



Rudi E. Scheidt
School of Music

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS
Wind Ensemble

presents,

THE
AMERICAN
EXPANSE

Dr. Will Plenk, conductor
Erin Duke, guest conductor

MARCH 19, 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

Niagara Falls

Michael Daugherty (b. 1954)

Symphony for Band

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

- I. Adagio allegro
- II. Adagio sostenuto
- III. Allegretto
- IV. Vivace

Erin Duke, guest conductor*

Intermission

***Concerto pour Saxophon Alto
et Orchestre***

**Henri Tomasi (1901-1971)
(arr. Claude Lecoq)**

- I. Andante et Allegro
- II. Final: Giration

Mateo Navarro, Alto Saxophone

Zion

Dan Welcher (b. 1948)

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

PERSONNEL

Flute

Nicole Rodriguez*
Samuel Jesuyemi
Catherine Balsamo
Ellie Pappas
Asa Pankewycz

Oboe

Isaac Ripple*
Jesus Salazar
Simon Dickerson

Bassoon

Lora Yopp*
Caiden Ross
Mollie Coates

Clarinet

Evgenii Mikheev*
Shihao Zhu
Joseph Burgos
Isis Weaver
Andrew Hofmann
Onyinye Igboanugo
Erin Moore

Alto Saxophone

Mark Lynch*
Chris Ghaffar

Tenor Saxophone

Eric Fung

Baritone Saxophone

Mateo Navarro
Alan Blair**

Trumpet

Logan Smoot*
Christian Chiasson
Oliver Buckley
Tyler Scott
Benjamin Vanderbijl

French Horn

Brittany Cooper*
Tristan Bass
Can Somel
Dean Blish
Jon Yopp**

Trombone

Cassidy Shiflett*
Zachary Smart
Constance Robinson

Bass Trombone

Caleb Elrod

Euphonium

Alfred Hernandez*
Alexander Chan**

Tuba

Nathan Owen*
Ethan Arnal

Double Bass

Geysiye Okoya**

Piano

JingYi Bai

Harp

Melodie Moore**

Percussion

Colton Renfrow*
Elijah Wynne
Chris Palmer
Paul Hayes
Allison Kiefer
Willie Castellanos
Daniel Padron

*Principal Player

**Guest musician

PROGRAM NOTES

Niagara Falls

Michael Daugherty (b. 1954)

Niagara Falls, a gateway between Canada and the United States, is a mecca for honeymooners and tourists who come to visit one of the most scenic waterfalls in the world. The Niagara River also generates electricity for towns on both sides of the border, where visitors are lured into haunted houses, motels, wax museums, candy stores, and tourist traps, as well as countless stores that sell "Niagara Falls" postcards, T-shirts, and souvenirs.

This composition is another souvenir, inspired by my many trips to Niagara Falls. It is a ten-minute musical ride over the Niagara River with an occasional stop at a haunted house or wax museum along the way. Its principal musical motive is a haunting chromatic phrase of four tones corresponding to the syllables of Niagara Falls, and repeated in increasingly gothic proportions. A pulsing rhythm in the timpani and lower brass creates an undercurrent of energy to give an electric charge to the second motive, introduced in musical canons by the upper brass. The saxophones and clarinets introduce another level of counterpoint, in a bluesy riff with a film noir edge. My composition is a meditation on the American Sublime.

-Program Note by The Composer

Niagara Falls Program Note, continued

Michael Daugherty (b. April 28, 1954, Cedar Rapids, Iowa) is a multiple GRAMMY Award-winning composer and one of the most performed American composers of concert music, as recognized by the League of American Orchestras. Widely known for his bold, eclectic voice and vibrant orchestration, his works have been recorded extensively by Naxos, earning six GRAMMY Awards, including Best Contemporary Classical Composition for *Deus ex Machina* (2011) and *Tales of Hemingway* (2017).

Raised in a musically active household, Daugherty's early experiences ranged from playing drums in Midwestern drum and bugle corps to leading his high school rock, soul, and funk band, The Soul Company. A versatile young musician, he performed as a jazz pianist, accompanied choirs, and worked with popular music artists at county fairs across the Midwest—experiences that continue to inform the dynamic, pop-culture-infused character of his concert works.

Daugherty studied with many of the 20th century's leading composers, including Pierre Boulez, György Ligeti, Betsy Jolas, Earle Brown, Bernard Rands, Roger Reynolds, and Jacob Druckman, and served as assistant to jazz arranger Gil Evans in New York. After teaching at the Oberlin Conservatory, he joined the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance in 1991, where he remains Professor of Composition and a mentor to emerging composers worldwide.

He has held numerous composer-in-residence positions with major orchestras and festivals and has received prestigious honors including a Fulbright Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, multiple awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the American Bandmasters Association Ostwald Award.

Symphony for Band

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

- I. Adagio allegro
- II. Adagio sostenuto
- III. Allegretto
- IV. Vivace

The *Symphony for Band* was commissioned and premiered by Clark Mitze and the Washington University Band at the MENC Convention in St. Louis on April 16, 1956. According to the composer, it could have been titled *Symphony for Winds*, following, as it did, his *Symphony No. 5 for Strings*. Persichetti, however, did not wish to avoid the word “band,” which he felt no longer had the connotation of a poor quality of music. In the autumn 1964 *Journal of Band Research*, he wrote, “Band music is virtually the only kind of music in America today (outside of the ‘pop’ field) which can be introduced, accepted, put to immediate and wide use, and become a staple of the literature in a short time.” According to Jeffrey Renshaw, “The *Symphony for Band* ... was in many ways such a departure from the established concepts of band works that it influenced the attitudes of generations of composers.”

The four movements (Adagio allegro, Adagio sostenuto, Allegretto, and Vivace) have forms with traditional implications. The opening horn call and a following scale-wise passage in the slow introduction become the two principal themes (in reverse order) in the subsequent Allegro. The standard exposition, development, and recapitulation of sonata form are the Allegro, although the traditional key relationships are not completely retained. The slow second movement is based on *Round Me Falls the Night*, from the composer’s *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year*. The third movement, in trio form, serves as the traditional dance movement and is followed by a finale in free rondo form, which draws the thematic material from the preceding movements and concludes with a chord containing all 12 tones of the chromatic scale.

Symphony for Band Program Note, continued

Vincent Persichetti (6 June 1915, Philadelphia, Penn. – 14 August 1987, Philadelphia) began his musical life at a young age, first studying the piano, then the organ, double bass, tuba, theory, and composition. By the age of 11 he was paying for his own musical education and helping by performing professionally as an accompanist, radio staff pianist, church organist, and orchestra performer. At the age of 16 he was appointed choir director for the Arch Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, a post he would hold for the next 20 years. During all of this, Persichetti was a student in the Philadelphia public schools and received a thorough musical education at the Combs College of Music, where he earned a degree in 1935 under Russel King Miller, his principal composition teacher.

Starting at the age of 20, he was simultaneously head of the theory and composition departments at the Combs College, a conducting major with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute, and a piano major with Olga Samaroff at the Philadelphia Conservatory. He received a diploma in conducting from the Curtis Institute and graduate degrees from the Philadelphia Conservatory. In 1947 he joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music, and became the chairman of the Composition Department in 1963.

**Concerto pour Saxophon Alto
et Orchestre**

- I. Andante et Allegro
- II. Final: Giration

**Henri Tomasi (1901-1971)
arr. Claude Lecoq**

Tomasi's *Concerto for Saxophone* is in two movements. Its opening is both mysterious and foreboding, but this is just an introduction to a puckish Allegro kept perpetually off-balance by its odd meter. The orchestra is a full partner here and throughout the concerto, with brilliant and inventive scoring at every turn. An accompanied cadenza recalls the opening music, more sensuous than fiery; the final Allegro then comprises an amazing number of moods in a very short time.

-Program note by Garrett Klaus

Henri Tomasi (17 August 1901, Paris – 13 January 1971, Paris) was a French composer and conductor whose richly lyrical and colorfully orchestrated works reflect both his Corsican heritage and the cultural crosscurrents of the 20th century. Raised in Marseille and Corsica, Tomasi studied at the Conservatoire de Paris, where he won the Prix Halphen (1925), the Second Grand Prix de Rome (1927), and a First Prize in orchestral conducting.

Equally active on the podium and at the writing desk, Tomasi served as music director of the Radio Colonial Orchestra in French Indochina (1930–35) and later conducted the Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française and the Opéra de Monte-Carlo. A founder of the Paris-based contemporary music group Triton alongside composers such as Prokofiev, Milhaud, Honegger, and Poulenc, he became known for championing new music while forging a distinctive compositional voice of his own.

Tomasi's output spans opera, orchestral, choral, and chamber music, though he is especially celebrated for his *Concerti for Wind Instruments*—including his popular *Trumpet Concerto* (1948) and *Saxophone Concerto* (1949). Deeply affected by the tragedies of World War II, he composed a *Requiem* dedicated to the martyrs of the French Resistance and later created ambitious stage works such as *Don Juan de Mañara*, *L'Atlantide*, and *Le Testament du Père Gaucher*.

Blending diatonic lyricism with chromatic color, polychordal harmony, and occasional twelve-tone elements, Tomasi drew inspiration from Mediterranean folk traditions, sacred chant, and the exotic sounds of Asia and North Africa. Though conversant with modernist techniques, he remained devoted to direct expression, declaring himself “a melodist at heart” who wrote music for the public at large.

Zion is the third and final installment of a series of works for wind ensemble inspired by national parks in the western United States, collectively called *Three Places in the West*. As in the other two works (*The Yellowstone Fires* and *Arches*), it is my intention to convey more an impression of the feelings I've had in Zion National Park in Utah than an attempt at a pictorial description. Zion is a place with unrivaled natural grandeur, being a sort of huge box canyon in which the traveler is constantly overwhelmed by towering rock walls on every side -- but it is also a place with a human history, having been inhabited by several tribes of Native Americans before the arrival of the Mormon settlers in the mid-nineteenth century. By the time the Mormons reached Utah, they had been driven all the way from New York State through Ohio and through their tragic losses in Missouri. They saw Utah in general as "a place nobody wanted" but were nonetheless determined to keep it to themselves. Although Zion Canyon was never a "Mormon stronghold", the people who reached it and claimed it (and gave it its present name) had been through extreme trials.

It is the religious fervor of these persecuted people that I was able to draw upon in creating *Zion* as a piece of music. There are two quoted hymns in the work: *Zion's Walls* (which Aaron Copland adapted to his own purposes in both *Old American Songs* and *The Tender Land*), and *Zion's Security*, which I found in the same volume where Copland found *Zion's Walls* -- that inexhaustible storehouse of nineteenth century hymnody called *The Sacred Harp*.

Zion Program Note, continued

My work opens with a three-verse setting of *Zion's Security*, a stern tune in F# minor which is full of resolve. (The words of this hymn are resolute and strong, rallying the faithful to be firm, and describing the "city of our God" they hope to establish.) This melody alternates with a fanfare tune, whose origins will be revealed later in the music, until the second half of the piece begins: a driving ostinato based on a 3/4-4/4 alternating meter scheme. This pauses at its height to restate *Zion's Security* one more time, in a rather obscure setting surrounded by freely shifting patterns in the flutes, clarinets, and percussion -- until the sun warms the ground sufficiently for the second hymn to appear. *Zion's Walls* is set in 7/8, unlike Copland's 9/8-6/8 meters (the original is quite strange, and doesn't really fit any constant meter) and is introduced by a warm horn solo with low brass accompaniment. The two hymns vie for attention from here to the end of the piece, with glowingly optimistic *Zion's Walls* finally achieving prominence. The work ends with a sense of triumph and unbreakable spirit.

Zion was commissioned in 1994 by the wind ensembles of the University of Texas at Arlington, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Oklahoma. It is dedicated to the memory of Aaron Copland.

- Program note by Composer

MUSIC BIOGRAPHY

DR. WILLIAM PLENK, Director

Dr. William Plenk is Associate Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands for the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music at the University of Memphis. In this role, he oversees the UofM Marching Band and Pep Band, conducts the Symphonic Band, and teaches music education courses.

Outside of the University, Dr. Plenk is active as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator. He has worked with concert bands, marching bands, and drum corps from across the United States, Singapore, and Japan, including a three-season tenure with the Tenrikyo Aimachi Marching Band from Nagoya, Japan. Dr. Plenk has presented or conducted at the CBDNA Western/Northwestern and Southern Division Conferences, as well as the CBDNA National Athletic Band Symposium.

Before arriving in Memphis, Dr. Plenk served as Associate Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands at the University of Nevada, Reno, developing the athletic band program into one of the most respected in the region. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was Conductor of the UCLA Symphonic Band, Associate Conductor of the UCLA Wind Ensemble, and Associate Conductor of the UCLA Brass Ensemble. He also received a Master of Music degree in tuba performance from UCLA, and a Bachelor of Music degree in tuba performance from Ithaca College.