

Symphonic Wind Ensemble
Robert Taylor, *conductor*
Maggie Whiteman, *doctoral assistant conductor*

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2026, AT 7:30 P.M.

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Sin Fronteras

Symphonic Wind Ensemble
Robert Taylor, *conductor*
Maggie Whiteman, *doctoral assistant conductor*

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL
2025–26 SEASON

Sin Fronteras

“Country Band” March (1903/1974)

Charles Ives
(1874–1954)
arr. James B. Sinclair

Sorrow from Afro-American Symphony
(1935/1962)

William Grant Still
(1895–1978)
arr. Robert O. O’Brien

Lincoln Portrait (1942/1951)

Aaron Copland
(1900–1990)
trans. Walter Beeler

Shawn D. Vondran, *narrator*

INTERMISSION

In This Breath (2025)

Shuying Li

Maggie Whiteman, *doctoral assistant conductor*

Sin Fronteras (2017/2023)

Clarice Assad
trans. Joe Jaxson and Ogechi Uka

SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

Robert Taylor, *conductor*

Maggie Whiteman, *doctoral assistant conductor*

Oliver Stark, *graduate assistant conductor*

Flute/Piccolo

Emma Cranford
Olivia Dorer
Isabel Evernham*
Carina Geist
Benjamin Hosking
Riona Kim

Oboe/English Horn

Ryan Ha*
Emmeline Murphy
Sarah Perry

Bassoon

Jason Capozucca
Micah Cortezzo*
Bowie Wu

Clarinet

Dylan Addonizio
Gavin Boudreau
David Hilt
Aydin Iqbal
Minjun Kim
Henry Lazzaro*
Nathan Soto

Saxophone

Seth Alexander
Aryan Avadhanam
David Bennette*
Kolbe Chapman

Trumpet

Carlee Santel
Ziyu Shang
Paul Stancampiano
Jonathan Taylor
Parisa Tofigh
Oliver Zhang*

Horn

Connor Cowart
Erin Harrigan*
Zoe Heim

Jon Mandrell
Micah Northam*
Baran Zolfaghari

Trombone

Ellie Abbott
Wesley Connor*
Dylan Halliday
Arlo Hollander
Liam Melvin

Euphonium

Brandon Baade
Will Claudius*

Tuba

Nolan Fallon*
Avery Li

Percussion

Harrison Buck
Isaac Chiang
Ivan Mendoza
Ryan Payne
Jacob Scheidt*

String Bass

Erik Oswald

Piano

Dirk Sun

Harp

Marin Trendel

* Section Leader

PROFILES

Robert Taylor is Professor of Conducting and Director of Bands at Northwestern University, where he holds the John W. Beattie Chair of Music. As the fourth person in the university's history to hold the Director of Bands position, Taylor conducts the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, teaches graduate and undergraduate conducting, and leads all aspects of the band program. With a career in music education spanning over thirty years, previous appointments include the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC, University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, and Eureka High School in Northern California, where ensembles under his direction earned recognition by *Downbeat Magazine*, the Selmer Corporation, and Grammy Signature Schools.

Known for innovative and immersive concert programming, Taylor maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor. Past engagements include performances with the Vancouver Brass Orchestra, U.S. Army Field Band, Pacific Symphonic Wind Ensemble, and Chicago-based contemporary music group, the Maverick Ensemble. Collaborations span a wide range of international artists—from virtuosi performers Barbara Butler (trumpet), Jose Franch-Ballester (clarinet), Larry Knopp (trumpet), Julia Nolan (saxophone), Daniel Perantoni (tuba), Jeff Nelsen (horn), Gail Williams (horn), and Allen Vizzutti (trumpet); to composers Mason Bates, Jodie Blackshaw, Steven Bryant, Raven Chacon, Michael Colgrass, John Corigliano, David Maslanka, Cait Nishimura, Joel Puckett, Alex Shapiro, Frank Ticheli, and Dana Wilson; to jazz, pop, and crossover performers Ingrid Jensen, Shruti Ramani, Manhattan Transfer, Kenny Werner, and Big Bad Voodoo Daddy. As a passionate advocate of music in the schools, Dr. Taylor is in high demand as a festival adjudicator, rehearsal clinician, and guest conductor throughout North America and internationally. His frequent appearances with young musicians include serving as principal conductor of the Puget Sound Youth Wind Ensemble and guest conductor of numerous honor groups, such as the Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall, National Youth Band of Canada, AMIS Asia Honor Band, California Orchestra Directors Association Honor Symphony, and many provincial and all-state bands across Australia, Canada, and the United States.

Taylor received the Master of Music and Doctor of Music degrees in conducting from Northwestern University, where he studied with Mallory Thompson, and the Bachelor of Arts degree in Trumpet and

Music Education from Humboldt State University. His research on wind literature, rehearsal techniques, integration of cutting-edge technology, and application of Ashtanga Yoga to improve body awareness and injury prevention in the training of nascent conductors and performing musicians, has been featured in presentations at regional, national, and international music conferences, including appearances at the Midwest Clinic, College Band Directors National Association, and on several popular podcasts. He has contributed to numerous leading publications and is a co-author of *The Horizon Leans Forward*.

Dr. Taylor is a Killam Laureate, Jacob K. Javits Fellow, and Thomas A. Davis Teaching Prize Winner, and has served as on the executive boards of the British Columbia Music Educators Association and College Band Directors National Association (Northwest Region). He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Kappa Lambda National Honor Societies, World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, and National Association for Music Education.

PROGRAM NOTES

“Country Band” March

Ives

Few composers embody the independent American spirit quite like Charles Ives. Born in Danbury, Connecticut, the son of United States Army bandleader George Ives, he grew up immersed in experimental musical thinking. After studying organ and composition at Yale University with Horatio Parker, Ives chose an unconventional path: rather than attempting to earn a living through composition, he built a highly successful insurance business and composed in the evenings. As a result, much of Ives’s music went unperformed and unpublished. Only decades later did audiences and scholars recognize the remarkable originality of his work. Long before atonality, polytonality, tone clusters, and complex rhythmic layering became hallmarks of twentieth-century modernism; Ives was already experimenting freely with them. In 1947, he received the Pulitzer Prize for his Symphony No. 3 (composed in 1911), which had finally premiered just a year earlier.

Composed in 1903, “*Country Band*” March is both an affectionate tribute and riotous parody. From its deliberately ‘out of tune’ opening to its chaotic conclusion, the piece captures the spirited imperfections of a small-town American band. While the principal march theme is Ives’s own, he layers

it with a collage of familiar tunes including *Arkansas Traveler*, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, *The British Grenadiers*, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, *London Bridge*, *Marching Through Georgia*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Yankee Doodle*, and *Semper Fidelis*. True to Ives’s “poly-everything” aesthetic, these melodies rarely appear in straightforward fashion. Instead, they collide in different keys, tempos, and rhythmic groupings, often overlapping in boisterous counterpoint. Ives celebrates the messy vitality of communal music making, transforming what might seem like cacophony into a bold artistic statement. It is a work that looks backward to familiar American tunes while pointing unmistakably toward the experimental future of twentieth-century music.

Sorrow from Afro-American Symphony

Still

William Grant Still was an American composer and conductor, and the first African American to conduct a professional symphony orchestra in the United States. Though he composed operas, ballets, and other works during his career, he is perhaps best known for his *Afro-American Symphony* (1931). Born in Mississippi, Still was raised by his mother and grandmother in Little Rock, Arkansas. He studied medicine at Wilberforce University in Ohio for a time before eventually turning to music, studying at the Oberlin Conservatory. In the 1920s, his musical education was diversified when he went to work for the bandleader Paul Whiteman and blues composer W.C. Handy. Still demonstrated great concern with the position of African Americans in U.S. society, and frequently incorporated jazz into his classical music. He tended to prefer simple, commercial harmonies and orchestrations, but utilized them with the highest professionalism and seriousness of purpose.

Premiered in 1931 by Howard Hanson and the Rochester Symphony Orchestra, the *Afro-American Symphony* quickly entered the American repertoire, receiving performances by the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall and dozens of other orchestras during the 1930s. Still described his artistic aim succinctly: he sought to write a distinctly American symphony that would elevate the blues to the highest symphonic level. *Sorrow* depicts the strength of an oppressed people. Solo oboe over flute and clarinet accompaniment presents the main theme with the blues theme of the first movement reappearing later in the flute. Slowly rolled harp arpeggios accompany a transformation of the oboe theme. Both themes return in reverse order to close the movement. Still inscribed the symphony to God, whom he called “the source of all inspiration.”

Lincoln Portrait

Copland

Few composers have shaped the sound of American concert music as profoundly as Aaron Copland, often called “the Dean of American composers.” Copland studied in Paris with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, whose influence helped him refine a voice that balanced modernist technique with a distinctly American character. Over the course of his career, Copland developed a style marked by open, spacious harmonies, and transparent orchestration. By the early 1940s, as the United States entered World War II, Copland turned toward a more direct, populist style. Works such as *Appalachian Spring* (for which he received the Pulitzer Prize) and *Fanfare for the Common Man* sought to express shared national ideals in accessible musical language. *Lincoln Portrait* belongs to this same patriotic period.

Commissioned in 1942 by conductor André Kostelanetz for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, *Lincoln Portrait* was written as part of a program featuring new works by American composers. Copland originally considered setting words of Walt Whitman, but at Kostelanetz’s suggestion he chose instead to honor Abraham Lincoln. For the narration, Copland selected excerpts from Lincoln’s own speeches and letters. The score is not a literal musical illustration of Lincoln’s words; rather, it creates a emotional landscape against which those words can resonate. Copland weaves quotations of traditional American tunes, including *Springfield Mountain* and Stephen Foster’s *Camptown Races*, grounding the work in the musical vernacular of Lincoln’s America. The composition unfolds in three principal sections. The opening evokes what Copland described as “the mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln’s personality,” with spacious harmonies and solemn orchestration suggesting quiet strength and reflection. A more animated middle section offers brief, energetic sketches that evoke the turbulence of Lincoln’s era. In the final section, the narrator enters, and Lincoln’s own words, culminating in lines from the Gettysburg Address, emerge over music of dignified simplicity and growing nobility. Since its premiere, *Lincoln Portrait* has been performed on countless significant occasions and has featured a wide range of distinguished narrators, including Carl Sandburg, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Copland himself.

In This Breath

Li

Shuying Li is an award-winning composer whose bold and emotionally charged music blends rich colors with compelling storytelling while con-

necting with audiences through universal human experiences and emotions. Originally from China, Li began her musical training at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music before earning a scholarship to continue her undergraduate studies at The Hartt School. She holds master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Michigan and is currently on the faculty at California State University, Sacramento. Previously, she directed the Composition and Music Theory program at Gonzaga University and served as research faculty at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Li’s accolades include awards and grants from the Copland House Residency Award, China National Arts Fund, ASCAP/CBDNA Frederick Fennell Prize, and The American Prize, International Antonin Dvorak Composition Competition, International Huang Zi Composition Competition, Competition, among others.

About *In This Breath*, Li writes:

“My nature is the nature of the cloud – the nature of no birth and no death. Just as it is impossible for a cloud to die, it’s impossible for me to die. I enjoy contemplating my continuation body, just as the cloud enjoys watching the rain fall and become the river far below. If you look closely at yourself, you will see how you too are continuing me in some way. If you breathe in and out, and you find peace, happiness, and fulfillment, you know I am always with you, whether my physical body is still alive or not. I am continued in my many friends, students, and monastic disciples.”

—*Thich Nhat Hanh, The Art of Living*

This quotation comes from Thich Nhat Hanh’s *The Art of Living*. This book is a collection of the Vietnamese monk’s ruminations on life and death that guided my partner Glen Adsit through his personal struggles when confronted with his own mortality. As well as being my beloved life partner and musical collaborator, Glen was a beloved figure in the music community who touched the lives of countless collaborators and students. In the wake of Glen’s sudden passing in January 2024 we have all become the rain to Glen’s cloud. His inextinguishable spirit and profound influence continue to resonate deeply within all of us. Although his physical body is no longer with us, we now constitute his continuation body and are charged with continuing his legacy of support and love for one another.

This piece is a tribute to Glen, the physical life we shared together, and the new life we share as I continue his legacy in my own way. It reflects the profound love and connection we share, both personally and through our collaborative musical endeavors. The piece is lyrical and tender, inviting listeners into the intimate emotional spaces Glen and I navigated together. It captures the essence of Glen's loving spirit — missed by many, cherished by those who experienced his warmth and guidance, and still apparent in the life and work of his family, colleagues, and students. It is both a celebration of Glen's life and the enduring bond he and I share and a tribute to the legacy of love and artistic collaboration that he left behind for all of us to continue together.

Glen Adsit was a conductor and trombonist. He served as the Director of Bands at The Hartt School and the President of the College Band Directors National Association.

—edited by John “Rusty” Koenig

Sin Fronteras

Assad

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian- American Clarice Assad is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop, and jazz genres. The Grammy Award-nominated composer, celebrated pianist, inventive vocalist, and educator is acclaimed for her evocative colors, rich textures, and diverse stylistic range. With her talent sought after by artists and organizations worldwide, the polyglot musician continues to attract new audiences both onstage and off. She endeavors to harness the incredible and intangible power of music to connect people and transform lives through original works, commissions, and education programs that give voice to everything from the impact of climate change on the natural world to issues of social justice, gender equity, and the empowerment of young voices.

Sin Fronteras emerged from a utopian state of mind in which I found myself one day, daring to erase imaginary lines that disconnect us geographically, culturally, and morally: Boundaries that the human race has willingly subscribed to for thousands of years. But what would happen if the walls that separate us from getting to know one another were not there? While this idea would generate a fair amount of confusion in the real world, in the realm of music of the 21st century, this does not need to be so! As a South American woman living in the United States for two decades, I chose sounds of places

that felt closest to home: The Americas. In *Sin Fronteras*, we journey from the bottom of South America, traveling up both coasts and navigating to the Northern hemisphere via Central America. The piece follows no storyline, but its central concept begins with a shocking reaction between two or more distinct cultures coming into contact for the first time. After the initial resistance, everyone collectively begins aggregating each other's ethnic fragments into their culture spheres to create something new – while still preserving their original roots.

The piece accomplishes this amalgamation effect by taking advantage of an old-time favorite musical form: Theme & Variation. Though it may not fit precisely into the ‘cookie-cutter’ format of this old tradition, there are several moments in the piece where familiar sounds, melodies, and motifs come and go, grounding the listener for a moment before morphing into something new.

—Clarice Assad

BAND PROGRAM

Director of Bands	Robert Taylor John W. Beattie Chair of Music
Associate Director of Bands	Shawn Vondran
Director of Athletic Bands	Daniel Farris
Doctoral Assistants	Imran Amarshi, Maggie Whiteman
Graduate Assistants	Oliver Stark, Rachel Stiles, Michael Witt
Stage Managers	Stewart Bridgeforth, Kolbe Chapman, Andy Hankes, Henry Lazzaro, Cameron Leonardi
Ensemble Librarians	Sarah Perry, Toby Tse, Maggie Umanetz-Lertprasopsak
AV/Equipment Manager	Micah Northam

CONCERT MANAGEMENT OFFICE STAFF

Director of Concert Management	Jerry Tietz
Concert Operations Manager	Kait Samuels
Ticketing Manager	Maxwell A. Johnson
Marketing Manager	Laura Nielsen
Marketing Coordinator	Elizabeth Avery
Technical Services Manager	Bill Milgram
Technical Services Manager	Zachary Lovitch
Concert Business Manager	Meg Lindsey
Supporting Staff	150 Northwestern Students
Dean, Bienen School of Music	Jonathan Bailey Holland

KEYBOARD MAINTENANCE

Supervisor of Keyboard Maintenance	Wesley Owen
Piano Technician	Chris Scroggins

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager. In consideration of the artists and other members of the audience, patrons who must leave before the end of the concert are asked to do so between pieces.
- Photography and audio/video recording of performances is strictly prohibited without prior written consent of the Concert Management Office.
- A limited number of assisted listening devices are available for the hearing impaired. Inquire at the box office.
- Smoking is prohibited by law in all Bienen School of Music performance venues.
- Every patron who will be occupying a seat must have a ticket in order to be admitted into the concert.
- The presenter reserves the right to ask any patron who is disrupting the event in any way to leave the concert hall.
- In the event of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- When joining us for upcoming concerts, please leave the Concert Management Office phone number (847-491-5441) with anyone who might need to reach you in case of emergency.