

UTEP Wind Symphony

CBDNA 2026

Performance

10:00am, February 28, 2026
Murchison Performing Arts Center
Denton, TX



Program

Before the Dawn (2023)

David Biedenbender

Rumba Fugata (2022)

Arturo Márquez

Jesse Hernandez, E-Flat Clarinet
Albert Valles, B-Flat Clarinet
Jarren Saenz, Bass Horn
Alondra Royval, Bass Clarinet
Dr. Brandon Houghtalen, conductor

Theme and Variations, Op. 43a (1943)

Arnold Schoenberg

Quinceañera (2026)

Juan Pablo Contreras

World Premiere

The Beau Ideal (1893)

John Philip Sousa

Dr. Lowell Graham, conductor

Let My Love Be Heard (2018)

Jake Runestad

The Flight to Neverland (1991/2016)

John Williams
trans. Paul Lavender



Program Notes

Before the Dawn was written to honor the teaching career of Mr. Dave Gott, who served as Director of Bands at Haslett High School in Haslett, Michigan for 19 years. It was commissioned by the Haslett High School Band Boosters. Before I started writing this piece, I visited the Haslett High School Band to ask about their experiences with Mr. Gott and to brainstorm ideas for the piece. What struck me most about their observations and memories of Mr. Gott was how he had helped so many of them do things they themselves did not think they could do, both personally and collectively—he saw potential in them that they could not yet see and helped them achieve goals they could not have even imagined.

I am also fortunate to call Dave Gott my friend. For as long as I've known him, he wakes up well before dawn, getting a head start on the day. For me, this time when the deep blue night sky moves toward day through hues of glorious red and orange is a time of hopefulness, joy, and optimism—it feels like anything is possible. My hope with this piece is to capture that feeling—the same optimism, hope, and inspiration that Mr. Gott brought to every student that entered his classroom—and to celebrate it through music. A simple melody rises from the distant horizon, repeating and expanding each time as more voices join. Eventually the melody gives way to unbridled energy, joy, and wonder, with soloists and sections collectively weaving their own unique variation of the melody into a colorful tapestry.



David Biedenbender (b. 1984) is a composer, conductor, performer, educator, and interdisciplinary collaborator. His music “...seizes the ear through a blend of expressive beauty and formal prowess...at turns rapturous and intimate, menacing and exuberant... Biedenbender isn't afraid to wear heart on sleeve as he applies telling nuances to concise, exquisitely shaped sonic tales.” (Gramophone) His creative interests include working with classically trained musicians and improvisers, chamber and large ensembles, interactive electronic interfaces and live brain data. His music is often influenced by experiences performing in rock and jazz groups, classical ensembles and concert bands, a New Orleans-style brass band, as well as Indian Carnatic Music. He has collaborated

with many renowned performers and ensembles, and his works have been performed, recorded, and broadcast around the world. “...active, compelling...shot through with energy...wonderfully imagined...Clearly, this is a composer to watch out for.” (Fanfare Magazine)

A dedicated teacher, he is currently Associate Professor and Chair of Composition in the College of Music at Michigan State University. He holds degrees in composition from the University of Michigan and Central Michigan University, and has also studied at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, the Aspen Music Festival, and in Mysore, India where he studied carnatic music.



Program Notes

Arturo Márquez's *Rumba Fugata* blends the rhythmic vitality of Afro-Cuban dance with the intricate structure of a fugue. Written in the composer's signature style that fuses classical forms with Latin American idioms, the piece layers lively rumba rhythms beneath interweaving melodic lines, creating a vibrant conversation between tradition and modernity. The result is a work that feels both spontaneous and sophisticated—celebrating Márquez's flair for transforming popular dance into concert art.



Arturo Márquez (b. 20 December 1950, Alamos, Sonora, Mexico) is a Mexican composer.

He began his musical training in La Puente, California, in 1966, later studying piano and music theory at the Conservatory of Music of Mexico and composition at the Taller de Composición of the Institute of Fine Arts of Mexico with such composers as Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, Hector Quintanar, and Federico Ibarra. He also studied in Paris privately with Jacques Castérède, and at the California Institute of the Arts with Morton Subotnick, Stephen Mosko, Mel Powell, and James Newton.

In recent years, Marquez has written a series of danzones, works based on an elegant Cuban dance that migrated to Veracruz, Mexico. His *Danzon No. 2* is among the most popular Latin American works to emerge since the 1950s, enhanced by its use by Gustavo Dudamel with the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra in their 2007 tour of the United States and Europe. In February 2006, Arturo Marquez received the *Medalla de Oro de Bellas Artes* (Gold Medal of Fine Arts), the highest honor given to artists by Mexico's *Bellas Artes*. That evening the concert *El Danzon según Márquez* (*The Danzón according to Márquez*) was presented at the *Palacio de Bellas Artes*. The concert included six danzons, all contained on a forthcoming CD.

Márquez has received commissions from the OAS, the *Universidad Metropolitana de Mexico*, the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico*, *Festival Cervantino*, *Festival del Caribe*, *Festival de la Ciudad de Mexico*, and the *Rockefeller Foundation*. He has received grants from the *Institute of Fine Arts of Mexico*, the *French government*, and the *Fulbright Foundation*. In 1994 he received the composition scholarship of Mexico's *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes*. Márquez's *Octeto Malandro* (*Misbehaving Octet*) was commissioned and premiered by *Philadelphia's Relâche Ensemble* in 1996, and subsequently recorded by *Relâche* for *Monroe St. Records*. Márquez's flute concerto, commissioned by the *Rockefeller Foundation* and the *Consejo Nacional para las Artes*, was premiered by *James Newton*. Other works by Márquez include *En Clave* for piano, *Son a Tamayo* for harp, percussion, and tape (featured at the 1996 *World Harp Congress*), *Homenaje a Gismonti* for string quartet, and *Zarabandeo* for clarinet and piano.



Program Notes

Composed in 1943 at the request of Carl Engel, Arnold Schoenberg's Theme and Variations, op. 43a was written for wind band and, though tonal rather than twelve-tone, was regarded by the composer as a technical masterwork. Cast in G minor, the piece uses variation form to showcase Schoenberg's contrapuntal mastery, applying techniques developed in his earlier serial works within a tonal framework. A 21-measure theme generates seven increasingly complex variations in which melodic and accompanimental roles are fragmented, reorchestrated, and passed throughout the ensemble, highlighting the coloristic potential of the wind band. Across the work, Schoenberg clearly differentiates each variation by character and texture—ranging from adagio and waltz to canon and fugato—before the theme reasserts itself in a climactic finale, capped by a subtle nod to Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue.



Arnold Schoenberg (born Vienna, 13 September 1874; died Los Angeles, 13 July 1951) began violin lessons when he was eight and almost immediately started composing, though he had no formal training until he was in his late teens, when Zemlinsky became his teacher and friend. His first acknowledged works date from the turn of the century and include the string sextet *Verklärte Nacht* as well as some songs, all showing influences from Brahms, Wagner and Wolf. In 1901–3 he was in Berlin as a cabaret musician and teacher, and there he wrote the symphonic poem *Pelleas und Melisande*. He returned to Vienna and began taking private pupils such as Berg and Webern. His compositional style moved in the direction of intensification of harmonic strangeness, formal complexity and contrapuntal density leading him further towards the evolution of the twelve tone method. However, Schoenberg found it possible a

quarter-century later to return to something like his tonal style in such works as the *Suite in G* for strings, the completion of the *Chamber Symphony No. 2* and the *Theme and Variations, Op 43a* for band.

Gradually Schoenberg began writing longer instrumental structures in the 12-note serial method. In the 1920s, he returned to standard forms and genres, notably in the *Suite* for piano, *String Quartet no.3*, *Orchestral Variations* and several choral pieces. He also founded the *Society for Private Musical Performances* (1919–21), involving his pupils in the presentation of new music.

In 1933, he left Berlin and moved to Paris. Later the same year, he arrived in the USA and settled in Los Angeles in 1934. It was there that he returned to tonal composition, while developing serialism. In 1936, he began teaching at UCLA and his output dwindled. After a heart attack in 1945, however, he gave up teaching and made some return to expressionism (*A Survivor from Warsaw, String Trio*), as well as writing religious choruses.

Program Notes

Growing up in Guadalajara, quinceañeras were the height of my teenage partying days. They were such meaningful (and exclusive) parties that my friends and I would sometimes even crash them uninvited.

The piece starts exactly there: we hear the quinceañera music playing from afar, as if we're outside the venue trying to find our way in. Then, suddenly, we make it inside, and the sound hits you: loud techno, right in the middle of the dance floor. From that point on, the piece plays like a real quinceañera party, like a DJ spinning the "hits" I remember from the early 2000s—when techno, cumbias, and banda were all the hype. There's a beautiful quinceañera waltz that becomes the centerpiece of the piece, and after that, the music returns to the feel of a DJ playlist: songs fading in and out, genres taking turns, the party constantly shifting and evolving.

This year also marks the 15th anniversary of my professional career as a composer, which inspired me to write a quinceañera party piece to celebrate this milestone in the most fitting way I know, with an authentic Quinceañera.



Juan Pablo Contreras is a three-time Latin GRAMMY®-nominated composer and conductor who masterfully weaves Western classical and Mexican folk music into an exhilarating soundscape. His music has been performed by 60 major orchestras across the United States, Mexico, Austria, Slovakia, Colombia, Spain, Argentina, and Venezuela, as well as in prestigious concert halls such as Walt Disney Concert Hall, Carnegie Hall, and Hollywood Bowl. He is renowned as the first Mexican-born composer to sign a record deal with Universal Music, to serve as Sound Investment Composer for Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and to win the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise.

He earned degrees in composition from University of Southern California (DMA), Manhattan School of Music (MM), and California Institute of the Arts (BFA). His most influential teachers include Richard Danielpour, Daniel Catán, Nils Vigeland, Andrew Norman, and Donald Crockett. Contreras' music has been recorded on Universal Music Mexico, EMI, Albany Records, Epsa Music, and Urtext Digital Classics. With a deep commitment to championing the music of living composers, Contreras is the first Mexican-born member of New Music USA's Board of Directors. He lives in Los Angeles and currently teaches at the USC Thornton School of Music.



Program Notes

“Sousa is the joy of the masses, the beautiful musician.” The expression “beau ideal” was used in the early 1890’s to describe anything that had caught the public fancy. An inscription on the original sheet music indicates that the “beau ideal” in the title was a newly formed organization called The National League of Musicians of the United States.



John Philip Sousa (1854–1932) was born in Washington, D.C., near the Marine Barracks, where his father, Antonio Sousa, served as a musician in the United States Marine Band. Sousa received his early education in Washington and studied music at a private conservatory operated by John Esputa, Jr., where he learned piano and most orchestral instruments, though the violin remained his primary focus. By age thirteen, he had developed considerable skill on the violin and nearly joined a circus band before his father intervened and enlisted him as an apprentice musician in the Marine Band. Sousa remained with the ensemble until age twenty, supplementing his practical training with studies in theory and composition under George Felix Benkert.

Following his discharge from the Marine Corps, Sousa worked as a conductor and violinist, touring with traveling theater orchestras and later settling in Philadelphia in 1876. There he earned a living as a composer, arranger, and proofreader for music publishers while developing a strong interest in operetta. He toured with a company producing *Our Flirtation*, for which he wrote both incidental music and a march. While on tour in St. Louis, Sousa received an offer to return to Washington as Leader of the Marine Band, a position he accepted in 1880, becoming the ensemble’s 17th Director.

Sousa’s leadership marked a turning point in the history of the Marine Band. Though this was his first experience conducting a military ensemble, he implemented rigorous rehearsals, revised instrumentation, and replaced much of the band’s library with symphonic transcriptions. Under his direction, the Marine Band gained national and international prominence, attracting increasingly sophisticated audiences. During this period, Sousa composed several of his most influential marches, including *The Gladiator*, *Semper Fidelis*, and *The Washington Post*, the latter earning him the enduring title “March King.” The Marine Band also made some of the earliest commercial recordings under his leadership and undertook its first national tours.

In 1892, Sousa resigned from the Marine Band to form his own civilian concert band, which he led for nearly forty years, further expanding his fame and influence. He made his final appearance with the Marine Band shortly before his death in 1932. Sousa’s legacy is preserved through numerous memorials, named facilities, and monuments honoring his contributions to American music. Most notably, *The Stars and Stripes Forever* was designated the national march of the United States in 1987, affirming Sousa’s lasting impact on American musical culture and the wind band tradition.



Program Notes

Originally a choral work written for Choral Arts Northwest, this work has taken on a new life in light of the 2015 atrocities in Paris and Beirut. Jonathan Talberg, the conductor of the choir at Cal State Long Beach, led his singers in a performance during the memorial vigil for Nohemi Gonzalez, a Long Beach student who was killed in the Paris attacks. The day after the vigil, the choir was supposed to begin rehearsing holiday music; however, Jonathan felt that was not appropriate and wanted time for the singers to grieve this loss. So, at the beginning of rehearsal, he passed out a brand new piece of music (Let My Love Be Heard), rehearsed it, and then recorded it. It was posted on SoundCloud and shared in memory of Nohemi and as a plea for peace. Their musical offering is a powerful outpouring of grief but also a glimmer of light. I am honored that this piece, Let My Love Be Heard, has helped to provide hope in the darkness of our world. This work is based on the following poem:

A Prayer
by Alfred Noyes

Angels, where you soar
Up to God's own light,
Take my own lost bird
On your hearts tonight;
And as grief once more
Mounts to heaven and sings,
Let my love be heard
Whispering in your wings.



Considered “one of the best of the younger American composers” (Chicago Tribune), Jake Runestad holds a master’s degree in composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University where he studied with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts. He has also studied extensively with acclaimed composer Libby Larsen.

Mr. Runestad is an award-winning and frequently-performed composer of “highly imaginative” (Baltimore Sun) and “stirring and uplifting” (Miami Herald) musical works. He has received commissions and performances from leading ensembles and organizations such as Washington National Opera, the

Netherlands Radio Choir, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Seraphic Fire, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, Craig Hella Johnson and Conspirare, and many more. Jake’s visceral music and charismatic personality have fostered a busy schedule of commissions, residencies, workshops, and speaking engagements.



Program Notes

Flight to Neverland (1991) is the highlight of music from Steven Spielberg's film Hook. It overflows with fairy tale magic, pirate adventures, an undeniable sense of freedom in flight, and childhood wonder. As Spielberg reunites us with the timeless characters of Peter Pan, Wendy, and Captain Hook, Williams captivates us with his expertly crafted and Oscar-nominated score. The composer cleverly crafts the entire main theme around the interval of a minor third, the first interval children are able to identify and sing. He offers the following words on the piece:

For countless centuries mankind has dreamed of flying, which is why I think it could be argued that the greatest achievement of the twentieth century may have been the accomplishment of flight itself. Our fascination with flying and the freedom we associate with it may also be one of the principal reasons why the story of James Barrie's play has been retold in every imaginable medium. My favorite moment has always been when Peter Pan and Tinkerbell rise above the rooftops of London and fly off to Neverland. In writing the music for Steven Spielberg's film version of the story, which he called Hook, I tried to create a clear singing melody that might combine some of the wonder of childhood with the energy and "lift" required for this famous flight.



Born just one month before the death of John Philip Sousa and the son of a jazz drummer, John Williams studied piano and composition at the University of California, Los Angeles, and later at The Juilliard School in New York City. By his late twenties, he was an active jazz and studio pianist and had begun composing music for television and film. In 1974, Williams met director Steven Spielberg, beginning a partnership that would become one of the most successful in film history, starting with *The Sugarland Express* and continuing the following year with *Jaws*, which brought Williams international recognition unmatched by any American composer since Sousa.

Over a career spanning more than six decades, Williams has composed many of the most iconic scores in Hollywood history, including *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *Home Alone*, the *Indiana Jones* series, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jurassic Park*, *Schindler's List*, and the first three *Harry Potter* films. Beyond film, he has written theme music for four Olympic Games, the *NBC Nightly News*, presidential events, and television series such as *Lost in Space*. From 1980 to 1993, Williams served as principal conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra and continues as its laureate conductor.

Williams's achievements have been recognized with five Academy Awards and numerous additional honors, including multiple Grammy, BAFTA, and Golden Globe Awards. With forty-five Academy Award nominations, he ranks among the most nominated individuals in Oscar history. His induction into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame and receipt of the Kennedy Center Honors further affirm his lasting influence on American music and film scoring.



Conductor Biography



Dr. Andrew Hunter is the Director of Bands at The University of Texas at El Paso. In his duties at UTEP, Dr. Hunter conducts the UTEP Wind Symphony and teaches graduate and undergraduate conducting. He is also the Artistic Director and Conductor of the El Paso Winds. Prior to his appointment at UTEP, Dr. Hunter served on the faculties of the University of Southern Mississippi, where he received the Thomas V. Fraschillo Award for Outstanding Musicianship among faculty, Louisiana College, where he was named Professor of the Year in 2012, and public schools in Louisiana and Georgia. Dr. Hunter holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he studied with Dr. Catherine Rand. His doctoral dissertation focused on the wind band and chamber winds compositions of Pulitzer Prize-winning composers. He also holds the Master of Music degree from Northwestern State University, and the Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Tennessee.

Dr. Hunter has worked as a clinician, adjudicator, and lecturer in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Izmir, Turkey, where he presented a seminar on American music and wind band history. His ensembles have performed across the country, most notably in Carnegie Hall in February 2018. He holds professional memberships in the College Band Directors National Association, the National Band Association, the National Association for Music Education, the Texas Bandmasters Association, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity.



Conductor Biography



Dr. Brandon Houghtalen currently serves as Director of Athletic Bands and Associate Director of Bands at the University of Texas at El Paso. He previously held conducting positions at Abilene Christian University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of New Mexico. In 2018, he founded the On the List Project, a group of teachers that assists states as they work to strengthen their required music lists.

His professional activities include frequent engagements as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator, as well as conference presentations. He has been featured on the podcasts Trilloquy and The Score and professional development events sponsored by CBDNA, TMEA, and NAFME. His research on James Reese Europe and the 369th Infantry Regiment Band led to the creation of new performing editions of The Memphis Blues, The St. Louis Blues, and Clef Club March. Houghtalen earned degrees in music education and conducting from the University of Tennessee, University of Colorado, and Arizona State University. His primary conducting teachers were Allan McMurray and Gary Hill. He is a member of CBDNA, TMEA, TBA, Phi Mu Alpha, and serves as the Sponsor of the Alpha Chi Chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi.



Conductor Biography



A native of Greeley, Colorado, Lowell E. Graham is currently serving as the sixth Music Director for the long established 111-year-old Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra. Previously he served as the Director of Orchestral Activities and Professor of Conducting at the University of Texas at El Paso and was the recipient of the “Abraham Chavez” Professorship in Music retiring in 2021. He has held numerous conducting positions to include that of the Commander and Conductor of the United States Air Force Band in Washington, DC. Graham has released recordings on six labels – Naxos, Telarc, Klavier, Mark, Altissimo and Wilson -- that have been recognized for both their artistic and sonic excellence. These recordings have been recognized in Stereophile’s “Records to Die-For” list, The Absolute Sound’s “The Super Disc List,” as well as one having won a Grammy. In 2014 he was named as the President and CEO of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. He also served as the 81st President of the American Bandmasters Association.



Personnel

Flute

Isabella Cortez
Javier Marquez
Claudia Panta
Johanna Romero
Naomi Torres

Oboe

Gianni Fragoso

Bassoon

Claudio Padilla
Juan Ramirez

Clarinet

Leonardo Borroel
Rosemary Escobar
Diego Esquivel
Jesse Hernandez
Olivia Lea
Andrew Montes
Georgia Ozer
Alondra Royval
Jarren Saenz
Albert Valles

Saxophone

Juan Flores
Carlos Garcia
Carlos Gutierrez
Joe Salazar

Trumpet

Andrew Freeman
André Gomez
Nathan Hernandez-Cruz
Edwin Martinez
Nikolas Olsen
Mauricio Uranga

Horn

Logan Jones
Maile Palmer
Shelby Rodriguez
Adam Roskopf
Coleman Spears

Trombone

Judith Olivas
Arabella Ramirez
Jacob Ramos
Joshua Richardson

Euphonium

Luis Cordero
Luis Olivas

Tuba

Micah Carrasco
Andy Gonzalez

Percussion

Erick Chico
Alejandro Gonzalez
Timothy Marquess
Jacob Ocampo
Damian Rodriguez
Israel Vasquez

String Bass

Charlize Jordan
Mason Mendoza

Piano

Beatrice Söderberg

