diamonds, they saw floating shards of solid diamond forming in the pools -- just like icebergs in our oceans. Imagine: distant planets with oceans of liquid diamond filled with bergs of sparkling solid diamonds drifting in the tide...

These theories are obviously all conjecture, but this alluring imagery provided heaps of inspiration for *Diamond Tide*, which utilizes the "melting" sounds of metallic water percussion and trombone glissandi throughout.

- Program Note by composer

Questions to Heaven

Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981)

For symphonic wind ensemble and fixed media

If you were like me, you had plans for 2020 that didn't work out. First, it started with scattered stories about a novel coronavirus, then it arrived in pockets, then there were illusions of two-week interruptions, and then it was an eternal presence. But that's the nature of a pandemic: it's unimaginable until it's a reality.

For me, our new normal of Zoom meetings, constant deliveries, and strategized movements outside the house made my anxiety skyrocket and shut me down creatively. It seems strange since our romantic clichés about artists seemingly revolve around a tortured isolation that leads to creative inspiration. At first, I indulged in this fantasy myself. I thought about how composing could escape the oppressive daily numbers that exactly measured the incommensurable horror that surrounded us. I could write and, by doing so, evade this reality and rescue the joy it had obscured. But, instead, I lived unproductively with my husband and two cats in a tiny house and felt terribly alone.

Ultimately, my rescue and the start of this piece did come, though not from an expected source. One day in late March, I stumbled upon an opinion article by retired NASA astronaut Scott Kelly entitled "I Spent a Year in Space, and I Have Tips on Isolation to Share." At the time, this type of article was already its own genre, but I read it anyway. For Kelly, his secluded observations of Earth from space were a perfect analogy for our new collective condition. Like Earth seen from space, our lives are borderless. Our vulnerabilities and interconnections had been laid bare by a virus, and it denied us our delusions of total autonomy. He articulated what I had been searching for: beauty in isolation -- a beautiful potential not from escape but from squarely confronting the present.

The following months saw my creative revival. It also reawakened my childhood fascination with space exploration. It was fortuitous as well. I moved my eyes skyward as scientists from multiple countries were launching expeditions to study Mars. NASA launched Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover, the United Arab Emirates launched their Hope spacecraft explorer, and China launched its orbiter Tianwen-1 or "Questions to Heaven," named after a classical Chinese poem. I became an avid fan of anything music and space-related from Stanley Kubrick's use of Richard Strauss's Sunrise theme in the opening montage of the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* to Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield's cover of David Bowie's *Space Oddity*, performed on the International Space Station, to recordings of interstellar space.

You will hear the sounds of the cosmos directly in this piece. It is a work meant to celebrate our collective accomplishments and our great if stressed-out ability to find beauty in our interconnected isolation.

- Program Note by composer

Vesuvius**Frank Ticheli (b.1958)**

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

MUSIC BIOGRAPHY

DR. WILKER AUGUSTO, Director

Dr. Wilker Augusto, from João Pessoa, Brazil, earned his Bachelor of Music in Horn Performance from the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), where he received the Laurel of Academic Excellence Award. In Brazil, he served for 14 years as a middle and high school band director and earned first-place honors in many state and regional championships, including conducting awards. During this time, he also participated in national and international music festivals for horn performance and conducting and won the “Young Orchestral Conductor” award. He was deeply involved in community outreach as a horn instructor, assistant orchestra director, and artistic director.

In 2016, Dr. Augusto relocated to the United States to advance his musical education and career. At Azusa Pacific University (CA), he earned an Artist Certificate in Horn Performance under the tutelage of Professor James Thatcher and a Master of Music in Instrumental Conducting with the guidance of Dr. John Burdett. At the same time, he served as Music Director of the World Music Symphony Orchestra at the Azusa Conservatory, taught horn and brass and assisted band programs at several schools, while also performing as a freelance musician throughout Southern California. In the marching arts, he served as a brass staff member for the Impulse Drum and Bugle Corps and as a tour assistant director for The Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps.

Dr. Augusto earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting from the University of Memphis in 2024, under the guidance of Dr. Albert Nguyen. He has participated in conducting symposiums nationwide and was selected as a Reynolds Conducting Institute Fellow. Dr. Augusto’s influence and impact within the global music community continue to expand. He serves as Director of International Relations for the Brazilian League of Bands (L.B.F) and is an active member of the International Horn Society, the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE), and the College Music Society. He has also been honored with membership in the national band fraternity Kappa Kappa Psi.

Currently, Dr. Augusto serves as Visiting Assistant Director of Bands at the University of Memphis. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses and works with the University Marching Band, “The Mighty Sound of of the South,” the Pep Band, the Symphonic Band, and the Wind Ensemble. In addition to his academic responsibilities, he remains active as a private horn instructor and as a performer with professional orchestras and chamber ensembles. He also serves as a clinician and guest conductor for honor bands and schools throughout the Mid-South.