



Symphonic Band

A large, dark blue rectangular area containing a collage of various icons. At the center is a realistic image of the Earth. To the left of the Earth, there is a stylized orange and yellow flame or explosion. Above the Earth, there are several icons: a computer monitor, a smartphone, a medical cross in a red circle, a first aid kit, a clock, a camera, and a small airplane. To the right of the Earth, there are more icons: a smartphone, a first aid kit, a camera, and a small airplane. Below the Earth, there are icons of icebergs and a small boat. The background of the collage is dark blue with some faint, glowing lines.

For Our Times

Dr. Cheldon R. Williams, conductor

Tuesday, November, 18 2025 • 7:30pm
Lyell B. Clay Concert Theatre
College of Creative Arts and Media
School of Music

PROGRAM

WVU Symphonic Band

Dr. Cheldon R. Williams, conductor

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906 - 1975)
trans. H. Robert Reynolds

Prelude Op. 34, No. 14

KENNETH J. ALFORD
(1881 - 1945)

Army of the Nile

ERIC WHITACRE
(b. 1970)

Sleep

DAVID MASLANKA
(1943 - 2017)

Give Us This Day

PROGRAM NOTES

Prelude / Dmitri Shostakovich

The *Twenty-four Preludes* for piano were composed in 1932-33, and the *Prelude in E-flat minor*, opus 34, No. 14 was one in this set. Opening with a calm but strong chordal statement, this piece continues to build in a single direction to a grand climax of *fff* dynamic after which it quickly returns to the quiet mood and material of the beginning. While only 36 measures long, one senses a much more expansive and lengthy composition than its few short minutes reveal.

-H. Robert Reynolds

Army of the Nile / Kenneth J. Alford

Kenneth Alford's arresting title, *Army of the Nile*, evokes the past with his customary and telling dedication to a time in history when British soldiers were gathered in this part of Africa. Why they were there is a subject long passed into the record of the 20th century.

In this however musically simple but highly convincing and stylistic little essay in march form, Kenneth J. Alford (1881 - 1945) expresses all that words cannot say of what an Army of the Nile must have been all about. And here's music written in great contrast by a man at the height of his craft, a piece that is clearly *his* in a style of march composition unlike that of any other composer: those marvelous bass-line, "simple" scales, flashing attacks, and striking contrasts - major/minor - add to a musically pleasant and unique aggressiveness.

The Army of the Nile and what it represented have passed, of course _ but, again, the music serves the occasions, the purpose, the moment, and provides expression that supersedes press comment and historical entry. With *Army of the Nile*, I invite you to join Kenneth Alford in a review of those minutes of history as only music can record them.

- Frederick Fennell

Sleep / Eric Whitacre

Sleep began its life as an a cappella choral setting, with a magnificent original poem by Charles Anthony Silvestri. The chorale-like nature and warm harmonies seemed to call out for the simple and plaintive sound of winds, and I thought that it might make a gorgeous addition to the wind symphony repertoire. Sleep can be performed as a work for band, or band and mixed chorus.

- Eric Whitacre

Give Us This Day / David Maslanka

The words "Give us this day" are, of course, from the Lord's Prayer, but the inspiration for this music is Buddhist. I have recently read a book by the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (pronounced "Tick Not Hahn") entitled *For a future to be Possible*. His premise is that a future for the planet is only possible if individuals become deeply mindful of themselves, deeply connected to who they really are. While this is not a new idea, and something that is an ongoing struggle for everyone, in my estimation it is the issue for world peace. For me, writing music, and working with people to perform music, are two of those points of deep mindfulness.

Music makes the connection to reality, and by reality I mean a true awake-ness and awareness. Give

PROGRAM NOTES

Us This Day give us the very moment of awakeness and aware aliveness so that we can build a future in the face of a most dangerous and difficult time.

I chose the subtitle "Short Symphony of Wind Ensemble" because the music isn't programmatic in nature. It has a full-blown symphonic character, even though there are only two movements. The music of the slower first movement is deeply searching, while that of the hight energized second movement is at times both joyful and sternly sober. The piece ense with a modal setting of a choral melody Vater Unser in Himmelreich (Our Fater in Heaven), no. 110 from the 371 Four-part chorales by Johann Sebastian Bach.

– David Maslanka

Flute

Shaylee Groves*

Music Education (BM)

Abigail Lawrence

Music Therapy (BM)

Caterina Occhione

Multidisciplinary Studies (BM)

Roslyn Skinner

Music Education (BM)

Cristina Wilcox

Music and Health (BS)

Avah Young

Music Education (BM)

Oboe

Cooper Gibson*

Music Education (BM)

Bassoon

Peyton Crosten*

Music and Health (BS)

Ky Moore

Music Business and Industry (BM)

B-flat Clarinet

Ella Boyce

Music Education (BM)

Jenna Carpenter

Wildlife and Fisheries Resources (BS)

Brazz Evans IV

Theatre (BA)

Audrey Richards

Music Therapy (BM)

Bethany Stein

Music Education (BM)

Michael Taylor*

Multidisciplinary Studies (BM)

Gabrielle Younger

Multidisciplinary Studies (BM)

Bass Clarinet

Lily Goldbach

Wildlife and Fisheries Resources (BS)

Nickolas Sisler

Game Design and Interactive Media (BA)

Anthony Witts

Chemistry (BS)

Alto Saxophone

Ryan Manno

Engineering (BS)

Ashly Yost*

Music Education (BM)

Tenor Saxophone

Abigail Ferrell

Music and Health (BS)

Baritone Saxophone

Madeline Ritchey

Music and Health (BS)

Horn

Roman Columbus*

Music Education (BM)

Luke Deaton

Engineering (BS)

Regina Head

Music Therapy (BM)

Kaleb Meister

Music Education (BM)

Joseph Smith

Music Therapy (BM)

Trumpet

Leah DeGarmo

Music (BA)

Isaiah Fisher

Music Education (BM)

Maggie Mason

Music Performance (BM)

Garrett Materne*

Music Education (BM)

Paul Smith

Music Education (BM)

Aaron Trader

Music Education (BM)

Trombone

Justin Butcher

Music Education (BM)

Grayson Chandler

Music Education (BM)

Megan Gary

Music Education (BM)

Jack Kyle*

Music Education (BM)

Colin Rosenecker

Music Education (BM)

Natalie Shinego

Music (BA)

Trevor Wotring

Music Education (BM)

Euphonium

Angel Cotto

Mathematics (BS)

Ayden Jacobs-Endicott*

Music Business and Industry (BA)

Emily Jobes

Music Therapy (BM)

Lauren Rice

Music and Health (BS)

Tuba

Brian Bernard

Music Education (BM)

Carson Cheskawich

Music Education (BM)

Caleb Rowan*

Music Education (BM)

Percussion

Allison Gillett

Music Education (BM)

Caden Herod

Multidisciplinary Studies (BM)

Michael Mullican*

Music Education (BM)

Jude Thomas

Music Composition (BM)

Evan Vorce

Music Education (BM)

Paige Wallace

Music (BA)

CONDUCTOR



Dr. Cheldon Williams serves as the Associate Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands at West Virginia University, where he provides comprehensive artistic, administrative, and educational leadership for one of the nation's most visible collegiate band programs. In this capacity, he holds the baton as the conductor of the West Virginia University Symphonic Band and is the visionary leader behind "The Pride of West Virginia" Mountaineer Marching Band and the Mountaineer Pep Bands. His academic role includes instructing undergraduate courses in Music Arranging for Public School Groups, equipping the next generation of music educators with essential, practical skills.

An accomplished conductor, scholar, and arranger, Dr. Williams's career is distinguished by a record of

significant achievement in performance, program development, and institutional advancement. At WVU, his strategic leadership has been instrumental in securing major philanthropic support, including assisting the fundraising initiative that fully funded the Mountaineer Marching Band's historic appearance in the 2024 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Dr. Williams has also significantly amplified the program's national profile through strategic digital engagement and by serving as a university ambassador at high-profile performances across the country, including major NCAA tournaments and bowl games, enhancing brand recognition and alumni engagement on a national scale.

His scholarly and creative work is focused on expanding the repertoire and pedagogical tools available to wind bands. He is the creator of the acclaimed Rediscovery Series, a groundbreaking transcription project dedicated to elevating the works of historically underrepresented composers for the wind band medium. This initiative, distributed by Murphy Music Press, has achieved international recognition, with performances by premier ensembles such as "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, the U.S. Navy Band, and major university programs nationwide. His research on assessing ensemble performance quality was first presented at the prestigious Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic and has since been shared at numerous national and international conferences. He is a published contributor to the landmark resource *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*.

Prior to his appointment at WVU, Dr. Williams earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Wind Conducting from The University of Texas at Austin (2020). He also holds a Master of Music Education (2014) and a Bachelor of Music Education (2004) from Florida State University. His previous academic posts include Interim Associate Director of Bands at New Mexico State University and a tenure as Director of Bands & Orchestras at J.P. Taravella High School in Florida, where his program received national acclaim.

An in-demand guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator, Dr. Williams has worked with all-state, regional, and honor ensembles across the United States. He maintains active membership in the National Association for Music Education and the West Virginia Music Educators Association. Through his dynamic leadership on and off the podium, Dr. Cheldon Williams continues to shape the landscape of music education, champion inclusive programming, and engage with musicians, educators, and audiences alike.



FACULTY AND STAFF



BANDS FACULTY & STAFF

Scott C. Tobias
Director of Bands

Cheldon R. Williams
Associate Director of Bands

Sarah Dawson
Graduate Assistant

Jeffrey Hadfield
Graduate Assistant

Brandon Lojewski
Program Assistant

STUDIO FACULTY

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Cynthia Anderson
Oboe

Andy Sledge
Bassoon

Keeheon Nam
Clarinet

Jeffery Siegfried
Saxophone

Robert Sears
Trumpet

Albert Houde
Horn

Hakeem Bilal
Trombone

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Euphonium/Tuba

George Willis
Percussion

Brittany Blair
Harp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Jamie Whoolery..... Assistant Dean of Production
Michael Vercelli Interim Director, School of Music

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