



WIND ENSEMBLE

Heather Baker, guest conductor
Tim Higgins, trombone soloist
Reed Thomas, conductor

T. Earl Hinton Music Hall
Wright Music Building

10 September | 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

WIND ENSEMBLE

John Cameron Wilson (2000 -)
Ignis Fanfare (2026)

Heather Baker, guest conductor

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934)
First Suite in E flat for Military Band (1909)
I. Chaconne
II. Intermezzo
III. March

Timothy Higgins (1982 -)
Concerto for Trombone (2020)
I. Daybreak
II. Nighttime
III. Finale

Timothy Higgins, trombone soloist



Heather Baker

Dr. Heather Baker is an active music educator, conductor, and scholar who serves as Assistant Director of Bands at Middle Tennessee State University. In this role, she contributes to the university's concert, athletic, and student-centered music programs through the MTSU Band of Blue, the Basketball and Volleyball Bands, and the Concert Band in the spring.

Dr. Baker recently completed her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction/Music Education at Kansas State University, where she served as a graduate teaching assistant with the band program, and worked with both concert and athletic ensembles, and supervised undergraduate conducting practicums with the University Band.

She holds degrees from Ball State University (2010) and VanderCook College of Music (2012), where she was a graduate teaching assistant in music technology and research, served on the Student Senate, and was honored with the Esprit de Corps Award and the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Award for Outstanding Student Achievement.

Dr. Baker's research focuses on the emotional well-being and adaptive coping strategies of instrumental music educators in under-resourced schools, centering on resilience, community support, and practical leadership. Before her doctoral studies, she taught for eleven years in Indiana public schools, where her district was continually recognized as a NAMM "Best Community for Music Education."

Her educational leadership and scholarship have earned her distinctions including 2024 Intern Scholar for the TI:ME Leadership Academy at the Texas Music Educator's Conference, the Timothy R. Donoghue Graduate Scholarship (2023–2025), and the 2021 Outstanding Music Educator Award from Quinlan and Fabish Music in Indiana. She also received the Roseanne Rosenthal Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award (2013) from VanderCook and was inducted into the Conn-Selmer Institute "Hall of Fame" (2015) after many years as a CSI volunteer.

Dr. Baker is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda and Phi Kappa Phi, an honorary member of Tau Beta Sigma, an alumnae member of Sigma Alpha Iota, and is active in numerous national and state professional associations.



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. 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.

TIMOTHY HIGGINS

Timothy Higgins was appointed to the position of Principal Trombone of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2025 by Klaus Mäkelä. He was previously the Principal Trombone of the San Francisco Symphony (appointed by Michael Tilson Thomas in 2008) and acting Second Trombonist with the



National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC. Mr. Higgins, a Houston native, has a Bachelor's degree in Music Performance from Northwestern University and has performed with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Music of the Baroque, Aspen Music Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival, Sun Valley Summer Symphony and Washington National Opera. His principal teachers have been Michael Mulcahy (Chicago Symphony), Michael Warny (Houston Grand Opera), and Royce Landon (Des Moines, Iowa).

In tandem with a busy orchestra career, Timothy Higgins is a sought after composer and arranger. He was the sole arranger of the National Brass Ensemble's Gabrieli recording. In November 2021, Tim composed and premiered as soloist in his Concerto for Trombone with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony. Additional arrangements and compositions have been programmed by the San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Steamboat Springs Strings Festival and numerous university brass ensembles. Tim's compositions have been commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony, Detroit Symphony, American Brass Quintet, international tuba soloist Sergio Carolino, and Music City Brass Ensemble. He was the composer in residence at Music Academy of the West in 2018, debuting a piece for chamber ensemble and voice featuring Deborah Voigt. His arrangements and original compositions are available through his publishing company, 415Music, established in 2014.

As a teacher, Timothy has been a faculty member of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Northwestern University School of Music, the Aspen Music Festival and the Pacific Music Festival. He has led masterclasses in Australia, China, Canada, Japan and the United States, including classes at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, the New World Symphony, Vanderbilt University, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School of Music.

In 2005, Timothy won the Robert Marsteller Solo trombone competition, as well as the ITA Trombone Quartet competition with CT3. While attending the Tanglewood Music Center, Mr. Higgins was awarded the Grace B. Upton Award for Outstanding Fellow.

In 2013, Timothy released his solo CD, Stage Left, which can be found [here](#). Recent albums include two self-produced recordings from 2020 in his Underground series.

Timothy Higgins is a Bach Artist and an Ultimate Brass Artist.

PROGRAM NOTES

John Cameron Wilson | *Ignis Fanfare* (2026)

Ignis Fanfare invokes the idea of rebirth and transformation, but it also pays equal homage to its mythological counterpart: the phoenix, an immortal bird which regenerates from the ashes of its fiery death. The creature can be heard characterized by the screeching tam-tam in the percussion section, and its flight can be followed through a journey of soaring and wildly energetic melodies. The piece transforms between terror, excitement, gracefulness, and mighty triumph; though this is certainly embodied in the myth of the phoenix, being a figure of immense power and beauty, it is no less representative of the realities of change itself.

Program note by composer

John Cameron Wilson is a composer and conductor from Murfreesboro, Tennessee who recently received his M.M. in Instrumental Conducting from MTSU in Spring 2026 and currently serves as an Adjunct Professor at MTSU. He also 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 80 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 marching band music, and conducting large ensembles within and outside the university. He hopes to pursue a D.M.A. in Music Theory or Composition in the near future.

PROGRAM NOTES

Gustav Holst | *First Suite in E Flat for Military Band* (1909)

I. *Chaconne*

II. *Intermezzo*

III. *March*

Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E-flat for Military Band* occupies a legendary position in the wind band repertory and can be seen, in retrospect, as one of the earliest examples of the modern wind band instrumentation still frequently performed today. Its influence is so significant that several composers have made a quotation or allusion to it as a source of inspiration to their own works.

Holst began his work with *Chaconne*, a traditional Baroque form that sets out a series of variations over a ground bass theme. That eight-measure theme is stated at the outset in tubas and euphoniums, and, in all, fifteen variations are presented in quick succession. The three pitches that begin the work -- E-flat, F, and B-flat, ascending -- serve as the generating cell for the entire work, as the primary theme of each movement begins in the same manner. Holst also duplicated the intervallic content of these three pitches, but descended, for several melodic statements (a compositional trick not dissimilar to the inversion process employed by the later serialist movement, which included such composers as Schoenberg and Webern). These inverted melodies contrast the optimism and bright energy of the rest of the work, typically introducing a sense of melancholy or shocking surprise. The second half of the *Chaconne*, for instance, presents a somber inversion of the ground bass that eventually emerges from its gloom into the exuberant final variations.

The *Intermezzo*, which follows, is a quirky rhythmic frenzy that contrasts everything that has preceded it. This movement opens in C minor and starts and stops with abrupt transitions throughout its primary theme group. The contrasting midsection is introduced with a mournful melody, stated in F Dorian by the clarinet before being taken up by much of the ensemble. At the movement's conclusion, the two sections are woven together; the motives laid together in complementary fashion in an optimistic C major. The *March* that follows immediately begins shockingly, with a furious trill in the woodwinds articulated by aggressive statements by brass and percussion. This sets up the lighthearted and humorous mood for the final movement, which eventually does take up the more reserved and traditional regal mood of a British march and is simply interrupted from time to time by an uncouth accent or thunderous bass drum note. The coda of the work makes brief mention of elements from both the *Chaconne* and *Intermezzo* before closing joyfully.

Program note by Jacob Wallace for the Baylor Wind Ensemble concert program, 19 December 2014

PROGRAM NOTES

Gustav Holst (21 September 1874, Gloucestershire, U.K. – 25 May 1934, London) was a British composer and educator.

Holst learned piano at an early age but was stricken with a nerve condition that affected the movement of his right hand, forcing him to give up the piano for the trombone. He received his degrees from The Royal College of Music in London, where he met fellow composer (and lifelong friend) Ralph Van Williams and became interested in Hindu mysticism and spirituality, interests that would later shape the course of his compositional output. In 1901 Holst married Isobel Harrison, who would remain with him for the remainder of his life.

Before Holst became a well-known composer, he relied on income from playing the trombone in the Carl Rosa Opera Company and in the White Viennese Band, a popular orchestra specializing in "light music." In 1905, Holst became director of music at the St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith, London, and in 1907, he also became director of music at Morley College, retaining both positions until his death in 1934. Holst's compositions for wind band, although only a small portion of his total output, have made him a cornerstone of the genre.

Timothy Higgins | *Concerto for Trombone* (2026)

Timothy Higgins's virtuosic Trombone Concerto emerged in a flurry of inspiration in January 2020, just a month before his family was enlarged through the birth of their first child. Expectations of life as a father informed this concerto. Its first movement conveys the playfulness he anticipated along with a dose of uncertainty, and the second suggests a middle-of-night lullaby to calm a crying baby.

Program note by James M. Keller, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra November, 2021

Composer Biography: Please see the Guest Artist section of this program for the composer's biography.

ROSTER

FLUTE/PICCOLO

Katie Adair
Oscar Cervantes
Emma Parker
Delana Renz
Grace Whitten

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Cami Smith
Roman Tillis

CLARINET

Ethan Bullock
Ashley Eady
Hailey Harrell
Macy Howell
Quinn Kindiger
Kelsa Rice
Eric "Sully" Sullivan
Nathanael Taylor

BASSOON

Austin Mills
Cadence Russell
Sean Yarnell

SAXOPHONE

Jayce Parker
Griffin Pasqual
Angel Quintero
TC Rich

HORN

Ian Gilbert
Perry Herrington
Ell Moore
Rebekah Rawlings
Brent Isaac Webb

CORNET/TRUMPET

Jenna Lynn Anderson
Liv Archset
Sarah Browning
Osten Collins
Sam Miller
Wyatt Murphy
Owen Workman

TROMBONE

Jocelyn Bullock
Drew Burroughs
Bernard Ekwuazi
Reilly Harris

EUPHONIUM

Zachary Sapp
Henry Wright

TUBA

Bradley Barlow
Matty Travis

String Bass

Maddie Sanders

Piano

Abbie Barton

Harp

Elizabeth Currier

Percussion

Jackson Alford
Joseph Bellino
Nathan Van Berkom
Brayden Bishop
Wyatt Crabill
Travis Hogwood
Cecil Joh
Jonah Sherlin
Logan Williams

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.



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.



MTSU BANDS FACULTY & STAFF

Dr. Reed Thomas, director of bands
Dr. Bryan Braue, associate director of bands/director of athletic bands
Dr. Heather Baker, assistant director of bands
Ms. Jennifer Stembridge, bands coordinator
Ms. Sarah Browning, graduate teaching assistant
Mr. Deaven Knowles, graduate teaching assistant
Ms. Delana Renz, graduate teaching assistant

MTSU WIND & 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

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