

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

DR. SARAH MCKOIN
DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY 13, 2025 | 8 PM
LILA COCKRELL THEATRE

TMEA CONVENTION
SAN ANTONIO, TX

PROGRAM

Go BIG or Go HOME (2019/2024)

Jessica Meyer
(b.1974)

Enigma (2024)

David Biedenbender
(b.1984)

Molly on the Shore (1907 / 1920 / 1998)

Percy Aldridge Grainger
(1882-1961)
arr. R. Mark Rogers
(b. 1955)

Dr. Eric Allen, *conductor*

and the mountains rising nowhere (1977)

Joseph Schwanter
(b. 1934)

Second Nature (2024)

Viet Cuong
(b.1990)

Aruna Quartet

Will Pyle, *soprano saxophone*

Jose Guzman, *alto saxophone*

Ryan Hill, *tenor saxophone*

Andrew Schoen, *baritone saxophone*

*Gold medal and Grand Prize winner at the
Fischoff Chamber Music Competition*

GO BIG OR GO HOME



***Go BIG or Go HOME* – Jessica Meyer**

This piece is an adaptation of the last movement of my string quartet *Get into the NOW* for the Nu Deco Ensemble in Miami. When the opportunity came up for me to make this arrangement, I wanted to both showcase, what the group can uniquely do, while also writing in a way that captures the spirit of what Miami inherently is.

In *Go BIG or Go HOME*, you will find hints of funk, bluegrass, and Latin while being driven by groove, virtuosity, and moments of improvisation allowing members of the group to put their own personal signature on the piece. Most importantly, it is written from a place of self-realization, empowerment, and celebration of how joyous life can be.

- Program Note by composer

ENIGMA



***Enigma* – David Biedenbender**

Enigma was originally written for brass choir and organ for the dedication of the Red Cedar Organ in the Michigan State University Alumni Chapel. This version was created for my friend Henry Dorn and the St. Olaf Band.

Enigma comes from a Greek word that means “to speak in riddles,” and in this piece, the riddle—or theme—is revealed gradually. The theme comes from the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach, which is one of my favorite pieces of music, and, once the theme is revealed, it is repeated cyclically with 21 variations, just like in Bach’s original. This piece is dedicated to my former teacher, José-Luis Maúrtua, a composer, theorist, conductor, and teacher with whom I studied at Central Michigan University. José-Luis was an extraordinary musician and teacher who was tirelessly dedicated to his students and to pushing them to do their best. I am forever grateful for the lessons I learned from him, and my music and my life are far better for having known him. Unfortunately, he was taken from this earth far too young—at the age of 57—by pancreatic cancer in the spring of 2022. I miss him dearly, and this music is for him.

- Program Note by composer

MOLLY ON THE SHORE

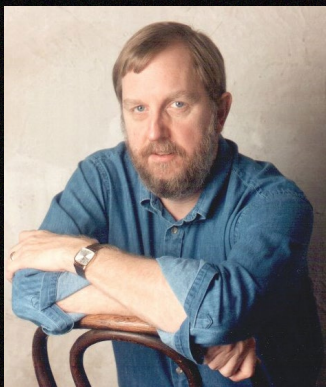


***Molly on the Shore* – Percy Aldridge Grainger/arr. R. Mark Rogers**

In setting *Molly on the Shore*, I strove to imbue the accompanying parts that made up the harmonic texture with a melodic character not too unlike that of the underlying reel tune. Melody seems to me to provide music with initiative, whereas rhythm appears to me to exert an enslaving influence. For that reason, I have tried to avoid regular rhythmic domination in my music -- always excepting irregular rhythms, such as those of Gregorian chant, which seem to me to make for freedom. Equally with melody, I prize discordant harmony, because of the emotional and compassionate sway it exerts.

- Program Note by composer

AND THE MOUNTAINS RISING NOWHERE



***and the mountains rising nowhere* – Joseph Schwantner**

“... And The Mountains Rising Nowhere” (1977) was written especially for Donald Hunsberger and the Eastman Wind Ensemble with the aid of a Composer Fellowship Grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. The work is scored for amplified piano, six percussionists, winds and brass, and seven glass crystals (the glass harmonica played by the oboists). It is the latest in a series of works which incorporate the glass crystals into the sonic tapestry of the ensemble. The title of the work is a line from a poem written by my friend, poet, and writer—Carol Adler. The following poem is contained in a collection of poems entitled *Arioso*:

*sepia
moonbeams
an afternoon sun blanked by rain
and the mountains rising nowhere
the sound returns
the sound and the silence chimes*

While the work is not specifically programmatic, the poem nevertheless acted as the creative impetus for the composition and provided, for me, an enigmatic, complex, and powerful imagery creating a wellspring of musical ideas and feelings in sympathetic resonance with the poem.

The instrumentalists of the wind ensemble, besides playing in a traditional manner, are also required to sing (“celestial choir”), whistle, play glass crystals, water- gongs, bow antique cymbals, vibraphones, and tam-tams, among other instruments and techniques that are employed. The percussion choir, with its wide diversity of instrumental and sonorous possibilities, plays a fundamentally important role in projecting, along with the amplified piano, musical materials in the work. The recognition of that role is emphasized by their foreground placement in the ensemble.

“... And The Mountains Rising Nowhere” is respectfully dedicated to Carol Adler, Donald Hunsberger, and the fine performers of the Eastman Wind Ensemble.

- Joseph Schwantner

SECOND NATURE



***Second Nature* – Viet Cuong**

The term “second nature” typically describes a skill that, while baffling at first, becomes effortless once mastered. Naturally, *Second Nature* calls for a quartet of saxophonists to tackle the virtuosic demands of the piece and make their efforts look easy. But the virtuosity in their music runs deeper than speedy flurries of notes or sky-high belts. The solo quartet must also play with exacting ensemble coordination as they emulate complex electronic delay effects, which, when combined with thumping four-on-the-floor drumbeats, capture the infectious exuberance of House music. If you see the soloists sweat, I hope that it’s at least in some measure because the music inspires them to move. I personally have never danced so much while writing a piece (and fortunately you’ll just have to take my word for it). Written in three unbroken movements, this concerto often exudes pure, unbridled joy.

Indeed, when I think about my own nature as a composer, and the affective inclination of my earlier work, it was at first joy. Improvisation at the keyboard, my first childhood foray into composition, was a happy escape from the labors of piano practice. For many years composition felt like play, and my music was infused with much more whimsy than gravitas. That changed to a great degree in 2020. My compositions, both by intention and the unconscious intrusions of the wider world, became darker and introspective. I had even come to terms with the possibility that my music would remain in this darker place for a very long time. However, with the brightness of its opening and closing C-major chords, *Second Nature* is me finding my way back. In that way, “second nature” is less of a description of something that has become effortless, but rather something which is relearned, an inclination rediscovered—nature, for the second time around.

It is with tremendous gratitude that I thank Dr. Sarah McKoin and Texas Tech University for leading the consortium of fifteen university wind ensembles and saxophone quartets who commissioned *Second Nature*. This concerto is dedicated to the sensational Aruna Quartet, who premiered the piece in early 2024 alongside Dr. McKoin and the Texas Tech University Symphonic Wind Ensemble

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Sarah McKoin, *director*

Dr. Sarah McKoin has served as the Director of Bands, Professor of Music and Chair of the conducting and ensembles area at Texas Tech University since 2005. Under Dr. McKoin's direction, the Symphonic Wind Ensemble has been featured at the Midwest Clinic, Texas Music Educators Association Conferences, the North American Saxophone Alliance, the College Music Society conference and CBDNA conferences.

Her ensemble is featured on the Albany, Naxos, and Mark recording labels. Widely sought as a guest conductor and clinician, Dr. McKoin has worked extensively in the United States and abroad as a conductor, traveling to Australia, Canada, China, Thailand, Taiwan, and Israel where she served as producer for the world premiere recording of Roberto Sierra's *Fantasia Correliana* with the Castellani-Andriaccio guitar duo and Israeli Chamber Orchestra. She has taught at the Interlochen Arts Academy and most recently, joined the faculty for the "Music in the Marche" summer opera training festival in Mondavio, Italy where she is starting an instrumental chamber music program. Her ensembles have performed for the Midwest Clinic, CBDNA, NASA (North American Saxophone Alliance) and the College Music Society. She is a passionate advocate for new music and frequently collaborates with composers and artists of all genres.

Dr. McKoin has held appointments at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music, the State University of New York at Buffalo and SUNY Fredonia and the Brevard Music Center. She is honored to be a Yamaha Master Educator and has served as President of the Southwest Division of the College Band Director's National Association and as President of the Big 12 Band Director's Association. She is a member of the American Bandmasters Association, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, Phi Beta Mu, Pi Kappa Lambda, and serves as faculty sponsor of the service fraternities Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Eric Allen, *conductor*

Eric Allen is Associate Professor of Music and Associate Director of Bands at Texas Tech University where his responsibilities include conducting the Symphonic Band, directing the Contemporary Music Ensemble, teaching conducting, and assisting with the Goin' Band from Raiderland.

Under Allen's direction, the Texas Tech Symphonic Band has performed at the CBDNA Southwestern Division Conference in Boulder, Colorado (2016), and in Norman, Oklahoma (2020.) They were praised in Fanfare Magazine for their fine work on the MSR Classics release of Andrew Stetson's solo album titled Rise Above. In addition, Allen conducted the TTU Contemporary Music Ensemble album titled Shifting Direction, released on the Navona Records Label. The album received 5 star reviews from Fanfare Magazine and was praised by Gramophone Magazine.

Allen also serves as conductor of the Lubbock Symphony Chamber Orchestra and the Texas Chamber Winds, and serves as Director of Music at First United Methodist Church in Lubbock. He holds Bachelor and Master of Music Education degrees from Florida State University and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of Minnesota.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Aruna Quartet

Evoking bagpipes, fiddles, deep sea creatures and everything in between, the Aruna Quartet performs interesting pairings of classical, contemporary and folk music. The quartet leverages the chameleon nature of the saxophone to present a tasting menu of sounds to their audience in concerts, educational programs, and multimedia collaborations. “Aruna” translates literally to “red, ruddy, tawny”—a succinct descriptor of the dust storms and sprawling, flatland sunsets that visually define West Texas where the quartet formed.



As travel enthusiasts, the group has adventured well over 10,000 miles together for various musical engagements, including a staggering 30-hour road trip through the deserts, canyons, mountains, and forests of the western United States. As a result of these excursions, the Aruna Quartet has been awarded the Grand Prize at the 46th Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, 2nd Prize at the Coltman Chamber Music Competition, and 3rd Prize at the MTNA Chamber Winds National Finals, among other national and international prizes.



Since its conception, the Aruna Quartet has cultivated a national and international presence. The quartet's appearances include the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago, the Asia Pacific Saxophone Academy in Bangkok, and the group traveled to Italy to perform at the 2024 Emilia-Romagna Festival. The Aruna Quartet presents world premieres, collaborations, and new programs on the “Aruna Quartet LIVE” series in Central and West Texas.



The quartet works with composers to tell new stories and push against genre boundaries. Recently, Aruna partnered with Sarah McKoin and the Texas Tech Symphonic Wind Ensemble to commission Viet Cuong to Second Nature for saxophone quartet and wind ensemble which premiered in February, 2024.

Find out more at arunaquartet.com

From top photo to bottom photo:

Will Pyle, *soprano saxophone*; Jose Guzman, *alto saxophone*; Ryan Hill, *tenor saxophone*; Andrea Schoen, *baritone saxophone*

PERSONNEL

FLUTE

Kristin Elliott
Julia Griffith
Elizabeth Kennedy
Kassie Lindamood Smith*
Maya McBrayer

OBOE

Wesley Barton
Angeli Nicolas
Annant Odell
Jacob Ratliff

BASSOON

Jacob Prentice
Ian Resurreccion*
Sabrina Stovall
Ashleigh Wagnon

CLARINET

Dillan Francis, *bass*
Amy Gilmore
Reilly Ledbetter
Kaitlyn Low
Josué Molina*
Quinn O'Hagen Lopez
Natalie Odom
Ryan Rodarte*
Ellie Wolfe

SAXOPHONE

Solomon Caraway*
Roger Dominguez
Alejandro Rodriguez
Carson Tucker, *tenor*
Natalie Wilson, *baritone*

TRUMPET

Jacob Garcia
Diana Gonzalez*
Angelika Moreland
Luke Reyna
Andrew Reynolds
Josh Tolosa

HORN

Esteban Chavez
Quentin Fisher*
Jack Mellinger
Brett Ramirez
Caledonia Trankel
Seth Wallace

TROMBONE

Jackson Franco, *bass*
Xavier Moncada
Jacob Moore
Matthew Ramirez
Julio Ricardo Rivera*

EUPHONIUM

Kyle Boschen*
David Hewitt
Matthew Jourdan

TUBA

Kyle Boschen
Bruno Brandalise Leonardi*
Bailey Dorsey
Jake Dossing

PERCUSSION

Kyle Buentello
Ari Castorena
Jacob Cauley*
Anthony Flores
Natalie Nance
Cody Otis
Grant Potts
Meliza Reyes

DOUBLE BASS

Fernando de Almeida

PIANO

Helen Kim-Sills

ELECTRIC BASS

Dustin Pedigo

ELECTRIC GUITAR

Alexander Hraha

**Principal*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ADMINISTRATION

President of Texas Tech University
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**Dean of the J.T. & Margaret Talkington College
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Martin Camacho

Director of the School of Music
Andrew Stetson

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Dillan Francis

Sean Hogan

Kirsten Rivera

Richard Zec

APPLIED FACULTY

The Texas Tech University Symphonic Wind Ensemble acknowledges the support and contributions of the applied string, wind, brass, and percussion faculty.

Lisa Garner Santa and Spencer Hartman, *flute*
Susetta Rockett, *oboe*
David Shea, *clarinet*
David Dees, *saxophone*
Richard Meek, *bassoon*
Julia Bell and Kevin Whalen, *trumpet*

Christopher M. Smith, *horn*
James Decker, *trombone*
Kevin Wass, *euphonium and tuba*
Lisa Rogers, *percussion*
Mark Morton, *double bass*
Daniel del Pino, *piano*

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