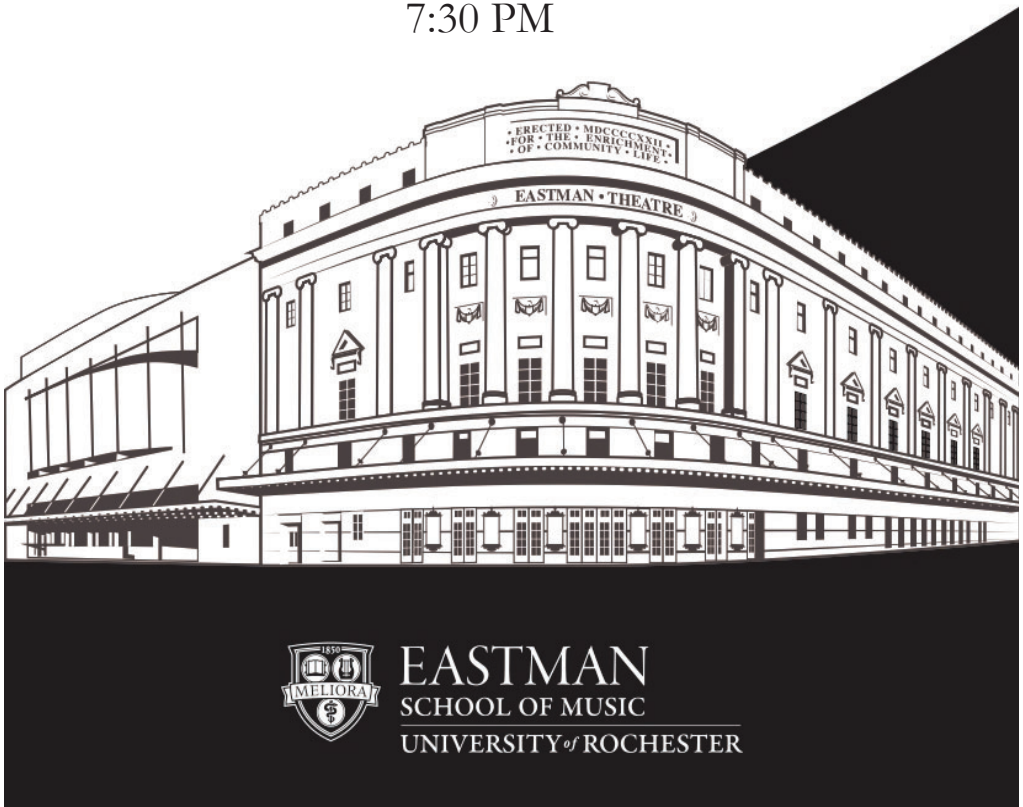
The Eastman Wind Ensemble

Mark Davis Scatterday
conductor

Augusta Read Thomas
guest composer

Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Kilbourn Hall
7:30 PM



~ PROGRAM ~
The Eastman Wind Ensemble
Mark Davis Scatterday, *conductor*

Illuminations "Fanfare Sinfonia" (2023) — **Augusta Read Thomas** (b. 1964) — 8'

Music for Five (1964) — **Verne Reynolds** (1926-2011) — 9'
- Fanfare
- Chorale
- Finale

Octet (1923) — **Igor Stravinsky** (1882-1971) — 15'
- Sinfonia
- Tema con Variazioni
- Finale

~ INTERMISSION ~

Konzertmusik für Blasorchester, Op. 41 (1926) — **Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963) — 15'
- Konzertante Overtüre
- Sechs Variationen über das Lied "Prinz Eugen, der edle Ritter"
- Marsch

~ PROGRAM NOTES ~

Illuminations "Fanfare Sinfonia"

Illuminations "Fanfare Sinfonia" is an optimistic, colorful, virtuosic, and vivid "Gratitude Fanfare." Encoded in the music are the rhythms of words. For example, the first two notes of the piece encode "Thank You!" There are many two-note "thank you" figures played throughout the composition whereby each player keeps adding onto the collection of "thank you" messages. The three-short-note-motive encodes the word "Grat-i-tude." The timpanist plays a main motive for which the encoded words are "We give you our gratitude." The composition, full of variations of the timpani motive, portrays an accumulation of appreciativeness.

When asked about the process of composition, Thomas replied, "it's like living inside of a poem… I think of myself, and have been described as, a poet-composer. I sculpt my music akin to how poets create, refine, and polish their poems.

She went on to say, "Poetry can give language to the ineffable. Analogously, music is akin to an infinite alphabet." The highly detailed and dimensional manner in which she braids characters and musical parameters such as melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, flow, lift, balance, space (among many other parameters) results in carefully wrought, clear, luminous, and evocative music. She polishes her music like a lapidary. Each highly etched sound-world presents facets of kaleidoscopic craft. *Illuminations* was Commissioned by Dr. Erica Neidlinger and the DePaul University Wind Ensemble and was premiered on 13 November 2023 in the Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall at DePaul University School of Music, Chicago.

A short version of this fanfare was commissioned by the Utah Symphony to honor Thierry Fischer's final season as Music Director of the Utah Symphony. It was premiered at a private party on September 8, 2022 by the Utah Symphony conducted by Benjamin Manis in Abravanel Hall, the short version was dedicated to Thierry Fischer and the Utah Symphony.

Augusta Read Thomas then composed and additional 7-minutes of music resulting in this final version of the composition.

Music for Five

Titled *Music for Five Trumpets* in its original form, Verne Reynolds' piece has become a staple of the trumpet ensemble repertoire having been recorded by professional trumpet ensemble Tromba Mundi and performed at the final round of the 2014 National Trumpet Competition by the Eastman School of Music trumpet ensemble. The piece contrasts established forms, such as the chorale and canon of the second movement, with more modern rhythmic, melodic and harmonic techniques.

Verne Reynolds (1926-2011), professor emeritus of horn, began teaching at Eastman in 1959. He received his bachelor's degree in music from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1950, and his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1951. He also received a Fulbright grant for study at the Royal College of Music in London, England (1953-1954). He performed with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the American Woodwind Quintet, and served as principal horn of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra from 1959-1968. Before coming to Eastman, he taught at the Cincinnati Conservatory (1949-1950), the University of Wisconsin (1950-1953), and Indiana University (1954-1959). Mr. Reynolds was a founding member of the Eastman Brass, and toured and recorded extensively with the group. In 1983, the members of the quintet received the Kilbourn Professorship, in recognition of their work in elevating the brass quintet genre and expanding its repertoire. A respected composer, Mr. Reynolds received awards and commissions from many orchestras, solo performers, universities, and chamber groups, including the Eastman Brass, the Cincinnati Symphony, and Doc Severinsen. Mr. Reynolds published numerous original works and is particularly well known for his transcriptions of Renaissance and Baroque music for brass quintet and horn choir.

Octet

Stravinsky's first professional conducting job was leading the premiere of his *Octet,* in a Koussevitsky Concert and the Paris Opéra on 18 October 1923 – programmed with Beethoven's *'Eroica' Symphony.* Many musicians who admired the powerful nationalism and neo-primitivism of *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* were taken aback by this change in Stravinsky's path; among those at the premiere were the young Aaron Copland, who later recalled his reaction to what seemed to be a 'mess of 18th century mannerisms', and Sergei Prokofiev, who sourly referred to Stravinsky's style as 'Bach, but with pockmarks'.

This *Octet* was one of the first works in a style that Stravinsky would explore for more than two decades. It's usually called Neoclassicism: a modern approach to the forms of Baroque and Classical music – emulating the formal regularity and tonal logic of Bach, Haydn, or Mozart, but in a deceptive, sometimes satiric way. It's the musical equivalent of a Braque or a Picasso breaking an image into its constituent parts and putting it back together according to a different logic – or perhaps a carnival juggler skillfully keeping several contrasting objects constantly aloft and in play.

Hand in hand with an interest in reworking Classical musical mannerisms, Stravinsky had also become more interested in writing for the precise timbres of wind and brass instruments; the *Octet* is immediately preceded by the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments,* and was succeeded by the *Concerto for Piano and Winds*. Stravinsky claimed that the initial idea for this piece came to him in a dream. His dream did not specify the instruments, but he eventually settled on the unusual combination of flute, clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets and two trombones. The somewhat bass-centric ensemble is handled with great delicacy and never sounds heavy (at least when well performed).

Formally, the *Octet* is (apparently) a model of clarity: an opening Sinfonia with slow introduction followed by a theme with five variations in a modified rondo form, and a Tempo giusto finale with a hint of jazz in the coda. The music is very precisely proportioned, yet always a bit out of kilter with a listener's expectations.

To 21st Century audiences, Stravinsky's *Octet* is an ear-tickling, charmingly fractured exercise in neoclassicism, as tart and tasty as a lemon drop. The composer's own attitude was much more severe. He used the piece as a manifesto of the musical elements he prized: clean lines, airy textures, lack of rubato, and a distaste for 'interpretation' (indicated by the paucity of expressive and dynamic markings in the score). He insisted that the *Octet* was no more than 'a musical object', 'a pure structure in sound', and claiming 'the play of musical elements is the thing'.

True enough – but the *Octet's* wit, friendly air, and fresh instrumental timbres are what have made it a popular piece, as well as a significant one. Jean Cocteau, writing about the first performance, captured this aspect of the *Octet* nicely when he described the effect of seeing Stravinsky leading his piece: he saw 'the back of an astronomer engaged in solving this magnificent instrumental arithmetic with its figures of silver'.

- **Mark Davis Scatterday**

Konzertmusik für Blasorchester, Op. 41

Since 1951, the musical world has rejoiced over Paul Hindemith's monumental *Symphony for Band. Konzertmusik, Op. 41*, an equally outstanding work written twenty-five years earlier for the annual Donaueschingen Music Festival, was first performed by "a student orchestra of the German Army", conducted by Herman Scherchen, its dedicatee.

Hindemith's scoring of this three-movement work requires a large brass ensemble in comparison with the woodwinds. In the preface to the work, Hindemith offers substitute instruments for the flugelhorns (soprano saxophones), tenor horns (tenor saxophones) and baritone (bass clarinet) and stresses flexibility in these decisions.

The *Konzertmusik* was a part of Hindemith's "Gebrauchmusik" (Utility Music) approach to composition in which he combined a practical melding of his serious compositional craft with the purposeful intent of making his music less formidable for audiences and players.

- **Donald Hunsberger**

~ PERSONNEL ~

The Eastman Wind Ensemble

Flute
Alex Lehmann

Oboe
Payton Brown

Clarinet
Barak Dosunmu
Lauren Enos
Harrison Kim
Victor Ni
Scott Shao

Bassoon
Trey Barrett
Aaron Lukenbill

Saxophone
Isaac Boone
Tim Coene
Joe Himmelberg
Darryl Leung
Matthias Roth

Horn
Aaron Fulton
Nathan Howton
Mary Kimble
Suzie Lee

Trumpet
Ted Ekstrand
Derek Gong
Jacob Hunkins
Kirk Morrison
Diego Turner

Trombone
Caleb Albrecht
Talia Berenbaum
Darren Brady
Charley Hibschweiler
Jacob Lytle
Ethan Pound
Madelyn Stoklosa
Gabriel Williams

Euphonium
Nathanael Kumar

Tuba
Josh Budziak
Addie Canning

Timpani
Izaiah Gonzales

Percussion
Ben Landon
Fletcher Leonard
Cass Lo
Remy Thomas

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