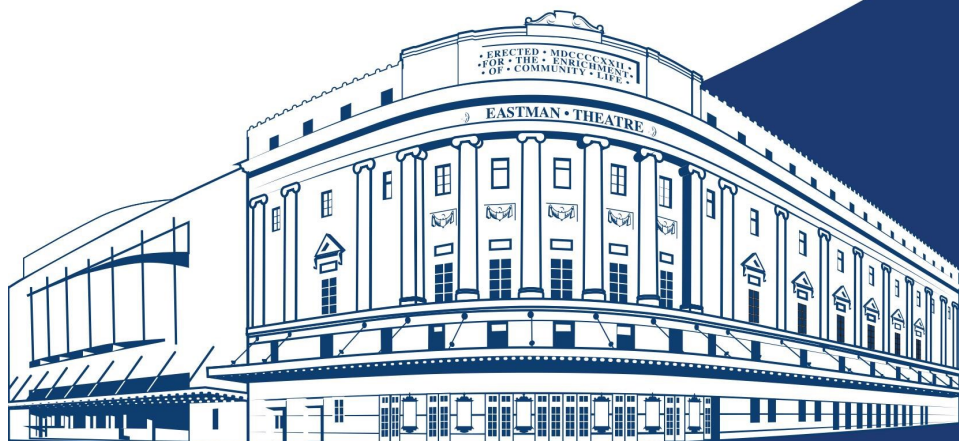


MELIORA WEEKEND

# EMPIRE FILM AND MEDIA ENSEMBLE

Thursday, October 5, 2023  
Kilbourn Hall  
7:30 PM



**EASTMAN**  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

## PROGRAM

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**Hungry Hoboes** (1928)

Mark Watters  
(b. 1955)

Walt Disney, director  
Brett Miller, conductor

**The General** (1926)

Jeff Beal  
(b. 1963)

Buster Keaton, director  
Jeff Beal, conductor

## PERSONNEL

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### *Violin I*

Madeleine Nysetvold, *concertmaster*

Jia Wen Lin

Alex Tada

Leila Fanien

### *Violin II*

Rebecca Villalta, *principal*

Anne-Marie Wnek

Yu-Jen Weng

Anatole Keshwani

### *Viola*

Ally Keller, *principal*

Arthur Nyanfor

Hannah Esquivel

Alex Diaz

### *Cello*

Danny O'Connell, *principal*

Rafael Rock

Anika Grieve

### *Bass*

Janae Gaddy

Luke Black

### *Flute*

Alexander Day

Alexander Lehmann

Angelina Lim

### *Oboe*

Ernest Chau

### *Clarinet*

Ju Young Yi

Lauren Enos

### *Bassoon*

Austin Struble

### *Horn*

Cristina Vиейtez

Morgan Chalmers

### *Trumpet*

Theodore Ekstrand

### *Trombone*

Darren Brady

### *Percussion*

Fletcher Leonard

Kaiwen Luo

Jack Kelly

### *Harp*

Catherine Caton

### *Piano*

Jenna Tu

### *Banjo*

Will Andersen

## PROGRAM NOTES

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**The General** (1926)

Jeff Beal

A lukewarm critical response and lackluster box office greeted *The General's* premiere in 1927. Buster Keaton's use of comedy in this film was in many ways ahead of its time, perplexing to the 1920's audience. In his enormous respect for his subject matter, he went to great lengths to accurately portray the look of the Civil War - Keaton told his production designers, "Make it look so real, it hurts." Rather than simply delivering a series of gags, *The General* is very much a comedic drama, in which the laughs arise out of this dramatic context. Since it's ill-fated premiere, *The General* has been rediscovered by many generations of audiences and critics alike, and is now regarded as Keaton's masterpiece, one of the greatest films of all time.

This sense of comedy in Keaton's performance was the first things that excited me about seeing the film. Keaton is well known for his use of deadpan: never cracking a smile in his films, always underplaying his reactions to the absurd and dangerous situations he would find himself in. To a contemporary audience, this understatement seems downright modern and gives his performance in *The General* a timeless and moving quality.

My goal with the music was first to underscore and personalize the performance. The experience of a silent movie is quite different than a talking picture. All of the information had to be conveyed by movement, body language, and other visual clues. I strove to make the experience of seeing the film an involving and organic one for a contemporary viewer. To this I end, I freely drew on some "modern" film scoring techniques, and also referenced styles and sounds evocative of the 1920's and Civil War periods.

In the absence of dialogue, several solo instruments assert themselves at different times in the score as musical "voices", i.e., a violin, banjo, clarinet, trumpet, etc. In the film, train conductor Johnnie Gray, single-handedly takes on the Union army after they steal his train. I sought to play this sense of a "Man Alone" against the crowd in the musical setting.

*The General* is very much about movement and action, danger and risk. Keaton liked to use big props. A speeding locomotive chase set against a moving landscape makes for many unforgettable scenes.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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To a modern audience used to seeing so many special effects rendered digitally, often with incredulous exaggeration, the “in camera” reality of Keaton’s daring stunts are nothing short of thrilling. I tried to mirror this movement in music, but without trivializing the drama and suspense of the situations. Rather, the musical “pulse” is in counterpoint to (and with) the visual element.

*The General* is also a wonderful parody on the absurdity of combat. The way in which many story points spring from seemingly random occurrence enhances Keaton’s audacious choice of the Civil War as a backdrop for his comedy. Making his hero, Johnnie Gray, a confederate soldier further underscores this irony.

But *The General* is most moving, and memorable as love story. Johnnie Gray is driven by his undying loyalty to his two loves - his train, and Annabelle. These two loves provide Keaton’s character with the will and courage to face seemingly insurmountable odds, and triumph in the end.

—*Jeff Beal*

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## EMPIRE FILM AND MEDIA ENSEMBLE OPERATIONS TEAM

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Brett Miller, artistic director

Danny O’Connell, production assistant

Alexander Day, personnel manger/outreach coordinator

Austin Keck, marketing director

## MEET THE COMPOSERS

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Emmy Award-winning composer and conductor **Mark Watters**' vast resume includes music for motion pictures, television, DVD, video games, and special events such as the Olympics. In addition to serving as director of the Beal Institute, Watters oversees Eastman's newly established Master of Music degree in Contemporary Media/Film Composition and teaches graduate courses.



Watters holds the distinction of serving as music director for two Olympics—the 1996 Centennial Games in Atlanta and the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City—which garnered him two of his six Emmys. He also received Emmys for Outstanding Music Direction for *Rock*; Outstanding Music for *True Life Adventure Alaska: Dances of the Caribou*; and two Outstanding Music Direction and Composition Daytime Awards for *Aladdin* and *Tiny Toon Adventures*.

As a film composer, Watters wrote the scores for MGM's *The Pebble and the Penguin* and *All Dogs Go to Heaven 2*, and for Disney's *Doug's First Movie* and *Get a Horse*, a new animated short featuring characters from 1920s Mickey Mouse cartoons that accompanied the theatrical release of *Frozen*. In addition, his music can be heard on almost two dozen direct-to-video/DVD releases, including *Aladdin* and the *King of Thieves* and several *Winnie-the-Pooh* features for Disney, *My Little Pony* and *Candyland* movies for Hasbro, and a *Tom and Jerry* feature for Warner Brothers.

Television viewers have heard his music across several networks and channels including CBS, Hallmark, and Disney on such series as *Paradise* and *The Little Mermaid*, made-for-TV movies including *The Longshot*, and documentaries such as *Medal of Honor* and the nature series *True Life Adventures*. Watters has also created original scores for theater productions of *The Raft of the Medusa*, *Snitch*, and *Hamlet*. Watters's video games music oeuvre includes *Coraline*, two *Ben 10* installments, *Toy Story 3*, *Cars Mania*, *Disney Princesses 1 and 2*, and *Disney Fairies: Tinkerbell*.

## MEET THE COMPOSERS

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As a guest conductor, Watters has led the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the New York Pops, and many other orchestras. In 2002, John Williams asked him to co-conduct the Academy Awards. In 2015, Watters led the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in a concert saluting 90 years of Disney animation, for which he also wrote new scores for two late-1920's "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit" shorts. He conducted three "Star Wars in Concert" tours, including one in Japan with the Tokyo Philharmonic.

In addition, Watters has worked as a conductor for individual artists Trisha Yearwood, Carrie Underwood, Beyoncé, Mary Jo Blige, John Legend, Sting, Barry Manilow, Jessye Norman, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and others.

Watters has taught film scoring at UCLA and for Columbia College of Chicago. He served several terms on the Television Academy's Board of Governors and as Co-Chair of the Academy's Creative Arts Emmy Awards Committee. Recent projects include serving as music director for the highly acclaimed animated series "Have A Laugh," a three-year project to restore and re-record 60 classic Disney shorts from the '30s and '40s.

## MEET THE COMPOSERS

**Jeff Beal** is a composer with a genre-defying musical fluidity. His film scores have received critical acclaim, while he remains a respected composer in the concert, theater and dance worlds.



Beal's evocative score and theme for the Netflix drama *House of Cards* received four Emmy Award nominations, and recently won for outstanding score, bringing Beal's Emmy tally to fifteen nominations and four statues. Other lauded series include HBO's *Carnivale* and *Rome*. Film scores feature the documentaries *Blackfish* and *Queen of Versailles* and dramas *Pollock* and *Appaloosa*.

Beal's orchestral works have been performed by the St. Louis, Rochester, Pacific, Munich, and Detroit symphony orchestras. Commissions include works for the Metropole Orchestra, The Ying Quartet, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Henry Mancini Institute, Prism Brass Quintet, Smuin Ballet, and grammy winner Jason Vieaux. His first choral commission, *The Salvage Men*, was written for the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the Eric Whitacre Singers. Music for theater includes 2015 the World Science Festival production *Light Falls*.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Beal's grandmother was a pianist who performed on the radio and as accompanist for silent movies. Beal graduated from the Eastman School of Music where he and his wife, Joan, recently donated \$2 million to the creation of The Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media.

*We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.*

## UPCOMING MELIORA WEEKEND CONCERTS

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All listed performances are free unless otherwise noted.

### MELIORA WEEKEND

#### Music in the Main Hall

Lowry Hall

Friday, October 6, 2023 at 2:30 PM

### MELIORA WEEKEND

#### Eastman Presents: An Evening with Renée Elise Goldsberry

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

Friday, October 6, 2023 at 8:00 PM

Featuring great Broadway hits, including selections from *Hamilton*, *Rent*, *Carousel*, *On a Clear Day*, *The Lion King*, and much more! Conducted by Mark Watters, Eastman's Director of the Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media.

**This performance is ticketed. For more information, please visit [EastmanTheatre.org](http://EastmanTheatre.org).**

### MELIORA WEEKEND

#### Morning Chamber Music

Hatch Recital Hall

Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 11:30 AM

Get your chamber music fix through this concert featuring flutist and educator Adam Sadberry '18E. Named one of *The Washington Post's* 23 for '23, Adam is paving a distinctive career with his citizenry, creativity, and vibrancy both on and off stage.

### MELIORA WEEKEND

#### Eastman Saxophone Project & Brass Guild

Kilbourn Hall

Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 2:00 PM



For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.



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