



School of Music
University of Missouri

2024-2025 Series | Large Ensemble

Blue Springs South Wind Symphony

Kenny Hansen, conductor

Wind Ensemble

Dr. Amy M. Knopps, conductor

Sophie Browning-Brodack, graduate guest conductor

Viet Cuong, guest composer in residence

Featuring

Jesse Hamilton, Trumpet, MU Concerto Competition Winner

Dr. Megan Arns, Percussion, University of Missouri

Dr. Annie Stevens, Percussion, Virginia Tech

Dr. Andrea Venet, Percussion, University of North Florida

Dr. Hannah Weaver, Percussion University of Nebraska-Omaha

April 25, 2025 | 7:00pm

Missouri Theatre

Program

Blue Springs South Wind Symphony

***Diamond Tide* (2015) – (8:00) Viet Cuong**
(b. 1990)

Program note provided by Viet Cuong:

A 2010 article published in Nature Physics details an experiment in which scientists were able to successfully melt a diamond and, for the first time, measure the temperature and pressure necessary to do so. When diamonds are heated to very high temperatures, they don't melt; they simply turn into graphite, which then melts (and the thought of liquid graphite isn't nearly as appealing or beautiful as liquid diamond.) Therefore, the addition of extremely high pressure—40 million times the pressure we feel on Earth at sea level—is crucial to melt a diamond.

The extreme temperature and pressure used in this experiment are found Neptune and Uranus, and scientists therefore believe that seas of liquid diamond are possible on these two planets. Oceans of diamond may also account for these planets' peculiar magnetic and geographic poles, which do not line up like they do here on Earth. Lastly, as the scientists were melting the diamonds, they saw floating shards of solid diamond forming in the pools—just like icebergs in our oceans. Imagine: distant planets with oceans of liquid diamond filled with bergs of sparkling solid diamonds drifting in the tide...

These theories are obviously all conjecture, but this alluring imagery provided heaps of inspiration for *Diamond Tide*, which utilizes the “melting” sounds of metallic water percussion and trombone glissandi throughout.

The work is in two movements, which can be performed separately.

Heartfelt thanks to Cheryl Floyd, Richard Floyd, the TMEA Region 18 bands, and John Mackey for making this piece possible.

***To Those We Love* (2022) - (5:30) Richard Carter**
(b. 1997)

Biography:

Richard (Joey) Carter is a graduate of Blue Springs South High School.

Program Note:

This piece was written for and premiered by Dr. Lee Hartman and the Mid-America Freedom Band on October 2, 2022. Lee was my first composition teacher and helped me continue writing through some of my hardest moments during my undergraduate degree.

There are many moments in life where we want to say “I love you” to someone, but cannot do so. This may be because they are no longer here, or we are not comfortable with saying these three words out loud, or that the situation doesn’t feel quite right.

These moments can cause some of life’s most gut-wrenching emotions and leave us feeling lost and alone.

This piece is dedicated to my family, friends, loved ones, and the Mid-America Freedom Band, whose mission is to provide a safe space for people of the LGBTQ+ community. History has consistently fought against the LGBTQ+ community's struggle to openly share love with each other. “To Those We Love” honors those who have struggled for decades and continue to do so. It’s a simple, musical “I love you”.

***Chester* (1778/1956) – (6:00) William Schuman**
(1910-1992)

Biography from WindRep.Org:

William Schuman (4 August 1910, Bronx, N.Y. - 15 February 1992, New York, N.Y.) was an American composer and educator.

Schuman was the second child of Samuel and Rachel Schuman. In 1928, Schuman entered New York University to prepare for a business degree at the School of Commerce, while at the same time working for an advertising agency. He continued to collaborate on pop songs with E. B. Marks, Jr., an old friend from summer camp, and also created some forty songs with lyricist [Frank Loesser](#), a neighbor who was also at the beginning of his career. Loesser's first publication, in fact, was a song with music by Schuman. Together they wrote many songs for radio, vaudeville, and nightclub acts. In April 1930, having attended his first professional symphony orchestra concert, Schuman suddenly realized that baseball, business, and popular music must be relegated to subsidiary positions in favor of composing "classical" or concert music.

Schuman earned a B.S. in music education (1935) from the Teachers College of Columbia University. In the fall of 1935, Schuman settled into his first teaching position, at Sarah

Lawrence College, Bronxville, N.Y., where he remained on the faculty for a decade. In 1937, he earned an MA degree from Columbia University. In 1944 G. Schirmer, Inc., appointed Schuman Director of Publications. He began work there even before leaving the Sarah Lawrence faculty and continued to serve Schirmer as Special Publications Consultant after moving in 1945 to his next post, the presidency of The Juilliard School. During the 1940s he received his first of many honorary doctorates and was awarded the first Pulitzer Prize ever given in the field of musical composition.

Program note provided by William Schuman:

The tune on which this composition is based was born during the very time of the American Revolution, appearing in 1778 in a book of tunes and anthems composed by [William Billings](#) called *The Singing Master's Assistant*. This book became known as *Billings' Best* following as it did his first book called *The New England Psalm Singer*, published in 1770. Chester was so popular that it was sung throughout the colonies from Vermont to South Carolina. It became the song of the American Revolution, sung around the campfires of the Continental Army and played by fifers on the march. The music and words, both composed by Billings, expressed perfectly the burning desire for freedom which sustained the colonists through the difficult years of the Revolution.

*Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And Slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.*

*The Foe comes on with haughty Stride;
Our troops advance with martial noise,
Their Vet'rans flee before our Youth,
And Gen'rals yield to beardless Boys.*

*What grateful Off'ring shall we bring?
What shall we render to the Lord?
Loud Halleluiahs let us Sing,
And praise his name on ev'ry Chord.*

Intermission

Wind Ensemble

Deciduous (2023) - (8:05) Viet Cuong
(b.1990)

Program note provided by Viet Cuong:

For a long time after my father passed away, I felt like I had “lost my leaves.” In the ways 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 throughout my life and activating them in textures that I have enjoyed exploring in recent years. 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 followed by a spring. *Deciduous* was commissioned by the Florida Bandmasters Association and premiered by the 11-12 Florida All-State Band under the direction of Dr. Emily Threinen.

in my quiet room, I see my world asunder (2025) - (9:30) Atticus Schlegel
(b. 2002)

World Premiere

Program note provided by Atticus Schlegel:

As graduation approaches this May, I’ve found myself reflecting deeply on how far I’ve come over the past five years. These reflections often emerge through solitary, introspective moments—quiet walks, long drives, or simply sitting with myself and wondering: *What lies beyond Mizzou for me?*

While there is a sense of disruption in leaving this place and community, there’s also a strong current of hope for what comes next. The form of *in my quiet room, i see my world asunder* mirrors this emotional landscape. It begins in a space of intense anguish, shaped by the uncertainty of departure. This ache is voiced through harsh harmonies and forceful interjections of a distinctive two-note motive. As the piece unfolds, however, a sense of forward-looking optimism emerges, guiding the music from restlessness toward a quiet, faithful curiosity about the future.

During this time of transition, I've also been reading *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and one metaphor in particular has lingered in my thoughts. Robert Pirsig likens life to a mountain—its peak representing our goals or ideal self, while its sides, where the mountain's life truly flourishes, represent the day-to-day experiences that shape us. While we may fix our eyes on the summit, it is the climb—the quiet struggles, the ordinary beauty, the steady movement—that sustains us. To live only for the destination is to miss the richness of the path itself.

Konzert for Trumpet and Wind Ensemble (1955/2013) – (13:00) Aleksandra Pakhmutova
(b. 1929)

Transcribed by Chris Buchanan

Jesse Hamilton, Trumpet, MU Concerto Competition Winner

Biography from Melodyia website:

Aleksandra Nikolayevna Pakhmutova (Russian: Александра Николаевна Пахмутова; born 9 November 1929) is a Soviet and Russian composer. She has remained one of the best-known figures in Soviet and later Russian popular music since she first achieved fame in her homeland in the 1960s. People's Artist of the USSR (1984).

She was born on 9 November 1929 in Beketovka (now a neighborhood in Volgograd), Russian SFSR, Soviet Union, and began playing the piano and composing music at an early age. She was admitted to the prestigious Moscow Conservatory and graduated in 1953. In 1956 she completed a post-graduate course led by the outstanding composer Vissarion Shebalin.

Her career is notable for her success in a range of different genres. She has composed pieces for the symphony orchestra (*The Russian Suite, the concerto for the trumpet and the orchestra, the Youth Overture, the concerto for the orchestra*); *the ballet Illumination*; *music for children* (cantatas, a series of choir pieces, and numerous songs); and songs and music for over a dozen different movies from *Out of This World* in 1958 to *Because of Mama* in 2001.

She is best known for some of her 400 songs, including such enduringly popular songs as *The Melody, Russian Waltz, Tenderness, Hope, The Old Maple Tree, The Song of the Perturbed Youth, a series of the Gagarin Constellation, The Bird of Happiness* (from the 1981 film *O Sport, You - the world!*, whose the song is subsequently very known in both Russia and China when performed by Russian singer Vitas since 2003) and *Good-Bye*

Moscow which was used as the farewell tune of the 22nd Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980. *Tenderness* was used with great effect in Tatyana Lioznova's 1967 film *Three Poplars on Plutschikha*. Her husband, the eminent Soviet era poet Nikolai Dobronravov, contributed lyrics to her music on occasion, including songs used in three films.

One of her most famous ballads is *Belovezhskaya Pushcha*, composed in 1975, which celebrates Bialowieza Primaeval Forest, a last remnant of the European wildwood split now between Poland and Belarus. Another much-aired song was *Malaya Zemlya*, about a minor outpost where the then Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev served as a political commissar during World War II.

Alexandra Pakhmutova found favour with the state establishment as well as the public. Reputedly Brezhnev's favourite composer, she received several Government Awards and State Prizes and served as the Secretary of the USSR and Russian Unions of Composers. She was named Hero of Socialist Labour in 1990. Her name was given to Asteroid # 1889, registered by the planetary centre in Cincinnati, Ohio, United States.

Program notes taken from The New Zealand Herald:

Aleksandra Pakhmutova, known for her tonal music in a wide variety of genres, is one of the most decorated Russian composers, having received awards both before and after the fall of the Soviet Union. Composed while she was a postgraduate at the Moscow Conservatory, Pakhmutova's trumpet concerto is one of the few works (apart from Shostakovich's) that have survived the post-Stalinist Soviet period of Russian music history. The trumpet concerto is in one movement but it references the rational tripartite structure of a concerto: a slow introduction leads into a fast Allegro, a slow legato section, and fast finale. Pakhmutova draws together most of the popular styles of mid-century Soviet music here: the influence of Rachmaninov's long melodies, Prokofiev's brass writing, and Khachaturian's colourful harmonic and rhythmic style are especially apparent."

Peace Dancer (2022) – (4:55) Jodie Blackshaw
(b. 1971)

Sophie Browning-Brodack, graduate guest conductor

Biography provided by Jodie Blackshaw:

Jodie Blackshaw (b. 1971) grew up in the south-east of rural Australia and formed a

very personal relationship with music early in life through the creative application of her imagination to musical colours and movement. Today, she continues to seek creative experiences for students through her teaching and composing so they, too, may enjoy the personal relationship she discovered in her formative years. This includes the launching of her very own four-volume series *“Teaching Performance through Composition”*.

In 2020 Blackshaw completed her PhD in Composition at the Australian National University. Her supervisor was Australian indigenous composer Dr. Christopher Sainsbury and her associate supervisor was Dr. Craig Kirchhoff. In addition to composing and presenting music education workshops, Blackshaw is passionate about fostering equality in concert programs, especially in schools. In 2017 she founded the Female Band Composer database (<https://www.jodieblackshaw.com/female-band-composers>) which is now cited as a tool for repertoire selection by The Midwest Clinic. In 2018 Blackshaw founded the website www.colourfullmusic.com in response to a panel presentation she curated for the Midwest Clinic entitled ‘Directors for Diversity’. The panel featured Jerry Junkin, John Lynch, Mary K. Schneider, Kevin Sedatole and high school band director Julie Bounds. ColourFULL Music shares diverse wind band programs created by an international array of leading conductors within the wind music community and now has a following of more than 5000 music educators and conductors.

Jodie has thrice presented at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago (2012, 2014, 2018) as well as conducted residencies and/or conference presentations in the Middle East, Hong Kong and throughout Canada, Australia and the United States. She is published by Manhattan Beach Music, GIA Music Inc., Brolga Music/C. Alan Publications, Alfred Music and Murphy Music Press Incorporated. In 2006 she won the inaugural Frank Ticheli Composition Contest and was the BandQuest composer-in-residence in 2014. Her music is played frequently internationally with performances of her first symphony appearing in Portugal, France, Germany, Switzerland, Australia and the United States. In June 2022 Blackshaw launched her ‘Conservation Series’, an infinitely growing set of works that raises both funds and awareness surrounding climate change and endangered species. Artistic Citizenship is an important component of Blackshaw’s compositions as she believes this enables students of all ages to become more emotionally engaged with their approach to music performance.

In July 2022 Jodie proudly became a board member of the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) and is currently in preparation for a six-week invitational tour of the United States in Jan/Feb 2024 where she will headline three music education conferences, realise two newly commissioned works and conduct residencies at a number of universities.”

Program note provided by Jodie Blackshaw:

Peace Dancer is inspired by the First Nations text of the same name by Roy Henry Vickers (Squamish Nation). In the words of the author:

The story Peace Dancer is about a song and dance that is thousands of years old originating from the time of the flood. Songs have been composed for different Chiefs up and down the Pacific northwest coast. The Chief who is chosen to do this sacred dance is recognized as a healer in each community and the songs and dances are a reminder of the great flood and how the people lost their way and their love for all things in creation. During the dance there is a time when the dancer shakes eagle down from their headdress to remind people of the flood.”

Whilst this text afforded many music making opportunities, the composer chose to focus on one moment:

“We have really lost our way, we have not taught our children love and respect”.

This is achieved by dividing this short piece into ‘moments’: meditation – awakening – realization – humility. It takes you, the audience on an emotional journey, similar to realizing you have been in the wrong; maybe you have been unkind or acted in a way that does not become you? Once you realize the consequence of your actions, remorse and the understanding that there is a need to move forward with humility and grace follows. Thus is the lesson of Peace Dancer.

Commissioned by the University of British Columbia Conducting Symposium Consortium, Symposium hosted by Dr. Robert Taylor, consortium led by Janet Wade.

***Re(new)al* (2019, revised in 2021) – (15:45) Viet Cuong**
***Concerto for Percussion Quartet and Wind Ensemble* (b. 1990)**

*Dr. Megan Arns, Dr. Annie Stevens, Dr. Andrea Venet,
and Dr. Hannah Weaver, Percussion*

Program note provided by Viet Cuong:

I have tremendous respect for renewable energy initiatives and the commitment to creating a new, better reality for us all. *Re(new)al* is a percussion quartet concerto that is

similarly devoted to finding unexpected ways to breathe new life into traditional ideas, and the solo quartet therefore performs on several “found” instruments, including crystal glasses and compressed air cans. And while the piece also features more traditional instruments, such as snare drum and vibraphone, I looked for ways to either alter their sounds or find new ways to play them. For instance, a single snare drum is played by all four members of the quartet, and certain notes of the vibraphone are prepared with aluminum foil to recreate sounds found in electronic music. The entire piece was conceived in this way, and even the accompaniment was written these ideas in mind.

Cooperation and synergy are also core themes of the piece, as I believe we all have to work together to move forward. All of the music played by the solo quartet is comprised of single musical ideas that are evenly distributed between the four soloists (for those interested, the fancy musical term for this is a *hocket*). The music would therefore be dysfunctional without the presence and dedication of all four members. For example, the quartet divvies up lightning-fast drum set beats in the second movement and then shares one *glockenspiel* in the last movement. But perhaps my favorite example of synergy in the piece is in the very opening, where the four soloists toast crystal glasses. We always toast glasses in the presence of others, and oftentimes to celebrate new beginnings. This is my simple way of celebrating everyone who is working together to create a cleaner, more efficient world.

Re(new)al is constructed of three continuous movements, each inspired by the power of hydro, wind, and solar energies. The hydro movement transforms tuned crystal glasses into ringing hand bells as the wind ensemble slowly submerges the soloists in their sound. The second movement turns each member of the quartet into a blade of a dizzying wind turbine, playing seemingly-impossible 90’s-inspired drum and bass patterns over a bass line that quotes and expands upon a few bars from one of my favorite drum and bass tracks by DJ Hype. The closing movement simulates a sunrise and evokes the brilliance of sunlight with metallic percussion instruments. This piece was originally written with a *sinfonietta* accompaniment, and in its original form was commissioned for the 2017 American Music Festival by David Alan Miller and the Albany Symphony’s Dogs of Desire in partnership with GE Renewable Energy. A full orchestra version was commissioned in 2018 by the Albany Symphony, and this final version for wind ensemble was commissioned by a consortium of universities and community ensembles. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been involved in any of the three versions of this piece.

Blue Springs South Wind Symphony Personnel

Flute

Alex Saddler
Alana Chambers
Kai Templeton
Gianna Cenni
Kaelin Harris
Bailee Davis

Bassoon

Addison Graheck

Oboe

Kayden Stevenson

Clarinet

Max Hansen
Angel Lopez
Allyson McConnell
Chelsea Yost
Jameson Jones
Bella Cadwallader
Izzy Arthur

Alto Saxophone

Maddie Matthews
Avery Wells
Aidan Olson
Caleb Davis
Lucas Painter

Tenor Saxophone

Josh Cooper
Ethan Barnhart

Bari Saxophone

Erin Butcher

Bass Clarinet

Andy Guerra

Trumpet

Sam Hansen
Hayden Gulley
Drake Martinez
Gavin Fisher
Jesse Mack
Mia Livojevich

Horn

Ann Perry-Parrish
Libby Cason
Claire Porter
Lily McDanel

Trombone

Ian Garcia
Baylee Wilkins
Xavier Scott
Robert Ninnig
Max Potts

Euphonium

Ayush Patel
Asher Clements

Tuba

Caden Dane
Mack Fuhr
Jim Zumba

Percussion

Chloe Arriaga
Brady Black
Gracie Buckner
Derek Dimmit
Garrett Flack
Kristin Freeland
Elyse Graheck
Samuel Hamilton
Bryce Klay

Wind Ensemble Personnel

Piccolo

Tatum Anderson
Lexie Cheek
Nadia Lake
Mattie Neidholdt

Flute

Lexie Cheek
Nadia Lake
Mattie Neidholdt

Alto Flute

Lexie Cheek

Oboe

+Kara Balthrop
+Lauren Hynes
Abigail Reed

English Horn

+Kara Balthrop

Bassoon

Grayson Helsel

E-Flat Clarinet

Sophie Browning-Brodack

B-Flat Clarinet

Maddie Balsman
Sophie Browning
Samantha Decker
Matthew Kim
+Ember Kirkham
Alexis Paten
Emily Stokes
+Jane Guillot-Beinke
+Sam Keithline

Bass Clarinet

Kamren Fox

Soprano Saxophone

Nate Leslie

Alto Saxophone

Nate Leslie
Warren Lane
+Emma Spalding

Tenor Saxophone

Jackson Huenefeldt

Baritone Saxophone

David Garcia

Contrabass Clarinet

+Ember Kirkham

Trumpet

Sophie Bock
Andrew Friesen
Maddy Haugsven
Ava Lairmore
Brandon Sconce

Horn

Hayden Alley
Lauren Griffith
Brandon Guillen
Pauline Rocha, Assistant
Joseph Rutherford

Trombone

Andrew Jaggi
Neil Reed
Chloe Wilson

Bass Trombone

Dézon Gagnon

Euphonium

Christopher Harris
Maggie Howell
Ryan Lowe

Tuba

Watinsi Dobbs
Brady Sohn

Percussion

Anders Harms
Chloe Hart
Lex Henderson
Matthew Hinkle
Daniel Noonan
Geddy Rice
Cooper Snodgrass
Nathan Stokes

String Bass

Sam Caldwell

Piano

Sarah Liu

Harp

+Hannah Lanning

+Guest Musician

Biographies

Viet Cuong

Called “alluring” and “wildly inventive” by *The New York Times*, the music of American composer Viet Cuong has been performed on six continents by musicians and ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, Eighth Blackbird, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Alarm Will Sound, Atlanta Symphony, Sandbox Percussion, Albany Symphony, PRISM Quartet, and Dallas Winds, among many others. Cuong’s music has been featured in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center, and his works for wind ensemble have amassed several hundreds of performances worldwide. Passionate about bringing these different facets of the contemporary music community together, his recent projects include a concerto for Eighth Blackbird with the United States Navy Band. Cuong also enjoys exploring the unexpected and whimsical, and he is often drawn to projects where he can make peculiar combinations and sounds feel enchanting or oddly satisfying. His works thus include a snare drum solo, percussion quartet concerto, and double oboe concerto. He is currently the Pacific Symphony’s Composer-in-Residence and serves as Assistant Professor of Music Composition at The University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Cuong holds degrees from Princeton University (MFA/PhD), the Curtis Institute of Music (AD), and Peabody Conservatory (BM/MM).”

Kenny Hansen is the Director of Bands for Blue Springs South High School. Kenny joined the staff at Blue Springs South in the fall of 2012 where the band program has continued to thrive in quality and student involvement under his leadership. Kenny is responsible for the total band program at Blue Springs South including the Wind Symphony, Concert Band, Jaguar Pride Marching Band, jazz band, pep band, and 6th grade trombones. In addition to the ensembles Kenny also helps oversee the solo/ensemble program.

Under his direction the Wind Symphony earned the Grand Champion of the Dallas Windband Festival, performed in the Music For All National Concert Band Festival, and have performed twice at the Missouri Music Educators Convention. The Jaguar Pride Marching Band has continued its success of being one of the region’s best marching bands. Most recently the Jaguar Pride has been a Bands of America Super Regional Finalist in 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, and 2023 as well as a Regional Finalist in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019.

Kenny earned his Bachelor of Music Education from Central Methodist University and a Master of Music Education from the University of Missouri. While at Central Methodist Kenny was a feature soloist with the Concert Band and Jazz Band his sophomore through

senior year. Kenny was also honored to perform with the All-Collegiate Band at MMEA in 1997 under the baton of Jerry Junkin. Kenny enjoys the opportunity to adjudicate and be a clinician for area band programs.

Kenny lives in Lee's Summit and enjoys spending time with his wife and kids. Kenny is a member of Phi Mu Alpha, Phi Beta Mu, Missouri Bandmasters Association and NAFME.

Amy M. Knopps is the Associate Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands at the University of Missouri where she directs Marching Mizzou, Mini Mizzou, Symphonic Band, and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the School of Music. Under her direction Marching Mizzou has grown in size from 245 members in 2017 to a current capacity 350 members in 2022, which stands today. In 2022 Marching Mizzou performed in the 96th Annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, where they led the parade, and was in the Opening Number alongside Lea Michele and the Cast of *Funny Girl*. In 2024 traveled to Dublin, Ireland to perform in the St. Patrick's Festival Parade, where they earned the distinction of "Best Overall Band."

Prior to her appointment in the fall of 2017, Dr. Knopps served for seven years as Associate Professor of Music, Associate Director of Bands, and Director of Athletic Bands in the School of Music and Dance at Eastern Michigan University. While at Eastern Michigan she was a Faculty Spotlight Recipient, the Eastern Michigan University Thank-A-Teacher Inaugural Recipient, and featured in a historic exhibition titled, "In Her Shoes: Forging Paths at EMU" as she was the first woman to direct the Eastern Michigan University Marching Band and serve as Associate Director of Bands. In fact in 2010, her and her colleague, Dr. Mary Schneider, Director of Bands, became the first woman team of Director of Bands and Associate Director of Bands not only at EMU, but nationwide at the collegiate level.

Dr. Knopps earned degrees from The University of Georgia (DMA), the University of Kansas (MM), and the University of Missouri (BS, Ed.) where her principal conducting teachers were Dr. John P. Lynch and Dr. Dale J. Lonis. While at Georgia and Kansas she held conducting associate positions that involved conducting both concert and athletic bands as well as teaching courses in the music curriculum. During her time at The University of Georgia, Dr. Knopps earned the Hugh Hodgson School of Music Director's Excellence Award and at the University of Kansas she earned the Russell L. Wiley Graduate Conducting Award.

Additional teaching experience includes numerous years as Director of Bands at Center High School and Center Middle School in her hometown of Kansas City, Missouri where

she guided all aspects of the diverse and award-winning band program, as well as served as the Fine Arts Coordinator. While in the Center School District, Dr. Knopps received the 2003 Missouri Fine Arts Outstanding Teacher Award and the 2004 You Make the Difference Award for her dedication and commitment to excellence in education. As an advocate for new wind music, she solely commissioned and premiered Jonathan Newman's *1861* for concert band in 2003 and continues her commitment to contributing to the wind band repertoire through additional and diverse commissions for Symphonic Band at the University of Missouri.

Dr. Knopps continues to be a very active conductor, clinician, and adjudicator across the United States and internationally having worked and performed throughout Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe, and South America. For ten years she has served as a head clinician/instructor at the Smith-Walbridge Clinics held in Charleston, Illinois each summer working with high school and collegiate drum majors from across the country. Dr. Knopps is also known for her published contributions as she has authored several articles for *School Band* and *Orchestra Magazine*, and has contributed to eight volumes of the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series. Dr. Knopps was also featured in *Women in Wind Band*, a 2023 book that thoughtfully looks at why female-identifying band directors are still a minority in the field. In addition to her published articles and podcasts, she has completed extensive research on American-Sponsored overseas secondary band programs.

Dr. Knopps maintains professional affiliations with the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), currently serving as Chair of the CBDNA Athletic Bands Committee, the first woman to ever serve in this position, and as Missouri State Chair, World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE), the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), National Band Association (NBA), Missouri Women's Band Directors Association (MWBD), Phi Beta Mu, Tau Beta Sigma, Kappa Kappa Psi, currently serving as the sponsor for the Eta Upsilon chapter, the Griffiths Leadership Society for Women, currently serving on the Executive Committee as Past Chair, and QEBH, the oldest of six secret honor societies at the University of Missouri when she was Honor Tapped in 2018.

In 2021, Dr. Knopps was named Associate Professor of the Year and earned a Purple Chalk Teaching Award from the College of Arts and Science. In 2022, Dr. Knopps was named to the 2022-2023 University of Missouri Provost Leadership Program Cohort. In 2023, Dr. Knopps earned a Distinguished Alumni Award from the College of Arts and Science, the Faculty and Alumni Award from the Mizzou Alumni Association, and was inducted into the Marching Mizzou Hall of Fame. In 2024, Dr. Knopps earned the William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence, the highest award offered at Mizzou. In

2025, Dr. Knopps was inducted into the Lee's Summit High School Hall of Fame.

Sophie Browning-Brodack is currently pursuing a PhD in Music Education at the University of Missouri in Columbia. As a graduate teaching assistant in the bands area, she assists with university concert bands and athletic bands, coordinates logistics for ensemble performances, and supports undergraduate music education students in rehearsal techniques and pedagogy.

Before beginning her doctoral studies, Sophie served as the Woodwind Specialist and Band Director in the Clayton School District. She has also taught band in the Edwardsville School District (IL) and at All Saints Catholic School (OH). She holds a Master of Music in Clarinet Performance from Bowling Green State University and a Bachelor of Music in Clarinet Performance and Music Education from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

An active music education researcher, Sophie has presented her work at the Missouri Music Educators Association Conference and the National Association for Music Education biennial conference. Her research has also been published in the Journal of Music Teacher Education. In 2024, she joined the St. Louis Wind Symphony Youth Ensemble as co-director.

Jesse Hamilton is a dynamic and talented up-and-coming musician currently based in Columbia, Missouri. Originally from Rochester, New York, he completed his bachelor's degree in Music Education at Penn State University and is currently finishing his master's degree in Trumpet Performance at the University of Missouri – Columbia. While studying for his degrees, Jesse has performed with many orchestras, including the Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra and the Penns Woods Festival Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Gerardo Edelstein, and the Missouri Symphony, under the direction of Maestro Wilbur Lin. As a soloist, Jesse is just as avid a performer, participating in masterclasses taught by Otto Sauter, Douglas Lindsey, Julian Kaplan, and Steven Franklin. He has also won multiple competitions, including the 2024 Missouri Music Teachers Association Brass Graduate Competition and the University of Missouri's 2024–25 Concerto Competition.

Jesse is also a frequent gigging musician in the jazz sphere, performing with various artists and groups including Benny Benack III, Benny Golson, Vardan Ovsepiyan, Joshua Davis, Steve Rudolph, Dwayne Dolphin, Clay Wulbrecht, Marco Marcinko, Rick Hirsch, Centre Dimensions Big Band, Zeropoint Big Band, and the Columbia Jazz Orchestra. He has also

been a pit musician for several theatre productions with Penn State School of Theatre's Centre Stage and Show Me Theatricals.

Jesse's notable teachers include Dr. Langston J. Fitzgerald III and Dr. Iskander Akhmadullin. In the Fall of 2025, he will move to Chicago to begin studying with Esteban Batallán and Stephen Burns at DePaul University.

Dr. Megan Arns is a percussionist, ethnomusicologist, and educator with a diverse set of skills and a driven passion for her craft. She is an Associate Professor and has served as Director of Percussion Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia since 2014 and is a recent recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity. Before coming to Mizzou, Megan held faculty positions at Mansfield University and at the National Music Conservatory in Amman, Jordan, where she was also principal percussionist and timpanist of the Amman Symphony Orchestra. During the summers, she is a section member of the New Hampshire Music Festival and regularly performs as a substitute with the St. Louis Symphony.

Megan is an advocate for the creation of new music, co-commissioning and premiering over 100 works both as a soloist and as a member of two contemporary chamber groups: the [Switch~ Ensemble] – an electroacoustic ensemble based out of New York City, and DRAX – a saxophone and percussion duo in residence at Mizzou. DRAX's debut CD *chaos+contemplation* was released on Ravello Records in 2022 and features four commissions of electroacoustic works. Her current solo project features six new commissions in collaboration with the Kinds of Kings Composer Collective. Megan has performed on four continents at venues such as the Kennedy Center, Millennium Park, Smithsonian Institution, and the Percussive Arts Society International Convention.

Megan received her D.M.A. in Percussion Performance & Literature and M.A. in Ethnomusicology at the Eastman School of Music, M.M. in Percussion Performance and Certificate in World Music from Florida State University, and B.M in Percussion Performance at Truman State University where she was recognized as a Presser Scholar. She currently serves on the Board of Directors and as 2nd Vice President on the Executive Committee of the Percussive Arts Society. Megan endorses Vic Firth Sticks & Mallets, Pearl/Adams Musical Instruments, Black Swamp Percussion, Remo Drumheads, and Zildjian Cymbals.

Dr. Annie Stevens, an active soloist and chamber musician throughout the U.S. and internationally, is the Associate Professor of Percussion at Virginia Tech, member of the

Escape Ten Duo, and Principal Timpanist of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. Annie has performed and lectured at over 40 universities, numerous international conferences, and was featured on NPR's "Performance Today." As an educator, Annie's students have won several awards and competitions, including acceptance into Carnegie Hall's prestigious NYO2 and NYO touring orchestras, winning first place at the Percussive Arts Society Chamber Music Competition at PASIC, and being awarded full scholarships for graduate study after completing their degrees at Virginia Tech. In 2023, she was awarded the Alumni Enterprise Award from the Music Academy of the West.

As a member of the percussion duo Escape Ten, Annie maintains an active performance calendar around the United States and abroad, having recently given performances in 2024 in Montreal, Texas, Delaware and Indiana, as well as giving the U.S. premiere of John Psathas' double concerto, *The All-Seeing Sky*, in 2023 with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. They have released two albums, *Colours of a Groove* and *Our Favorite Things*. She also performs in a faculty quartet at Virginia Tech, October Sky, whose mission is to actively commission, record, and perform works for tenor, violin, cello, and percussion. Their debut album, *October Skies*, was released on the MSR Label in 2023. As the principal timpanist for the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, she was recognized as "impeccably responsive" by the Roanoke Times. She has also performed with the festival orchestras of the Music Academy of the West, the National Orchestral Institute, the Aspen Music Festival, Ensemble Evolution with the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Metropolis Ensemble, and the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra (Florida).

Annie's primary teachers include Michael Burritt, Alan Abel, Chip Ross, Bill Cahn, She-e Wu, and Tom McGowan, and she holds degrees from Northwestern University (B.M.), Rutgers University (M.M.) and The Eastman School of Music (D.M.A). Annie endorses Mallettech, Remo, Blackswamp Percussion, and Dream Cymbals and Gongs, and she is the Chapter President for the Percussive Arts Society, Virginia/D.C. Region. She lives in Blacksburg, VA with her husband and violinist, John Irrera, and their two daughters.

Dr. Andrea Venet is a percussion artist, soloist, educator, and composer specializing in contemporary and classical genres. She is currently Assistant Professor of Percussion and head of the department at the University of North Florida, where she directs the UNF percussion ensemble, teaches applied lessons, pedagogy, methods and percussion literature. Her creative activity includes performance, composition, and commissioning new works.

As an international soloist, chamber musician, and clinician, Andrea maintains an active performance schedule, having held appointments in Europe, Japan, Canada, and Trinidad.

Andrea has been a featured soloist at the Celebrate Marimba Festival, The Steve Weiss Mallet Festival (Barnes Foundation, PA), Prairie Music Residency (SK, Canada), and with the Kutztown University Symphony. Dr. Venet's percussion duo, Escape Ten, maintains a steady performance schedule touring as guest artists and clinicians nationally and internationally. In 2016 they performed a Showcase Concert at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, giving 3 world premieres. As signature artists, Escape Ten has their own mallets (2020) and publication series of new percussion duos through Mallettech/Keyboard Percussion Publications (KPP). You can hear them their albums, *My Favorite Things* (Parma Records, 2020) and *Colours of a Groove* (2014).

Andrea's compositions and arrangements can be found self-published via her website, through Keyboard Percussion Publications (KPP), Tapspace, and Alfonse-Production, in addition to articles published with Percussive Notes and Rhythm! Scene magazines. A passionate educator, Andrea's research involves pedagogy, with focus on college percussion education at various levels, classical improvisation and historically informed Baroque performance practice techniques for Bach on marimba. She has presented her lecture recital entitled "Affekt and Execution: Historical Performance Practice and Contemporary Techniques for performing Bach on Marimba" multiple times across the country. Andrea holds a DMA in Performance and Literature with a minor in Pedagogy, and the prestigious Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. She received her Masters and Bachelors degrees from Rutgers and Arizona State University, respectively. Andrea is endorsed by Mallettech, Remo, DREAM Cymbals, Black Swamp Percussion, and currently serves as the Percussive Arts Society Florida Chapter President.

An avid solo and chamber performer, **Dr. Hannah Weaver** has special interests in contemporary literature and the solo literature of J. S. Bach. Recent performances include a world premiere of Jennifer Bellow's "Amethyst Sky" (considered for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Grammy 2020) and a solo recital of transcriptions of Bach solo works for collaborations of marimba, vibes, and dancers. A member of the Heartland Marimba Quartet since 2021, she performed with the quartet on their spring 2021 tour (concerti performances with Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, concerts in Mason City, IA and Oak Park, IL). Her mixed chamber trio "Odds and Ends" (saxophone, clarinet and percussion) released an electronic album summer '21 with new commissions by Kitty Xiao, Erich Barganier, Jeremy Bearsden and Sean William Calhoun.

In November of 2018, Weaver competed in the TROMP International Percussion Competition in Amsterdam and advanced to the semifinals. She also placed in the semifinals of the 2009 Paris International Marimba Competition and won the 2014 Percussive Arts Society International Convention Orchestra Mock Audition. She has held

fellowships with the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, the Lake George Music Festival, the Texas Music Festival and the National Repertory Orchestra, and regularly performs with the Kansas City Symphony. In 2015 she was a featured concerto performer with the National Repertory Orchestra, where she performed Russell Peck's "The Glory and the Grandeur."

A passionate teacher committed to cultivating her students' individual musicianship, Weaver holds the position of Assistant Professor of Percussion at University of Nebraska-Omaha. Previously she taught at Virginia Tech during the 2018 spring semester. A guest clinician at Virginia Commonwealth University, Bowling Green State University, Radford University, the University of Indianapolis, and Eastern Tennessee State University, she has coached and conducted percussion ensembles at Virginia Tech, University of Michigan, University of Rochester, and Eastman School of Music. Weaver is a proud endorser of Mallettech and Zildjian products. She received her D.M.A., Performer's Certificate, and B.M. from the Eastman School of Music and her M.M. in Percussion Performance and Chamber Music from the University of Michigan.