



Rudi E. Scheidt
School of Music

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS Wind Ensemble

presents,

INTO THE DEPTHS

Dr. Will Plenk, conductor

Jon Yopp, guest conductor

APRIL 29, 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

Fanfare for Full Fathom Five

John Mackey (b. 1973)

Jon Yopp, guest conductor*

Ecstatic Waters

Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

- I. Ceremony of Innocence
- II. Augurs
- III. The Generous Wrath of Simple Men
- IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice
- V. Spiritus Mundi (epilogue)

Intermission

Symphony No. 4

David Maslanka (1943-2017)

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Wind Conducting

PERSONNEL

Flute

Nicole Rodriguez*
Samuel Jesuyemi
Catherine Balsamo
Ellie Pappas

Oboe

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

Trumpet

Logan Smoot*
Christian Chiasson
Oliver Buckley
Tyler Scott
Benjamin Vanderbijl
Mason Stinson**

French Horn

Brittany Cooper*
Tristan Bass
Can Somel
Dean Blish
Jon Yopp**
Juan Garay**
Bethany Beck**

Trombone

Cassidy Shiflett*
Zachary Smart
Constance Robinson
Caleb Elrod
Evan Green**
Chandler Chrestman**

Euphonium

Sophia Rivera*
Alfred Hernandez

Tuba

Nathan Owen*
Ethan Arnal

Double Bass

Geysiye Okoya**

Piano

JingYi Bai

Organ

Yun-Heng Tiao**

Harp

Marian Shaffer**

Percussion

Colton Renfrow*
Elijah Wynne
Chris Palmer
Paul Hayes
Allison Kiefer
Willie Castellanos
Erin Duke**

*Principal Player

**Guest musician

PROGRAM NOTES

Fanfare for Full Fathom Five

John Mackey (b. 1973)

*Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.*

– William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*: 1.2.396-401.

In *The Tempest*, this rather foreboding and gloomy text is sung by the tormented spirit Ariel to the young prince of Naples, Ferdinand, who has just escaped a shipwreck caused by the eponymous storm and is unaware of whether his father -- the King, Alonso -- has survived. In reality, Ariel's dire taunt proves to be somewhat inaccurate, but his song has a place in the English lexicon partly due to two phrases which have entered common usage: "full fathom five," a nautical reference that indicates a placement under a depth of thirty feet of water but is used metaphorically to imply an impossible and unavoidable doom; and "sea-change," which describes an unexpected and profound transformation. Both of these images, along with the backdrop of a tumultuous squall, paint the musical language of John Mackey's *Fanfare for Full Fathom Five*.

The fanfare is scored for an athletic array of brass and percussion: six trumpets (deliberately split into two quasi-antiphonal trios), six horns, three tenor trombones, three bass trombones, two tubas, and four percussion, with an ad libitum organ and the possible substitution of contrabass trombone. The orchestration and architecture of the piece is designed to be analogous to Richard Strauss' *Wiener Philharmoniker Fanfare*, but where Strauss' fanfare is emotionally straightforward with bounds of unstoppable heroism, Mackey's is more complex, taking the traditional fanfare rhythms and motifs and blurring them with a whirlwind of dissonance through chromaticism and murky glissandi that present the whole in a darker and more sinister context.

Fanfare for Full Fathom Five Program Note, continued

All of the typical hallmarks of the fanfare genre are present: vibrantly articulated triplets in the trumpets, soaring horn lines, and brash pedal points in the low brass (doubled colorfully by the organ). The harmonic language is one of abrupt shift; the blustery opening seems to clearly establish B-flat major as the home key, but each time it seems to reaffirm this notion, it veers wildly into unexpected territory. The piece ends triumphantly in E-flat, but along the way it also takes detouring ventures through D-flat, G-flat, and perhaps most strangely, E major during the work's contrastingly delicate midpoint. In the end, despite a journey that is continuously rich and strange, the heroes win the day and, as in *The Tempest*, all comes to a happy and victorious conclusion.

- Program Note by Composer

Ecstatic Waters

Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

- I. Ceremony of Innocence
- II. Augurs
- III. The Generous Wrath of Simple Men
- IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice
- V. Spiritus Mundi (epilogue)

Ecstatic Waters is music of dialectical tension -- a juxtaposition of contradictory or opposing musical and extra-musical elements and an attempt to resolve them. The five connected movements hint at a narrative that touches upon naiveté, divination, fanaticism, post-human possibilities, anarchy, order, and the Jungian collective unconscious. Or, as I have described it more colloquially: W.B. Yeats meets Ray Kurzweil in *The Matrix*.

The overall title, as well as “Ceremony of Innocence” and “Spiritus Mundi,” are taken from poetry of Yeats (*News for the Delphic Oracle*, and *The Second Coming*), and his personal, idiosyncratic mythology and symbolism of spiraling chaos and looming apocalypse figured prominently in the genesis of the work. Yet in a nod to the piece's structural reality -- as a hybrid of electronics and living players -- *Ecstatic Waters* also references the confrontation of unruly humanity with the order of the machine, as well as the potential of a post-human synthesis, in ways inspired by Kurzweil.

The first movement, “Ceremony of Innocence,” begins as a pure expression of exuberant joy in unapologetic B-flat Major in the celesta and vibraphone. The movement grows in momentum, becoming perhaps too exuberant -- the initial simplicity evolves into a full-throated brashness bordering on dangerous arrogance and naivete, though it retreats from the brink and ends by returning to the opening innocence.

In movement II, “Augurs,” the unsustainable nature of the previous “Ceremony” becomes apparent, as the relentless tonic of B-flat in the crystal water glasses slowly diffuses into a microtonal cluster, aided and abetted by the trumpets. Chorale-like fragments appear, foretelling the wrathful self-righteousness of movement III. The movement grows inexorably, spiraling wider and wider, like Yeat's gyre, until “the center cannot hold,” and it erupts with supreme force into “The Generous Wrath of Simple Men.”

Ecstatic Waters Program Note, continued

Movement III is deceptive, musically contradicting what one might expect of its title. While it erupts at the outset with overwhelming wrath, it quickly collapses into a relentless rhythm of simmering 16th notes. Lyric lines and pyramids unfold around this, interrupted briefly by the forceful anger of a chorale, almost as if trying to drown out and deny anything but its own existence. A moment of delicate lucidity arrives amidst this back-and-forth struggle, but the chorale ultimately dominates, subsuming everything, spiraling out of control, and exploding.

“The Loving Machinery of Justice” brings machine-like clarity and judgment. Subtle, internal gyrations between atonality and tonality underpin the dialogue between lyric melody (solo clarinet and oboe) and mechanized accompaniment (bassoons). An emphatic resolution in A-flat minor concludes the movement, floating seamlessly into the epilogue, “Spiritus Mundi.” Reprising music from movement I, this short meditative movement reconciles and releases the earlier excesses.

- Program Note by Composer

Symphony No. 4

David Maslanka (1943-2017))

The sources that give rise to a piece of music are many and deep. It is possible to describe the technical aspects of a work -- its construction principles, its orchestration -- but nearly impossible to write of its soul-nature except through hints and suggestions.

The roots of *Symphony No. 4* are many. The central driving force is the spontaneous rise of the impulse to shout for the joy of life. I feel it is the powerful voice of the Earth that comes to me from my adopted western Montana, and the high plains and mountains of central Idaho. My personal experience of the voice is one of being helpless and torn open by the power of the thing that wants to be expressed -- the welling-up shout that cannot be denied. I am set aquiver and am forced to shout and sing. The response in the voice of the Earth is the answering shout of thanksgiving, and the shout of praise.

Out of this, the hymn tune *Old Hundred*, several other hymn tunes (the Bach chorales *Only Trust in God to Guide You* and *Christ Who Makes Us Holy*), and original melodies which are hymn-like in nature, form the backbone of *Symphony No. 4*.

To explain the presence of these hymns, at least in part, and to hint at the life of the *Symphony*, I must say something about my long-time fascination with Abraham Lincoln. Carl Sandburg's monumental *Abraham Lincoln* offers a picture of Lincoln in death. Lincoln's close friend, David Locke, saw him in his coffin. According to Locke, his face had an expression of absolute content, of relief at having thrown off an unimaginable burden. The same expression had crossed Lincoln's face only a few times in life; when after a great calamity, he had come to a great victory. Sandburg goes on to describe a scene from Lincoln's journey to final rest at Springfield, Illinois. On April 28, 1865, the coffin lay on a mound of green moss and white flowers in the rotunda of the capitol building in Columbus, Ohio. Thousands of people passed by each hour to view the body. At four in the afternoon, in the red-gold of a prairie sunset, accompanied by the boom of minute guns and a brass band playing *Old Hundred*, the coffin was removed to the waiting funeral train.

Symphony No. 4 Program Note, continued

For me, Lincoln's life and death are as critical today as they were more than a century ago. He remains a model for his age. Lincoln maintained in his person the tremendous struggle of opposites raging in the country in his time. He was inwardly open to the boiling chaos, out of which he forged the framework of a new unifying idea. It wore him down and killed him, as it wore and killed the hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the Civil War, as it has continued to wear and kill by the millions up to the present day. Confirmed in the world by Lincoln, for the unshakable idea of the unity of all the human race, and by extension the unity of all life, and by further extension, the unity of all life with all matter, with all energy and with the silent and seemingly empty and unfathomable mystery of our origins.

Out of chaos and the fierce joining of opposite comes new life and hope. From this impulse I used *Old Hundred*, known as the *Doxology* -- a hymn to God; *Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow*; *Gloria in excelsis Deo* - the mid-sixteenth century setting of Psalm 100.

I have used Christian symbols because they are my cultural heritage, but I have tried to move through them to a depth of universal humanness, to an awareness that is not defined by religious label. My impulse through this music is to speak to the fundamental human issues of transformation and re-birth in this chaotic time.

- 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.