



Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

WESTERN UNIVERSITY WIND ENSEMBLE *COLOURFUL TAPESTRIES*

Saturday, February 7, 2026
3 p.m., Paul Davenport Theatre
Dr. Colleen Richardson, *Music Director*

Tuttarana (2024)

Reena Esmail
(b. 1983)

Before the Dawn (2023)

David Biedenbender
(b. 1984)

Fantasie (1898)

Faure Gabriel
(1845-1924)
arr. R. Webb (1926-2024)
ed. J. Nishimura (b. 1953)

Yiping Zhang, Flute

Dionysiaques Op. 62 (1913)

Florent Schmitt (1870-1958)
arr. Felix Hauswirth (b. 1955)

Amen (2017)

Carlos Simón (b. 1986)

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PROGRAM NOTES

Reena Esmail is an Indian American composer whose work brings together Western classical music and Hindustani (North Indian classical) traditions. Trained at The Juilliard School and Yale University, Esmail later studied Hindustani music in India as a Fulbright-Nehru Fellow, an experience that profoundly shaped her artistic voice. Her music creates a thoughtful dialogue between cultures, integrating elements such as raag, rhythm, and improvisatory gesture within Western notation. Through this approach, Esmail seeks not fusion, but meaningful collaboration that honors the depth and integrity of both musical traditions.

Esmail describes the inspiration for *Tuttarana*:

The title of this piece is a conglomeration of two words: the Italian word 'tutti', means 'all' or 'everyone', and the term 'tarana' designates a specific Hindustani (North Indian) musical form, whose closest Western counterpart is the 'scat' in jazz. The tarana is a place where musicians can put their greatest virtuosity on display, leaving an audience in awe. While a tarana is a solo form, I wanted to bring that same energy to an ensemble form. This work was originally written for treble chorus, then arranged for brass quintet, and is now in its third iteration for concert band.

David Biedenbender is an American composer, conductor, performer, educator, and interdisciplinary collaborator whose music blends expressive beauty with formal sophistication. His works have been praised for their rich sonic imagination, rhythmic vitality, and emotional depth, drawing on influences from rock, jazz, classical, and Indian Carnatic music. Biedenbender has written for chamber and large ensembles, dance, and multimedia, and his music has been performed worldwide by ensembles ranging from Alarm Will Sound to the United States Navy Band and leading wind ensembles. He is Associate Professor and Chair of Composition at Michigan State University and holds degrees from the University of Michigan and Central Michigan University.

Before the Dawn was written to honor the teaching career of Mr. Dave Gott, who served as Director of Bands at Haslett High School in Haslett, Michigan for 19 years. It was commissioned by the Haslett High School Band Boosters. Before I started writing this piece, I visited the Haslett High School Band to ask about their experiences with Mr. Gott and to brainstorm ideas for the piece. What struck me most about their observations and memories of Mr. Gott was how he had helped so many of them do things they themselves did not think they could do, both personally and collectively—he saw potential in them that they could not yet see and helped them achieve goals they could not have even imagined.

I am also fortunate to call Dave Gott my friend. For as long as I've known him, he wakes up well before dawn, getting a head start on the day. For me, this time when the deep blue night sky moves toward day through hues of glorious red and orange is a time of hopefulness, joy, and optimism—it feels like anything is possible. My hope with this piece is to capture that feeling—the same optimism, hope, and inspiration that Mr. Gott brought to every student that entered his classroom—and to celebrate it through music. A simple melody rises from the distant horizon, repeating and expanding each time as more voices join. Eventually the melody gives way to unbridled energy, joy, and wonder, with soloists and sections collectively weaving their own unique variation of the melody into a colorful tapestry.

Gabriel Fauré was a French composer whose music bridges late Romanticism and early modernism. Known for its refined harmony, lyrical elegance, and emotional restraint, his work shaped the course of French music in the early twentieth century. Fauré also served as director of the Paris Conservatoire and influenced generations of composers.

Robert K. Webb was an American arranger, composer, and educator best known for his contributions to wind band and chamber music repertoire. His arrangements are valued for their clarity, idiomatic writing, and sensitivity to the original works, making a wide range of classical music accessible to wind performers and audiences.

Fantasie was originally written in 1898 as a concours piece for the Paris Conservatoire, showcasing both the lyrical elegance and technical brilliance characteristic of his style. The work unfolds in two contrasting sections: a flowing, expressive opening followed by a lively and virtuosic conclusion, highlighting the soloist's agility and tonal refinement.

In this arrangement for solo flute and concert band by Webb, with editorial work by Judy Nishimura, Fauré's original piano accompaniment is reimagined through transparent and colorful wind textures. The arrangement preserves the intimacy and grace of the original while expanding its expressive scope, allowing the solo flute to shine against a rich yet sensitive ensemble backdrop.

Florent Schmitt was associated with the post-Romantic and early modern traditions of French music. A student of Gabriel Fauré at the Paris Conservatoire, Schmitt was known for his bold harmonic language, rhythmic vitality, and rich orchestration. His music often reflects exoticism and large-scale dramatic intensity, combining late Romantic expressiveness with emerging twentieth-century colors.

Felix Hauswirth is a contemporary arranger and editor known for his work with wind and concert band repertoire. His arrangement of Schmitt's *Dionysiaques, Op. 62* adapts the original orchestral writing for modern wind ensemble, preserving the work's rhythmic drive and brilliance while enhancing clarity, balance, and playability for today's performers.

The symphonic poem *Dionysiaques, Op. 62* is considered worldwide as the pre-eminent emblematic composition of the original French wind band repertoire. Written in 1913, after attending the premier of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Schmitt finalized the band score in ca. 1924, and the Garde Républicaine played the first performance on June 9, 1925. The piece draws its inspiration from the ecstatic rituals of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and revelry.

Marked by rapid shifts in texture and harmony, *Dionysiaques* demands exceptional virtuosity, precision, and endurance from the ensemble. The work's sweeping gestures and intense climaxes showcase Schmitt's mastery of large-scale form and orchestration, making it both a technical tour de force and a powerful expression of early twentieth-century French modernism.

Carlos Simón is an American composer whose music is characterized by its emotional directness, rhythmic vitality, and strong narrative voice. Drawing inspiration from gospel, jazz, neo-Romanticism, and social history, Simón's works often explore themes of identity, resilience, and human connection. His music has been widely performed by leading orchestras, chamber ensembles, and wind bands across the United States. Through an accessible yet powerful musical language, Simón seeks to communicate personal and collective stories with clarity, urgency, and expressive depth.

AMEN! is a powerful and contemplative work that reflects the composer's deep connection to spirituality, community, and shared human experience. Rather than functioning as a literal religious statement, *AMEN!* serves as a universal affirmation—an expression of hope, resilience, and collective breath. It pays homage to his family's four generational affiliation with the Pentecostal church and the joyous dancing, spontaneous shouting, and soulful singing of the services.

The three movements of *AMEN!* are performed without break to depict how the different parts of a worship service flow into the next. In the first movement, I've imagined the sound of an exuberant choir and congregation singing harmoniously together in a call and response fashion. The soulful second movement quotes a gospel song that I frequently heard in many services. The title, *AMEN!* refers to the plagal cadence, which is the focal point of the climax in the final movement. Along with heavily syncopated rhythms and interjecting contrapuntal lines, this cadence modulates up by half step until we reach a frenzied state, emulating a spiritually heightened state of joy.

YIPING ZHANG, FLUTE SOLOIST

Yiping Zhang was born in Hohhot, Mongolia, and emigrated to Montreal, Canada at age eleven. She began playing the flute at eight years of age, and has become a serious musician, currently in her third year of Honours Music Performance at the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University, in London, Ontario.

Yiping recently won the Winds Brass and Percussion Concerto Competition at Western University's Don Wright Faculty of Music and will be performing the *Faure Fantasy* with Western University's Wind Ensemble. In addition she won the London Youth Symphony's Concerto Competition and will be performing the first movement of Devienne's Concerto in E Minor with them in May. And First Runner Up for the Western University Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition

In the summer of 2025, she was accepted into the prestigious Domaine Forget Academy of Music for studies with Paul Edmund-Davies, Susan Hoepfner, Sylvia Carddu and Jacinthe Forand.

Yiping is currently in the Western University Symphony Orchestra performing on flute and piccolo. She is currently studying with Sharon Kahan.

Program notes by Jiajun Chen

WESTERN UNIVERSITY WIND ENSEMBLE

Dr. Colleen Richardson, Music Director

Piccolo

Mackenzie Anderson*
Sophia Brawn*
Darren Lee Wo

Flute

Mackenzie Anderson*
Sophia Brawn*
Nicole Lun
Chisa Shoji
Darren Wo
Yesol (Melody) Won
JinYi (Jennie) Zhang

Oboes

Pauline Dizon
Rachel Jin
Leona Wen*

English Horn

Pauline Dizon

Bassoon

Siodhachan Morehead*
Annabelle Quan

Clarinets

Maria Con
Justine Dennis*+
Ryan Miller
Jerill Morales
Richard Yang
Carina Zu
Kaitlyn Chambers

Bass Clarinet

Justin Woong

Alto Saxophone

Maddison Caswell
Evan Cheng
Abby Barkowski

Tenor Saxophone

Erin Barlett
Alex Rozenberg

Baritone Saxophone

Cole Rowen

Bass Saxophone

Alex Rozenberg

Trumpets

Martin De Freese
Nayli Deleon Kantule
Hilary Ho
Rex Mulder*
Meghan Reesor
Colin Spencer*

Horns

Hayden Baetsoen
Kai Church
Rebekkah Higgs*
Nate Longstreet

Trombones

Alex Allsopp*
Will Cavanagh
Caitlin Dalziel
Ryan Minten
Selena Tenass
Isabel Thor

Bass Trombones

Will Cavanagh
Ryan Minten

Euphoniums

Samuel Boudreau*
Elina Lai
Chiron Leather

Tuba

Michael Bagnall
Billan Liao
Daniel Montaseri*
Jasmin Mand

Percussion

Derek Colling
Emily Finnigan
Dylan Lillie
Owen Marche Bastarache
Ziyun Peng
Rebecca Selman*
Alana Yabis Sibal
Kiran Steele

Piano/Keyboard

Anna Tjamolova

**Section Leaders
+Concert Master*