



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MEMPHIS**®

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

## **The Human Condition**

*featuring*

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS**

**Wind Ensemble**

**In collaboration with the  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
and  
arx duo**

Albert Nguyen, conductor  
William Whitt, guest conductor  
Wilker Augusto, guest conductor

April 25, 2023

7:30 p.m.

Scheidt Family Performing Arts Center  
Plough Foundation Performance Hall

**Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music**  
Kevin Sanders, Director

**College of Communication and Fine Arts**  
Ryan Fisher, Interim Dean

# PROGRAM

*D'un Matin de Printemps* (1918/2021) Lily Boulanger  
(1893-1918)  
trans. Jack Hontz

Wilker Augusto, conductor

*In Thrall* (2019) Ted Hearne  
(b. 1982)

arx duo, Garrett Arney and Matthew Duvall, percussion

*Sheltering Sky* (2012) John Mackey  
(b. 1973)

William M. Whitt, conductor

*Desert Tales* (2022) Evan Erickson  
(b. 2003)

*I. Hymn of the Nomads*

*II. The Sultan's Parade*

*III. The Tiger Cave*

Dancers: Kylie Davis, Elyzah Gasmen, Melody Green, Ella Lark,  
Kaylin Martin, Kennedy McCaskill, Hannah Smith, Jacob Stagoski,  
Joshua Waits

Choreographer: Jill Guyton Nee in collaboration with the dancers

\*\*\*World Premiere\*\*\*

\*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in  
Wind Conducting.

# University of Memphis Wind Ensemble

Albert Nguyen, conductor

## Flute

Delara Hashemi\*  
Catie Balsamo  
Samuel Jesuyemi  
Matthew Hammons  
Mackenzie Saylor+

## Oboe

Ty Matthews\*  
Victoria Hoffman  
Jesus Salazar

## Bassoon

Tina Hazell\*  
Jacob Bridges

## Clarinet

Evan Erickson\*  
Kendall Howard  
Fernando Martinez  
Desmon Taylor  
Justin James  
Ian Greer

## Bass Clarinet

Adam Alter

## Alto Saxophone

Nathan Graybeal\*  
Andrew Stine

## Tenor Saxophone

Matthew Meyers

## Bari Saxophone

Landon Riggins

## String Bass

Kendrick Cottrell  
Kaleb Ritchie

## Harp

Marian Shaffer

## Horn

James Currence\*  
Steven Groff  
Madeline Miller  
Wilker Augusto+  
William M. Whitt+

## Trumpet

Tyler Helms\*  
Lacey Peschel  
Yiming Zhang  
Walker Higgins  
Oliver Buckley  
Alex Scheutrupf+

## Trombone

Nathan Hiers\*  
Jesse Coppick  
Collin Woods  
Gus Bradbury  
Jasmine Lockwood

## Euphonium

Shekinah Ball\*  
Andrew Jennette

## Tuba

Bryson Harding  
Christopher Gilchrist+

## Percussion

Susannah Clabough\*  
Jacob Bross  
Overton Alford  
Mario Shaw  
Kate Bingham  
Christian Davis  
Dwight Van de Vate

## Piano

Diego Parra

\*denotes principal player

+denotes guest musician

***D'un Matin de Printemps* (1918/2021) Lily Boulanger (1893-1918)  
trans. Jack Hontz**

First set for violin and piano and then re-scored for full orchestra, *D'un Matin de Printemps* evokes a wealth of different characters. The music alternates between feelings of liveliness, joy, mystery, curiosity, contemplativeness, pain, and nuances in between. Above all, the work exudes a vibrant energy that hides the fact that its composer was mere months away from her death.

*D'un Matin de Printemps* also clearly showcases Lili Boulanger's immense talent. The impact of the French symbolists is palpable, particularly given the usage of parallel harmonies and colorful orchestration one might expect from Debussy or Ravel. Also present are biting dissonances and bitonality that hint towards the coming shift away from tonal harmony. Boulanger's ability to combine these traditional and progressive techniques, mingled with her talent to convey vivid colors, leave us all wanting more and pondering that fateful question, "what if...". -Jack Hontz

**Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)**, a French composer, was born into a family of musicians and showed her gifts at the age of two. It was the same year that she contracted pneumonia, which permanently weakened her immune system, an event that would condition the rest of her life, during which she contracted numerous infections until tuberculosis caused her premature death at 24.

Lili Boulanger showed prodigious musical talent from a young age. It was Gabriel Fauré, a family friend and mentor, who first discovered Lili's perfect pitch when she was still a child. With the guidance of family and formal training, Lili's compositional skills quickly blossomed. She began her musical study with her sister Nadia Boulanger. She was also a student of Paul Vidal at the Paris Conservatory. Her top place finish at the highly competitive Prix de Rome in 1913 (the first time a top prize was awarded to a woman) cemented her stature as a rising giant in the French, if not European, musical landscape.

However, fame and fortune tragically eluded Lili. Her first stay in Rome was interrupted by the First World War, and she returned home to Paris to found the Franco-American Committee at the Paris Conservatory to help musicians who had been sent off to Rome. Her childhood bout with pneumonia left her immune system compromised, and she would battle illness her entire life. Nevertheless, Lili continued writing through her illness until it consumed her entirely. With the help of her sister, Nadia (a famous composer and teacher in her own right), Lili composed right up until her death in 1918 at the age of 24.

## ***In Thrall* (2019)**

**Ted Hearne (b.1982)**

*In Thrall* focuses on the interdependency of different groups. Two solo percussionists shift their weight in time against each other, see-sawing polyrhythms. The ensemble behind them pulses in sound clouds that ebb and flow, demarcating disparate but interlocking periods of time. The percussionists play mostly cymbals, slipping in and out of audible articulation by controlling the degree to which the instrument is dampened or allowed to ring, and by varying the location on the instrument that is being struck. Led by this cymbal sound, but echoed in all instruments, the music highlights confounding moments when clearly different pulses fuse into one sound.

The title is drawn from a 2017 lecture by Judith Butler, “The Human Condition.” In it, Butler asks us to consider “a set of relations without which there is no self” — “The self is not a bounded entity, but as something that is bound to others. As bound up with others alternatively, bound and unbound, the self is a set of relations, is nothing outside those relations, and even in referring to itself it is referring to nothing other than those set of relations that make survival possible.

The term bound carries complex resonances here. If the self is bounded, it is discrete, defined by its boundary, and so defined precisely by what differentiates that self from others. If the self is bound to others, then it is in thrall, in relationship, and there is no in itself and no boundary that establishes the self as a discrete entity. Indeed, the self is always negotiating the loss of its discreteness, its boundary, and this is an invariable feature of its sociality.

And though we might think in commonsensical ways that we will lose the “self” if we lose our “boundary” — most Americans feel that way, for whatever reason — it is surely more fundamentally true that if we are unable to lose or loosen the boundary, we cannot live in relations with others, which means that we cannot live.” -Ted Hearne

**Ted Hearne (b. 1982)** is a composer, performer, singer, and bandleader who draws on a wide breadth of musical and artistic influences to create intense, personal, and multi-dimensional works. The *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "No single artist embodies the post-genre Brooklyn scene, but Hearne may be its most zealous auteur."

Hearne's "Katrina Ballads", a modern-day oratorio with a primary source libretto, was awarded the 2009 Gaudeamus Prize and the recording, on New Amsterdam Records, was named one of the best classical albums of 2010 by several publications including The *Washington Post*. An engaged and imaginative collaborator, Hearne has worked with artists as diverse as composer J.G. Thirlwell, jazz vocalist Rene Marie, harpist/composer Zeena Parkins, renowned filmmaker Bill Morrison and French synth-pop band M83. His most recent collaboration paired him with hip-hop/soul icon Erykah Badu, for whom he wrote an evening-length work combining new music with arrangements of songs from Badu's 2008 record *New Amerykah: Part One*. Premiered by Badu with Alan Pierson and the Brooklyn Philharmonic at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in two sold-out performances, the work was met with instant acclaim.

Hearne is a member of the six-person composer collective Sleeping Giant, with whom he has created several collaborative pieces, most notably *Histories*, a companion piece to Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*. His electronic/vocal duo with Philip White, R WE WHO R WE, has earned praise for its radical deconstructions of music from the pop landscape.

Active as a conductor and performer of contemporary music, Ted Hearne has served as music director for the world premiere productions of theatrical works by David Lang and Michael Gordon and won acclaim for his vocal performance in contemporary operas including Jacob Cooper's *Timberbrit* and James Ingenfritz's *The Ticket that Exploded*.

Ted Hearne attended Manhattan School of Music and Yale School of Music. He has received fellowships from the Barlow Endowment, Fromm Music Foundation, American Academy of Arts and Letters, and ASCAP. He recently completed residencies at High Concept Laboratories in Chicago and at The MacDowell Colony.

## ***Sheltering Sky* (2012)**

**John Mackey (b. 1973)**

The wind band medium has, in the twenty-first century, a host of disparate styles that dominate its texture. At the core of its contemporary development exists a group of composers who dazzle with scintillating and frightening virtuosity. As such, at first listening one might experience John Mackey's *Sheltering Sky* as a striking departure. Its serene and simple presentation is a throwback of sorts — a nostalgic portrait of time suspended.

The work itself has a folk song-like quality — intended by the composer — and through this an immediate sense of familiarity emerges. Certainly the repertoire has a long and proud tradition of weaving folksongs into its identity, from the days of Holst and Vaughan Williams to modern treatments by such figures as Donald Grantham and Frank Ticheli. Whereas these composers incorporated extant melodies into their works, however, Mackey takes a play from Percy Grainger. Grainger's *Colonial Song* seemingly sets a beautiful folk song melody in an enchanting way (so enchanting, in fact, that he reworked the tune into two other pieces: *Australian Up-Country Tune* and *The Gum-Suckers March*). In reality, however, Grainger's melody was entirely original — his own concoction to express how he felt about his native Australia. Likewise, although the melodies of *Sheltering Sky* have a recognizable quality (hints of the contours and colors of *Danny Boy* and *Shenandoah* are perceptible), the tunes themselves are original to the work, imparting a sense of hazy distance as though they were from a half-remembered dream.

The work unfolds in a sweeping arch structure, with cascading phrases that elide effortlessly. The introduction presents softly articulated harmonies stacking through a surrounding placidity. From there emerge statements of each of the two folk song-like melodies — the call as a sighing descent in solo oboe, and its answer as a hopeful rising line in trumpet. Though the composer's trademark virtuosity is absent, his harmonic language remains. Mackey avoids traditional triadic sonorities almost exclusively, instead choosing more indistinct chords with diatonic extensions (particularly seventh and ninth chords) that facilitate the hazy sonic world that the piece inhabits. Near cadences, chromatic dissonances fill the narrow spaces in these harmonies, creating an even greater pull toward wistful nostalgia. Each new phrase begins over the resolution of the previous one, creating a sense of motion that never completely stops. The melodies themselves unfold and eventually dissipate until at last the serene introductory material returns — the opening chords finally coming to rest.

- Program Note by Jake Wallace

**John Mackey (b.1973)** has written for orchestras (Brooklyn Philharmonic, New York Youth Symphony), theater (Dallas Theater Center), and extensively for dance (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Parsons Dance Company, New York City Ballet), but the majority of his work for the past decade has been for wind ensembles (the fancy name for concert bands), and his band catalog now receives annual performances numbering in the thousands.

Recent commissions include works for the BBC Singers, the Dallas Wind Symphony, military, high school, middle school, and university bands across America and Japan, and concertos for Joseph Alessi (principal trombone, New York Philharmonic), Christopher Martin (principal trumpet, New York Philharmonic), and Julian Bliss (international clarinet soloist). In 2014, he became the youngest composer ever inducted into the American Bandmasters Association. In 2018, he received the Wladimir & Rhoda Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He resides in San Francisco, California, with his spouse, A. E. Jaques, a philosopher who works on the ethics of artificial intelligence for MIT, and also titles all of his pieces; and their cats, Noodle and Bloop.

Mackey holds a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with John Corigliano and Donald Erb, respectively.



## ***Desert Tales* (2022)**

**Evan Erickson (b. 2003)**

Written throughout the entirety of 2022, *Desert Tales* is an embodiment of composer Evan Erickson's freshman year of college. Serving as one of only two works written during his 2021-2022 school year at the University of Memphis, Evan takes inspiration from every aspect of his first year of his undergrad. From every concert he attended, all of the music he played in ensembles, new artists he learned about, his appreciation of being able to pursue a degree in music and move away from home, and influences from his teachers and friends, all of these came together to inspire the creation of this large-scale work.

This piece was composed for the University of Memphis Wind Ensemble and serves as a gift to its conductor, Dr. Albert Nguyen. His support, professional demeanor, leadership, and kindness inspires and surrounds the Memphis music community. *Desert Tales* is a tribute of gratitude and respect for the impact Dr. Nguyen has had on Evan's life. Thank you, Dr. Nguyen.

*Desert Tales* is a three movement dance suite written for wind ensemble and dancers. The piece follows three small stories built in an imaginary desert kingdom. After writing "The Sultan's Parade," Evan's father imagined something akin to the Disney movie *Aladdin*. This led to the creation of the surrounding movements and the storyline of *Desert Tales*.

In the opening movement, "Hymn of the Nomads," a collection of nomads are roaming around the desert looking for somewhere to stay and rest. They are weary, but together they sing a melody to stay attentive to their task. This melody is sung by the members of the wind ensemble, which is a recurring motif across the entire work.

Eventually, the nomads discover a desert kingdom where an annual festival is being held to celebrate their Sultan leader. "The Sultan's Parade" begins with the low hum of the piano and bass drum as the nomads hear the distant noise of the festival coming from inside. When they arrive, there is partying in the streets, decorations hung about, food vendors, animals of all sorts, and a parade in honor of their Sultan. After participating in and enjoying the festival, they learn the Sultan will be sentencing some of the most wrongful criminals in the city. The end of this movement shows the chaos leading up to their sentence. But, it is decided; the criminals will be sentenced to death in "The Tiger Cave."

Also taking inspiration from *Aladdin*, "The Tiger Cave" is a direct homage to the Cave of Wonders (a cave in the shape of a tiger's head containing the magic lamp). The final movement switches to the perspective of the criminals as they are banished from the kingdom and prepare themselves for their punishment. There is energy, lopsided rhythms, chaos, tension, fright, and groove throughout this final movement as the criminals come to terms with their sentence. They will all be entering the home of a vicious feline twice their size and must fight for their life. Ending with unbridled chaos, it is up to the audience to decide what the outcome of the brawl in the cave was.

Note from the choreographer: When Dr. Albert Nguyen approached me about choreographing a ballet for an undergraduate composition, I had one caveat – it would need to be modern dance instead! Nguyen and composer Evan Erikson did not express any disappointment with my answer, and so we began planning.

I rehearsed with nine undergraduate students from the Dance and Dance Science programs of the Department of Theatre & Dance. In listening to Erikson's music, they expressed intrigue and loved the idea of working with the brand-new composition and its challenging tempos and meter within the piece. Although the composer has a vivid narrative to accompany the score, it is important to me as a dance educator that dancers find their own artistic authorship inside the movement. As we rehearsed, we allowed the work to unfold – not knowing what we were making; discovering it as we created. While the dance does not follow the narrative written by Erikson, it does parallel it. Each performer becomes a character – slowly introduced, then intricately connected to one another through an innate and intimate ensemble. They reveal nuanced and idiosyncratic vocabulary through their personalities and navigate the classically modern choreography to demonstrate big, boisterous and athletic physicality.

Dancing to live music is unlike any performance experience – it requires intuitive listening, and vibrant presence of time and space. The dancer must be constantly ready and responding to the live instrumentation, and adjust in a moment's notice of tempo, sound and timbre. The quality of the movement might shift or evolve into something new each time it is performed. The art actively lives in real time; it makes for the most exciting endeavor for a performer. I send a special thank you to Albert, Evan, and the woodwind ensemble for having us join the stage at the Scheidt Family Performing Arts Center. We are thrilled to dance with you, and to share our story with yours. I hope you, the audience, enjoy the dancing to this vibrant, wildly intricate, wonderful piece!

**Evan Erickson (b. 2003)** is a clarinetist, composer, and engraver, currently studying clarinet with Robyn Jones and composition with Kamran Ince. As a composer, Evan's music has been performed and commissioned by various ensembles and performers across the United States, some of which include: the Heartland Marimba Quartet, the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, the Eastern Michigan University Orchestra, the University of Memphis Orchestra, and the Oneota Valley Community Orchestra. Recently, Evan's orchestral work, "Two Pieces in Minimalism," received an honorable mention for the 2023 Metropolitan Youth Orchestra Emerging Composers Competition. Evan has been featured as a soloist with the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra in both 2019 and 2021 as the winner of their concerto competition. He remains actively involved as a solo, chamber, and large ensemble performer at the University of Memphis. Now in its third year, Evan hosts an annual "Call for Scores" opportunity for unknown composers across the world to receive premiere performances and cash prizes for their music.

**arx duo** is dedicated to the expansion of the percussion chamber music repertoire through the creation and presentation of new works, the educating and inspiring of young artists, and exciting performances inviting audiences to engage with new works and artists from all over the world. They have had premiere performances throughout the globe, conducted workshops on three continents, and worked with a variety of composers and artists to bring new creations to life for communities everywhere.

Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the duo had given their Royal Albert Hall Debut in London with British Composer of the Year (2018) Dominic Murcott's "Harmonic Canon". They were also scheduled to have their Carnegie Hall Debut in April of 2020. Through the Pandemic, the group has continued to commission and workshop new pieces with composers, and engage with students and audiences across the globe. Honing their recording skills, they have released numerous videos and full online concerts, and are preparing to release their first album in the spring of 2022, through a residency with Jack Straw Artists in Seattle.

With a repertoire ranging from established masters to today's newest compositional voices, **arx duo** has worked closely with composers such as Jonathan Bailey Holland, Ted Hearne, Steven Mackey, Juri Seo, and many more. They have worked with a performed with renowned chamber ensembles such as the Dover String Quartet, Aeolus String Quartet, Bergamot String Quartet, Amy Yang, Henry Kramer, The Percussion Collective - Robert van Sice, among many others.

As educators, arx duo has held guest positions at Peabody Conservatory, Michigan State University, and are currently faculty at Curtis Institute of Music Young Artist Summer Program. They've also given masterclasses to young musicians on three continents, including many locations in the states. Mari and Garrett have also given residencies (both in person and virtual) for the composition departments of Princeton, Boston Conservatory, and more in the coming seasons.

The name "**arx duo**" comes from the artists' desire to forge new connections and artistic pathways or "arcs" within the genre, expanding the opportunities for their music to reach new audiences.

## Garrett Arney

Garrett's richness of sound identifies his sincerity and intellectual curiosity in his performance. His passion in developing the genre of percussion music has inspired many composers and musicians through creative collaboration and workshops. Garrett's commissioning projects include the premier of *Book of Grooves* by Alejandro Vinao, as well as working with composers such as Martin Bresnick, James Wood, and many young composers. As a past member of Ensemble Connect, Garrett performed the Carnegie Hall premiere of Steven Mackey's *Micro-Concerto*, as well as many other performances through New Work City. He also served as a teaching artist for schools and community centers throughout the Five Boroughs. A native of Michigan, he studied at Michigan State University, Peabody Conservatory, and Yale School of Music, and now teaches at Cleveland State University, and is a frequent guest teacher at Peabody Conservatory.

## Matthew Duvall

Matthew Duvall is the percussionist for eighth blackbird. One of the premier new music groups in the world, now in its 15th season, eighth blackbird has won both the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and is additionally a multiple recipient of the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming.

The ensemble records for Cedille Records and has released four studio recordings with two more releases due in 2011. The 2008 recording *strange imaginary animals* was awarded two Grammys, one of which was for best chamber music performance. Additionally, Fall 2010 introduced eighth blackbird's recording of Steve Reich's *Double Sextet* on Nonesuch Records. Other recent and upcoming highlights include a new concerto by Jennifer Higdon (premiered and recorded with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra), a return to Carnegie Hall for two performances in Spring 2011, and a European tour in May 2011 to include an appearance at The Barbican. Continuing engagements include hosting the MusicX Festival (Blonay, Switzerland), ensemble-in-residence positions at the University of Richmond and the University of Chicago, and proudly endorsing Pearl Drums and Adams Musical Instruments, and Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets. eighth blackbird is represented by Opus 3 Management and 21C Media Group.

**Choreographer bio:** Jill Guyton Nee (MFA, BA, BS) is a North Carolina native and moved to Memphis in 2014. She is the Head of Dance and an Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre & Dance. She regularly choreographs contemporary concert dance and musicals for the university. She has performed with world renowned choreographers such as David Dorfman, Bebe Miller, Susan Hadley, Erin Carlisle Norton and Gaspard Louis. Her works have been presented throughout the U.S. and Thailand. Her next projects include performing in Neile Martin's *Saddle Tramp* this May at Crosstown Concourse, teaching and choreographing for Whirlwind Dance Company in Columbus, OH, and working alongside Liz Lerman at the American Dance Festival in Durham, NC.