

Thursday, November 21, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.
E. Desmond Lee Concert Hall, 560 Music Center

Washington University Wind Ensemble

Chris Becker, conductor



WashU Arts & Sciences

Music

Program

Percussion Ensemble

Clay Pigeons

Colleen McDermott
(b. 2002)

Wind Ensemble

First Suite Fanfare (2020)

Erika Svanoe
(b. 1976)

The Prairie is My Garden (2018)

Robert W. Smith
(1958 - 2023)

Contre Qui, Rose (1993/2006)

Morten Lauridsen
(b. 1943)
trans. H. Robert Reynolds

Red Rock Mountain (2016)

Rossano Galante
(b. 1967)

Deciduous (2022)

Viet Cuong
(b. 1990)

Hymn to the Fallen (1998)

John Williams
(b. 1932)
trans. Paul Lavender

Songs of the West (1907/1986)

Gustav Holst
(1874 - 1934)
arr. Jim Curnow

Clay Pigeons came about purely by chance - an impulsive decision in my final semester at WashU to take the course "Composition Workshop" and see if I could write my own piece of music. I spent many evenings in the basement of the 560 trying to pull inspiration from the marimba and vibraphone, and many more evenings in front of my computer trying to piece disjointed segments together. Every week, I took the half-baked piece to my professor Christopher Stark for some much-needed guidance. As the music took shape over time, Chris often noted my tendency to switch between ideas too fast, without giving each one ample time to develop itself. I had to expand musical phrases more, allow them to breathe before moving on to the next. Chris finally culminated this advice into one metaphor I will never forget: "See the music as a hot air balloon. You have to let it land slowly and gently. You can't just shoot it out of the sky."

In other words, if I had to say this piece is about anything, it is about the process of composing itself. It is about trying something new, knowing the result will not be perfect but taking that first step anyway. And as the title would suggest, it is about shooting things out of the sky - or rather, letting the music fly and land in its own time.

-note from the composer

First Suite Fanfare pays homage to Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E-flat*. The fanfare utilizes and transforms material from the opening movement, specifically the *Chaconne's* familiar melody that is heard throughout. In much the same way that Holst utilized the starting notes of his melody to unify all three movements of *First Suite in Eb*, the first four pitches of the *Chaconne* (Eb, F, C, Bb) are rhythmically altered in the energetic opening measures of the fanfare. Longer portions of the *Chaconne* and its inversion are also reworked as melodies, countermelodies, short motives, and the central chorale.

-note from the composer

The Prairie is My Garden

Inspired by and based on the masterpiece "The Prairie Is My Garden" by American painter Harvey Thomas Dunn, this work for the symphonic band is large in scope and musical depth. In the painting, a mother and her two children are out gathering flowers from the quintessential prairie of the Great Plains. Composer Robert W. Smith delivers us to the same Great Plains in this epic musical tone poem. From the reflective opening solo to the bold and courageous statements that follow, this homage to the generations that built the great American west is an excellent concert/festival selection for the mature concert band.

-note from the publisher

Contre Qui, Rose is the second movement of my choral cycle *Les Chansons des Roses*, on poems by Rilke, a poet whose texts were also used for my *Nocturnes* and *Chanson Éloignée*. Rilke's poetry is often multilayered and frequently ambiguous, forcing his reader to use his or her own imagination

to grasp the text. This wonderful little poem poses a series of questions, and the corresponding musical phrases all end with unresolved harmonies, as the questions remain unanswered. We have all been in situations where we have given affection and not had it returned, where attempts at communication have been unsuccessful, met by resistance or defenses of some kind. A sense of quiet resignation begins the setting as the stark harmony and melodic line, filled with unresolved suspensions and appoggiaturas, gradually build to a nine-part chord on ["on the contrary"] and then the music folds back on itself, ending on a cluster that simply fades away as does the hope of understanding the reasons for the rose's thorny protection.

Against whom, rose,

*Have you assumed these thorns?
Is it your too fragile joy that forced you
to become this armed thing?
But from whom does it protect you,
this exaggerated defense?*

*How many enemies have I lifted from you
who do not fear it at all?
On the contrary, from summer to autumn
you wound the affection that is given you.*

-note from the composer


Red Rock Mountain 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.

-note from the publisher

For a long time after my father passed away, I felt like I had "lost my leaves." In the way that leaves harness light to create energy for trees and plants, I felt like I had so little left to harness creatively. Many days I feared those leaves would never grow back. After struggling for months to write, I finally found some healing while creating **Deciduous**. This involved revisiting chord progressions that brought me solace as a child and activating them in textures that I have enjoyed exploring as an adult. The piece cycles through these chord progressions, building to a moment where it's stripped of everything and must find a way to renew itself. While I continue to struggle with this loss, I have come to understand that healing is not as much of a linear process as it is a cyclical journey, where, without fail, every leafless winter is following by a spring.

Thank you to the Florida Bandmasters Association for commissioning *Deciduous* in 2023.

-note from the composer




Hymn to the Fallen

Saving Private Ryan a gripping, powerful movie depicting the horrors of World War II, is another milestone in the years Steven Spielberg and John Williams have been collaborating on films. Williams' score includes this simple hymn, using chorus as an instrument of the orchestra, adding a special reverence and poignancy to the simple melody. Arranger Paul Lavender brings this dignified edition to the concert band stage.

-note from the publisher

Songs of the West is a companion piece to *A Somerset Rhapsody*. The pair - Opus 21 No. 1 and 2 respectively - were written in 1906/1907 and based on folk tunes collected in the west of England by Cecil Sharp and Baring Gould.

-note from the score



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 47 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 eleven 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.

Wind Ensemble

Flute

Lillie Kang (Global Public Health, Louisville, KY)
Jimin Lee (Data Science, Seoul, South Korea)
Cherie Liu (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Overland Park, KS)
Jason Tung (Chemistry, Crown Point, IN)
Hayoon Kim (Neuroscience, Radnor, PA)
Lena Stern (Undeclared, Annapolis, MD)
Dalia Heller (History, Buffalo Grove, IL)
Joline Sun (Biology, Houston, TX)
Neela Myers (Biology, West Chicago, IL)
Nikol Krol (Undeclared, Hickory Hills, IL)
Kelly Quick (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Lake St. Louis, MO)
Emery Bowman (Undeclared, St. Louis, MO)
Elizabeth Papalotzi (Environmental Science, Valley Park, MO)
Mel Mallard (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Apopka, FL)

Oboe

Michelle Zhang (Computer Science and Music, Ballwin, MO)
Luca Marianova (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Brooklyn, NY)
Ethan Penn (Statistics, Glenview, IL)
Mary Kelly (MA Social Work, Belleville, IL)

Bassoon

Lucas Neres (English Literature, Winter Haven, FL)
Jeff Panhorst (Community Member)

Clarinet

Felix Guo (Biology, Lawrence, KS)
Theodor Martin (Linguistics and Anthropology, Makanda, IL)
Q Negrete (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Morgan Hill, CA)
Claire Gwak (Undeclared, St. Peters, MO)
Niu Niu Zhang (Mechanical Engineering, Vermillion, SD)
Marie Xue (Undeclared, Toronto, Canada)
Raymond Brooks (Undeclared, Belleville, IL)
Tyler Teague (Mechanical Engineering, Eureka, MO)

Bass Clarinet

Laurin Council (WashU Faculty)

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)
James Tong, alto (Undeclared, Suzhou, China)
Brianna Duhart, tenor (Biomedical Engineering, Bartlett, TN)
Grant McIntyre, tenor (Physics and Mathematical Sciences, Darien, CT)
Connor Higano, bari (Finance and Math: Economics, Wildwood, MO)

Wind Ensemble

Trumpet

Juliet Ainsley (Environmental Science, Wilmette, IL)
Zach Spain (Undeclared, Palo Alto, CA)
Tori Vasquez (History, Hazelwood, MO)
Victoria Wiecko (Mechanical Engineering, Wildwood, MO)
Cara Lichty (Classics, Dallas, TX)
Cameron Selby (Earth Science, Mercer Island, WA)
Seth Peters (Mechanical Engineering, Barnhart, MO)

French Horn

Thomas McGrath (Art History and Archaeology, St. Louis, MO)
Tai Moore (Art, St. Louis, MO)
Emily Wallman (Biology, O'Fallon, IL)
Riley Novak (Global Studies and Spanish, Phoenix, AZ)
Ethan Holtzman (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Fenton, MO)
Regina Loehr (WashU Faculty)

Trombone

Sean Wang (Biochemistry, Pleasanton, CA)
Julian Mitchell (Biology, O'Fallon, IL)
Aaron Roytman (Chemistry, Hillsborough, CA)
Henry Wasserman (Biochemistry, Concord, MA)

Euphonium

Yu-Chia Chang (PhD Chemistry, Taichung City, Taiwan)
Grace Moore (PhD Biology/Biomedical Science, University City, MO)
Tianyue Song (MA Information Systems Management, Beijing, China)

Tuba

Fabian Reyes (Mechanical Engineering, Kansas City, MO)
Sylas Sindle (Studio Art, Springfield, MO)
Sriharsha Gonuguntla (Biology, Ballwin, MO)

Percussion

Wilson Hou (Chemical Engineering, Singapore)
Maya Irvine (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Camdenton, MO)
Jake Page (Chemistry, St. Louis, MO)
Alex Nguyen (PhD Earth, Environmental, & Planetary Sciences, St. Peters, MO)
Phoenix Jarosz (Computer Science and Mathematics, O'Fallon, MO)
Jessica Flannigan (WashU Staff)
Neil Flannigan (Community Member)
Nicole Hackel (Community Member)

Piano

Sophie Tao (Communication Design, Atherton, CA)

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