



# SCHOOL OF MUSIC

## TEXAS TECH

J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts

## TECH FOLK ORCHESTRA

Wednesday, October 23, 2024 | 8:00 pm

Hemmler Recital Hall

### **“The BABYLON BERLIN RAGAMUFFIN BAND”**

#### **About this Program**

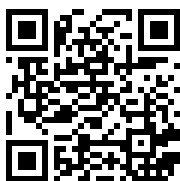
Listening tunes and songs from England, France, Ireland, Northumberland, New England, and Bassanda, with original choreographies and social dances. Featuring as special guests the TTU Historical Performance Ensemble and Caprock English Bagpipe Consort, and the design and costume assistance of TCVPA Theatre & Dance students (Professor Mallory Prucha).

#### **The Tech Folk Orchestra**

Dr Christopher Smith, director; Cole Brady Adams (drums, percussion); Elisia Arrieta (dance, voice, flute); Katie Brookreson (dance, voice [dance captain]); Ethan Do (clarinet); Roger Dominguez (saxophone); Arabella Dunlap (fiddle); Tara Findley (dance, voice); James Fludd (saxophone); Cassidy Forehand (fiddle [strings section leader]); Edith Frank (flute); Brendan Funk (trumpet); CJ Goodyear (fiddle); Beck Haynes (horn); Amy Jackson (bass guitar, double bass); Judith Johnson (flute, voice); Django Jones (mandolin, mandola); Abbigayle Keesee (horn); Teya Martin (piano, accordion); Xavier McGarrell (drums, percussion); Aloysius Migadde (guitar, percussion); Maggie Ogea (dance, tumbling, voice); Rafi Quilpas (horn); Allison Sessom (flute); Steve Stallings (guitar [rhythm section leader]); Simran Sunil (dance, voice); Kaity Swecker (dance, voice [dance captain]); Callie Trankel (horn [high brass section leader]); Erick Valle (fiddle); Seth Weaver (saxophone)

#### **with special guests**

**The TTU Historical Performance Ensemble**  
**The Caprock English Bagpipe Consort**



About Bassanda and the Eternal Stalwarts Orchestra: Symphonic Folk from a Lost World Major inspiration for the Eternal Stalwarts Orchestra, the alter ego of the Tech Folk Orchestra, comes from the fictional country of “Bassanda”; a creation of VMC partners Chipper Thompson ([chipperthompson.com](http://chipperthompson.com)) and Roger

Landes ([rogerlandes.com](http://rogerlandes.com)). We imagined the fictional “Eternal Stalwarts Orchestra”; in which, as part of an “alternate-history” frame, it’s alleged that a Soviet satellite’s official state folkloric ensemble (the “Bassanda National Radio Orchestra”) mutates, after the fall of Communism, into a free-lance ensemble engaged in a Never-Ending Tour. Performing “Symphonic Folk from a Lost World,” the BNRO/ESO has thus been heard in many permutations, including the “Classic 1952 Band”; the “1962 ‘Beatnik’ Band”; the “1965 Newport Folk Festival Band”; the “1885 Victorian ‘Steampunk’ Band”; the post-apocalyptic “Great Southwestern ‘Sand Pirates’ Band”; the “1912 New Orleans Creole ‘Voodoo’ Band”; the “1928 ‘Carnivale Incognito’ Band”; the “1934 Intergalactic Pandemic Popular Front Band”; the “1936 International Brigade Libertarias Band,” the “1942 ‘Casablanca’ Band,” the “1948 Berlin Airlift Band”—and, now, the c1950 “Babylon Berlin Ragamuffin Band.”

In Europe and the Americas, the post-World War II period of the late 1940s was a period of social, economic, and geopolitical upheaval. Although the Allies had “won” the conflict and defeated the Axis, Europe itself and much of East Asia were still reeling from the destruction of infrastructure, government, and—most tragically—millions of lives. Even beyond the military losses, the horrors of the Holocaust and of nuclear warfare triggered a massive reconsideration of much of what had passed for “normal” in the pre-War era. There were strikes and food shortages in France and England, extensive poverty in Germany and Eastern Europe, and a mood of only very uneasy “victory” in the USA. In the States, that unease—regarding shifts in class, gender, race, and economic expectations—played out in both material prosperity, with new suburbs and factories going up seemingly overnight, and also psychological distress, with the surface optimism of radio and live-TV “situation comedies” concealing darker undercurrents of sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and racism. In Hollywood, where the members of the BNRO had been crucial backstage and soundstage contributors to wartime classic films (the so-called “1942 Casablanca Band”), and in Berlin, where a nucleus of players later (1947) relocated on board the electromagnetic, oscillating screw-retrofitted C-47 plane called *Le Oiseaux Vert* (The Big Green Bird), disappearing into the city of the “Berlin Air Lift”

as nightclub musicians and denazification operatives, a literally darker aesthetic prevailed, especially in the cinematic genre fittingly called “film noir.” In these movies, men and women were tormented by traumatic memories, driven by anger and greed, and subject to the shadowy whims of unknown societal forces. To the Bassandans who had experienced similar social dynamics during the long twilight of first Tsarist and then Soviet dictatorships, such dark-tinged pessimism was to be recognized and resisted. Parody, disguise, and dark humor thus formed part of the arsenal of the “Babylon Berlin Ragamuffin Band,” whose clownish or nightmarish presentation obscured but did not deter their fierce commitment to human rights.

For those interested in all things Bassanda: related correspondence, personal biographies, timelines, galleries & archival commentary can be found at <http://www.eternalstalwartsorchestra.org>; likewise search Facebook for “Eternal Stalwarts Orchestra.”

### **Can I participate?**

Yes! If you are interested to participate in one of the VMC’s community-facing ensembles or partners (Historical Performance Music Ensemble, Balkan Ensemble, Eternal Stalwarts, and/or Caprock English Bagpipe Consort), feel free to contact their respective directors. Auditions typically occur in the first weeks of each academic semester.

### **Radio Broadcast & Television Recording**

We are recording live today, and we appreciate your participation and your patience! However, because of this, we ask you to power-down (e.g., completely shut-off) electronic devices including cell phones, and to avoid any extraneous noise during the performance. Please refrain from use of flash photography during this concert. Such use represents a safety hazard for performers.

### **The Vernacular Music Center at the TTU School of Music**

The mission of the Vernacular Music Center is to provide a center for in-depth and comparative research, study, teaching and advocacy on behalf of the world’s vernacular musics and dance—their construction, history, and role in defining cultural life in human communities—in all cultures and historical periods. As a research Center officially recognized by the TTU Office of the Vice President for Research & Innovation, the VMC is dedicated to the study of the process by which music is taught and passed on within a community, as well as assisting in the ongoing cultivation of arts on the South Plains. The VMC partners with its 501c3 partner, the Roots Music Institute ([rootsmusicinstitute.com](http://rootsmusicinstitute.com)).

**Become a Friend of the VMC!**

Visit us at [vernacularmusiccenter.org](http://vernacularmusiccenter.org) for more information!

Donations: <http://www.give2Tech.com/>

Please help advocate for the VMC by filling out the following audience reply form, and thank you!



**Upcoming Events**

***East African Quartet***

8:00pm, Friday, October 25

The Kent R. Hance Chapel

***Nataliya Sukhina Faculty Piano Recital***

4:00pm, Saturday, October 26

Hemmle Recital Hall

***University Choir***

6:00pm, Sunday, October 27

Buddy Holly Hall - Crickets Theater