



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Tuesday, February 10, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.
Margot and Bill Winspear Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

North Texas Wind Ensemble Amy Woody, conductor Carlos Granthon, guest conductor

Afrospire (2023) Bakhari Nokuri
(b. 2005)

Candide Suite (1956/1993) Leonard Bernstein
The Best of all Possible Worlds (1918–1990)
Westphalia Chorale and Battle trans. Clare Grundman
Scene Auto-Da-Fe (What a Day)
Make Our Garden Grow
Glitter and Be Gay

Luminescence (2009) David Biedenbender
(b. 1984)
Carlos Granthon, conductor

Centennial Horizon (2017) Kevin McKee
Aspen Grove (b. 1980)
Alpenglow (interlude)
Roaring Gunnison
Brian Walker, trumpet solo

Scenes from "The Louvre" (1966) Norman Dello Joio
The Portals (1913–2008)
Children's Gallery
The Kings of France
The Nativity Paintings
Finale

**Program three hundred thirteen of the 2025–2026 season
Photography and videography are prohibited**

Program Notes

Bakhari S. Nokuri (b. 2005) is an African-American composer, producer, and drummer based in Los Angeles. He is currently a third-year undergraduate composition major at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, where he studies with Camae Ayewa (Moor Mother). Largely self-taught until 2023, he has also studied with Adrian B. Sims, Andrew Norman, Ted Hearne, and Will Kennedy.

Raised in Howard County, Maryland, Bakhari maintains strong artistic roots in Baltimore, influenced by time spent with his mother, Charmaine (Michelle) Nokuri, a jazz performance major at the Peabody Conservatory. His music blends orchestral influences such as Mahler, Bernstein, and Hazy with the improvisatory language of jazz artists including Robert Glasper, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea, alongside contemporary influences like *Thundercat*, *Tyler, the Creator*, and *Hiatus Kaiyote*. His work reflects a continuous search for new textures, grooves, and expressive energy.

Bakhari began composing in 2015 using a music app and later created works for marching, symphonic, and jazz ensembles throughout middle and high school. He received five Superior ratings from the Maryland Music Educators Association's Young Composers Project, and his first live premiere occurred in 2023 with *Prayers and Tribulation*. In 2024, he led his own big band for the Nokuri Foundation's Night of Hope benefit concert, supporting Ray-Est Primary School in Cameroon. He is the recipient of ASCAP's Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award, the Morton Gould Young Composer Award, and the National Young Composers Challenge.

About *Afrospire*, Bakhari Nokuri writes:

In the process of creating ***Afrospire***, I found it hard to place a label on it. This composition is a swelling-dance inspired by Afro-Cuban rhythms and grooves, most notably from Chick Corea's *La Fiesta* and Stan Kenton's *Malagueña*. While the harmonic language in the piece shifted over time from when the piece was first created in April 2022, the meaning and feeling of the piece never changed.

When I started the work, I was going through a particularly challenging time in school, lacking motivation and drive. I had to dig deep inside myself to find a sense of motion and reason to go on. I turned to music, finding songs that instilled a fire in me. I found that the sounds of African drums resonated within my soul the most, making me feel connected to my African roots, and pushing me to go on. *Afrospire* encapsulates this feeling of being transcended from reality and being left in a trance or dream that tells you to keep going. The word itself is a combination of two words: "afro-", meaning relating to the African diaspora, and "spir-", deriving from spirit.

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990) was an American composer, pianist, and conductor. Born to Russian immigrants, he studied at Boston Latin School, Harvard University, and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he worked with Edward Burlingame Hill, Walter Piston, and Fritz Reiner. During the summers of 1940 and 1941, he studied conducting at Tanglewood with Serge Koussevitzky alongside Frederick Fennell, Lukas Foss, and Walter Hendl.

In 1943, Bernstein became assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic and rose to national fame after substituting at the last minute for Bruno Walter in a nationally broadcast concert on November 14, 1943. His Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah*, premiered in 1944, followed later that year by *Fancy Free* and *On the Town*. These early successes led to international opportunities, including becoming the first American to conduct at La Scala.

Bernstein later served as head of conducting at Tanglewood and as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from 1958 to 1969. During this time, he championed contemporary music, created the Young People's Concerts, and recorded the symphonies of Gustav Mahler, though his administrative responsibilities limited his composing. In the 1970s, he returned more actively to composition and received numerous honors, including the Kennedy Center Honor, 11 Emmy Awards, election to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and a Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award.

Candide Suite, arranged by Clare Grundman, is made up of five numbers from the musical *Candide*. In the first movement, *The Best of All Possible Worlds*, Doctor Pangloss, Voltaire's satirical portrait of the philosopher Gottfried von Leibnitz, tutors his Westphalian pupils. In the second movement, *Westphalia Chorale and Battle Scene*, the devout Westphalians sing a chorale praising the integrity of their homeland, after which they are massacred by the invading Bulgarian army. In movement three, *Auto-da-fe*, Candide and Dr. Pangloss find themselves in Lisbon, where, being free-thinkers, they are prosecuted as heretics by the Spanish Inquisition; however, Candide and Dr. Pangloss escape.

The fourth movement, *Glitter and Be Gay*, depicts Cunegonde, Candide's true love, singing of her attempts to maintain a brilliant, carefree exterior, while she may (or may not) be tortured inwardly by self-doubt. The final movement, *Make Our Garden Grow*, has Candide realizing that the only purpose of living is to cultivate the earth and to create a garden.

David Biedenbender (b. 1984) is an American composer and teacher. His early musical experiences included performing in rock and jazz bands as an electric bassist, as well as in wind and jazz ensembles as a bass trombone, euphonium, and tuba player. He earned the Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees in composition from the University of Michigan and the Bachelor of Music degree in composition and theory from Central Michigan University. His studies also include work in Sweden, India, and at the Aspen Music Festival, and he has studied with numerous influential mentors.

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Biedenbender's music has been widely praised for its beauty, craftsmanship, rhythmic intensity, and stirring harmonies. He has composed for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations, drawing inspiration from his diverse background in rock, jazz, wind ensembles, brass bands, and South Indian Carnatic music. His current creative interests range from acoustic chamber works and large ensembles to collaborations involving electronic interfaces and live data.

His music has been performed by many distinguished ensembles and musicians, including Alarm Will Sound, the PRISM Saxophone Quartet, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the United States Navy Band, and the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra. He has received major recognitions such as two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and the Suzanne and Lee Ettelson Composers Award. In addition to his work as a composer, Biedenbender is an Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Boise State University and has taught at several universities and arts institutions, with his students earning regional and national recognition.

About *Luminescence*, David Biedenbender writes:

Luminescence is based on fragments from the melody "Ermuntre dich, mein schwacher Geist" "Rouse Thyself, My Weak Spirit", which was written by Johann Schop and subsequently harmonized in several settings by Johann Sebastian Bach. It is most commonly known as the Christian hymn "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light". It may enrich the overall musical experience, both for the ensemble and for the audience, to hear the original chorale before the piece is played.

Kevin McKee (b. 1980) is an American composer and trumpeter.

McKee began playing the trumpet in grade school at the urging of his father, who was a high school music teacher in town. He went on to earn two degrees in trumpet performance, a BM from Sacramento State, where he studied with Gary Dilworth, and an MM from the University of Maryland, with Chris Gekker.

Mr. McKee's music draws inspiration from movie scoring, the sweeping views in the state of Colorado, and serves as an homage to his grandmother. He was inspired to try his hand at composition after spending a month working with the incredible composer/trumpeter Anthony DiLorenzo at the 2006 summer music festival in Japan. Since this time McKee's catalog has grown to about 15 pieces. His music has been performed on every continent and can be heard on over 20 recordings. He has contributed to the International Trumpet Guild journal and is a member of ASCAP.

In addition to composing, McKee is an active trumpet performer and teacher in the Washington, D.C., area.

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About *Centennial Horizon*, Kevin Mckee writes:

Centennial Horizon was commissioned by Albany trumpeter Catherine Sheridan. With two contrasting movements *Aspen Grove* and *Roaring Gunnison* connected by an interlude *Alpenglow*, I have attempted to capture some of the beauty and adventure of what truly is an amazing place: Colorado (the "Centennial State"). Inspired by my late grandmother's love of that state, the first movement is an homage to her.

When Catherine Sheridan wrote to me about composing a piece for trumpet and piano, my first thoughts were of my late grandmother, Gertrude, who was always suggesting that I write a piece with Colorado as the subject. She loved that state. And while she lived most of her life in California, she always longed to go back to Colorado amongst the quaking aspens, the mountains, the rivers and the vibrant colors. I have at last taken her up on her suggestion referencing the "Centennial State", a nickname given to Colorado for being inducted into the Union one hundred years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The first movement in particular is an homage to my grandmother.

The trumpet and concert band adaptation was commissioned by a consortium of 14 groups and individuals.

Norman Dello Joio (1913–2008) was an American composer. Born to Italian immigrant parents, he began his musical career at age fourteen as organist and choir director at the Star of the Sea Church in New York. He studied piano with his father and later organ with his godfather, Pietro Yon, organist at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. In 1939, he received a scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music, where he studied composition with Bernard Wagenaar.

While pursuing graduate studies at Juilliard, Dello Joio decided to focus on composition rather than church music. In 1941, he began studying with Paul Hindemith, whose influence was central to his artistic development. Hindemith encouraged him to embrace the natural lyricism of his music and to avoid rigid compositional systems, advice that strongly shaped Dello Joio's personal style. A prolific composer, Dello Joio wrote more than forty-five choral works, nearly thirty orchestral pieces, ten works for band, and numerous compositions for solo voice, chamber ensembles, and concertos. He taught at Sarah Lawrence College and the Mannes College of Music, and later served as Professor of Music and Dean at Boston University. From 1959 to 1973, he directed the Ford Foundation's Contemporary Music Project, which placed young composers in high schools and supported the creation of new music for educational ensembles.

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This band version of **Scenes from “The Louvre”** is adapted from the 1965 Emmy Award winning original film score. The five movements of this suite pay tribute to the development of the museum and feature thematic material from the Renaissance time period. *The Portals* begins with a low brass choir and evokes notions of the grandeur of the Louvre. The light, delicate staccato playing of the clarinets conveys the gaiety of children at play in the *Children’s Gallery*. Visions of state occasions and courtly dances evolve from the brass’s contrapuntal parts in *The Kings of France*. The religious theme in *Dulci Jubilo* appears in *Nativity Paintings* and features the solo clarinet and oboe. The *Finale* is introduced by a royal fanfare and bears the pomp and elegance of the era as the ensemble brings the work to a noble conclusion.

Biographies

Amy Woody is Lecturer in Wind Studies and Director of Athletic Bands at the University of North Texas and serves as the conductor of the Wind Ensemble. She also teaches courses in Advanced Conducting and Marching Pedagogy. She served as a Teaching Fellow in the Wind Studies Area at UNT, and duties included teaching the Concert Band, University Bands, Fundamentals of Conducting and assisting with all aspects of concert and athletic ensembles. She was named one of four UNT Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award recipients for the 2022–2023 school year. Her teachers include Eugene Migliaro Corporon, Andrew Trachsel and Daniel Cook. Prior to UNT, Ms. Woody served as the Director of Bands (2014–2021) and Associate Director of Bands (2007–2014) at John H. Guyer High School in Denton, TX. The Guyer Wind Ensemble was named a Commended Winner in the 2021 Mark of Excellence New Music Category, a 2018 Mark of Excellence National Winner, and a 2018 Western International Band Conference Invited Ensemble in Seattle, Washington.

Recently, she served as the Chief Programs Officer for the Lone Star Wind Orchestra (LSWO), a professional wind band based in the DFW metroplex. She has performed in the clarinet section of the Lone Star Wind Orchestra since the fall of 2008. In her time with the ensemble she performed at the International Midwest Band and Orchestra Conference, International Women’s Brass Conference (IWBC), World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensemble (WASBE), Texas Bandmaster’s Association (TBA), Clarinetfest, the OU Clarinet Symposium as well as other professional engagements in the DFW Area. Ms. Woody’s past performance engagements include the Richardson Symphony Orchestra, Waco Symphony Orchestra, and the Oswego Opera Orchestra.

Ms. Woody is a graduate of the University of North Texas (DMA Wind Conducting), Eastman School of Music (Master of Music in Clarinet Performance), and Baylor University (Bachelor of Music Education). Ms. Woody serves as an active clinician and adjudicator in the greater DFW area, Texas, and across the U.S.

Carlos Granthon is a Peruvian conductor currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical Arts in Wind Conducting at the University of North Texas, where he serves as a Teaching Fellow in the Wind Studies area. As part of his responsibilities, he conducts the Symphonic Winds and assists with different administrative aspects of the Wind Studies program. His conducting teachers include Eugene Migliaro Corporon, Andrew Trachsel, and Amy Woody.

Prior to his doctoral studies, Carlos earned the Master of Music degree in Wind Conducting from Kent State University in Ohio, where he studied with Dr. Benjamin Lorenzo. His academic path represents a significant milestone for wind conducting in Peru, as he is the first Peruvian musician to earn a master's degree in this field and is currently working toward becoming the first to complete doctoral studies in wind conducting.

He has over twenty years of experience as a conductor and music educator, working with professional, university, school, and community wind bands throughout Latin America. His professional activities include guest conducting, clinics, and educational residencies in countries such as Peru, Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and England, with a strong focus on ensemble development and artistic growth.

Carlos is a founding member of "ProBandas Latinoamérica", a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and strengthening of wind band programs throughout the Latin American region. During his master's studies, he was a recipient of the "CBDNA Mike Moss Conducting Study Grant" and continues to be actively involved in international festivals, workshops, conducting symposiums and collaborative initiatives supporting music education through wind bands.

Dr. Brian Walker is currently the Associate Professor of Trumpet at the University of North Texas. Prior to his appointment at UNT, Brian Walker was Professor of Trumpet at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas for twelve years. As a teacher, his students have been accepted into many undergraduate and graduate music programs and currently perform in orchestras and premier military groups throughout the United States. His students are frequently featured at the National Trumpet Competition and International Trumpet Guild Conferences as competitors, presenters, and performers. He has presented masterclasses throughout the United States as a leading pedagogue in his field.

As a performer, he has appeared with various orchestral groups in the DFW region and is currently Second Trumpet with the Richardson Symphony Orchestra and Dallas Chamber Symphony. As a commercial musician, Dr. Walker has played for various Broadway and Musical Theater organizations in Dallas and Fort Worth. As a soloist, Dr. Walker has given recitals and performances throughout the United States and in Greece, France, China, Croatia and Brazil for organizations such as ITG, NTC, and TMEA, to name a few.

Brian is active in the International Trumpet Guild where he serves on the Board of Directors and Chairs the Financial Investment and Emerging Artist Fellowship Selection Committees. At UNT, he currently serves as Chair of the Graduate Performance Degree Committee.

Dr. Walker holds degrees from the University of North Texas (DMA), The Florida State University (MM) and Southeastern Oklahoma State University (BM) where he studied with John Holt, Christopher Moore, and Michael Miles, respectively.

He is a Yamaha Performing Artist and plays exclusively on Yamaha trumpets.

North Texas Wind Ensemble Personnel

Flute

Michael Boike Jr.
Jadelyn Donoho
Rachel Hatanaka
Leonardo Martinez
Kristian Ng
Ava Sankey
Julianne Williams

Oboe

Brenda Espinosa
Victoria Hartman
Justin Reece

Bassoon

Ansel Christensen
Jayden Guajardo
Joaquin Soto
Emaline Wylie

Clarinet

Pablo Acosta
Jay Berry
Caden Burnett
Cristian Canales
Nochebuena
Leviticus Cano
Marissa Cuetlach
Ezven Gonzalez
Paola Lozada
Robin Sabatini
Aden Sandoval
Maria Sotello Castillo
Adrian Torres
Ethan Wann
Neill Williams

Saxophone

Henry Cao
Pin Yen Chen
Zhixuan Jin
Teague Shelton
Haoran Yu

Trumpet

Jakob Burnham
Elaina Garza
Michael Guzman
Lucas Laster
Daniel Love
Geovanny Mancera
Aidan Massengill

Horn

Joseph Brown
Sarah Gamble
Gianncarlo Ramirez
Pedraza
Alex Salazar
Chelsea Song
Jordyn Sullins

Trombone

Harley Barrett
Joan Martinez
Nicolas Perreault
Jackson Thomas

Bass Trombone

Gabe Ramirez
David Smith

Euphonium

Zachary Burns
LeShaun Nelson
Azariah Tower

Tuba

Ricardo Loera
Donald Nagle
Felix Tovar

Percussion

Nicholas Arnold
Taylor Bowen
Juan Castillo
William Chenoweth
Matthew Chovanec
Cam Dorchester
Hanna Le

Piano

Marco Acosta

Harp

Eliza Fichialos

Double Bass

Julia Rompf

Conducting Associates

Melinda Coleman
Carlos Granthon Boy
Katharine Reed
Nathan Wise

Graduate Associates

Caeley Hovanec
Stoney Shelton

Members of the Wind Ensemble are listed alphabetically to acknowledge each performer's unique contribution. Every individual is considered to be a principal player.

