



VANDERBILT  
Blair School *of* Music

*American Icons*

Vanderbilt Wind Symphony

Thomas Verrier, conductor

*featuring*

Vanderbilt Symphonic Choir

Tucker Biddlecombe, director

**Friday, February 9, 2024**

Ingram Hall | 8:00 p.m.

Tonight's performance is presented with gratitude to

**Evelyn and Ross Matthews**

for their generous support of the Blair School



*American Icons*

# Vanderbilt Wind Symphony

Thomas Verrier, conductor

Friday, February 9 | 8:00 p.m.  
Martha Rivers Ingram Hall

Songs of Democracy

Howard Hanson  
(1896-1981)

*Vanderbilt Symphonic Choir*

George Washington Bridge

William Schuman  
(1910-1992)

...and the mountains rising nowhere

Joseph Schwanter  
(b. 1943)

*Jama Reagan, piano*

Blue Shades

Frank Ticheli  
(b. 1958)



## The Vanderbilt Wind Symphony

### Flute

Lena Jin\*  
Terry Li  
Ryan Cho  
Hazel Marion\*  
Alice Huh  
Cindy Liu\*

### Oboe

Shianne Bonham\*  
Jaime Paul  
Bella Bookas\*  
Joshua Jung\*  
Molly Dench

### English Horn

Jaime Paul  
Molly Dench  
Bella Bookas

### Clarinet

Whitney Roberts  
Aaron Wong\*  
Elias Kim  
Cheng Ding\*  
Michael Serafino  
Anita Liu

### Bass Clarinet

Milo Holcombe Pomerance

### Bassoon

Jonathan Fenders\*  
Lindsay Glaccum  
Nate York  
Cassie Valenti  
Anthony Muñoz\*

### Contrabassoon

Jonathan Fenders

### Saxophone

Nathan Jasper\*  
Marcello Tortoreo  
Chuyuan Xu  
Jose Ruis Zepeda  
Issac Collins  
Andrew Xiong  
Parker Schultz\*

### French Horn

Natalie Kloos\*  
Diego Gonzalez\*  
Alex Digennaro  
Hunter Keeran\*  
Lyle Foley

### Trumpet

Natalia Freedman  
Bracyn Crain  
Rajkumar Fitzpatrick\*  
Ben Black\*  
Charles Schmitt

### Trombone

Liam Barron  
Riley Borklund\*  
Seth Hahn\*  
Ian Boggs  
Austin Root  
John Calma  
Isabel Laurel

### Euphonium

Noah Hudson-Camack\*  
AJ Abbey

### Tuba

Muriel Wallach  
Dante Harrison\*  
Jake DuPont  
Daniel Osheroff

### Percussion

Bill Zhang\*  
Trenton Brink  
Gabriel Chichka  
Hannah Lam  
Jordan Katz\*  
Riley Hale\*  
Sarang Shravan

### Harp

Audrey Kim

### String Bass

Lacy Tier

### Managers

Gray Pearson  
Milo Holcombe Pomerance

### Librarian

Hina Tamaki

### Set-up Crew

Gray Pearson  
Milo Holcombe Pomerance  
Nick Van den Bogaerde  
Cassie Valenti  
Molly Dench  
Michael Serafino  
Whitney Roberts

*\* indicates principal player*

Catharine Proctor, piano



## The Vanderbilt Symphonic Choir

### **Soprano**

Emelia Bailey  
Syd Braunstein  
Viji Burma  
Kady Hillman  
Bella Land  
Sophia Masullo  
Marudy Murugaverl  
Diana Nalyvaiko  
Mahi Patil  
Hailey Pfeiffer  
Anna Rice  
Ana Soto  
Polly Vaillant  
Elena Woodburn  
Brynn Wooten

### **Alto**

Sarah Barnes  
Lucy Calaway  
Amelia Day  
Daniela Diano  
Tatum Earp  
Gwen Goetz  
Tyler Hanson  
Chloe Jalkut  
Foster Johnson  
Hanna Kostiv  
Maggie McGowan  
Grace O'Duffy  
Ariel Olaleye  
Vera Powell  
Jenna Price  
Jo Rydberg  
Paula San Antonio  
Paityn Taylor-Gunter

### **Tenor**

Caleb Brock  
Julian Delgado  
Francis Gandolfi  
Jordan Haas  
Anwar Hussein Agha  
Nathan Jasper  
Hunter Keeran  
David Lee  
Matthew Marcus  
Owen Purcell  
Alasdair Payten  
Jack Yan  
Nico Zavala

### **Bass**

Aj Abbey  
Brooks Bradbury-Fawns  
Luke Dailey  
Jayden Delgado  
Riley Eddins  
Matt Eyles  
Jacob Laan  
Adain Luckadue  
Levi Pabst  
Joe Rhee  
Pedro Rosales-Diaz  
Preston Rogers  
Ryan Shabahang  
Gavin Trautman  
Quinn Welder



## Biographies

**Thomas E. Verrier** is the Senior Band Conductor and Director of Wind Ensembles at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music. He is the conductor of the Vanderbilt Wind Symphony, previously served as Artistic Director of the Vanderbilt Music Academy in Berlin, Germany (a joint project with musicians of the Berlin Philharmonic), and was the Founding Director of the Conductors Lab in Aix-en-Provence, France. His teaching duties include undergraduate and graduate-level courses in conducting, pedagogy, and education. In 2020, Dr. Verrier developed the Curso Virtual de Dirección de Banda, a one-of-a-kind certification course administered through Vanderbilt's Blair Academy. In its first three years, the course has enrolled more than 50 participants from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Paraguay, and Argentina.

Dr. Verrier dedicates much of his time to the teaching of band pedagogy and the training of band conductors throughout Central and South America. He was the Program Director of the Sistema Nacional de Educación Musical Instituto de Desarrollo Musical, a collaborative project of the Blair School of Music and the Ministry of Culture of Costa Rica. He has accepted invitations to conduct throughout the Americas, Asia, and Europe. He has presented and/or conducted performances at conferences of Asodibandas (Cajicá, Colombia), Probandas Latinoamerica (Lima, Peru), the Congreso Iberoamericano de Directores, Compositores, Arregladores e Instrumentistas de Bandas Sinfónicas (Tenerife, Canary Islands), the Asian Pacific Band Directors Association (Macau and Hong Kong), the Hong Kong International Band Fair, and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic (Chicago). Ensembles under his direction have been selected to perform for the International Society for Music Education, The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) National In-Service Conference, the North American Saxophone Alliance, southern and western division conferences of the College Band Directors National Association, as well as the CBDNA National Conference. He has served as Consultor Artístico with the Dirección General de Bandas of Costa Rica and the Artistic Advisor of the Hong Kong Wind Ensemble.

Dr. Verrier is co-author of *The Ensemble Musician*, a practical guidebook that empowers musicians to get the most out of their ensemble experience by unifying elements of the music through direct communication and collaboration with one another. He is also co-developer of the ear-training application *Intonology*. Dr. Verrier is a member of the American Bandmasters Association and also serves on the Executive Board of the College Band Directors National Association as the organization's National Executive Secretary.

**Tucker Biddlecombe** (Ph.D.) is associate dean for undergraduate education, associate professor of choral studies, and director of choral activities at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music, where he conducts the Vanderbilt Chorale and Glee Club. He also serves as coordinator of the Blair-to-Peabody teacher education program, teaching courses in conducting and music education. He is the founding director of the Vanderbilt Choral Scholars Immersion Program, which annually brings students to perform and study choral music throughout the United Kingdom. In addition, Biddlecombe recently concluded his seventh season as Director of the Nashville Symphony Chorus, the vocal arm of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

Since joining the faculty in 2012, Biddlecombe has invigorated choral activities at Vanderbilt, with a focus on large choral works and music by living composers. Performance highlights have included Britten's *War Requiem*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Haydn's *Creation*, Bernstein's *MASS*, and multiple collaborations with the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth. He founded the annual Choral Prism concert, consistently the largest drawing event on the Blair concert calendar. In 2018 the Vanderbilt Chorale released its first solo album, *Music in the Listening Place* (Navona), with *Gramophone UK* noting that the Chorale "shine in a variety of repertoire that suggests the experience of hearing an actual concert." Dr. Biddlecombe is a recipient of the Blair Faculty Excellence Award.

His work with the Nashville Symphony has included chorus preparation for many of the repertoire's most revered masterworks. Notable performances have included Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Bernstein "Kaddish" *Symphony No. 3*, Haydn *Creation*, Mozart *Requiem*, Verdi *Requiem*, Mahler *Symphony No. 2*, and the annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*. During his tenure the chorus has toured the Czech Republic in 2019 performing Orff's *Carmina Burana* at Smetana Hall in Prague. He has prepared the chorus for two major world-premiere recordings, John Harbison's *Requiem* (rel. 2018, Naxos) and Gabriela Lena-Frank's *Conquest Requiem* (to be released on Naxos in 2024). Upcoming projects include a recording of Antonio Estevez's *Cantata Criolla* and conducting *Messiah* in December 2023.

A passionate advocate of music education and a veteran teacher, Biddlecombe has served as President of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Choral Director's Association (ACDA) and on the Florida ACDA Executive Board. Ensembles under his direction have performed at state and regional conventions of ACDA and toured both nationally and internationally. His credits include All-State choruses in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, New York, and North Carolina, and serving as co-conductor of the UCTB (Unchanged, Cambiata, Tenor, Bass) honor choir for the Southern Region of ACDA. International engagements include invitations from the United Kingdom and China, including a 2019 residency with the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Biddlecombe made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2019 conducting Lauridsen's *Lux Aeterna* and will return to conduct Carol Barnett's *The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass* in February 2024.

Tucker Biddlecombe is a graduate of SUNY Potsdam and Florida State University, where he completed studies in choral conducting and music education with Daniel Gordon and André Thomas, respectively. He resides in Nashville with his wife Mary Biddlecombe, director of the Blair Academy at Vanderbilt, and artistic director of the Blair Children's Chorus.

**Jama Reagan** has been an active performer as soloist and chamber musician, both in the United States and abroad for more than 30 years. She has been featured on radio and television in England (for the BBC) and Spain, as well as in the U.S.

Reagan's first love of duo piano collaboration began with the Fox/Towse Duo and eventually led to the Clarion Duo, which gave a sold-out debut concert in the prestigious Purcell Room, South Bank Centre (London). She has appeared with the Nashville Symphony in a performance of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*.

Reagan's interest in contemporary music has led to many performances for composers, such as George Crumb, John Adams, Karel Husa and Jeffrey Wood, as well as for the numerous Blair composition students she has taught during her time at Vanderbilt. She gave the world premiere of Frank DeVuyst's arrangement of Ricardo Villa's Gran Fantasia for piano and wind ensemble in Nashville, which led to the premiere recording of this piece in Spain.

Reagan obtained her Bachelor of Music degree in performance from The North Carolina School of the Arts and her Master of Music degree from Austin Peay State University. In addition, she earned diplomas for performance and for teaching from The Royal College of Music (London) and The Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London), respectively. Her teachers have included Robert McDonald, Marian Hahn, Eric Larsen, Anne Epperson, & Benjamin Kaplan.

During her more than 20 years as a Blair School of Music piano faculty member, Reagan has taught a wide range of students, including piano majors, performance and general minors, and Blair Academy students. Her students participate frequently in performances on and off campus, including competitions, master classes, auditions and concerts. Her students have been awarded top prizes in local, state and regional competitions, including Curb Concerto Competition, TMTA competitions, Clavierfest, Young Artist Achievement Awards, NPAC, UT-Martin, UT-Chattanooga, TTU Piano Competition, to name a few. In addition, Reagan's students have been accepted to major conservatories and summer festivals across the U.S., including Oberlin College, Cincinnati Conservatory, Indiana University, Peabody Conservatory, North Carolina School of the Arts, Rice University, Aspen Music Festival, Brevard Music Festival, Eastern Music Festival, etc.

Reagan's teaching and playing focus on technical facility that is in keeping with the Taubman principles of rotation, arm weight, efficient movement, and how it affects tone and musical expression. Her students explore and acquire many tools to apply to the practice of and polishing of their repertoire. Recognized for her excellence in teaching, Reagan has been awarded Nashville Teacher of the Year twice, as well as Tennessee Teacher of the Year.

Active in the music community, Reagan frequently presents lectures and master classes for teachers and for pedagogy students, and she is a frequent adjudicator for area and regional competitions/auditions. Her mission statement as a musician and teacher is to encourage, inspire, and lead her students always to demand their very best and, while doing so, ignite and cultivate the passion they have for music within.



## Program Notes

### Song of Democracy

Based on the Walt Whitman text, Howard Hanson's *Song of Democracy* was performed at the inaugural concert for incoming U.S. President Richard Nixon in 1969. Hanson proudly noted this was the first inaugural concert to feature only American music.

### George Washington Bridge

There are few days in the year when I do not see George Washington Bridge. I pass it on my way to work as I drive along the Henry Hudson Parkway on the New York shore. Ever since my student days when I watched the progress of its construction, this bridge has had for me an almost human personality, and this personality is astonishingly varied, assuming different moods depending on the time of day or night, the weather, the traffic and, of course, my own mood as I pass by.

I have walked across it late at night when it was shrouded in fog, and during the brilliant sunshine hours of midday. I have driven over it countless times and passed under it on boats. Coming to New York City by air, sometimes I have been lucky enough to fly right over it. It is difficult to imagine a more gracious welcome or dramatic entry to the great metropolis.

- *Program Note by composer, William Schuman*

### ...and the mountains rising nowhere

Commissioned by Donald Hunsberger and the Eastman Wind Ensemble with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, *...and the mountains rising nowhere* was Joseph Schwantner's first composition for wind ensemble (and is part of a "trilogy" that includes *From a Dark Millennium* and *In evening's stillness*). The premiere was given in College Park, Maryland, at the 1977 National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) by the Eastman Wind Ensemble, Hunsberger conducting. It is dedicated to children's author Carol Adler; its title inspired by a line in her poem *Arioso*:

*arioso bells*

*sepia*

*moon-beams*

*an afternoon sun blanked by rain*

*and the mountains rising nowhere*

*the sound returns*

*the sound and the silence chimes*

- *Program Note by Nikk Pilato*



## **Blue Shades**

In 1992 I composed a concerto for traditional jazz band and orchestra, *Playing with Fire*, for the Jim Cullum Jazz Band and the San Antonio Symphony. I experienced tremendous joy during the creation of *Playing with Fire*, and my love for early jazz is expressed in every bar of the concerto. However, after completing it, I knew that the traditional jazz influences dominated the work, leaving little room for my own musical voice to come through. I felt a strong need to compose another work, one that would combine my love of early jazz with my own musical style.

Four years, and several compositions later, I finally took the opportunity to realize that need by composing *Blue Shades*. As its title suggests, the work alludes to the blues, and a jazz feeling is prevalent -- however, it is not literally a blues piece. There is not a single 12-bar blues progression to be found, and except for a few isolated sections, the eighth-note is not swung.

The work, however, is heavily influenced by the blues: "Blue notes" (flatted 3rds, 5ths, and 7ths) are used constantly; blues harmonies, rhythms, and melodic idioms pervade the work; and many "shades of blue" are depicted, from bright blue, to dark, to dirty, to hot blue.

At times, *Blue Shades* burlesques some of the clichés from the Big Band era, not as a mockery of those conventions, but as a tribute. A slow and quiet middle section recalls the atmosphere of a dark, smoky blues haunt. An extended clarinet solo played near the end recalls Benny Goodman's hot playing style, and ushers in a series of "wailing" brass chords recalling the train whistle effects commonly used during that era.

*Blue Shades* was commissioned by a consortium of thirty university, community, and high school concert bands under the auspices of the Worldwide Concurrent Premieres and Commissioning Fund.

- *Program Note by composer, Frank Ticheli*

Interpretation of lighting for tonight's performance of  
*...and the mountains rising nowhere*  
by Christopher Jones.



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