

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

QUESTIONS TO HEAVEN
University of Maryland Wind Ensemble



Thursday, December 5, 2024 • 8PM
DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL
AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**

University of Maryland School of Music
Presents

QUESTIONS TO HEAVEN

University of Maryland Wind Ensemble
Andrea E. Brown
Conductor

Illyrian Dances Guy Woolfenden
(b. 1937)

- I. Rondeau
- II. Aubade
- III. Gigue

Giovanni T. Clarke, *Graduate Conductor*

Questions to Heaven Jennifer Jolley
(b. 1981)

Serenade for Wind Nonet Katahj Copley
(b. 1998)

- I. Slow
- II. Moderate
- III. Waltz
- IV. Dance

Erick Von Sas, *Graduate Conductor*

Sursum Corda, Op. 11 Edward Elgar
(1857–1934)
Arr. Jacob A. Kappey

Twist Jodie Blackshaw
(b. 1971)

- I. Survival
- II. Reflection
- III. Discovery
- IV. Obsession
- V. Carnevale
- VI. Ascension



ANDREA E. BROWN was appointed the associate director of bands at the University of Maryland in 2018. In this position, she conducts the University of Maryland Wind Ensemble, serves as the director of athletic bands and teaches conducting. Brown is formerly a member of the conducting faculty at the University of Michigan, where she served as the assistant director of bands and was a faculty sponsor of a College of Engineering Multidisciplinary Design Project team researching conducting pedagogy technology. She also served as the director of orchestra and assistant director of bands at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. She is a frequent guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator in the United States, Europe and Asia.

While under her direction, the UMD Wind Ensemble was selected to perform at the 2022 College Band Directors National Association Eastern Division Conference in Baltimore. The ensemble has performed works by a diverse range of composers and has collaborated with soloists Willie Clark, Robert DiLutis, Jennifer Piazza-Pick and Amanda Staub. Brown led a consortium commissioning Omar Thomas's setting of "Shenandoah" and has participated in commissions for works by Katahji Copley, Shiyung Li, Catherine Likhuta and Harrison Collins.

During her time at Maryland, the UMD "Mighty Sound of Maryland" Marching Band (MSOM) has collaborated in halftime shows with local artists such as the Critical Condition Band (DC GoGo), Mawty Maw (rap artist), Grace Chin (drum set) and the Maryland Steel Pan Collective. MSOM has also been a part of joint performances with the Howard University "Showtime" Marching Band and the Penn State "Blue" Band, and has participated in special performances at The Kennedy Center (D.C.), the Heisman Trophy Banquet (NY) and Bands of America Regionals (MD).

Brown completed a doctor of musical arts degree in instrumental conducting at UNC Greensboro where she was a student of John Locke and Kevin Gerald. While at UNCG, she was both guest conductor and principal horn on UNCG Wind Ensemble's fireworks! and finish line! CDs released on the Equilibrium label. Brown has also had several rehearsal guides published in the popular GIA Publications series, "Teaching Music Through Performance in Band" and has presented at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Oxford Conducting Institute, Music For All Summer Symposium, the Yamaha Bläserklasse in Schlitz, Germany, the International Computer Music Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the College Music Society International Conference in Sydney, Australia and multiple times at the College Band Directors National Association National Conference.

A proponent of inclusion and equity issues in the music profession, Brown is a frequent guest speaker on these topics. She currently serves on the CBDNA Diversity Committee and was a founding member of the Drum Corps International InStep Committee. Brown is the founder of "Women Rising to the Podium," an online group of over 4,700 members supporting and celebrating women band directors. Additionally, she also served as the chair of the Sigma Alpha Iota Women's Music Fraternity Graduate Conducting Grant for eight years and is an advisor of the SAI chapter at the University of Maryland.

Brown previously served on the brass and conducting instructional staff of the DCI World Champion Phantom Regiment (2004–2017). Other marching organizations she has instructed include the U.S. Army All-American Marching Band and Carolina Crown. Brown has served as a music judge for Drum Corps International since the 2022 season and has been a member of the John Philip Sousa Foundation Sudler Shield Jury since 2021. Additionally, Brown was invited to be the Eastern Region Director of the 2024 D-Day 80th Anniversary Collegiate Mass Band and led the group in its performances in Normandy, France.

As a performer, Brown was a member of the AA Brass Quintet, which won the International Brass Quintet Competition hosted by Fred Mills at the University of Georgia. She performed with the horn sections of the Boston Brass All Stars Big Band, North Carolina Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony and the Brevard Music Center Orchestra. Brown has studied brass performance and pedagogy with Abigail Pack, J.D. Shaw, Jack Masarie, Freddy Martin, Dottie Bennett, Randy Kohlenberg, Richard Steffen and Ed Bach.

Originally from Milan, Tennessee, she is a graduate of Austin Peay State University and earned a master of music degree in horn performance and a master of music education degree with a cognate in instrumental conducting from UNCG. Prior to her position at Georgia Tech, Brown was the assistant director of bands at Austin Peay State University and taught public school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Dallas, Texas. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Pi Kappa Lambda and CBDNA. She was awarded the Rose of Honor as a member of Sigma Alpha Iota Women's Music Fraternity and is an honorary member of Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma.



A native of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, **GIOVANNI T. CLARKE** currently serves as a graduate teaching assistant in the School of Music at the University of Maryland, College Park. In this position, he serves as a teaching assistant in undergraduate conducting, teaching and administration of all UMD concert and athletic bands. In addition, he is a first-year doctoral student studying wind band conducting under the tutelage of Michael Votta.

Before joining UMD, Clarke held the position of director of bands and subject coordinator at C.V. Bethel High School (The Bahamas). His leadership led to the concert band, chamber ensembles and soloists consistently receiving superior ratings in the E. Clement Bethel National Arts Festivals. Notably, he has a strong commitment to student affairs and academic success, having facilitated hundreds of students in accessing post-secondary education through academic or technical and vocational tracks. His efforts have secured more than 5 million dollars in scholarships.

An award-winning educator and conductor, Clarke has been honored for his musicianship and civic contributions. In 2023, he received the College Band Director National Association Mike Moss Conducting Fellowship Award. He received the 2019-2022 Teacher of the Year award at C.V. Bethel High School and was first runner up for the National Teacher of the Year award in The Bahamas. In 2019, he received the Lou Adams Award for instrumental conducting and the 2018 Meta Davis Cumberbach Award for most outstanding instrumental performance at the E. Clement Bethel National Arts Festival (The Bahamas). Moreover, he is the 2017 National Youth Award for Arts and Culture and the recipient of the Prestigious Prime Minters Cup Award.

Clarke's educational background is a testament to his dedication and passion for music education. He holds a master of music degree in wind band conducting from Central Washington University, a master of music degree in music education from the Vandercook College of Music, and a bachelor of education degree from the University of the Bahamas. His conducting teachers include Christy Lee, Adrian Archer, Alex Kaminsky, T. André Feagin and Michael Votta.

Clarke is an active member of several professional organizations, including the National Band Association, Minority Band Directors National Association, Graduate Wind Conductors Association and the Bahamas Music Educators Association. His involvement in these associations not only reflects his commitment to continuous learning and professional development but also reassures the audience of his expertise and dedication to his field.



ERICK VON SAS is a doctor of musical arts degree student in wind conducting at the University of Maryland, College Park, studying with Michael Votta, Jr. and serving as one of the graduate assistants in the band area. As part of his duties, he assists with concert ensemble logistics, continued development of social media for the concert bands, assisting Andrea Brown with her undergraduate conducting courses, as well as renewing the *Prevailing Winds* podcast with Votta.

As a music educator, Von Sas most recently served as director of bands at Crofton High School (Crofton, MD) in Anne Arundel County. Ensembles under his direction have consistently received praise from adjudicators and clinicians for their musicality, creative direction and commitment to quality performance. Prior to Crofton High School, he held teaching positions at Old Mill (MD) High School, Annapolis (MD) Middle School, Greenville (OH) City Schools and Sandusky (OH) Central Catholic School. He is a regularly sought-after clinician and guest conductor along the I-95 corridor.

An advocate for new music for winds, Von Sas has been part of several commissioning projects in various roles. He was a consortium member for *This Cruel Moon* by John Mackey and *Jinx* by Ryan George, and was the consortium lead for Anthony O'Toole's *Latin Dance Movements*. Most recently, Von Sas commissioned Danille Fisher to write *Feather* in celebration of the birth of his son, Luca. That piece was premiered in May of 2024 in collaboration with Fisher, who drew inspiration from an original poem written by Von Sas.

Von Sas is an active arranger and drill writer, and is a sought-after designer in the pageantry arts. His design clients have been incredibly successful at the local, regional and national levels, and Von Sas frequently serves as a guest clinician for marching ensembles throughout the region. Marching ensembles under his direction have not only been successful competitively, but are regularly praised for their kindness, organization and esprit de corps.

Von Sas has presented on issues of repertoire diversity, teaching high-needs populations, and equity in the large ensemble at the local and state level. His Spring 2019 study of concert band assessment repertoire was presented at the Maryland Music Educators Association Fall 2019 In-Service Conference, and spurred continued dialogue around the issue of diversity in performed repertoire, particularly at MMEA-sponsored assessments.

Von Sas is a graduate of the University of Dayton (B.M.) and of the American Band College of Central Washington University (M.M.). He holds professional memberships with the National Association for Music Education, the Maryland Music Educators Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and the College Band Directors National Association. He currently lives in Linthicum Heights, Maryland with his wife Chelsea, their son Luca, their dogs Milo and Stella, and cat Bruno.

Under the direction of Andrea E. Brown, the **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND WIND ENSEMBLE** was selected to perform at the College Band Directors National Association Eastern Division Conference in 2022, and has been invited to perform at the Maryland Music Educators Association Conference in Baltimore in March of 2025. The ensemble led the commissioning consortium and gave the premiere performance of Omar Thomas's setting of "Shenandoah" in 2019. UMWE has also been involved in the consortiums for the commissioning of Katahji Copley's *Dope*, Catherine Likhuta's *Planet B*, and Shuying Li's *Luminance*. The ensemble also has the honor of representing the UMD School of Music and UMD Bands in their performances at the annual Music for All Mid-Atlantic Concert Band Festival held in DeKelbourn Concert Hall each spring. Previous soloist collaborations have included Master Gunnery Sgt. Samuel Barlow of "The President's Own" Marine Band (trombone), Willie Clark (tuba), Robert DiLutis (clarinet), Jennifer Piazza-Pick (soprano) and Amanda Staub (mezzo soprano).

UMWE performs works from the most respected repertoire written for wind band with a focus on highlighting women composers and composers of color. UMWE is composed primarily of music majors, but often incorporates music minors and non-majors who want to be involved in music in a serious way.

Illyrian Dances (1986)

GUY WOOLFENDEN

Born 1937, Ipswich, UK | Died April 15, 2016, Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire, UK

Viola: What country, friends, is this?

Captain: This is Illyria, lady.

Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night Act I., Sc 2*

Set in Shakespeare's own world, *Illyrian Dances* is a three-movement suite that incorporates renaissance forms of rhythm. The composer, Guy Woolfenden, served as the music director of the Royal Shakespeare Company and wrote this work at the behest of Timothy Reynish for the 1986 meeting of the British Association of Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble. The first movement, "Rondeau," is a common form of *formes fixes* verse poetry that eventually adapted musical syntax into what we know as a Rondo. The recurring "A" theme alternates orchestration during each iteration, allowing the variety of colors available within the wind ensemble to be highlighted. The mixing of subdivisions gives the movement a sparkling vitality while maintaining a firmly British character. "Aubade" is a love song for the morning, as opposed to a "Serenade" that is intended for evening performance. This flirtatious and harmonically stimulating middle movement was definitely written with a midsummer morning in mind. The piece closes with a lively "Gigue," a baroque dance form derived from the English jig. This lively dance in triple meter moves through a variety of timbral textures and fiercely tonal harmonic language. The piece ends in a very transparent texture, perhaps alluding to the mysterious origins of Illyrian.

Questions to Heaven (2021)

JENNIFER JOLLEY

Born 1981, Bellflower, CA

In the midst of the chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us found ourselves trapped in our homes attempting to maintain our own sanity. We found many ways to cope with a distinct lack of the essential human experience: community. *Questions to Heaven* came out of the composer's attempts to cope with a time in her life where she (and all of us) felt incredibly alone. A renewed fascination with space was spurred by an Op Ed by retired astronaut Scott Kelly, entitled "I Spent a Year in Space, and I Have Tips on Isolation to Share." The irony of the vast expanse of space versus the singularity of earth was an apt, albeit harsh analogy to our lack of connection to others that we all experienced. In 2020, three missions were launched with the hope of exploring Mars. Orbiter Tianwen-1, or "Questions to Heaven," was launched by the China National Space Administration and named after the classical Chinese poem. The piece utilizes fixed media, along with a minimalist approach to harmonic and rhythmic structure with slow, gradual development over time in space. This introspective work is emulative of its namesake, as the 172 Heavenly Questions revolve around religious beliefs of ancient China that pose both conundrum and contradictions within themselves. *Questions to Heaven* was commissioned by the Michigan State University Symphony Band and premiered in the Autumn of 2021 with David Thornton conducting.

Serenade for Wind Nonet (2019)

KATAHJ COPLEY

Born January 15, 1998, Carrollton, GA

While originally intended as an anti-serenade, Copley's work reflects a more loving and lively character. Even though he had recently experienced the end of a relationship, the composer's love for life and for people shines through in this charming piece for winds. The first movement represents single-dom with perhaps a more introspective harmonic character that eventually changes to hope for newfound partnership. The second movement is a quirky encounter with flirtation, suggesting that both parties are shy at the outset of their introduction. The waltz is reminiscent of a rom-com first date montage with many grand gestures and only a few missteps. Finally, the fourth movement begins with a spunky clarinet solo that invites the rest of the ensemble to join. The movement makes several sudden accelerandi, culminating in a wild dance as our young lovers finally admit to their love for one another.

Sursum Corda, Op. 11 (1894)

EDWARD ELGAR

Born June 2, 1857, Lower Broadheath, England | Died February 23, 1934, Worcester, England

The immortality of Sir Edward Elgar's contribution to our collective consciousness in academia can be represented in three words: *Pomp and Circumstance*. This march (the first in a series of four) is heard around the country during commencement exercises every semester. Elgar, however, is no one-trick pony. Pieces like *Enigma Variations* and *Severn Suite* have received various transcriptions and arrangements over the years for performers of all levels. "Sursum Corda" (translated to "Lift up your hearts") is a phrase lifted from the Catholic Mass in Latin, which is indicative that this work has a liturgical flavor. Written for his friend and golfing companion Henry Dyke Acland, the work premiered at Worcester Cathedral in 1894. Originally scored for strings, brass and organ, this lovely adagio was arranged for the wind band in 1901 by Jacob A. Kappey.

Twist (2012)

JODIE BLACKSHAW

Born 1971, Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia

Twist is a piece inspired by the Murray River, Australia's longest waterway. The river stretches through South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, and covers 2,508 kilometers. The rich ecological and cultural landscapes that are and were supported by this river over the millenia provide a lush and colorful palette from which to draw. Divided into six sections, the work chronicles natural occurrences, European encroachment, and celebrations. "Survival" drew its inspiration from the story of Tiddalick the Frog, who once consumed an entire river and its full, bio-diverse contents. The movement is designed to impress upon the listener violent hopping while he gorges himself to exhaustion. "Reflection" is an evening landscape in more placid waters with something potentially darker lurking underneath. "Discovery" documents the encroachment of the British and their use of paddle boats to travel up and down the river. The awesome sight of cliffs and falls is both breathtaking and terrifying as the full ensemble shares in this dichotomy. "Obsession" is a tone painting of a bush campfire at dusk, with a sleazy tango performed by the saxophones. "Carnevale" is an homage to the many Italian immigrants to New South Wales that arrived in the late 1940s and early 1950s and the emergence of a thriving viticulture due to their efforts. The melodic material of this section is inspired by the tarantella folk dance. Finally, "Ascension" completes the water cycle, borrowing material from the first movement, signifying the great connection between all living things. Blackshaw asks that the listener consider how they contribute to the stewardship of this beautiful incredible planet.

- Program Notes by Erick Von Sas

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND WIND ENSEMBLE

Andrea E. Brown, *Conductor*
Mark Wakefield, *Manager of Instrumental Ensembles*

Flute

Nneka Chigbu
Natalia Escalona
Alexa Hunleth
Abby Lieu
Amy Wang
Kira Whitby

Oboe

Jonathan Alonzo
Aaron Emerson
Zander Barrow

Bassoon

Collin Blackman
David Nsolo
Regan Ryder
Spencer Stones

Clarinet

Marli Banner
Sam Cheng
Jennifer Dennison
Leeza Frank
Cerys Freer
Annie Gruman
Jordan Hershaft
Molly McPoland
Alden Newsome
Michael Ortiz
Lino Romero Alarcon
Natalie Turner

Saxophone

Brandon Greenberg
Patrick McCluskey
Katrina Webbert
Jay Smith

Horn

Nicholas Beach
Kyle Bickel
Morgan MacLean
Ethan Thoms-Chelsey
Brianna Truitt

Trumpet

William Allen
Nick Franck
Sebastian Gieske
Gerrardo Granados
Ethan Hawkes
Roberto Laskaris
Waverly Nakashima
Ryan Saylor

Trombone

Katie Rose Hand
Amir Hayward
Mia Rosenblum-Solis
Sylvia Vallina

Euphonium

Daphne Fish
Matt Miller

Tuba

Hadyn Hopper
Ryan Vest

Percussion

Sebastian Gonzalez
Mare Lennon
Trey Perry
Julian Zuzzolo

Piano/Electric Organ

Anthony Bock
Emily Yong

Harp

Cambria Van de Vaarst

Bass

Broc Mertz

Graduate Assistants

Giovanni T. Clarke
James Gates
Erick Von Sas

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND



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SEASON

*at The Clarice Smith
Performing Arts Center*

