

FRIDAY FANFARE - OCTOBER 31, 2025

NEWSLETTER

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY.

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dr. Chris Combest, Assistant Director - chris.combest@mtsu.edu

It has been a remarkable week for our MTSU music community; one filled with energy, connection, and creativity.

On Saturday, the Contest of Champions brought thousands of high school musicians and families to campus for a full day of performances, camaraderie, and Blue Raider pride. Each ensemble that stepped onto the field reminded us of the power of preparation and the joy of shared experience.

Earlier in the week, our students collaborated with the Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment for an evening of live music at Puckett's Restaurant on the Murfreesboro square. The event spotlighted original songwriting and performance while bridging the worlds of music, media, and community life.

We ended the week with a playful fright at the annual Scare-inet Concert, where the Clarinet Studio brought humor, costumes, and artistry to Hinton Hall. Beneath the laughter and Halloween spirit was something deeper—a sense of belonging and shared purpose that music uniquely creates. Together, these moments show what makes MTSU's School of Music thrive: not only the excellence of our performances, but the generosity of spirit that connects our students, faculty, and audiences. This is how a community grows—through music made together, stories shared, and memories built one note at a time.

FEATURED FACULTY: LALO DAVILA, PERCUSSION

Lalo Davila is an accomplished educator, composer, author, and performer whose career spans the concert hall, studio, and stage. Named one of Nashville's Top Five Percussionists and the city's Best Latin Jazz Musician, he has performed with the Nashville Symphony, Take 6, and many leading artists. His playing and voice appear in major films, TV shows, and games, including *The Equalizer* and *Star Wars: Black Ops III*. A sought-after clinician and composer, his works include *Contemporary Rudimental Studies and Solos* and *Play at First Sight*. Lalo continues to perform with Latin groups such as Orkesta Eme Pe.





What a night of great music! MTSU Jazz Ensemble I joined forces with the Establishment Big Band for an unforgettable performance at Seasons Restaurant on Monday, October 20. Pictured here are members of both bands coming together for the closing finale.

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MTSU music students Grace Whitten (flute) and Josue Garza (percussion) recently performed traditional fife and drum music for a special ceremony at the Brentwood Library. Dressed in period attire, they brought early American music to life, blending history and artistry in a performance that connected audiences to the roots of our nation's musical traditions.

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Thanks to the MTSU music students, Central Magnet School, and Webb School students who helped with the STEAM Festival at Dow Street this week. They are simply the best!! They are shown here playing the harmonica that was one of the craft activities today. And MTSU violin/viola professor **Dr. Andrea Dawson** joined in the fun!!



Congratulations to graduate piano student **Taylor Van Ryckeghem** (MM, Piano Performance) who has won the Tennessee MTNA Young Artist Competition, held Saturday, October 25 at Lipscomb University! Taylor studies with **Dr. Arun Nadgir**. She will advance to compete in the MTNA Regional Competition later this year – and if successful, will represent MTSU at the MTNA National Competition in Chicago this March. We are so proud of her artistry, dedication, and musical spirit!

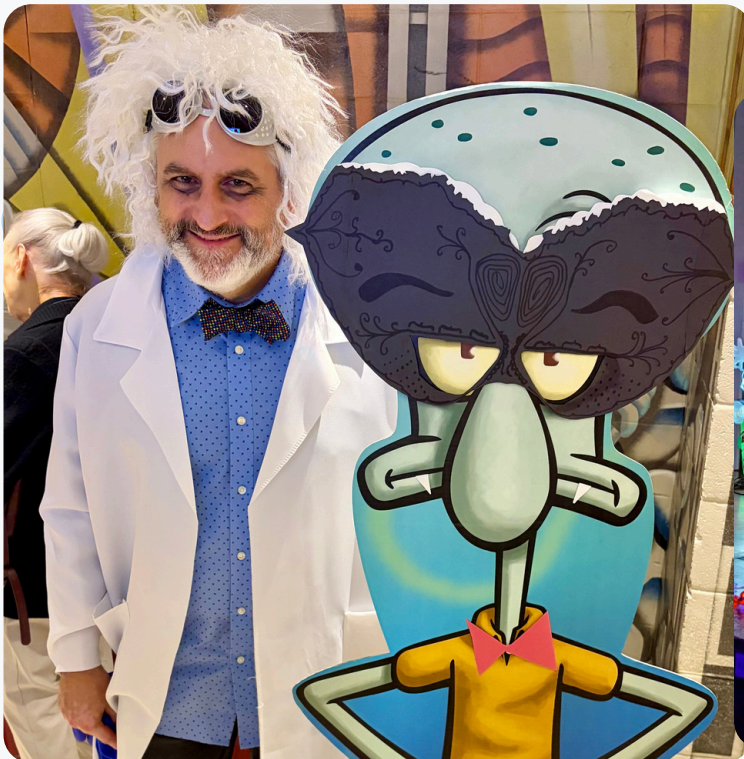


The MTSU Chinese Music Ensemble brought the sounds of China to Vanderbilt University's Language Center in a lively and engaging performance that blended tradition and innovation. Featuring School of Music students, along with visiting scholar Jingyi Zhan, the ensemble performed a colorful mix of ensemble and solo works. Under the direction of Dr. Mei Han, the group captivated the audience with expressive and energetic performance. Throughout the concert, Dr. Han introduced the pieces, offering rich historical background, explanations of the instruments, and insights into the cultural meanings behind the music. Her commentary provided the audience with a deeper understanding of Chinese musical heritage and its continuing evolution in the modern era. The concert ended on a joyful note as audience members eagerly tried out several traditional instruments, turning the event into a hands-on workshop.





Downtown Murfreesboro came alive with the sound of MTSU talent as student musicians and songwriters performed at Puckett's Restaurant. The evening was a collaboration between the School of Music and the Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment, showcasing the creativity and connection that thrive when performance and production meet. Guests filled the room to hear original songs and live sets from students representing the next generation of Nashville's music scene. Events like this not only spotlight the artistry within MTSU's programs but also strengthen ties between the university and the local community through shared music and collaboration.



On Tuesday, October 28th, the MTSU Clarinet Choir filled Haunted Hinton Hall with spooky sounds and festive fun during their "Scare-inet Concert!" Dressed in creative costumes, the ensemble performed an evening of eerie and entertaining music that delighted an audience of all ages.

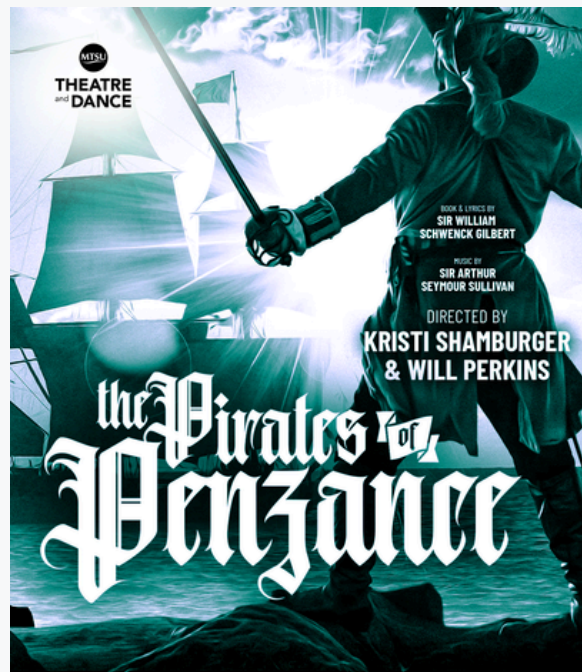
Check out the livestream here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An7Dt-LJUhg>

FAITH BROWN

A Senior Recital

November 9th 5pm
Hinton Hall
Reception in IRH following recital

Works by Spencer McDonald, Stevens, Molla Joseph Walker, Piano

THEATRE and DANCE

BOOK & LYRICS BY SIR WILLIAM SCHWENCK GILBERT
MUSIC BY SIR ARTHUR SEYHOOR SULLIVAN
DIRECTED BY KRISTI SHAMBURGER & WILL PERKINS

The Pirates of Penzance

TUCKER THEATRE | NOVEMBER 6-9, 2025



AFTERMAN

Josue Garza Senior Percussion Recital

ASCENSION



PHASE 1 PHASE 2

WHARTON	AKIHO
CANGELOSI	MIKI
BAKER	KECK
VENET	WALKER
SCHUBERT	TREVINO
	GADE

HINTON HALL - MTSU NOV. 9, 8:00 PM

Lauren Parker's Senior Recital

November 2nd at 3pm in the Wright School of Music, Hinton Hall

Featuring works from:
Robert Schumann, Kayla Hestrop, Stephen Rosh, Drew R. Farnell, and Philip Catalano
Gyuhee Kim on Piano
Faith Brown on Euphonium

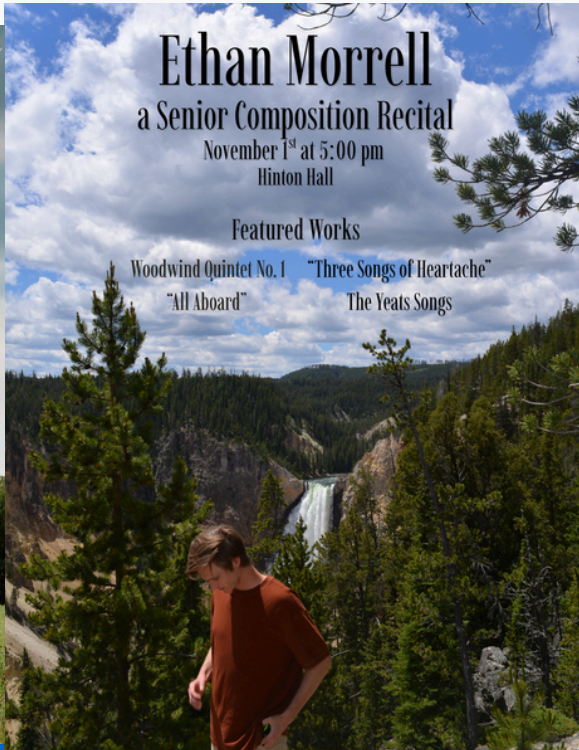


Ethan Morrell

a Senior Composition Recital

November 1st at 5:00 pm
Hinton Hall

Featured Works
Woodwind Quintet No. 1 "Three Songs of Heartache"
"All Aboard" The Yeats Songs



Bassoon Recital

Mario Puentes | Gyuhee Kim, Piano

Feat. Charlie Miller, Cadence Russell, James Yame, and Sean Yamell

Esealzo
Bozza
Vivaldi
Kurrausch
Kalliwoda

Sunday, November 2nd @ 5PM
1439 Faulkinberry Dr, Murfreesboro, TN, 37130



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday, November 1 – Ethan Morrell Recital, 5pm/Isabelle Kailing Recital, 8pm (Hinton Hall)
- Sun., Nov. 2 - Lauren Parker Recital, 3pm/Mario Puentes Recital, 5pm/Olivia Guthier Recital, 7pm
- Monday, Nov. 3 - Visiting Chinese Music Ensemble, 12:30pm/Opera Lovers Meeting, 5:30pm
- Wednesday, Nov. 5 - Percussion Ensemble Concert, 7pm (Hinton Hall)
- Thursday, November 6 - Nathan Malone Recital, 8pm (Hinton Hall)
- Saturday, November 8 - MTSU Honors Orchestra Concert, 8pm (Hinton Hall)

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

Share your Alumni news at <https://forms.office.com/r/8Eu72excj6>

Each fall, the MTSU Band of Blue hosts one of the region's largest and most anticipated marching band events – the Contest of Champions. Now in its 63rd year, this tradition continues to bring together talented student musicians, directors, and families from across the Southeast for a full day of spirited performance and community celebration. This year's event welcomed 28 bands from Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky, with over 3,500 prospective students attending and more than 10,000 guests on campus throughout the day. Over the years, the Contest of Champions has also drawn bands from Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, and New York, making it a true showcase of regional artistry and dedication. Beyond the music and competition, the event serves as a bridge between MTSU and future generations of musicians, inspiring students to see what is possible when talent, teamwork, and tradition come together in sound and spirit. (photos courtesy of Dr. Jenny Snodgrass)



The FRIDAY FANFARE is a weekly newsletter of the MTSU School of Music edited by Dr. Chris Combest - chris.combest@mtsu.edu
Want to see your event, faculty, student news featured? Submit it to the [Director's Advisory Box](#)
To learn more about our programs and events at the School of Music, please visit music.mtsu.edu.



MTSU Trombone Ensemble performs the STB at COC