

CCM

**WIND SERIES
PRESENTS**

**WIND SYMPHONY
SONGS FROM THE END OF
THE WORLD**

Featuring the CCM Youth Wind Ensemble and the
CCM Youth Saxophone Ensemble

Kevin Michael Holzman, music director and
conductor

Bradley Esau, graduate student conductor

Ashlyn Rock, solo soprano

**Friday, November 17, 2023
Corbett Auditorium
7:30 p.m.**

PROGRAM

CCM Youth Saxophone Ensemble

Strange Humors

John Mackey
(b. 1973)

CCM Youth Wind Ensemble

Infinity

Katahj Copley
(b. 1998)

Aurora Awakes

John Mackey

Intermission

CCM Wind Symphony

Fanfare for Uncommon Times

Valerie Coleman
(b. 1970)

Bradley Esau, graduate conductor

Songs from the End of the World

John Mackey
text by A. E. Jaques

I. A long time ago

II. Raveling

III. At sea

Ashlyn Rock, solo soprano

Wine-Dark Sea

John Mackey

I. Hubris

II. Immortal thread, so weak

III. The attentions of souls

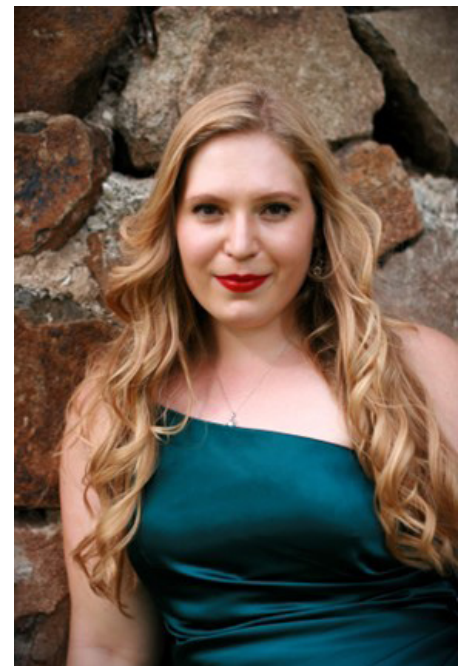
BIOGRAPHIES



John Mackey (he/him) has written for orchestras (Brooklyn Philharmonic, New York Youth Symphony), theater (Dallas Theater Center), and extensively for dance (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Parsons Dance Company, New York City Ballet), but the majority of his work for the past decade has been for wind ensembles (the fancy name for concert bands), and his band catalog now receives annual performances numbering in the thousands.

Recent commissions include works for the BBC Singers, the Dallas Wind Symphony, military, high school, middle school, and university bands across America and Japan, and concertos for Joseph Alessi (principal trombone, New York Philharmonic), Christopher Martin (principal trumpet, New York Philharmonic), and Julian Bliss (international clarinet soloist). In 2014, he became the youngest composer ever inducted into the American Bandmasters Association. In 2018, he received the Vladimir & Rhoda Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He resides in San Francisco, California, with his spouse, A. E. Jaques, a philosopher who works on the ethics of artificial intelligence for MIT, and also titles all of his pieces; and their cats, Noodle and Bloop

Colorado soprano Ashlyn Rock is currently pursuing her Artist Diploma in Opera at CCM with Amy Johnson. She completed her master's at CCM with Bill McGraw and Tom Baresel and her BM undergraduate and a minor in English at George Mason University with John Aler. In recent years with CCM, Ashlyn has performed as Marie Celeste/Duchess Christina in Philip Glass's *Galileo Galilei*, Miss Lightfoot in Gregory Spears' *Fellow Travelers*, and "was a sparkling Sister Constance with a crystalline voice" in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Janelle Gelfand, *Cincinnati Business Courier*). This October, Rock performed with Bel Cantanti Opera in Maryland as Micaëla in Bizet's *Carmen*. Rock is a recent winner of the Judges Special Award and Finalist of Partners for the Arts Competition, as well as the First Prize winner of the DC Chapter's Dorothy Lincoln-Smith Vocal Awards with the National Society of Arts and Letters. When she is not singing, Ashlyn enjoys practicing yoga, hiking, biking, writing poems and working on publishing her own book.



PROGRAM NOTES

Strange Humors, John Mackey

Strange Humors represents another of Mackey's works (after "Redline Tango") that has been transcribed for wind ensemble. This transcription was then later written for saxophone ensemble, which is played here. The first version of "Strange Humors" was a student piece for string quartet and djembe that Mackey wrote while pursuing his graduate degree at The Juilliard School. It was later adapted for use by the Parsons Dance Company, with choreography by Robert Battle. Its transcription came at the behest of Richard Floyd on behalf of the American Bandmasters Association. The piece represents a merging of musical cultures — the modal melodies and syncopated rhythms of middle Eastern music with the percussive accompaniment of African drumming.

At the heart of the work lies the pulse of the djembe, which remains from the original version. The djembe, an hourglass-shaped drum played with bare hands, is a major part of the customs of west African countries such as Mali and Guinea, where djembe ensembles accompany many functional celebrations of society.

The piece opens with a sultry English horn solo, a line laced with Phrygian influence representing the "typical" melodies of the most northeastern parts of the African continent — most notably Egypt, but also parts of the Arabian peninsula. Later, the saxophones emulate the snaking lines of the English horn. The addition of brass and auxiliary percussion to the original orchestration makes for particular impact during the shout sections of the piece, and the groove of the djembe combined with the quirky rhythms throughout leave an impression that lingers in the listener's mind long after its conclusion.

Jake Wallace

Infinity, Katahj Copley

Shooting stars have symbolized many things throughout our Earth's history: a new birth, good luck, a change or big event in one's life, a brief wonder, a fleeting moment, love, an ending or beginning, one reaching their ultimate destiny, and a wish for a better opportunity in one's life.

Throughout our Earth's history, shooting stars have been one of the most significant prophecies we've encountered. This, along with asteroids and the movement of heavenly bodies in the night sky, has always been a fascination of mine. It wasn't until I decided to dive into the subject of shooting stars that I understood the magic behind the miracle.

With Infinity, I wanted to construct the phenomena of shooting stars flying through an infinite playground- space. As the piece begins, this playground is filled with stars running through the skies. As we transition from dark to light, the stars encounter different scenarios until the end, where they embrace their bright colors and flash across the atmosphere with spectacular grandeur.

Katahj Copley

PROGRAM NOTES

Aurora Awakes, John Mackey

*Aurora now had left her saffron bed,
And beams of early light the heav'ns o'erspread,
When, from a tow'r, the queen, with wakeful eyes,
Saw day point upward from the rosy skies.
--Virgil, The Aeneid, Book IV, Lines 584-587*

Aurora – the Roman goddess of the dawn – is a mythological figure frequently associated with beauty and light. Also known as Eos (her Greek analogue), Aurora would rise each morning and stream across the sky, heralding the coming of her brother Sol, the sun. Though she is herself among the lesser deities of Roman and Greek mythologies, her cultural influence has persevered, most notably in the naming of the vibrant flashes of light that occur in Arctic and Antarctic regions – the Aurora Borealis and Aurora Australis.

John Mackey's *Aurora Awakes* is, thus, a piece about the heralding of the coming of light. Built in two substantial sections, the piece moves over the course of eleven minutes from a place of remarkable stillness to an unbridled explosion of energy – from darkness to light, placid grey to startling rainbows of color. The work is almost entirely in the key of E-flat major (a choice made to create a unique effect at the work's conclusion, as mentioned below), although it journeys through G-flat and F as the work progresses. Despite the harmonic shifts, however, the piece always maintains a – pun intended – bright optimism.

Though Mackey is known to use stylistic imitation, it is less common for him to utilize outright quotation. As such, the presence of two more-or-less direct quotations of other musical compositions is particularly noteworthy in *Aurora Awakes*. The first, which appears at the beginning of the second section, is an ostinato based on the familiar guitar introduction to U2's "Where The Streets Have No Name." Though the strains of The Edge's guitar have been metamorphosed into the insistent repetitions of keyboard percussion, the aesthetic is similar – a distant proclamation that grows steadily in fervor. The difference between U2's presentation and Mackey's, however, is that the guitar riff disappears for the majority of the song, while in *Aurora Awakes*, the motive persists for nearly the entirety of the remainder of the piece:

"When I heard that song on the radio last winter, I thought it was kind of a shame that he only uses that little motive almost as a throwaway bookend. That's my favorite part of the song, so why not try to write an entire piece that uses that little hint of minimalism as its basis?"

The other quotation is a sly reference to Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E-flat for Military Band*. The brilliant E-flat chord that closes the *Chaconne* of that work is orchestrated (nearly) identically as the final sonority of *Aurora Awakes* – producing an unmistakably vibrant timbre that won't be missed by aficionados of the repertoire.

PROGRAM NOTES

Aurora Awakes, John Mackey (cont.)

This same effect was, somewhat ironically, suggested by Mackey for the ending of composer Jonathan Newman's *My Hands Are a City*. Mackey adds an even brighter element, however, by including instruments not in Holst's original:

"That has always been one of my favorite chords because it's just so damn bright. In a piece that's about the awaking of the goddess of dawn, you need a damn bright ending -- and there was no topping Holst. Well... except to add crotales."

Jake Wallace

Fanfare for Uncommon Times, Valerie Coleman

Fanfare for Uncommon Times was commissioned by Orchestra of St. Luke's and was premiered by Orchestra of St. Luke's on June 27th, 2021, at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts.

The composer states: "We are going through some strange times right now, so it almost seems sarcastic ... to write a fanfare for the times we are currently living in." But her work *Fanfare for Uncommon Times* is anything but sarcastic.

"I wanted to create a piece that brings people together," she continues, "a piece that touches that within us, that thing that wants to survive ... that gives us that regenerative, renewable hope." As a Black woman, she also sought to "bring the Black experience in," including the "turmoil, the upheaval," of today's conversation of race in America.

Mark Bilyeu

Songs from the end of the world, John Mackey

The cycle is inspired by a passage in the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus, shipwrecked and near death, washes up on the shore of an island belonging to the nymph Kalypso. Homer's telling treats the ensuing interlude as just another bit of exotic travelogue, one of many adventures on Odysseus' long journey home; these three songs imagine what it meant to Kalypso herself, and are sung in her voice.

I. A long time alone

Kalypso's island home is beautiful beyond imagining but remote beyond reach. Her immortality is thus an eternal solitude. The first song in the cycle, set before Odysseus' arrival, is her lament of this loneliness. Standing on her shore, she remembers long-gone days when she could still delight in her paradise, and tells of the slow erosion of sensation and even sense after endless ages alone.

PROGRAM NOTES

Songs from the end of the world, John Mackey (cont.)

II. Raveling

The second movement begins after Odysseus has been with Kalypso for seven years. She sings as she moves back and forth with a golden shuttle at her loom, weaving a tapestry—the work of all that time—that tells their story. At one end, the luminous threads show the near-dead castaway washed ashore; nearby the nymph nurses him back to health. Flowers and fruit, ripe and radiant, tumble through images of the love they found together. But the simple happiness of the scene and the song curdles: Odysseus wants to return to his home, leaving Kalypso to her solitude; nothing she has given or can give means anything to him anymore. She is shattered, but he is cold. So Kalypso returns to her loom, singing again, but now unraveling the tapestry, unmaking the document of love.

III. At sea

In the final song, Kalypso watches Odysseus sail away on a boat she has given him, born by a breeze she has called up to fill a sail she has fashioned from the unmade tapestry. Waves carry him toward the horizon, and her loneliness washes in again.

A. E. Jaques

I. A long time alone

Dawn draws her rose-red fingers soft across the sleeping sky.

Another day unasked-for, light pinking flesh untouched.

*Long ago I loved to watch the water wake
when first rays raced the waves.*

Morning warm-born in a moment.

But the sweetest second sours in solitude.

Forever is a long time alone.

Summer murmurs memory of seasons sweet with cypress.

Seabirds basking idle as the fishes dare to doze.

*I used to sing with the insects
answering sleet whirrup with trilling airs.*

But that was years ago,

*before the buzzing buried cicada sounds inside
to rattle in the cluttered attic of never-spoken thoughts.*

Even lovely liquid languor spoils.

Forever is a long time alone.

*Wade into the wine-dark sea and leave the lonely island;
let salt swamp tears.*

Waters hold you for a while.

*Skin gleams warm. Long-fallow flesh awakens
but the ocean's kiss consumes.*

Soon there is no woman—only wave.

*So the body brought back rushes out again,
tide and time-taken as all things are.*

The sea is not a solace but a cell.

Forever is a long time alone.

II. Raveling

*When I found you, or you found me,
both of us lost in the endless sea,
then I healed you, and you healed me,
two tattered souls stitched up lovingly*

PROGRAM NOTES

*Seven summers of sun,
seven winters of wanting,
seven springtimes as new as the dawn,
seven autumns of falling
deeper into your breath—
seven years you are warp to my weft.
Only now is this paradise paradise.
Only now is this living a life.
Only now is there greenness and sweetness and air—
lost and found ones, we two, what a pair.
As I lose you, and so lose me,
finding I never had what I thought was free—
how can you take what once you gave?
I asked only love for the life I saved.
Seven years you were warp to my weft.
Seven years, yet you leave me bereft.
Seven years and I have nothing left.
You and I, we were bound up together.
You and I wove a heaven from scars.
You and I turned the darkness and lostness and pain
into something worth living again.
Only you made this paradise paradise;
Only you made this living a life;
Only you gave me greenness and sweetness and air—
All unraveling now, past repair.*

*III. At sea
Again, alone.
Again, forever.
Solitude and I, once more, together.
And now—forget?
Or yet remember?
If I hold fast will I still surrender?
Shall I cling to memory, and polish thoughts like bright stones?
But every touch erodes them; to love their light is to lose it.
Remembering. Dismembering.
Forget, then. Forget him.
Forget him. Forget, yes.
And cast away the empty oyster shell.
Tide take him.
But watch—who knows what waters wash home?
Forget him? Forget, how?
This cruel moon brings ghosts in waves now, to haunt me.
Too-cruel moon brings ghosts to haunt me, to taunt me now.
This tide that gives and takes and tolls the time,
the time, the long and longing time alone.
I can't forget;
I can't remember.
The loss remains, so hard, so tender.
And all my rhymes are ravings,
my words the wailing of a lost one,
storm-tossed one.*

PROGRAM NOTES

*The sea won't hear.
The sky won't care.
No different to them,
my silence or song.
No words, so. Unheard, so.
Why go on then? Why cry this silence?
Alone. Alone.
All cast away now.
Just ghosts to stay now.
Alone, all lost at sea.*

Wine-Dark Sea, John Mackey

For the past 10 years, I've written all of my music in collaboration with my wife, Abby. She titles nearly all of my pieces, a process that usually involves my writing the music, then playing it for her, after which she tells me what the piece is about. Without her help, "Aurora Awakes" would be "Slow Music Then Fast Music #7 in E-flat." Sometimes she'll hear a piece halfway through my writing process and tell me what the music evokes to her, and that can take the piece in a different (and better) direction than I had originally intended. I've learned that the earlier she is involved in the process, the better the piece turns out. So with "Wine-Dark Sea," my symphony for band, I asked for her help months before I ever wrote a note of music.

The commission, from Jerry Junkin and The University of Texas Wind Ensemble, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music, was for a piece lasting approximately 30 minutes. How could I put together a piece that large? Abby had an idea. Why not write something programmatic, and let the story determine the structure? We had taken a similar approach with "Harvest," my trombone concerto about Dionysus, the Greek god of wine. Why not return to the Greek myths for this symphony? And since this story needed to be big (epic, even), I'd use the original, truly epic tale of Odysseus, as told thousands of years ago by Homer in The Odyssey.

The full Odyssey, it turned out, was too large, so Abby picked some of the "greatest hits" from the epic poem. She wrote a truncated version of the story, and I attempted to set her telling to music. Here is the story the way Abby outlined it (in three movements), and I set it: After ten years of bloody siege, the Trojan War was won because of Odysseus' gambit: A horse full of soldiers, disguised as an offering. The people of Troy took it in as a trophy, and were slaughtered.

Odysseus gave the Greeks victory, and they left the alien shores for home. But Odysseus' journey would take as long as the war itself. Homer called the ocean on which Odysseus sailed a wine-dark sea, and for the Greek king it was as murky and disorienting as its name; he would not find his way across it without first losing himself.

PROGRAM NOTES

I. Hubris

Odysseus filled his ship with the spoils of war, but he carried another, more dangerous, cargo: Pride. This movement opens with his triumphal march, and continues as he and his crew maraud through every port of call on their way home.

But the arrogance of a conquering mortal has one sure consequence in this world: a demonstration of that mortal's insignificance, courtesy of the gods. Odysseus offends; Zeus strikes down his ship. The sailors drown. Odysseus is shipwrecked. The sea takes them all.

II. Immortal thread, so weak

This movement is the song of the beautiful and immortal nymph Kalypso, who finds Odysseus near death, washed up on the shore of the island where she lives all alone. She nurses him back to health, and sings as she moves back and forth with a golden shuttle at her loom. Odysseus shares her bed; seven years pass. The tapestry she began when she nursed him becomes a record of their love.

But one day Odysseus remembers his home. He tells Kalypso he wants to leave her, to return to his wife and son. He scoffs at all she has given him. Kalypso is heartbroken.

And yet, that night, Kalypso again paces at her loom. She unravels her tapestry and weaves it into a sail for Odysseus. In the morning, she shows Odysseus a raft, equipped with the sail she has made and stocked with bread and wine, and calls up a gentle and steady wind to carry him home. Shattered, she watches him go; he does not look back.

III. The attentions of souls

But other immortals are not finished with Odysseus yet. Before he can reach his home, he must sail to the end of the earth, and make a sacrifice to the dead. And so, this movement takes place at the gates of the underworld, where it is always night.

When Odysseus cuts the throats of the sacrificial animals, the spirits of the dead swarm up. They cajole him, begging for blood. They accuse him, indicting him for his sins. They taunt him, mocking his inability to get home. The spirit of his own mother does not recognize him; he tries to touch her, but she is immaterial. He sees the ghosts of the great and the humble, all hungry, all grasping.

Finally, the prophet Teiresias tells Odysseus what he must do to get home. And so Odysseus passes through a gauntlet beyond the edge of the world, beset by the surging, shrieking souls of the dead. But in the darkness he can at last see the light of home ahead. Wine-Dark Sea is dedicated to Jerry Junkin, without whom the piece would not exist. The second movement, "Immortal thread, so weak," telling of Kalypso's broken heart, is dedicated to Abby, without whom none of my music over the past ten years would exist.

ROSTER

CCM Youth Saxophone Ensemble

Joshua Tuttle, music director and conductor

Soprano

Prateek Bhandari
Max Page

Tenor

Katy Campman
Julia Smith

Percussion

Wyatt Hatch

Alto

Jonathan Liu
Gavin Bradley
Nathan Wang
Hayden Spyrou
Quincy Whitfield

Baritone

Braden Hopping
Sam Greer
Fernando Llerena

CCM Youth Wind Ensemble

Kevin Michael Holzman, music director and conductor

Flute

Jaina Crothers
Brianna Flaig
Janne Guo
Camille Kolar
Kaitlyn Liu
Aparna Nambirajan
Elizabeth Pirkey
Allison Sayles
Riya Tummala
Thomas Wood IV

Bass Clarinet

Themis Moreau

Trombone

Thomas Boaz
Connor Brown
Erin O'Neill
Rafael Ortiz-Rivera

Oboe

Arjuna Lee
Anna Reeder

Alto Saxophone

Prateek Bhandari
Gavin Bradley
Jonathan Liu
Max Page
Nathan Wang

Bass Trombone

Jessica Ries

Tenor Saxophone

Katy Campman
Braden Hopping

Euphonium

Caden Gallagher
Mina Hagopian
Lydia Lysko
Aidan Mahoney

Bassoon

Gunnar Pellissier
Zachary Pinnick
Amelie Weber

Baritone Saxophone

Sam Greer

Tuba

Seth Dossa
Henry Hornung
Christopher Todorov

Clarinet

Mingsheng Chen
Morgan Cloud
Sanvi Jha
Christopher Larsen
Mason Moyle
Ruah Park
Landon Richey
Emma Schneider
Victoria Tang
Austin Zhong

Horn

Callie Dillard
Lucas Elmore
Charles Healy
John Hennessy
Cate Mahoney
Meghan McGuire

Percussion

Braeden Brown
Knox Dowell
Nate Eslinger
Jonathan Kaseff
Ethan Kuhn

Trumpet

Hunter Chermly
Gabe Cordrey
Wesley Dentinger
Benjamin Holloway
Russel Johnsonbaugh

ROSTER

CCM WIND SYMPHONY

Kevin Michael Holzman, music director and conductor

Flute/Piccolo

Betania Canas
Dayna Hagstedt
Lauren Jett
Ay Kawasaki
Valentina Arango
Sanchez
Lindsey Wong

Oboe/English Horn

Pyunghwa Cho
Evan Dial

Bassoon

Justin Bruss
Yu-chuen Huang
Evan Schultz
Kyle Sodman

Clarinet

Owen Cheung
Logan Leister
Talor Marren
Geovanny Morales-
Santos
Matthew Mitchell
Amay Pant
Leila Sereki
Kale Welte
Kevin Lawrence

Saxophone

Ian Dabin Jung
Dean Haynes
Josh Herrera
Seok Jun Yang

Horn

Seth Johnson
Grace Kim
Hayden LaVelle
Jack Song
Natalie Sweasy
Emma Van Zuyle

Trumpet

Solomon Abang
Jessica Barrick
Mae Deeter
Joseph Keller
Joshua Krovetz
Joseph Rau
Anna Sheppard

Trombone

Kyle Langer
Sean LaRoy
Sean Reynolds
Madison Smith
Cameron Webb

Euphonium

Isaac Slavens

Tuba

Chris Messinger
Laurenz Oriondo

Bass

Gregory Patterson

Piano

Trinity Le

Harp

Zibin Zhou

Percussion

Ryan Donahue
Qiming Han
Jacob Hess
Peter Loferski
Kyle Roemer
Jett Stevens
San-Lou Wei

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