

# Washington University Wind Ensemble

Chris Becker, conductor

# Program

## **Percussion Ensemble**

*Through the Emerald Lens* (2023)

Mo Longo  
(b. 1985)

## **Wind Ensemble**

*Mother Earth* (2008)

David Maslanka  
(1943 - 2017)

*Sunrise at Angel's Gate* (2001)

Philip Sparke  
(b. 1951)

*Tha Mi Sgìth* (2023)

Traditional Gaelic Folksong  
arr. Brian Beck  
(b. 1976)

*Dancing in Air* (2004)

Yo Goto  
(b. 1958)

*One Life Beautiful* (2010)

Julie Giroux  
(b. 1961)

*Abram's Pursuit* (1998)

David R. Holsinger  
(b. 1945)

# Program Notes

***Through the Emerald Lens*** was commissioned by Chris Carmean and the Pickerington North High School Percussion Ensemble.

When Chris Carmean invited me to write a piece for this special concert, the theme 'Pickerington Connections' spoke easily to me. I have had a few previous experiences with Pickerington, including rehearsing at Pickerington North HS with the Glassmen Drum & Bugle Corps and marching in the Rose Parade with the Saluting America's Band Directors Marching Band (a project of the Michael D. Sewell Memorial Foundation).

For this piece, the Pickerington connection that I drew inspiration from is the friendship I have with a particular Pickerington Band alum. This wonderful friend has been a consistent supporter of mine throughout my musical career, and the sparkle in my friend's uniquely green eyes led me to the idea of writing a piece about the emerald, entitled *Through the Emerald Lens*.

*Through the Emerald Lens* explores the emerald stone and what it symbolizes. The piece is divided into four major parts, each of which represents various qualities or symbols that the emerald stone is known for:

1. Magical, Mysterious, Mystical
2. The Heart Chakra ("Open the Heart and Calm the Emotions")
3. Wisdom, Truth, Patience
4. Friendship, Peace, Hope, Unconditional Love

*-Note from the composer*

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.

*-Note from the composer*

## ***Sunrise at Angel's Gate***

This piece depicts the refined beauty of the Grand Canyon at sunrise and sunset. These are the best times to view the canyon, with the sun low in the sky casting shadows that give depth and form to the vast panorama. Angel's Gate is one of the many named rock formations in the canyon. The composer has tried to depict the sights and sounds of dawn, birdsong in the early morning sky and the gradual revelation of the canyon itself as sunlight reaches into its rocky depths.

Towards the end of the piece, to the sound of a tolling bell, we are however reminded of the dangers that the beauty of the Grand Canyon so cleverly hides.

*-Note from the publisher*

**Tha Mi Sgith** is a Gaelic folksong about forbidden love. One day, a fairy was cutting the bracken (cutting down ferns) when he saw a beautiful girl strolling along the countryside. They fell in love and spend their days together, however, this infuriated the girl's family. The father forbade the his daughter from seeing him ever again and locked her away. Now, the fairy spends his day cutting the bracken and pining away for his lost love.

<i>Tha mi sgith 's mi learn fhin,</i>	<i>I am tired and I am alone,</i>
<i>Buain na rainich, buain na rainich,</i>	<i>Cutting the bracken, cutting the bracken,</i>
<i>Tha mi sgith 's mi learn fhin,</i>	<i>I am tired and I am alone,</i>
<i>Buain na rainich daonnan</i>	<i>Forever cutting the bracken</i>

<i>'S tric a bha mi fhin 's mo leannan,</i>	<i>Often, my love and I</i>
<i>Anns a' ghleannan cheothar,</i>	<i>Were in the misty glens,</i>
<i>'G eisteachd coisir bhinn an doire,</i>	<i>Listening to the sweet choir of the grove,</i>
<i>Seinn sa choille dhomhail</i>	<i>Singing in the corpulent forest</i>

Arranger Brian Beck has expertly scored a setting of this folk song in a style reminiscent of Grainger, Grieg, and Holst.

*-Note from the score*

**Dancing in Air** is dedicated to Nicholas Williams and the University of North Texas Concert Band. Transparent layers of sound open the work with an appropriately airy feel, which then gives way to a light dance section. This work has a unique sensibility that is both pleasant and meaty. *Dancing in Air* is an intriguing work offering colorful, contrasting textural and stylistic qualities.

*-Note from the publisher*

**One Life Beautiful** -- The title itself is a double-entendre which in one sense is referring to the person this work is dedicated to as in "one life" that was beautifully lived. The other sense is a direct observation concluding that having only one life is what makes life so sacred, tragic and so very precious. This is an impressionistic work musically describing that condition. Shakespeare's "sweet sorrow," the frailty and strength of life, the meaning of what it is to truly live One Life Beautiful.

*-Note from the publisher*

### **Abram's Pursuit**

In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis there is a story of a rebellion led by Chedorlaomer, the King of Elam. Chedorlaomer and three other Kings joined together to ravage and conquer everything that lay in their path. They were met in battle at the Valley of Siddim (the Salt Sea) by an army mustered from the forces of the King of Sodom, the King of Gomorrah (pre-destruction days, of course...), the King of Admah, the King of Zebolim, and the King of Bela. Unfortunately this opposition army was not a match for Chedorlaomer, and each of these city-kingdoms, including Sodom and Gomorrah, were overrun. Chedorlaomer's forces, as was the custom, pillaged and fled with all the goods and provisions of the cities. Unfortunately for Chedorlaomer, his men also kidnapped Lot, Abram's brother's son. This, of course, is the same Abram who later became Abraham, Father of the Jewish Nation, and a very close friend of God. (In retrospect, this was probably Chedorlaomer's "not-so-bright" decision of the campaign!)

When Abram heard that Lot was taken captive, his armed three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born of his house went in pursuit of the invaders. With his small contingent, he divided his forces against the kings, attacked, and routed Chedorlaomer's entire army, recovering Lot and his goods, as well as all the women and people who had been kidnapped during the conquest.

*-Note from the composer*

# Wind Ensemble

## Flute

Lillie Kang (Global Public Health, Louisville, KY)

Priya Ramotar (Biology, Frisco, TX)

Angelica Han (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology: Cognitive Neuroscience, Beijing, China)

Olivia Lee (English, Springfield, MO)

Jason Tung (Chemistry, Crown Point, IN)

Alexa Wienhoff (Chemical Engineering, Springfield, IL)

Yael Shaw (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology and Marketing, Glencoe, IL)

Mel Mallard (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Apopka, FL)

Dalia Heller (History, Buffalo Grove, IL)

Megana Paidela (Environmental Biology, Springfield, IL)

Tanvi Gorre (Computational Biology, Westport, CT)

Riya Pant (Applied Mathematics and Economics & Strategy, Atlanta, GA)

Olivia Leigh (Psychological & Brain Sciences, San Francisco, CA)

## Oboe

Ethan Penn (Statistics, Glenview, IL)

Michelle Zhang (Computer Science and Music, Ballwin, MO)

Claire Workinger (WashU Faculty)

## Bassoon

Claire Treece (Music, Marion, IL)

Emily DePaz (Architecture, Arlington Hts, IL)

Donita Bauer (Community Member)

## Clarinet

Eric Miao (Biochemistry, Modesto, CA)

Andrea Carbonell (Chemical Engineering, Pembroke Pines, FL)

Felix Guo (Biology, Lawrence, KS)

Q Negrete (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Morgan Hill, CA)

Abby Matthews (Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, Cartersville, GA)

Sohee Chun (Physics PhD, Seoul, South Korea)

Julia Tompkins (Systems Engineering, Westfield, NJ)

Tyler Teague (Mechanical Engineering, Eureka, MO)

Kelly Dale, E-flat (Community Member)

## Bass Clarinet

Grayce Cooper (Design, Laurel, MD)

Dante Nicotera (MD Program (M2), Hanover, MA)

## Saxophones

Brett Carnes, alto (Physics, Springfield, MO)

Evan Xiao, alto (Biology, Broken Arrow, OK)

Sarah Baek, alto (Studio Art, Atlanta, GA)

Steven Chi, alto (Biochemistry, North Huntingdon, PA)

Nalin Gupta, alto (Chemical Engineering, Cleveland, OH)

Haley Jetter, tenor (PhD in Biology/Biomedical Science, Washington, DC)

Connor Higano, bari (Undeclared, Wildwood, MO)

# Wind Ensemble Cont.

## Trumpet

Gabi Grasso (Psychology and Music, San Diego, CA)  
Ankit Chhajed (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Bolingbrook, IL)  
Juliet Ainsley (Environmental Science, Wilmette, IL)  
Jake Tillman (Economics and Finance, Strafford, MO)  
Grace Tillman (Ancient Studies and Political Science, Strafford, MO)  
Nathan Pravda (Physics, Natick, MA)  
Seth Peters (Mechanical Engineering, Barnhart, MO)

## French Horn

Ceresa Munjak-Khoury (Cognitive Neuroscience, Kansas City, MO)  
Thomas McGrath (Art History and Archaeology, St. Louis, MO)  
Riley Novak (Global Studies and Spanish, Phoenix, AZ)  
Ethan Holtzman (Undeclared, Fenton, MO)  
Grace Teuscher (WashU Alum, South Bend, IN)

## Trombone

Sean Wang (Biochemistry, Pleasanton, CA)  
Julian Mitchell (Biology, O'Fallon, IL)  
Matthew Viola (Philosophy, Manhasset, NY)  
Henry Wasserman, bass (Biochemistry, Concord, MA)

## Euphonium

Joshua Adams (Community Member)

## Tuba

Sriharsha Gonuguntla (Biology, Ballwin, MO)

## Bass

Melissa Parkinson (Environmental Science and Secondary Education, Downers Grove, IL)

## Percussion

Maya Irvine (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Camdenton, MO)  
Phoenix Jarosz (Computer Science and Mathematics, O'Fallon, MO)  
Cameron Kalik (Computer Science, Martinsville, NJ)  
Colleen McDermott (Environmental Analysis, Collegeville, PA)  
Jake Page (Chemistry, St. Louis, MO)  
Jessica Flannigan (WashU Staff)  
Neil Flannigan (Community Member)

## Harp

Ariel Richards (Chemical Engineering, Kingston, Jamaica)

## Piano

Eran Fann (Undeclared, Seattle, WA)

# Director



Chris Becker is the Director of the Wind Ensemble and the Jazz Bands at Washington University in St. Louis, and serves as the director of winds and percussion. Mr. Becker graduated from the University of Missouri - Kansas City Conservatory of Music "With Distinction" in 1977, receiving the Bachelor of Music Education Degree, and earned a Master of Arts in Education from Lindenwood University.

Mr. Becker has taught instrumental music in Missouri for 46 years from the elementary to the university level. In June 2017, he retired as Director of Bands at Parkway South High School, after serving for 36 years in the Parkway School District (St. Louis County, Missouri). During his tenure there, he directed Marching Bands, Symphonic Bands, Jazz Bands, and all other related band activities.

In addition, he is the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Manchester Community Band, a highly successful ensemble founded ten years ago and enthusiastically received by the residents of Manchester. Mr. Becker has also been a frequent guest conductor for both concert bands and jazz bands in Missouri and Illinois.

Mr. Becker has served as the Jazz Vice President for the Missouri Music Educators Association, the first educator to hold that position after it was established as a part of the MMEA Board. Mr. Becker is a Past President of the Missouri unit of the International Association of Jazz Educators. During his term he helped clarify the mission and goals of the unit, and endeavored to reach out to music educators, those in the music industry, and professional players to create a broader base of support for jazz education. Becker has also served as Jazz Vice President for the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association. Becker plays the trumpet professionally with a variety of ensembles in the St. Louis area, and has taught trumpet privately in both the Kansas City and St. Louis areas.

Mr. Becker is a member of the National Association for Music Education, the Missouri Music Educators Association, the Missouri Association for Jazz Education, the Missouri Band Masters Association, and Phi Beta Mu Band Directors Fraternity. He was named "Charles Emmons Outstanding Band Director of the Year" by Phi Beta Mu in January 1999. He was nominated numerous times for the Pillar of Parkway Award, which recognizes commitment and dedication for work in the Parkway School District, and was awarded a Pillar of Parkway in April 2016. Mr. Becker was honored for his distinguished career by the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association in January 2018, and named to their Hall of Fame.



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