



WIND ENSEMBLE

Reed Thomas, conductor
Cameron Wilson, assistant conductor

MTSU
*School
of Music*

Middle Tennessee State University

T. Earl Hinton Music Hall

Wright Music Building

7 April 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

WIND ENSEMBLE

Reed Thomas, conductor

Aram Khachaturian (1903 - 1978) | arr. Ralph Satz

Armenian Dances (1943, 1945)

I. Allegro Moderato

II. Allegro

Cameron Wilson, conductor

Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990) | trans. Paul Lavender

Symphonic Dances from West Side Story (1957, 2008)

Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937) | arr. Felix Hauswirth

Bolero (1928, 2017)

David Avshalomov (1946 -)

Hill Dance (2009, 2015)

CAMERON WILSON

John Cameron Wilson is a composer and conductor from Murfreesboro, Tennessee who is currently pursuing an M.M. in Instrumental Conducting at MTSU. He received his undergraduate degree in Music Theory/Composition from MTSU in 2022, during which time, he was also a member of the school's Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, and "Band of Blue" Marching Band. He has served in such positions as Drum Major (Band of Blue) and Principal Trumpet (Symphonic Band) for several years. Additionally, he joined such organizations as The National Society of Leadership and Success, the American Choral Directors Association, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity, where he also held many leadership positions, including Chapter President (Phi Mu Alpha).



While at MTSU, Wilson has accrued multiple awards for leadership and musicianship, including the Howard Malone Espirit de Corps Scholarship and the "Mr. Band-of-Blue" title. Most recently, he was awarded the College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Student Award (Graduate Level) for his proud representation of and services to the MTSU School of Music and its surrounding community.

He has performed in many prestigious honor bands in the United States and abroad, performing in England, Germany, Switzerland, and Costa Rica among others. He has traveled as a member of the Tennessee Ambassadors of Music, The 80th Anniversary D-Day Marching Band, and the Middle Tennessee-Costa Rica Honor Band. Before beginning his master's, Wilson served as the assistant conductor for the Middle Tennessee Woodwind Orchestra from 2022-2023.

As he continues his studies, Wilson plans to continue composing original works for various ensembles and media, arranging for marching band, and conducting large ensembles within and outside the university. After finishing his degree, he hopes to pursue a D.M.A. in Music Theory or Composition.

REED THOMAS

Dr. Reed Thomas is the Director of Bands and Professor of Music and Conducting in the School of Music at Middle Tennessee State University, a position he has held since 2003. As well as guiding all aspects of MTSU band program, his teaching responsibilities include: conducting the Wind Ensemble and University Chamber Winds, teaching undergraduate courses in conducting and instrumental methods, graduate courses in conducting, wind and orchestral repertoire, and instrumental rehearsal problems. He is the founding conductor of the Three Rivers Wind Symphony, a professional group of wind and percussion players from Northeast Indiana and was the Conductor of the Littleton Chamber Winds in Littleton, Colorado from 1997-99. He has been a guest conductor throughout the United States, South Korea, China, Brazil, Panama, Columbia, Costa Rica, Portugal, Russia, United Kingdom, and several European countries. He currently serves as the Executive Musical Director of the Corazon Verde Band Festival in Paraiso, Cartago, Costa Rica.



Dr. Thomas is an active conductor and clinician who has received praise and critical acclaim for his artistic interpretations, thorough preparation, and innovative programming from composers such as David Maslanka, Nigel Clarke, Pete Madsen, James David, Kit Turnbull, Jonathan Newman, DJ Sparr, Shafer Mahoney, Peter Fischer, Jamie Simmons, and Robert Bradshaw, and from solo performers such as Jens Lindeman, Brett Baker, Harmen Vanhoorne, Peter Skaevard Sheppard, Steve Houghton, Eddie Daniels, Jennifer Gunn, David Cooke, Jonathan Gunn, and She-e Wu for his interpretive conducting. His groups have been invited to perform at venues throughout the United States, China, South Korea, Panama, and Costa Rica. Dr. Thomas is an avid supporter of new music, commissioning over 60 compositions since 2003 and presenting world premier performances to well over 45 compositions. He has been a strong supporter to music from Brazil, Latin America, Spain, Portugal, and China.

Dr. Thomas has seven Internationally released Compact Disc's featuring the MTSU Wind Ensemble including two on the Naxos Label; the critically acclaimed *Angel's in the Architecture* and *Earthrise*; and four on the Toccata Classics Label: *Nigel Clarke - Music for Symphonic Wind Orchestra*, featuring his epic work, *A Richer Dust*, commissioned by the MTSU Wind Ensemble, *Music for Trombone and Winds*, featuring newly composed works for solo trombone and wind ensemble, Bret Baker soloist, *Chosen Gems of David Maslanka*, and the most recently released *Firedance - Music of Peter Fischer*.

A native of Colorado, Dr. Thomas received his Ph.D. in Music with an emphasis in conducting from the University of Minnesota and both his Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Music Education from the University of Utah. Prior to his appointment at MTSU, he conducted at universities in Indiana and Colorado and was a public school Music Director at two high schools in Utah. He has written articles for the *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band Series* and is the Artistic Director of the annual Corazon Verde Music Festival in Paraiso, Cartago, Costa Rica. Dr. Thomas is an active member of several associations including the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE), Pi Kappa Lambda, Kappa Kappa Psi, and Phi Mu Alpha and is an honorary member of the Costa Rican Band Directors Association, the Korean Band Association, the China Bandmasters Association, and the Asian Pacific Band Directors Association.

Aram Khachaturian | *Armenian Dances*

Armenian Dances is but one of several examples of Khachaturian's wind band writing. The work was originally written for the Red Army Cavalry Band in 1943, then edited to accommodate full (Western) band instrumentation. It is unknown whether the themes within are borrowed from Armenian culture or are original. Regardless, these dances show Khachaturian's flair for melody and his penchant for layering rhythm to evoke mood. Showcased in this work, listeners will become quickly familiar with a unique talent found plentifully in much of Khachaturian's musical corpus: the masterful blending of Armenian intonations with contemporary orchestral techniques.

Program note researched and compiled by Cameron Wilson



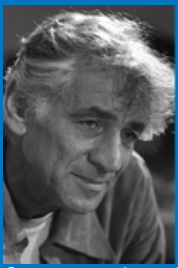
Aram Il'yich Khachaturian was a Soviet Armenian composer and conductor born in Tbilisi, Georgia and is considered one of the leading Soviet composers of his time. Khachaturian moved to Moscow in 1921 following the Sovietization of the Caucasus. Without prior music training, he enrolled in the Gnessin Musical Institute, subsequently studying at the Moscow Conservatory in the class of Nikolai Myaskovsky, among others. His significant compositions include the *Masquerade Suite* (1941), the *Anthem of the Armenian SSR* (1944), three symphonies (1935, 1943, 1947), ballets *Gayane* (Happiness) (1942) and *Spartacus* (1954), around 25 film scores. His most popular piece, the *Sabre Dance* from *Gayane*, has been used extensively in popular culture and has been covered by a number of musicians worldwide. His style is "characterized by colorful harmonies, captivating rhythms, virtuosity, improvisations, and sensuous melodies." Khachaturian was initially approved by the Soviet government and held several high posts in the Union of Soviet Composers from the late 1930s, although he joined the Communist Party only in 1943. Along with Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich, he was officially denounced as a "formalist", and his music was dubbed "anti-people" in 1948, but was restored later that year. In 1950 he taught at the Gnessin Institute and the Moscow Conservatory, where he would turn to conducting. He traveled to Europe, Latin America, and the United States with concerts of his own works. In 1957, Khachaturian became the Secretary of Union of Soviet Composers, a position he held until his death.

Composer biography extracted from The Wind Repertory Project

Leonard Bernstein | *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

Symphonic Dances from West Side Story was first performed by the New York Philharmonic on an all-Bernstein concert in 1961, four years after the opening of *West Side Story* on Broadway. The songs of the musical had immediately become popular standards, while at the same time the dance music had been sophisticated enough to find its way into the concert hall. Most composers for Broadway were songwriters who did not write their own dance music. But Bernstein, a fully trained composer who had already written two formal ballets, crafted these remarkable dances himself. The suite encompasses "Mambo," a competitive dance between the gangs of the musical; "Cha-Cha," when the main protagonists Tony and Maria see one another for the first time; and the "Finale," love music and a procession that recalls the ever-popular aria *Somewhere*, but now with a more tragic sentiment.

Program note copied from that used by the California Polytechnic State University Wind Ensemble



Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts to Russian immigrants. He attended the Boston Latin School, Harvard University, and the Curtis Institute of Music and studied with composers Edward Burlingame Hill and Walter Piston, as well as conducting with Fritz Reiner. In the summers of 1940 and 1941, he studied conducting at Tanglewood with Serge Koussevitzky along with Frederick Fennell, Lukas Foss, and Walter Hendl. He became assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic in 1943, and it was in this role he became famous by filling in last-minute for Bruno Walter for a national broadcast on November 14, 1943. His *Symphony No. 1, "Jeremiah"* (1942) was premiered by the Pittsburgh Symphony in January 1944, followed by *Fancy Free* and *On the Town* by the end of the year. These successes led to numerous opportunities overseas, including being the first American to conduct at La Scala. In 1951 he became the head of conducting at Tanglewood and seven years later would become Music Director of the New York Philharmonic (1958-1969) - this opportunity would make Bernstein the first American-born conductor to lead a major American symphony orchestra. In this position he promoted new music, developed a series of Young People's Concerts, and recorded the symphonies of Gustav Mahler, but was limited in his time to compose. As a composer, Bernstein wrote in many genres, including symphonic and orchestral music, ballet, film and theatre music, choral works, opera, chamber music, and pieces for piano. Perhaps Bernstein's most famous work would be the monumental Broadway musical *West Side Story*, which continues to be regularly performed worldwide, and has been adapted into two (1961 and 2021) feature films.

Program note compiled by Cameron Wilson

Maurice Ravel | *Bolero*

Ravel is perhaps known best for his orchestral work *Bolero*, which he considered trivial and once described as "a piece for orchestra without music". *Bolero* is a one-movement orchestral piece originally composed as a ballet for Russian ballerina Ida Rubinstein. For *Bolero*, he used the opportunity to conduct an experiment. As he put it, the score would be "uniform throughout in its melody, harmony and rhythm, the latter being tapped out continuously on the drum. The only element of variety is supplied by the orchestral crescendo." Instrumental coloring plays a major role as well, an area in which Ravel had attained supreme mastery. After its premiere as a ballet, *Bolero* quickly won even greater success in the concert hall. *Bolero* is a set of 18 variations on an original two-part theme – or perhaps, more properly speaking, 18 orchestrations of that theme, for the theme itself does not change, though the instruments do. In recent years, it has been speculated by Ravel scholars and psychiatric researchers that *Bolero* might have been the unintended product of an underlying neurodegenerative disease – a disease marked by its effect of causing obsessive repetition in its early stages. Though not ultimately confirmed, this has been largely accepted; Ravel's well-documented mental deterioration preceding his death closely resembles frontotemporal dementia, the early effects of which were clearly present in his day-to-day life and were speculated to have been reflected in his work.



Joseph Maurice Ravel was a French composer, pianist, and conductor who is often associated with the Impressionist movement along with his elder contemporary Claude Debussy, although they both rejected the term. In the 1920s and 1930s, Ravel was internationally regarded as France's greatest living composer. He was known especially for his melodies, as well as his orchestral and instrumental textures. As a slow and painstaking worker, Ravel composed fewer pieces than did many of his contemporaries. Among his works to enter the repertoire are chamber pieces, two piano concertos, ballet music, two operas, and eight song cycles; he wrote no symphonies and only one religious work, *Kaddish* (1914). No works expressly for winds have been found.

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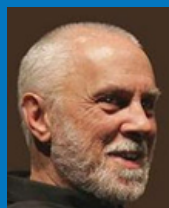
Many of his works exist in two versions: first, a piano score and later in orchestration. Some of his piano music, such as *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908), is exceptionally difficult to play, and his complex orchestral works, such as *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912), require skillful balance in performance. Ravel was among the first composers to recognize the potential of recording to bring their music to a wider audience. From the 1920s, despite limited technique as a pianist or conductor, he took part in recordings of several of his works; others were made under his supervision.

Program note and composer biography researched and compiled by Cameron Wilson

David Avshalomov | *Hill Dance*

Hill Dance was originally composed in 2009 as a work for the Los Angeles Clarinet Choir, serving as the third and final movement of a larger work titled *Three Outside*. The work was meant to project three types of energy experienced in different settings: mechanical energy, natural energy, and human energy, with the *Hill Dance* movement portraying the latter. According to the composer, it was written in the style of a Bulgarian hill country dance that relies on rhythmic vitality to serve its desired aesthetic. It is complete with showy solos for Eb, Bb, bass clarinet, a slower middle with Jewish circle-dance tunes, and a wild and ecstatic ending that builds into full ensemble. The work was transcribed for band in 2015 with the clarinet feature remaining true to its original form.

Program note compiled by Cameron Wilson



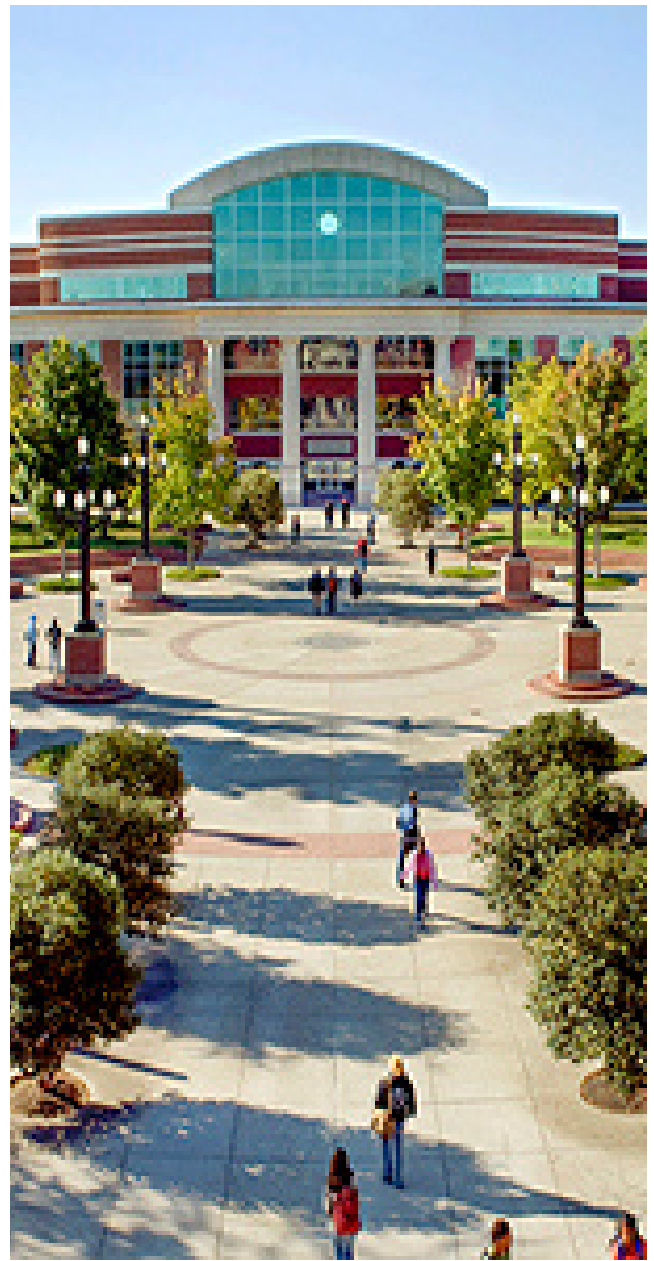
David Avshalomov is an American classical composer, conductor, and accomplished vocalist who represents a musical lineage that stretches from the Caucasus, to Siberia, through China, and to the U.S. He began composing in middle school and would later earn degrees in music from Harvard and University of Washington, with further conducting studies at Peabody, Aspen, and Tanglewood. His conducting teachers included George Bell, Stanley Chapple, Leo Mueller, Herbert Blomstedt, Werner Torkanowsky, Seiji Ozawa, and Leonard Bernstein. His composition teachers included Charles Jones, John Verrall, Robert Suderberg, and William Bergsma. His compositions have been performed professionally across the U.S. and in Europe, Russia, China, Japan, and South America, and are recorded on the Albany and Naxos labels. He has earned grants from Meet the Composer, the American Music Center, the American Composer's Forum, and two from the Durfee Foundation. In 2014 he was designated an Honored Artist of the American Prize in recognition of the consistently high quality of his submitted works.

Composer biography provided by the composer



WIND ENSEMBLE

Conducted by Dr. Reed Thomas, The **Middle Tennessee State University Wind Ensemble** is the premier performing ensemble for wind, brass, and percussion students at the university. Members are selected through audition each semester and comprise the best musicians at MTSU. The ensemble explores the vast range of the wind repertoire by utilizing a flexible instrumentation approach where the repertoire dictates the number of players for each piece. The ensemble is dedicated to performing outstanding and challenging works of diverse musical styles while furthering wind music of artistic and historical significance. Performing three to five concerts each semester, they also tour extensively throughout the region and overseas. The Wind Ensemble is recognized as one of the outstanding university ensembles in the country and abroad having performed on concert tours of South Korea, China, Costa Rica, and Panama. Membership is open to all MTSU students and is based upon successful audition. Audition and further information can be found by visiting the MTSU band website at www.mtsubands.com.



Having commissioned more than 60 new works for winds since 2003, the MTSU Wind Ensemble Commissioning Project has enlisted such composers as Nigel Clarke, Jesus Santandreu, Kit Turnbull, Jessie Montgomery, David Rose, David Maslanka, Jonathan Newman, Jeffery Brooks, Edson Beltrami (Brazil), Anthony Plog, D.J. Sparr, Peter Fischer, Jamey Simmons, Todd Coleman, Robert Bradshaw, and Michael Linton. Soloists who have performed with this ensemble include, Jens Lindemann (Trumpet), Steve Houghton (Percussion), Eddie Daniels (Clarinet), Jennifer Gunn (Flute), Jonathan Gunn (Clarinet), Sandra Arndt (Piano), She-e Wu (Marimba), Peter Skaevard Sheppard (Violin), Gilbert Long (Tuba), John Gilbert (Violin), David Loucky (Trombone), Michael Arndt (Trumpet), Don Aliqou (Saxophone), Jamey Simmons (Trumpet), Maya Stone (Bassoon) Todd Waldecker (Clarinet), George Riordan (Oboe), Deanna Little (Flute), Angela DeBoer (Horn), James Douglas (Piano), Laura Ann Ross (Oboe), Song, Inguck (Conductor, S. Korea), and Kim, Yeoung-Du (Conductor, S. Korea).

Graduates of the MTSU Wind Ensemble have pursued graduate degrees at other major universities throughout the country, have held positions in symphony orchestras and several of the premier military bands, and are exceptional conductors, teachers and performers in public and private schools and colleges throughout the world.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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ROSTER

Flute/Piccolo

Katie Beatty
Jonathan Oldham *
Emma Parker
Delana Renz
Grace Whitten

Oboe/English Horn

Kayla Ownby *
Cami Smith
Roman Tillis

Clarinet

Yassin Adams
Ethan Bullock
Ashley Eady
Michael Fojas
Spencer Goad
Kelsa Rice
Eric Sullivan *
Nathanael Taylor

Bassoon

Austin Mills
James Orme *
Cadence Russell

Saxophone

AJack Harrison *
Connor Mitchell
TC Rich
Reagan Stewart

Horn

Ilan Gilbert
Perry Herrington
Jaiden Keith
Rebekah Rawlings
Brent Webb *

Cornet/Trumpet

Sarah Browning
Harry Ferguson
Donavon Hamlett
Sam Miller
Wyatt Murphy
Isaac Swinney *

Trombone

Jocelyn Bullock
Mitchell Elmore *
Rielly Harris
Ryan Hungerpillar

Euphonium

Zachary Sapp
Henry Wright *

Tuba

Justin Averill *
Matty Travis

String Bass

Maddie Sanders *

Piano

Amelia Ochoa *

Harp

Claire Cifonie *

Percussion

Samuel Brooke *
Kiefer Burks
Wyatt Crabill
Joseph Flores
Isaac Ivy
Jonah Sherlin
Paul West

* Section Leader

MTSU BANDS - PERFORMANCES

SPRING 2026

Chamber Winds and Symphonic Band
'Band of Blue' Alumni Club - Hall of Fame Induction
Tuesday, April 21 | 7:30 p.m. | T. Earl Hinton Music Hall

MTSU BANDS

FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Reed Thomas, director of bands
Dr. Bryan Braue, associate director of bands/director of athletic bands
Dr. Dennis A. Hawkins, Jr., assistant director of bands
Ms. Jennifer Stembridge, bands coordinator
Ms. Sarah Browning, graduate teaching assistant
Ms. Delana Renz, graduate teaching assistant
Mr. Cameron Wilson, graduate teaching assistant

MTSU WIND AND PERCUSSION

APPLIED FACULTY

WOODWINDS

Prof. Don Aliquo, saxophone, woodwind coordinator
Dr. Deanna Little, flute
Dr. Keith Sorrels, oboe
Dr. Staci Spring, bassoon
Dr. Todd Waldecker, clarinet

BRASS

Dr. Michael Arndt, trumpet
Dr. Chris Combest, tuba
Prof. Angela DeBoer, horn
Dr. David Loucky, trombone, euphonium, brass coordinator

PERCUSSION

Prof. Julie Davila, percussion
Prof. Lalo Davila, percussion, percussion coordinator
Dr. Brian Mueller, percussion



In 2011, MTSU Arts was established to provide a singular brand through which the University community delivers our many outstanding art offerings to Middle Tennessee. Literally hundreds of performances, exhibitions, and concerts are held annually through MTSU Arts in our art, dance, music, and theatre programs. Our students' artistic expressions demonstrate the transformative power of education and the arts. Just as our students enrich their lives by showcasing their skills, we invite you to enrich yours by being a MTSU Arts Patron.

The MTSU Arts Patrons Society was created to enhance opportunities for our students in the performing and fine arts programs. When you become a member of the MTSU Arts Patrons Society, you support students with: scholarships to educational workshops and conferences, guest artist workshops and student art exhibits, theatre performances and concerts produced by students, and student music recording projects.

We are also pleased to announce that Ascend Federal Credit Union is the presenting sponsor of MTSU Arts for the 2025-26 season.





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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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