



School of Music  
University of Missouri

2023-2024 Series | Large Ensemble

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# Wind Ensemble

**Dr. Brian A. Silvey, conductor**

**Neil L. Reed, guest graduate conductor**

**Noah Wright, euphonium**

**November 15, 2023 • 7:00PM**

**Missouri Theatre**

## Program

*Festive Overture* (1954) ..... **Dmitri Shostakovich**  
(1906-1975)  
Transcribed by Donald Hunsberger  
(1932-2023)

*In Memoriam Donald Hunsberger*

*Danzas* (2022) ..... **Giovanni Santos**  
(b. 1980)

*Elegy for A Young American* (1967) ..... **Ronald Lo Presti**  
(1933-1985)

Neil Reed, graduate guest conductor

*Vintage* (1990) ..... **David Gillingham**  
(b. 1947)

Noah Wright, euphonium  
2023 MU Concerto Competition Winner

*The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* (2020) ..... **Omar Thomas**  
(b. 1982)

## Program Notes

### *Festive Overture* (1954)

The story behind the creation of *Festive Overture* is one of those fantastic tales which reveals the true nature of a composer's genius, leaving all of the eye-witnesses shaking their heads in wonder. Shostakovich's friend Lev Lebedinsky related the story of how one time, when he was hanging out at the composer's apartment one day in the fall of 1954, they were visited by a conductor from the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra. Due to mysterious political maneuverings and bureaucratic snafus, the orchestra needed a new work to celebrate the October Revolution, and the concert was in three days.

Shostakovich had his friend Lebedinsky sit down next to him and began to compose.

Lebedinsky relates:

“The speed with which he wrote was truly astounding. Moreover, when he wrote light music he was able to talk, make jokes and compose simultaneously, like the legendary Mozart. He laughed and chuckled, and in the meanwhile work was under way and the music was being written down.”

There is not a trace of haste or carelessness in the vibrant *Festive Overture*. Shostakovich always composed at a fast pace, writing down the notes with superhuman facility. We will never know whether or not he employed musical ideas which were already lurking in his imagination, or whether the entire work was simply an instantaneous flash of inspiration. It is amusing however to think of Shostakovich “laughing and chuckling” as he composed, for it is easy to imagine the pervasiveness of the composer's good humor driving this energetic, truly festive work.

### *Danzas* (2022)

Giovanni Santos serves as Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Music at La Sierra University, where he directs the University Wind Ensemble, Chamber Winds, Big Band, and teaches courses in graduate and undergraduate instrumental music education, popular music, conducting and composition.

The composer wrote the following about their piece:

“*Danzas* takes a journey through the colorful and unique musical traditions in Cuban folklore. Heavily influenced by Afro-Cuban heritage and diaspora, this work sets to celebrate and honor its rich music history. This collage of styles starts its tribute with a musical tradition that began in West Africa and migrated to Cuba, the Bembé. The Bembé is traditionally in 6/8 and was introduced to the world by the Yorùbá people.

This work quickly travels through other important folkloric fusions, such as the songo, a section inspired by colonial Cuba, and a dream-like son, or song and hints of fusion rhumba. This work

is dedicated to my Cuban grandparents, Ireneo and Onelia Santos.”

*Danzas* was premiered by the Florida State Wind Orchestra and conducted by the composer, Giovanni Santos.

### ***Elegy for A Young American (1967)***

*Elegy for a Young American* is a testament to the vision and commitment of our 35th president, as well as a deeply emotional meditation on his tragic passing. The work is often described as moving through the various stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Interestingly, the idea of a codified progression of grief was not put forward until 1969, five years after the premiere, but there is no doubt that the piece travels through many of the emotional states felt by so many Americans in November of 1963. Gentle, homophonic choruses give way to discordant outbursts and massive climaxes as the composer struggles to make sense of Kennedy’s death. Finally, the anguish settles into a peaceful resolution, suggesting that even in the face of tragedy there is some room for acceptance.

Ronald Lo Presti was a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, and a former Ford Foundation composer-in-residence. He taught at Texas Technical University, Indiana State College (Pennsylvania), and Arizona State University. Lo Presti was the recipient of several Ford Foundation grants to young American composers.

### ***Vintage (1990)***

David Gillingham earned Bachelor and Master Degrees in Instrumental Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and the PhD in Music Theory/Composition from Michigan State University. His numerous awards include the 1981 DeMoulin Award for Concerto for Bass Trombone and Wind Ensemble and the 1990 International Barlow Competition (Brigham Young University) for *Heroes Lost and Fallen*. His works have been recorded by Klavier, Sony and Summit and Centaur. Dr. Gillingham is a Professor of Music at Central Michigan University and the recipient of an Excellence in Teaching Award (1990), a Summer Fellowship (1991), a Research Professorship (1995), and most recently, the President’s Research Investment Fund grant for his co-authorship of a proposal to establish an International Center for New Music at Central Michigan University. He is a member of ASCAP and has been receiving the ASCAP Standard Award for Composers of Concert Music since 1996.

A standard solo and a mainstay for many competitions, *Vintage* combines Gillingham’s intimate knowledge of how to write effectively for the instrument. This composition features wonderful soaring lines in the euphonium (ascending up to high C’s) while at the same time mixing in a jaunty and highly rhythmic 5/4 section. All the technical aspects of the piece, while challenging, are well thought out and effective for performer and audience. This full wind band version of this features some lush instrumental textures and makes it a common choice for programming.

## *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down (2020)*

Hailed by Herbie Hancock as showing “great promise as a new voice in the further development of jazz in the future,” educator, arranger, and award-winning composer Omar Thomas has created music extensively in the contemporary jazz ensemble idiom. It was while completing his Master of Music Degree that he was appointed the position of Assistant Professor of Harmony at Berklee College of Music at the surprisingly young age of 23. Following his Berklee tenure, he served on faculty of the Music Theory department at The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Now a Yamaha Master Educator, he is currently an Assistant Professor of Composition and Jazz Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. He was awarded the ASCAP Young Jazz Composers Award in 2008, and invited by the ASCAP Association to perform his music in their highly exclusive JaZzCap Showcase, held in New York City. In 2012, Omar was named the Boston Music Award’s “Jazz Artist of the Year.” In 2019, he was awarded the National Bandmasters Association/Revelli Award for his wind composition *Come Sunday*, becoming the first Black composer awarded the honor in the contest’s 42-year history.

Thomas provided the following program note:

“The end of the 60s into and through the 70s saw the era of the “blaxploitation” film – a genre of filmmaking aimed at African-American audiences which put us in leading roles of stories that often followed anti-establishment plots. These films were often controversial due to their exaggerated bravado, hypersexuality, and violence. Noticing the lucrative potential of blaxploitation films, Hollywood began to market these films to a wider audience. Though low budget, they possessed an exciting, raw, soulful quality unlike any other genre up until that time, and from these films were born some of the most iconic characters (Shaft, Dolemite, Foxy Brown, and Cleopatra Jones, to name a few) and soundtracks ever created, written by some of the biggest names in African-American popular folk music of the day and since, including Issac Hayes, Curtis Mayfield, James Brown, and Marvin Gaye.

*The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* is the soundtrack for a nonexistent blaxploitation film. It pulls from various sounds and styles of African-American folk music, such as funk, R&B, soul, early hip hop, the blues, and even film noir to stitch together its “scenes.” The title pulls from and is inspired by “post-jive” African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). The word “Brown” in the title, in addition to its reference to none other than the Godfather of Soul, James Brown, whose most-famous licks and bass lines pepper the intro and recur throughout the piece, also refers to the melanin of the people who created these sounds.

This piece unapologetically struts, bops, grooves, slides, shimmies, head bangs, and soul claps its way straight through its thrilling “chase scene” finale. It was my intention with the creation of this piece to go full steam ahead on bringing African-American folk music to the concert stage to take its place amongst all other types of folk music that have found a comfortable home in this arena. May this work push back against notions of “sophistication,” “appropriateness,” and “respectability” that have been codified in the concert music setting for a century and more.”

## Personnel

### **Piccolo**

Amanda Greenbacker-Mitchell

### **Flute**

Lexie Cheek, co-principal  
Nadia Lake, co-principal  
Kyrsten Wehner

### **Oboe**

Anna Claunch, principal  
Kara Balthrop

### **Bassoon**

Luke Frith, principal

### **E-flat Clarinet**

Elizabeth Ganey

### **B-Flat Clarinet**

Maddie Balsman, principal  
Samantha Decker  
Elizabeth Ganey  
Ava Rittgers  
Emily Stokes  
Abby Twyman  
Anton Yang

### **Bass Clarinet**

Meghan Brown

### **Alto Saxophone**

Warren Lane  
Andrea Lee, principal

### **Tenor Saxophone**

Abby Reed

### **Baritone Saxophone**

Nate Leslie

### **Trumpet**

Layden Dukes  
Jesse Hamilton  
Madison Haugsven  
Emily Rahn, principal  
Matthew Redshaw  
Brandon Sconce

### **Horn**

Brandon Guillen  
Sydney Hendrickson  
Erica Ohmann, principal  
Abby Oreskovich  
Pauline Rocha

### **Trombone**

Andrew Jaggi  
Tyler Martindale, principal  
Neil Reed  
Chloe Wilson

### **Euphonium**

Reece Hinton  
Noah Wright, principal

### **Tuba**

Jonah Hammontree, principal  
Atticus Schlegel

### **Percussion**

Alex Baur  
Miles Bohlman, principal  
Jacob Deeter  
Chloe Hart  
Luke Haymon  
Ryan Heckman  
Michael Tiffany

### **String Bass**

Sammy Asel

### **Piano**

Garrett Peterman

*Names appear in alphabetical order to illustrate the importance of each ensemble member's contributions to the group.*