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## **McLennan Wind Ensemble**

Jon R. M. Conrad, conductor

James Pitts, piano

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Monday, November 18, 2024, 7:30 PM  
Wilbur A. Ball Performing Arts Center

# Repertoire

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## McLennan Wind Ensemble

*Who's Who In Navy Blue* (1920)

John Philip Sousa (1854–1932)

*The Last Full Measure Of Devotion* (2012)

Matthew Herman (b. 1972)

*Colonial Song* (1911/1962)

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961)

*Kingfishers Catch Fire* (2007)

John Mackey (b. 1973)

I. Following falls and falls of rain

II. Kingfishers catch fire

*Rhapsody In Blue* (1924/2010)

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

trans. Marco Tamanini

James Pitts, *Piano*

*The use of all cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited.*

*Please silence all electronic devices.*

# Program Notes

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Despite the genre's relatively limited structure, **John Philip Sousa's** 136 marches are highly varied in character. The vast majority are in the quickstep dance style and a third of their titles bear military designations. He also wrote school songs for several American Universities, including Kansas State University, Marquette University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Minnesota. Until a cache of old letters was recently discovered among Sousa family holdings in 1975, there was no proof of a request for ***Who's Who In Navy Blue*** coming from the student body of the U.S. Naval Academy. From the letters it was learned that a request had been made by Midshipman W. A. Ingram, president of the class of 1920. At that time, it was customary for each class to have its own new song or march to be performed at graduation exercises. The manner of choosing a title for the march bordered on the comical. Midshipman T. R. Wirth suggested "Ex Scienta Tridens" ("From Science to Sea Power"). Sousa's response to this was that it sounded like a remedy for the flu or a breakfast cereal. He suggested an alternate, "Admirals By and By." Wirth stood firm with his proposal and pointed out that one of Sousa's most famous marches was *Semper Fidelis*, also taken from the Latin. At this point, Sousa apparently was inclined to withdraw his offer to compose the march, but Wirth pleaded with him not to take this course of action. Wirth tried to compromise on a title, offering such names as "Gentlemen Sailors," "Seafarers" and "Admirals All." Sousa did some compromising of his own, and *Who's Who in Navy Blue* became the title.

- Program Note by Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 96.

**Matthew Herman's** compositions have been played throughout the United States and abroad. Performances of their woodwind sonatas have taken place at the International Double Reed Conference, the International Clarinet Festival, and at the Weill Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall. Dr. Herman also served as the chief editor for *The New Elson's Pocket Music Dictionary*, published in 2009 by Theodore Presser Company. Their research interests include the late works of Shostakovich and the pedagogical techniques developed by Vincent D'Indy at the Schola Cantorum of Paris. *The **Last Full Measure of Devotion*** was conceived as a memorial to the men who fought and gave their lives at The Battle of Gettysburg, occurring over July 1–3, 1863. This momentous battle is considered one of the most significant turning points of the Civil War. *The Last Full Measure of Devotion* gets its title from President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address speech:

*"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."*

# Program Notes

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The composition opens with a traditional marching cadence from the Civil War era. The brass instruments playing angular and somber fanfare, representing the Army of the Potomac in disarray after the defeat at the Battle of Chancellorsville. A brighter and more optimistic section ensues, with the woodwinds representing the relatively easy journey of the Army of Northern Virginia through the Shenandoah Valley and up into Pennsylvania. The piece is programmatic of the three-day battle, utilizing many of the favorite folk songs of each Army and layering them to portray the combat during the day and the quiet and somber nights. A quiet coda separates the armies as they march away to the opening drum cadence. This time the Union theme is bright and optimistic, and the Confederate theme has become somber. As night falls once again, the drums fade away into the distance.

**George Percy Grainger** was an Australian-born composer, pianist and champion of the saxophone and the concert band, who worked under the stage name of Percy Aldridge Grainger. Grainger was an innovative musician who anticipated many forms of twentieth century music well before they became established by other composers. As early as 1899 he was working with "beatless music", using metric successions (including such sequences as 2/4, 2½/4, 3/4, 2½/4). In December 1929, Grainger developed a style of orchestration that he called "Elastic Scoring". He outlined this concept in an essay that he called, "To Conductors, and those forming, or in charge of, Amateur Orchestras, High School, College and Music School Orchestras and Chamber-Music Bodies". In 1932, he became Dean of Music at New York University, and underscored his reputation as an experimenter by putting jazz on the syllabus and inviting Duke Ellington as a guest lecturer. Twice he was offered honorary doctorates of music, but turned them down, explaining, "I feel that my music must be regarded as a product of non-education." In a letter to Frederick Fennell, Grainger explains that his **Colonial Song** was "an attempt to write a melody as typical of the Australian countryside as Stephen Foster's exquisite songs are typical of rural America." The main tune of the work, which is presented by solo saxophone shortly into the piece, makes appearances in two other Grainger compositions (*Australian Up-Country Tune* and *Gumsuckers March*) but it makes its biggest splash here, as it grows from a wistful tune into a fully romanticized tumbling of low reeds and brasses before returning to the material and texture that began the work.

- Program note by Jacob Wallace for Baylor Wind Ensemble concert program, 11 February 2016

**John Mackey** holds a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with John Corigliano and Donald Erb, respectively. His works have been performed at the Sydney Opera House; the Brooklyn Academy of Music; Carnegie Hall; the Kennedy Center; Weill Recital Hall; Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival; Italy's Spoleto Festival; Alice Tully Hall; the Joyce Theater; Dance

# Program Notes

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Theater Workshop; and throughout Italy, Chile, Japan, Colombia, Austria, Brazil, Germany, England, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. John's compositions have been recognized with numerous grants and awards. A kingfisher is a bird with beautiful, brilliantly colored feathers that look in sunlight as if they are on fire. Kingfishers are extremely shy birds and are rarely seen, but when they are seen, they are undeniably beautiful. The first movement of ***Kingfishers Catch Fire***, *Following falls and falls of rain*, is suspended in tone, but with hope, depicting the kingfisher slowly emerging from its nest in the early morning stillness, just after a heavy rain storm. The second movement, *Kingfishers catch fire*, imagines the bird flying out into the sunlight. The work ends with a reference to Stravinsky's *Firebird*. *Kingfishers Catch Fire* was commissioned by several Japanese wind ensembles and premiered on March 17, 2007.

- Program note by the composer

Fueled by a passion for music, **George Gershwin** began studying the piano at the age of 12. Not being academically inclined, he convinced his parents to let him quit school at 15, and he became a pianist in Tin Pan Alley, demonstrating songs for the Remick Publishing Company. He began to compose popular songs while still a teenager and produced a succession of musicals, including *Strike Up the Band* (1927), with his brother Ira as lyricist. Gershwin was a sensitive songwriter of great melodic gifts and blended jazz, folk, and classical styles into a uniquely American musical form. On January 4, 1924, Ira Gershwin brought a brief item in a New York Tribune to the attention of his younger brother George. Its heading read "Whiteman Judges Named. Committee Will Decide 'What Is American Music.'" According to the advertisement (purely a media ploy), Paul Whiteman had assembled an impressive group of musicians including Sergei Rachmaninoff and Jascha Heifetz to witness a concert of new American music. This concert was to be presented on the afternoon of February 12, just five weeks later. Busy with his show *Sweet Little Devil*, Gershwin had not yet begun to compose such a concerto, though he and Whiteman had casually talked about his writing a special piece for the band. Gershwin began work on *Rhapsody in Blue* on Monday, January 7. Though a gifted melodist, he was ill equipped to score the accompaniment. To assist him, Whiteman offered the services of his chief arranger, Ferde Grofé, who completed the score on February 4. The first of five rehearsals was held immediately, during which several modifications were made both to Gershwin's music and Grofé's arrangement. Most notable among these is the change in the opening clarinet solo. Gershwin had originally written a seventeen-note slur; however, Ross Gorman (Whiteman's lead reed player) improvised the signature clarinet "wail." According to contemporary reviews, the concert was rather dull, but *Rhapsody in Blue* was received enthusiastically by the audience, which included Jascha Heifetz, Victor Herbert, Fritz Kreisler, Sergei Rachmaninoff, John Philip Sousa, Leopold Stokowski, and Igor Stravinsky.

- Program note from California Polytechnic State University,  
San Luis Obispo, Wind Ensemble concert program, 19 April 2013

# Guest Artist

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**Dr. James Pitts**, pianist and educator, began his piano studies with his mother, Dr. Ruth Pitts. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree at Baylor University, and his Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of North Texas, where he was a pupil of the eminent artist and Cliburn Gold Medalist, Vladimir Viardo. Dr. Pitts is an active performer, frequently presenting solo and duo recitals with his wife, Dr. Ping-Ting Lan. He has performed many of the pinnacles of piano repertoire, including Beethoven's *Appassionata* and *Hammerklavier* sonatas, Chopin's 4 *Scherzi* and 24 *Preludes*, Brahms's *Handel Variations*, *Op. 24*, and Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*. He has also performed several contemporary works by Messiaen, Birtwistle, Carter, Ohana, and others. Dr. Pitts's dissertation was a study of the work

of the Russian composer and pianist, Nikolai Medtner. He has become something of a specialist in the works of Medtner, and has performed 6 of Medtner's sonatas, including the "Night Wind" *Sonata, Op. 25 #2* and the *Sonata-Ballade, Op. 27*, as well as several shorter works, such as his *Tales (Skazki)*. Dr. Pitts has been a soloist with several orchestras, including the Waco Symphony Orchestra (Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue*, Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*), the Central Texas Orchestra (Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4*), and the Orchestra of the Pines (Rachmaninov *Concerto No. 3*). A dedicated teacher, Dr. Pitts has taught applied lessons, class piano, and a two-semester historical survey of piano literature. Many of his undergraduate and graduate piano majors have won competitions and have had professional success as teachers, collaborative pianists, and church musicians. Some of these have gone on to receive their DMA degrees. As a collaborative pianist, Dr. Pitts has worked with hundreds of student instrumentalists and singers, performing in about 40 recitals each year. He has extensive experience working with opera, choirs, and large instrumental ensembles. Dr. Pitts is also in demand as an adjudicator, and has frequently judged for the Music Teachers National Association, the Texas Music Teachers Association, Houston Forum, the Dallas Music Teachers Association, the Waco Music Teachers Association, and the McLennan Community College Piano Competition. Dr. Pitts's teachers include Dr. Ruth Pitts, Mr. Doyce Edwards, Mr. Roger Keyes, and Dr. Vladimir Viardo.

# McLennan Wind Ensemble Personnel

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## **Flutes**

Victor Jaquez Medina  
Bethany Jordan  
Galilea Olguin, *Principal*

## **Piccolo**

Kacy Olson

## **Oboes**

Kayla Butler, *Principal*  
Lara Selman

## **Bassoons**

Tristen Collinsworth,  
*Principal*  
Kayla Schlotman

## **Clarinets**

Ramiro Alvarez, Jr.  
Giovanni Bouye  
Hayden Heck  
Rachel Holden  
Mackayla Montgomery,  
*Concertmaster*  
Sonia Perez  
Jasmin Romero \*  
Ericka Rostro  
Nathalie Willman

## **Bass Clarinet**

Shailyn Harris

## **Saxophones**

Nicholas Collins  
Jasmin Garcia  
Felipe Pablo, Jr.  
Xavier Shubert \*, *Principal*  
John Whiteside

## **Horns**

Sierra Martinez  
Carolina McNeill \*  
Aaron Olvera  
Noah Sosolik, *Principal*  
Gabriel Valdivia

## **Trumpets**

Thomas Doyle  
Bolton Garrett  
Angel Orozco-Martinez  
Mario Perales  
Ethan Peterson  
Elia Salas, *Principal*  
Aidan Vazquez-Olguin

## **Trombones**

Jose Chaparro  
Hannah Christudass  
Ainsley McDaniel, *Principal*  
Dylan Mitchell  
Mauricio Rivera  
TJ Rollins

## **Euphoniums**

Juan Gonzalez  
Agustin Jaimes, *Principal*  
Ryan McClung

## **Tubas**

Giovani Arias Alvarado  
John Fowlkes  
Noah Grmela  
Aidan O'Shields, *Principal*

## **Percussion**

Mario Flores  
Jace Kirkpatrick,  
*Section Leader*  
Jarius Pullen  
Brazos Tankersley  
Reuben Tedford

## **Bass**

Edgar Carrillo

## **Piano**

Daneida Hernandez

## **Harp**

Jared Eben °

## **Banjo**

Chuck Jennings

° *MCC Faculty*

\* *Student Assistant*

**McLennan Community College Music Faculty & Staff**

Mandy Morrison, Director of Visual and Performing Arts  
Jon Conrad, Music Area Coordinator  
Jonathan Kutz, Music Industry Careers Program Director  
Meghan Wilfong, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Bradley Christian, Dean of the Arts and Sciences

**ENSEMBLES**

Noah Alvarado, *jazz band*  
Jon Conrad, *band*  
Jenna McLean, *choir*  
Clark Nauert, *jazz band*  
Peter Olson, *orchestra*  
Edgar Sierra, *opera*  
Arthur Torres, *mariachi*

**MUSIC INDUSTRY CAREERS**

Jon Fox  
Shane Hall  
Brian Konzelman  
Jonathan Kutz  
Maddison Livingston  
Patrick McKee  
Clark Nauert

**WINDS**

Brently Bartlett, oboe  
Vanessa Davis, clarinet  
Clay Garrett, euphonium/tuba  
Kim Hagelstein, horn  
Timothy Owner, trombone  
Masha Popova, flute  
Mark Schubert, trumpet  
Matthew Singletary, saxophone

**PERCUSSION**

Jonathan Kutz

**STRINGS**

Ben Cantrell, violin/viola  
Kate Cockle, harp  
Peter Olson, bass

**VOICE**

Jenna McLean  
Mandy Morrison  
Edgar Sierra

**PIANO**

Jared Eben  
Marsha Green  
Ping-Ting Lan  
James Pitts

**MUSICOLOGY & THEORY**

Ben Cantrell  
Kate Cockle  
Jared Eben  
Marsha Green  
Peter Olson  
James Pitts  
Matthew Singletary

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Randy Dockendorf,  
Theatre Technician  
Nick Webb, Box Office

Scan the QR code for a complete list of events.  
Concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. unless noted.



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