



University of Maryland School of Music Presents

ORACLES
UMD Wind Orchestra

Friday, November 1, 2019 . 8PM
DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL
at The Clarice



SCHOOL OF
MUSIC

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

ORACLES

UMD WIND ORCHESTRA

Michael Votta, Jr.

Music Director

The Last Hivemind.....Shuying Li

The Road Home..... James Stephenson
Chris Gekker, *trumpet*

Suite in B-flat Major, Op. 4 Richard Strauss
I. Praeludium
II. Romanze
III. Gavotte
IV. Introduction und Fuge

INTERMISSION

Memorial to Lidice..... Bohuslav Martinu
Arranged by Robert W. Rumbelow

*Oracles** Mark Wilson
I. Variations on the First Delphic Hymn
II. Kastalia: Sacred Water
III. Games

*World Premiere

MICHAEL VOTTA, JR., has been hailed by critics as “a conductor with the drive and ability to fully relay artistic thoughts” and praised for his “interpretations of definition, precision and most importantly, unmitigated joy.” Ensembles under his direction have received critical acclaim in the United States, Europe and Asia for their “exceptional spirit, verve and precision,” their “sterling examples of innovative programming” and “the kind of artistry that is often thought to be the exclusive purview of top symphonic ensembles.”

He currently serves as director of bands at the University of Maryland where he holds the rank of professor. Under his leadership, the UMD Wind Orchestra (UMWO) has been invited to perform at the international conference of the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles as well as national and regional conferences of the College Band Directors National Association. UMWO has also performed with major artists such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Eighth Blackbird and Imani Winds.

Votta has taught conducting seminars in the US, Israel and Canada, and has guest conducted and lectured throughout the world with organizations such as the Beijing Wind Orchestra, the Prague Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music, the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the National Arts Camp at Interlochen, the Midwest Clinic and the Conductors Guild.

His performances have been heard in broadcasts throughout the US, on Austrian National Radio (ÖRF) and Southwest German Television, and have been released internationally on the Primavera label. Numerous major composers including George Crumb, Christopher Rouse, Louis Andriessen, Karel Husa, Olly Wilson, Barbara Kolb and Warren Benson have praised his performances of their works.

His arrangements and editions for winds have been performed and recorded by university and professional wind ensembles in the US, Europe and Japan. He is also the author and editor of several books and articles on wind literature and conducting.

He is president of the Big Ten Band Directors Association and vice-president of the College Band Directors National Association. He previously served as editor of the CBDNA Journal, as a member of the Executive Board of the International Society for the Investigation of Wind Music (IGEB) and on the board of the Conductors Guild.

Before his appointment at Maryland, Votta held conducting positions at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Duke University, Ithaca College, the University of South Florida, Miami University (Ohio) and Hope College.

Votta holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting degree from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Donald Hunsberger. A native of Michigan, Votta received his undergraduate training and Master of Music degrees from the University of Michigan where he studied with H. Robert Reynolds.

As a clarinetist, Votta has performed as a soloist throughout the US and Europe. His solo and chamber music recordings are available on the Partridge and Albany labels.

MARK WILSON, associate professor of composition at the University of Maryland, began his productive career in his native California. He studied with Henri Lazarof and Leon Kirchner at the University of California at Los Angeles, where he received a Ph.D. at the age of 25. He has received many prizes, awards and other honors for his orchestral and vocal works, his chamber music and electro-acoustic compositions, many of which have been commissioned and performed by major institutions and performing organizations.

Most of Wilson's recent works reflect an emphasis on compositions for orchestra employing a new approach that he characterizes as "dramatic narrative." Two scores composed for and introduced by the UMD Symphony Orchestra were premiered in this hall under the direction of James Ross and José-Luis Novo: *The Phoenix* and *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* with faculty colleague Larissa Dedova on piano. Three commissions for the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra have been premiered by that orchestra: *Four Sketches of Notre Dame de Paris*, *Gethsemane* and *Morpheus*, the last of which was awarded first prize in the Haubiel New Orchestral Music Competition.

The three-movement work *The Phoenix* (2009) quickly became one of Wilson's most successful efforts, taking the Grand Prize in the Realize Music Challenge, an international competition held under the joint sponsorship of Notion Music, Inc., and the London Symphony Orchestra. His fellow composer John Corigliano, who headed the jury for that event, wrote of *The Phoenix* in a press release:

"Excellent piece. It really develops its materials and has a fine large shape. I felt a true symphonic mind at work. Beautiful orchestration, too. Bravo!"

As part of the prize, *The Phoenix* was recorded at Abbey Road Studios by the London Symphony Orchestra under Jack Jarrett. Wilson has received numerous other awards for his compositions including the BMI Award, two Maryland State Arts Fellowships and no fewer than seven Creative and Performing Arts Awards from the University of Maryland.

In 2014, *Meteora* was awarded first prize in the New Orchestral Repertoire Project, an international competition to foster new music for orchestra sponsored by the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra (MPO). In addition to a cash prize, the MPO performed *Meteora* twice in the summer of 2014, Jere Lantz conducting. (The MPO is a summer season orchestra made up primarily of members of the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.) Since the recording of *The Phoenix* by the London Symphony Orchestra, *Meteora* and *The Phoenix* together have received a total of 19 additional performances nationwide including, to mention only a few, four performances as part of the regular season of the Austin Symphony Orchestra, Peter Bay, music director; performances by the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Ulysses James, music director; the Lansing Symphony Orchestra and the Chautauqua Music Festival Orchestra, Timothy Muffitt, music director.

Recordings of Wilson's compositions include *Windows*, on the Neuma label, and on Capstone/Parma a collection of his works ranging from solo pieces and chamber music to a composition for chamber orchestra, *Ancient Ways*, in which the Hollywood Chamber Players are conducted by the composer. *Dream-Crossed Twilight*, a string quartet commissioned by the Music Teachers' National Association, was premiered last year by the Left Bank Quartet. A video of their performance can be viewed on YouTube.

Wilson's creative emphasis on the orchestra at this point is by no means a matter of chance, but is motivated by his enthusiasm for the medium and his concern for its survival. This concern, one might say, has become a stimulus and empowerment for him, as he has stated clearly and frequently:

"Although not all conductors readily perform new works, composers nevertheless must not give up on the orchestra as a medium that is both vital and relevant to a living culture. It would be a tragic loss if the role of the symphony orchestra were to be restricted solely to the musical equivalent of a museum. The talented creative artists who constitute a symphony orchestra should have a purpose beyond that of being curators of the great art of another era. I propose a renaissance in the field of music for symphony orchestra—a music that will capture the imagination of audiences—and, in this endeavor, American composers can lead the way."

– Richard Freed

CHRIS GEKKER is professor of trumpet at the University of Maryland School of Music. He has been featured as soloist at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. After performances of J.S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 at Carnegie Hall, the *New York Times* praised his "bright virtuosity" and described his playing as "clear toned and pitch perfect." Gekker appears on more than thirty solo recordings and on more than one hundred chamber music, orchestral, jazz and commercial recordings.

Gekker's many solo recordings include the Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 (2000) and "Winter" (2004), a CD of music for trumpet and piano by Eric Ewazen and David Snow. His most recent solo recording is "Ghost Dialogues" (2017). It features music by Robert Gibson, Lance Hulme, Carson Cooman, David Heinick and Kevin McKee and won the American Prize 2nd Place in the 2018-2019 Solo Artist Category.

Gekker was a member of the American Brass Quintet for eighteen years. He served on the faculties of the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University. He was principal trumpet of the Orchestra of St. Luke's, frequently performed as principal and soloist with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and often featured with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has been a guest principal trumpet of the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, the Santa Fe Opera and the Baltimore Symphony. Gekker has performed and recorded with many jazz and commercial artists, and often for television and movies. In 2009, he recorded and toured with Sting, and is featured on the DVD "A Winter Night" which was recorded live at Durham Cathedral in England.

In the Washington D.C. area, Gekker serves as principal trumpet of the National Philharmonic at Strathmore, the Washington Ballet and the Post Classical Ensemble. During the summer, he is principal trumpet at the Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Gekker has been committed throughout his career to education and community service. In 2013, the Maryland Classics Youth Orchestra awarded him the Chester J. Petranek Community Award "for outstanding community service in enriching the musical life in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area."

Many of his students occupy orchestral positions in major symphonies throughout the world, as well as being prominent in jazz, chamber and commercial music. His "Articulation Studies," "44 Duos," "Endurance Drills," "Piccolo Trumpet Studies," "24 Etudes" and "Slow Practice" are available from Charles Colin Publications, and are sold worldwide.

Gekker was born in Washington, D.C., grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, and is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Maryland. His teachers include Emerson Head, Sidney Mear, Adel Sanchez and Gerard Schwarz. In 2018, the University of Maryland awarded Gekker the rank of Distinguished University Professor. He is the first professor from the School of Music to receive this honor. For more information, pictures, recordings and videos, please visit his website: www.chrisgekkertrumpet.com

The Last Hivemind

SHUYING LI

Born: 1989 | Composed: 2018

Duration: 7 minutes

The composer writes:

The Last Hive Mind was written for conductor Glen Adsit and the Foot in the Door Ensemble at The Hartt School. Inspired by several episodes of the British TV series "Black Mirror" and the general idea of recent increasing debate around artificial intelligence and how it will affect our daily lives as human beings, I put some of my personal thoughts, standing and imagination into this work. Thanks to Glen who came up with this very dynamic and matching title at the preliminary stage of my writing of it — the title also helped in the shaping of how the musical narrative is navigating its own way throughout.

Specifically, I was struck by the idea in one episode of "Black Mirror," the "Metalhead." After the unexplained collapse of human society, a group of people tried to flee from the robotic "dogs," a huge hive mind with metal built bodies and powerful computer "brains." The failure is almost predictable, but one detail that struck me the most was that the whole reason that a few human beings got trapped in the crazy chasing by the robotic dogs was because of their effort of searching a comforting gift for a very sick child — and the gift is just a fluffy teddy bear.

In *The Last Hive Mind*, there are two forces fighting with each other — the robotic, rhythmic, seemingly unbreakable "hive mind" music, versus the dreamy, melodic and warm "lullaby" tune. Lastly presented by the piano, the "lullaby" music is also a quote from my mini piano concerto *Canton Snowstorm*. As the title indicates, this work depicts the struggle between the artificial intelligence, or the hive mind, and the dimming humanity; furthermore, the work implies the final collapse and breakdown of the last hive mind followed by its triumph.

– Shuying Li

The Road Home

JAMES STEPHENSON

Born: 1969 | Composed: 2018

Duration: 10 minutes

The composer writes:

Chris Gekker is widely known in the trumpet world for his warm sound and fluid dexterity. His recordings have been circulated amongst friends and colleagues as examples of the highest quality, showcasing standard and new repertoire written for the instrument. My goal in composing this piece was merely to put him on display doing what he does best. No fireworks, no pyro-techniques, just Chris being Chris.

The Road Home might be imagined as someone both longing and happy to be heading toward home, or arriving home, after quite some time away. At times mysterious, and other times jubilant and joyful, there is always a sense of going somewhere with anticipation.

I am delighted that forces were joined by ITG, John Irish and the Band of the West for me to compose this piece for Chris, who I have long admired, and for Major David Alpar to conduct. David is a long-time friend of mine from high-school days. We have collaborated on several occasions, so, in a sense, writing for him is also like going back home.

– James Stephenson

Suite in B-flat Major, Op. 4**RICHARD STRAUSS****Born: 1864 | Died: 1949 | Composed: 1884***Duration: 24 minutes*

There is no particular reason why Richard Strauss should have ever composed any music for winds, even though his father, Franz Strauss, made his living as a hornist in the Bavarian Court Opera Orchestra and was renowned as one of the greatest wind players of his day. Nearly all of Richard's early experiences with music were connected with the opera, its orchestra and music-making within the extended family. By age ten, it was clear that the young Strauss was serious about composition, and so in 1875 he began a systematic study of composition (under Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer, an assistant conductor at the Court Opera), and over the next five years, Strauss produced *Hausmusik* for family use and also a modest series of larger works for orchestra that may have been his composition assignments. After completing his formal studies, Strauss began work on his most ambitious composition to date, a Symphony in D-minor, which was immediately followed by a String Quartet. Both premiered early the next year, and the Quartet was quickly published. From all outward appearances, Strauss was embarking on a career as a serious composer of art music.

And then, with no signs of any music for winds in the more than 100 works drafted by Strauss up to that time, he composed the Serenade, Op. 7 in 1881. His father was an avowed anti-Wagnerian, who barely tolerated any composers much beyond Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven, and thus the model for his son's Serenade is Mozart's seven-movement Serenade in B-flat, K. 361. Strauss's ensemble does differ slightly from Mozart's, who called for pairs of oboes, clarinets, basset-horns and bassoons, augmented by four horns and a double bass. In contrast, Strauss uses the standard four pairs of orchestral winds (flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons), along with four horns and "contrabassoon or tuba." Hans von Bülow added the piece to the repertoire of the Meiningen Orchestra in the winter of 1883-84, and it was an immediate success. Although many years later, Strauss would describe the Serenade as "nothing more than the respectable work of a music student," it gave him his first significant triumph, and thus it is not surprising that he sought to recapture that success almost immediately.

Within a few months after the Meiningen performances of the Serenade, Strauss had begun drafting a multi-movement work for the same thirteen instruments. Around that time, Bülow wrote to Strauss with a detailed plan for a multi-movement work for the same ensemble. Bülow's advice arrived too late for Strauss to follow completely, but he did use some of those suggestions in the four-movement Suite in B-flat Major, Op. 4, which Strauss gave to Bülow in the fall of 1884.

As a whole, Strauss's compositional technique is secure in this work, and his handling of the instruments is nearly symphonic at times. Nevertheless, the Suite has been somewhat less successful than the Serenade, perhaps because the Serenade is much more tuneful—like Mozart's music it is essentially operatic. The Suite, on the other hand, looks forward to Strauss's symphonic works (which began immediately following it), and is more motivically dense and a study in compositional craftsmanship.

The opening "Präludium" is a straightforward sonata-allegro movement based on the short motive that opens the work. Although there is a contrasting second

theme, there is little development. This is a similar design to the Serenade, and may have been a way for Strauss to confirm his handling of the ensemble before venturing into the more varied music of the other movements. The second movement is a "Romanze" of similar design. The most concertante of all the movements, it has a prominent role for the clarinet.

As the first two movements perhaps look backward to the Serenade, the final two seem to be moving forward to Strauss's mature symphonic style. The third movement is labeled "Gavotte," but the movement has little to do with the eighteenth-century French court dance implied by that title. Rather, its playfulness suggests the mood of a scherzo (but in duple meter). The basic idea is a simple three-note chromatic descent, introduced in whole notes. After it is repeated twice in diminution, Strauss decorates the first two notes with upper neighbors and the third note with a descending fourth. Finally, only the basic rhythm of the decorated version is reiterated by the horns. All of this deceptively simple development takes place in just four measures, and when played in Strauss's colorful, soloistic scoring it provides more than enough material for the movement.

The finale, an "Introduction und Fuge," is compositional and instrumental tour-de-force. Strauss's manipulation of his materials is impressive, and, with the benefit of hindsight, we can hear sounds that prefigure some of Strauss's great orchestral wind writing.

– Michael Votta, Jr. (adapted from notes by Scott Warfield)

Memorial to Lidice**BOHUSLAV MARTINU ARRANGED BY ROBERT W. RUMBELOW****Born: 1890 | Died: 1959 | Composed: 1943 | Arranged: 1995***Duration: 9 minutes*

In 1942, the appalling news reached America that the Czech village of Lidice had been burned to the ground by the Nazis in retaliation for the assassination of Gauleiter Heydrich by the Resistance. The town's men were shot, its women and children carried off to concentration camps, and all evidence of its existence wiped from the earth. The following year, the American League of Composers asked Martinu and several other composers to commemorate the appalling tragedy at Lidice with appropriate music. *Memorial to Lidice* was written within a few days in August 1943 at Darien, Connecticut. The composition was first performed on October 2, 1943 at the Carnegie Hall, New York, by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski, at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic. The work is in a single broad movement that progresses solemnly but without despair to its climax, which quotes the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the tonal symbol of the free world during World War II. Following the premiere, the critic Oscar Thompson wrote in the *New York Sun*, "Memorial do Lidice is a chant and prayer, somber but not depressed in mood, aglow with restrained feeling, steady and strong in spirit." This arrangement was premiered in Rochester, New York by the Eastman Wind Ensemble on May 10, 1995 under the baton of Mr. Rumbelow."

– From the Score

Oracles**MARK WILSON****Born: 1950 | Composed: 2019 World Premiere***Duration: 20 minutes*

The composer writes:

Oracles was written during my sabbatical leave in spring 2019 and is dedicated to my colleague Michael Votta, Jr., and the UMD Wind Orchestra. The inspiration for the piece comes from the First Delphic Hymn, dating from the late Hellenistic period. The original Greek work is an unaccompanied, monophonic vocal piece, a hymn to Apollo written by Athenaios Athenaiou in 138 BC. The First Delphic Hymn is the earliest surviving example of notated music by a composer known by name and was discovered inscribed on a stone stela buried in the ruins of the Delphi, home to the most important oracle of the ancient world.

“Variations on the First Delphic Hymn,” the opening movement of *Oracles*, is a series of free variations on excerpts from the First Delphic Hymn. I had no interest in attempting an historical reconstruction of any aspect of the original piece. No reference to the devotional tone or mood of the Greek original is made in my work. Rather, I was attracted to the musical materials of the work, in particular the lilting, jazzy rhythmic patterns based on groupings of five and the extraordinary, ever-changing modes used in the work. Occasional quotations from the First Delphic Hymn are used in the opening movement of *Oracles*, but most of the piece consists of highly transformed variations that were merely inspired by the Greek original as a point of departure. The piece is wide ranging in character with dramatic shifts from light to dark and back again.

The slow, mysterious second movement, “Kastalia: Sacred Water,” makes use of colorful, dissonant harmonies employing pitch relationships derived from the opening phrases of the First Delphi Hymn. The title is a reference to the sacred spring that wells up near the precinct of Delphi, used to purify the oracular participants in ancient times, but the title is also intended as a metaphor for the sacred nature of water: the origin and sustainer of all life. The piece conjures up images of still, clear water. Fantastic birds come to drink the cool water and sing to each other.

The final movement, “Games,” on the surface makes reference to the ancient Phythian Games, athletic and artistic competitions held every four years at Delphi, but is more about games of a musical nature, in particular the lively interplay between rhythmic patterns of two versus groupings of three. There are some surprising twists and turns in the piece—all part of the game.

I’ve always been moved by the cultural remnants of deep antiquity, edited by the erosion of time. It seems to me that the more remote the source from our present time and way of thinking, the fresher, the more thought provoking, and indeed, the more unconventional the experience. If modernity is a search for the fresh and new, then, for me at least, the more ancient, the more modern.

– Mark Wilson

Michael Votta Jr., *Music Director*
Mark Wakefield, *Ensembles Manager***FLUTE/PICCOLO**Emily Davis
Emma Hammond
David Le
Madeline Swartz**OBOE**Lydia Consilvio
Katelyn Estep
Karyanne Mitchell
TJ Wagman**CLARINET**Nathan Dorsey
Kyle Glasgow
Cliff Hangarter
Brooke Krauss
Adrian Paras
Casey Schreck
Kenny Wang
Darren Williams
Andrew Zhang**BASSOON**Mark Liffiton
Grayham Nield
Monica Panepento**SAXOPHONE**Carolyn Braus
Matthew Chaffer
Joseph McNure
Sanjay Subramanian**HORN**Ben Busch
Emerson Miller
Cosette Ralowicz
Niklas Schnake
Hannah Smith**TRUMPET**Andy Bible
Antonios Eleftheriou
Jacob Rose
Di Yue**TROMBONE**Jack Burke
Dan Degenford
Leanne Hanson**EUPHONIUM**

Chris McGinty

TUBA

Pasquale Sarracco

PERCUSSIONMatthew Dupree
Thomas Glowacki
Anthony Konstant
Bruce Perry
Corey Sittinger**TIMPANI**Anthony Konstant
Nehemiah Russell
Corey Sittinger**BASS**

Kimberly Parillo

HARP

Heidi Sturniolo

PIANO/CELESTA

Ria Yang

UPCOMING FALL 2019 SCHOOL OF MUSIC CONCERTS

HOLST'S THE PLANETS

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND
WOMEN'S VOICES OF THE
UMD CONCERT CHOIR

SUN, NOV 3 • 3PM

\$25 PUBLIC / \$10 STUDENT/YOUTH / UMD STUDENTS FREE

Gustav Holst's *The Planets* is an epic orchestral suite that takes the listener on a majestic journey through the solar system. Together the seven movements represent the planets visible from Earth at the time the piece was composed, each taking on the astrological character of the planet it depicts. The concert will also feature Arvo Pärt's *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, composed as an elegy to mourn the loss of the great British composer.

HANDEL'S ARIODANTE MARYLAND OPERA STUDIO

NOV 21 - 25

\$25 PUBLIC / \$10 STUDENT/YOUTH / UMD STUDENTS FREE

Handel's *Ariodante* is a story of royalty, love, intrigue and deceit set in the medieval Scottish highlands. Don't miss this Baroque masterpiece known for its emotionally evocative arias. Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

FROM BJÖRK TO SCHMITT

UMD WIND ORCHESTRA

SAT, DEC 7 • 8PM

\$25 PUBLIC / \$10 STUDENT/YOUTH / UMD STUDENTS FREE

From the Icelandic rockstar Björk's Overture to *Dancer in the Dark* to Florent Schmitt's joyful *Dionysiaques*, enjoy a dynamic evening of modern masterworks for wind orchestra.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND
UMD CHAMBER SINGERS

SUN, DEC 8 • 3PM

\$25 PUBLIC / \$10 STUDENT/YOUTH / UMD STUDENTS FREE

This most beloved Baroque masterpiece returns to the University of Maryland for the first time in two decades! Experience Handel's glorious and powerful music through the combined power of the UMD Chamber Singers, members of the UMD Symphony Orchestra and student and alumni soloists all led by Edward Maclary. Featuring the much-loved "Hallelujah Chorus," this is a holiday favorite you won't want to miss!

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