

UMD Wind Orchestra _____

Michael Votta Jr.,
music director
Mark Wakefield,
ensemble manager
Anthony Rivera,
graduate assistant
Craig Potter,
graduate assistant

Flute

Jenny Lehtonen
Caroline Rohm

Oboe

Lauren Arel
Elizabeth Eber

Clarinet

Matthew Dykeman
Nathan Raderman
Emily Robinson

Bassoon

Ronn Hall
Nick Ober
Caitlin Wieners

Horn

JP Bailey
Erika Binsley
Avery Pettigrew

Tuba

Craig Potter

Percussion

Laurin Friedland
Maurice Watkins

Piano

Alex Chen

Violin

Jamie Chimchirian
Gray Dickerson

Viola

Emily Kurlinski

Cello

Erin Snedecor

Bass

Adam Celli



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
wind orchestra

MICHAEL VOTTA, JR., CONDUCTOR

WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR
SYMPHONIC BANDS AND ENSEMBLES
CONFERENCE

CALIFORNIA THEATRE, SAN JOSE, CA
JULY 12, 2015
8:00 PM



University of Maryland School of Music
2110 Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
College Park, MD 20742-1620

“Collage”

col-lage (kə'läZH)

1. a work of art made by juxtaposing diverse materials
2. a combination or collection of various things

WA Mozart (1756-1791): Overture to "The Magic Flute"
(1791, arr. Bastiaan Blomhert)

Michael Forbes: *Grumpy Troll*
Craig Potter, tuba

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935): *Fratres* (1977, arr. Beat Brinner, 1990)

Edgard Varèse: *Density 21.5*
Caroline Rohm, flute

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951): Chamber Symphony, Op. 9 (1906)
– intermission –

Paul Lansky (b.1944): *Comix Trips* (2008)

Leaping Lizards
Holy Moly
Good Grief
What, Me Worry?

Gaspar Cassadó: *Preludio-Fantasia*
from Suite for Solo Cello
Erin Snedecor, cello

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992): *Libertango* (1974, arr. Jeff Scott, 2009)

UMWO and UMSO are led with a shared vision and with close collaboration in programming, personnel assignment and concert-giving:

1. We believe there is no difference between playing chamber music, playing in orchestra, and playing in an ensemble of winds except the number of people around you.
2. We believe every concert must be a simultaneous celebration of the past and of the future.

These core beliefs have influenced every aspect of our large ensemble program including what we play, why we rehearse, how we define the symbiotic roles of conductor and player, and how we give concerts:

1. We believe that music-making in all ensemble settings requires the same essential skills of active listening and co-shaping that characterizes great chamber music-making. We believe in leading while following and following while leading—not just for our players but also for ourselves as leaders of players.
2. We believe in the conductor-less large ensemble experience.
3. We believe in encouraging active verbal input from players throughout the rehearsal process and in soliciting their ideas for programming future seasons.
4. We believe in mixing the skill levels of our players for maximum educational benefits, and in the primacy of process—i.e. that good rehearsals are their own reward.
5. We believe in our New Lights initiative, which asks questions like: What exists in a concert that people should want to come to it? What is it about the ritual of concerts that may keep people from wanting to come? How can we enhance the impact of the music we play? What forms might concerts take 50 years from now? What is good music of any genre—and why does music of different genres so rarely appear together on concerts? Beyond playing the notes well, what might be asked of young musicians to help build the kind of musical life they would want to inhabit?

Our concerts are our attempts at responses to these questions.

James Ross
Director of Orchestral Activities

Michael Votta, Jr.
Director of Wind Activities

Piazzolla returned to tango and to his instrument, the bandoneon. What he once saw as a choice between “sophisticated music or tango” was transformed into “sophisticated music and tango.”

In 1955 he introduced “Nuevo tango,” a new approach to the genre incorporating jazz improvisation, counterpoint, and dissonance. Although he met with resistance in Argentina, his music gained popularity in Europe and North America. A virtuoso bandoneonista, Piazzolla collaborated with classical musicians including violinist Gideon Kremer, cellists Mistislav Rostropovich and Yo-Yo Ma, pianist Emanuel Ax, and the Kronos Quartet (which commissioned *Five Tango Sensations for bandoneón and string quartet* in 1989). In 1990 he suffered a heart attack in Paris, and he died two years later in Buenos Aires.

One of his most popular works, *Libertango* (1973), has been arranged for countless instruments and combinations. Piazzolla said, “Libertango stands for the freedom which I allow for my musicians. Their limits are defined solely by the extent of their own capabilities and not through any exterior pressure.” Written for his *Octeto Nuevo de Buenos Aires*, the piece represents a leaner, more fluid musical style, based on the inherent musical qualities of the tango, “liberated” from the social context of its origins.

VISION STATEMENT

The University of Maryland Wind Orchestra was founded in 2008 to give advanced undergraduate, MM and DMA performance students the opportunity to participate in a professional caliber ensemble with the intent of furthering their preparation as professional orchestral and chamber music performers.

UMWO is committed to the idea that chamber music is central to all ensemble performance, and it embraces the ethos of chamber music even in large ensemble contexts.

UMWO regularly incorporates string, keyboard and vocal performers. In addition to expanding repertoire possibilities, UMWO seeks to create a “next-generation” of string, keyboard and vocal performers who embrace the wind ensemble as a vital and integral part of their musical world.

During its seven-year history, UMWO has performed in side-by-side collaborations with major professional ensembles such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Eighth Blackbird and the Imani Winds, has been invited to perform at international, national and regional conferences, and has been active in commissioning and premiering new works for winds.

All wind, brass, and percussion players rotate between the UM Wind Orchestra and the UM Symphony Orchestra by concert period, placing constantly shifting demands on our musicians every four weeks and inspiring the development of skills that serve them best in a variety of musical situations.

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 UM Wind Orchestra 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 the Imani Winds. UMWO has commissioned and premiered numerous works by composers such as Daniel Bernard Roumain, Andre Previn, Baljinder Sekhon, Robert Gibson, Alvin Singleton and James Syler.

Votta has taught conducting seminars in the US and Israel, and has guest conducted and lectured throughout the world with organizations including 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.

He is the author of numerous articles on wind literature and conducting. 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 currently the President-Elect of the Eastern Division of the College Band Directors National Association, and has 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 served as Assistant Conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and 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.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The recipe for tonight's "collage" is intentionally eclectic—a mixture of equal parts timeless spirituality, grumpy troll, comic strip characters, tango, magical flutes (both sonic and allegorical), and a seminal work by one of the major figures of 20th century music. Add a dash of percussion, garnish with solo cello and serve.

Pondering this odd collection of pieces might inspire one to wonder "why?" Resisting the facile reply ("why not?") might require further reflection, a sense of whimsy and perhaps a willingness to wonder why and how concerts of classical music work (or not). And there is that elephant in the room: "the wind ensemble repertoire."

Even after working with and studying this repertoire for 30 years, I am still perplexed by the "wind ensemble repertoire" and its relationship to the orchestral, "band" and chamber music repertoires. It is a repertoire that continually challenges its curators.

Wind ensembles are omnivorous, voraciously consuming any repertoire that crosses their path. They have also been known to become ferocious predators, relentlessly hunting down works from other genres for their own nourishment.

This has led to the birth of a repertoire that is eclectic both in content and artistic intention, one that finds places for composers as diverse as John Phillip Sousa and Alban Berg even as it adds new works with dizzying pace. It is full of contradictions, puzzlements, uneven quality (what repertoire isn't?), and it requires a lifetime of study.

In short, it's absolutely perfect.

We would like to play some of it for you this evening to inspire, amuse, challenge and, hopefully, to delight you.

PROGRAM NOTES

WA Mozart: The Magic Flute

In eighteenth-century Europe, noblemen enjoyed musical accompaniment to their meals, parties and other social events. The wind octet (or, as the Viennese termed it, *Harmonie*) consisting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons proved the ideal medium, and many aristocrats established their own private *Harmonie*—even public taverns and other gathering spots would engage the services of a professional wind band. At first, most *Harmoniemusik* consisted of transcriptions of the popular operas of the day; in fact such transcriptions became big business. In July 1782 Mozart wrote to his father:

"I am up to my eyes in work, but by next Sunday I have to arrange my opera [*Abduction from the Seraglio*] for wind instruments. If I don't, someone will get to it before I do and reap the profits. You have no idea how difficult it is to arrange a work of this kind for wind instruments, so that it suits these

Lansky also has said, "Here I am, 64, and I find myself at what feels like the beginning of a career. I'm interested in writing for real people at this point...[Earlier in my career] I wanted to be a filmmaker rather than a playwright. That is, I was interested in creating the finished product rather than in creating scripts or other people to execute."

Now, Lansky is discovering the joy of creating scripts for living players, and the thrill of hearing an audience react to the enthusiasm of human performers playing his creations. He has come to wonder whether the future success of a piece of music depends on the pleasure musicians take in playing it, the implication being that a piece with no performers has a built-in obsolescence. Holy Moly!

Gaspar Cassadó : Suite for Solo Cello (1926)

Cassadó was a child prodigy who gave his first public cello recital at nine years of age. Pablo Casals was present at that performance and was so impressed that he offered to teach the gifted young cellist. After receiving a scholarship from the City of Barcelona, Cassadó went to Paris where he became Casals's first pupil. He also studied composition with Maurice Ravel and Manuel De Falla.

Like the music of Arvo Pärt, Cassadó's work has its roots in the music of Bach. His *Suite for Solo Cello*, like Bach's, begins with a prelude and Cassadó's music combines the sounds of his native Spain with neo-Baroque elements and with harmonies inspired by his teacher Ravel. This movement pays tribute to two of Cassadó's mentors: Casals (in its homage to Bach's cello suites) and Ravel—the central portion of the movement quotes the flute solo from Ravel's ballet *Daphnis et Chloe*.

Cassadó is best known to wind conductors as the composer of the "Frescobaldi Toccata" (arranged for band by Earl Slocum). This work, originally for cello and piano, was presented by Cassadó as his arrangement of a work for keyboard by Frescobaldi.

Astor Piazzolla: Libertango

Arguably the most renowned tango musician in the world, Argentine-born Astor Piazzolla left a vast catalog of works encompassing instrumental tangos, tango songs, film music, pieces for guitar or flute, chamber and orchestral music, and—almost—an opera (he died before completing the commission).

After winning a scholarship from the French government to study in Paris in 1954, Piazzolla began lessons with Nadia Boulanger. At first, Piazzolla tried to hide his tanguero past, thinking that his destiny lay in classical music. After several frustrating weeks, he opened his heart to Boulanger and played his tango "Triunfal" for her. Boulanger gave him an historic recommendation: "Astor, your classical pieces are well written, but the true Piazzolla is here, never leave it behind."

The *Chamber Symphony* is unquestionably one of Schoenberg's masterworks, containing formal and tonal ideas that opened the door to many later developments in 20th century music. The piece is written in the one-movement form conceived by Schubert and developed by Liszt: a sonata-form structure that unites the several movements of the sonata (or the symphony) in a single span of music.

Schoenberg said he had a "perfect vision of the whole work" when he started to compose, but he struggled with the opening of the *Chamber Symphony*. It is an almost-atonal passage that moves melodically from Ab to A as the underlying harmony cadences on F major. The horn then presents a chromatic ascent from D to Eb as a rising series of fourths. The Eb (D#) is the leading tone to the main key of the work, E major, but a G augmented triad leading to a series of whole-tone scales undermines its tonal effectiveness.

Schoenberg, in fact, seems to delight in finding ways to subvert the tonal world that operates at the heart of post-Romantic symphonic music. A key center is still present during the course of the music, however, and when the music settles in E major during the coda there is the satisfying feeling of "returning home" that distinguishes good symphonic music.

Schoenberg believed that he had "arrived" with the *Chamber Symphony*. He told his friends at the time, "Now I have established my style. I know now how I have to compose." But several years later, his comments about the work sound like regrets for a lost love of youth: "It was as lovely a dream as it was a disappointing illusion."

In fact, rather than an arrival, the *Chamber Symphony* was a launching pad. It rocketed Schoenberg to his revolutionary ideas of "the unity of musical space" and ultimately to his "system of composing with 12 tones."

Paul Lansky: Comix Trips

Commissioned by the contemporary ensemble, Relâche, *Comix Trips* is fun—and extremely virtuosic. Paul Lansky is one of America's best-known pioneers in computer music and he was famously sampled by Radiohead on their *Kid A* album. Lately, he's received praise from the NY Times and others for his acoustic compositions, like *Comix Trips*, which takes its inspiration from famous comic strips and characters like Little Orphan Annie ("Leaping Lizards!"), Captain Marvel ("Holy Moly"), Peanuts ("Good Grief"), and Alfred E. Newman ("What, Me Worry?").

The Times article begins, "After 35 years immersed in the world of computer music, the composer Paul Lansky talks with wonder about the enormous capacities of primitive objects carved from trees or stamped from metal sheets: violins, cellos, trumpets, pianos. 'To create the sound of a violin — wow!' he said in a recent interview. 'I can't do that on a computer.'"

instruments and yet loses none of its effect."

Mozart seems never to have completed his transcription: his operas in *Harmoniemusik* form have reached us through the pens of contemporaneous oboists and clarinetists: Georg Triebensee, Johann Nepomuk Wendt, and Joseph Heidenreich. Heidenreich was a prolific arranger of operas, and the *Wiener Zeitung* of January 14, 1792, gives the following announcement:

"Since several music lovers have expressed the wish to own a *Harmonie* arrangement of the popular opera, *The Magic Flute*, the last work of the great Mozart, the undersigned flatters himself that he will not be giving unwelcome news when he says that the aforesaid opera set for 8 parts will be issued at a subscription price of 6 fl. 40 kr., which lasts until the end of January...should some music lover prefer, however, to have this opera in 6 parts, the undersigned will be no less willing to serve a sufficient number of subscribers."

On the whole, Heidenreich's arrangement of the overture was well done, but his solution to the development section (where Mozart's modulations introduced keys beyond the capabilities of the instruments of his time) was simply to cut it out.

We are performing a modern adaptation by Bastiaan Blomhert that restores the missing development section (there is such a thing as progress), adds a flute (restoring the leading instrumental character—"the magic oboe" just wouldn't be right...), and that reinforces the low voices with a double bass (following the practice recommended by Mozart's friend and leader of the Imperial *Harmonie*, Anton Stadler).

Michael Forbes: The Grumpy Troll

Michael Forbes writes, " 'The Grumpy Troll' is my first composition for unaccompanied tuba. It comes from my musings about how a Norwegian troll would act and sound—especially if particularly disturbed.

"The opening figure sets the tone of the work with a rising minor-third interval—a musical grunt that reflects the overall demeanor of the troll. The second section of the work portrays a more active but still angry troll, who leaps between ideas and argues with himself. The third section recalls the earlier grunts, but with more fluidity and expression to the troll's musings. Finally, the fourth section unleashes the troll in high pursuit of something."

"You can hear the troll's out-of-breath quality both in the tuba player's exuberance as well as in the leaking sound of the open valve, which permeates the work. This work was meant to be a tour-de-force of technique and musical expression for the tubist as well as a vehicle to demonstrate contemporary sounds and techniques to audiences in an entertaining and accessible way."

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres*

For thirty-five years the Estonian-born composer Arvo Pärt has occupied a prominent place among composers of what has been termed “holy minimalist” music. After early flirtations with serialism (which were criticized by the Soviet authorities), Pärt began to study Bach and to incorporate some neo-Baroque elements into his works. This in turn led to his exploration of music made from materials of the greatest simplicity.

Pärt began to immerse himself in medieval and Renaissance chant and polyphonic music—the title of this evening’s work, *Fratres* (“brothers”), suggests monastic meditations—and he started to focus on the mystical energy born of the simultaneous sounding of notes. By 1976 he had found the essence of the style that has been his hallmark ever since: a technique he calls “tintinnabuli,” referring to bell-like resonances.

Pärt said: “Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers—in my life, my music, my work... The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it?”

“I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements—with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials—with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells. And that is why I call it tintinnabulation.”

The tintinnabuli principle is central to *Fratres*. The three-part theme is repeated at successively lower pitch levels and in alternation with its inversion, as the work slowly and meditatively proceeds to its inevitable conclusion.

A drone on A and E is sustained through the entire ten-minute piece as an unwavering foundation. Everything progresses slowly, and the volume swells halfway through and then sinks back to near-silence.

After *Fratres* was premiered in 1977, Pärt created or authorized new arrangements or elaborations over the course of many years. At last count, his publisher listed sixteen different versions for a wide variety of forces, including of course the version we’re playing this evening.

Edgard Varèse: *Density 21.5*

“Contrary to general belief, an artist is never ahead of his time but most people are far behind theirs. I do not write experimental music. It is the listener who must experiment.”

Edgard Varèse

The density of platinum is 21.5 grams per cubic centimeter, and *Density 21.5* was written in 1936 for the debut of George Barrere’s platinum flute. Besides being principal flute in the New York Philharmonic, Barrere is a notable figure in the history of wind music: it was his wind ensemble (the *Société moderne des instruments à vent*) that commissioned Reynaldo Hahn’s *Le Bal de Beatrice d’Este* and other staples of “the wind ensemble repertoire.”

Like *Fratres*, *Density 21.5* is based on simple ideas and begins meditatively. Unlike Pärt’s work, however, the flute gradually unfolds its two main ideas into ever-higher registers, becoming increasingly agitated as we leave the serene calm of the monastery for the drama of the modern concert hall.

Density 21.5 is a seminal work for flute. In the decades following its premiere, composers began to explore a much larger range of timbres and techniques for the instrument, ultimately leading to an explosion of virtuosic and colorful modern works for solo flute.

Arnold Schoenberg: *Chamber Symphony, Op. 9*

Like Varese, Arnold Schoenberg was a composer in search of listeners willing to experiment. In 1915, when his music regularly provoked one scandal after another, Schoenberg wrote to his brother-in-law, Alexander von Zemlinsky:

“You know that I have scarcely ever taken any account of whether my works were liked or not. I have become indifferent to public abuse and I have never had any inclination to do anything that wasn’t dictated by the purely musical demands of my works.” In that same letter, however, he asked that Zemlinsky not to program his *Chamber Symphony* on an upcoming concert, but to substitute an earlier piece, “something that [we] can count on being fairly well received by the public.”

Although the *Chamber Symphony* can sound romantic in its gestures and harmonic language today, it was difficult for audiences to follow when it was first played. Midway through the premiere, given in Vienna’s elegant *Musikverein* in February 1907, people began to scrape their chairs loudly in protest and to walk out.

Gustav Mahler, who was in the audience, rose from his seat in anger and demanded silence. At the end of the performance, he stood at the front of his box, applauding, until everyone had left the hall. Although he recognized the importance of Schoenberg’s latest work, on the way home he confessed, “I do not understand his music, but he is young; perhaps he is right.”

When the chamber symphony was played again in Vienna in March 1913, it was again met with obvious displeasure—although that night it was the music of Schoenberg’s pupil, Alban Berg, that touched off a riot. The riot—and the concert—were stopped by the arrival of the police.