MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY WIND SYMPHONY

Conductor
Kevin L. Sedatole

Guest Conductors
Simon Holoweiko
Hunter Kopczynski

Guest Composer
Omar Thomas

Thursday, September 26, 2019 | 7:30 PM
Cobb Great Hall
Wharton Center for Performing Arts
**PRE-CONCERT MUSIC**

Roger Zare  
b. 1985  
**Z(4430)** (2014)  

Group (2)  
Evan Harris, *soprano saxophone*  
Eric Zheng, *alto saxophone*  
Adam Epler, *tenor saxophone*  
Tyler Young, *baritone saxophone*

**PROGRAM**

Ron Nelson  
b. 1929  
**Rocky Point Holiday** (1969)

Joel Love  
b. 1982  
**Musica Dei, donum optimi** (2005/2013)  
Simon Holoweiko, *conductor*

Elena Specht  
b. 1993  
**Scenes from Home** (2019)  
I. Mountain Lake  
II. Seagulls in Morning Light  
III. Winter Forest  
IV. Cottage by the Shore  
Hunter Kopczynski, *conductor*  

*World Premiere* | MSU Honors Composition Competition Winner

- INTERMISSION -

John Philip Sousa  
1854 - 1932  
**The Gallant Seventh** (1922)

John Mackey  
b. 1973  
**Hymn to a Blue Hour** (2010)

Omar Thomas  
b. 1984  
**Come Sunday** (2018)

Please silence all handheld electronic devices for the duration of the performance.
OMAR THOMAS | GUEST COMPOSER

Described as "elegant, beautiful, sophisticated, intense, and crystal clear in emotional intent," the music of Omar Thomas continues to move listeners everywhere it is performed. Born to Guyanese parents in Brooklyn, New York in 1984, Omar moved to Boston in 2006 to pursue a Master of Music in Jazz Composition at the New England Conservatory of Music. He is the protégé of lauded composers and educators Ken Schaphorst and Frank Carlberg, and has studied under multiple Grammy-winning composer and bandleader Maria Schneider.

Hailed by Herbie Hancock as showing "great promise as a new voice in the further development of jazz in the future," educator, arranger, and award-winning composer Omar Thomas has created music extensively in the contemporary jazz ensemble idiom. It was while completing his Master of Music Degree that he was appointed the position of Assistant Professor of Harmony at Berklee College of Music at the surprisingly young age of 23. He was awarded the ASCAP Young Jazz Composers Award in 2008, and invited by the ASCAP Association to perform his music in their highly exclusive JaZzCap Showcase, held in New York City. In 2012, Omar was named the Boston Music Award's "Jazz Artist of the Year." He is currently on faculty in the Music Theory department at The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Omar’s music has been performed in concert halls the world over. He has been commissioned to create works in both jazz and classical styles. His work has been performed by such diverse groups as the Eastman New Jazz Ensemble, the San Francisco and Boston Gay Mens’ Choruses, and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, in addition to a number of the country’s top collegiate music ensembles. Omar has had a number of celebrated singers perform over his arrangements, including Stephanie Mills, Yolanda Adams, Nona Hendryx, BeBe Winans, Kenny Lattimore, Marsha Ambrosius, Sheila E., Raul Midon, Leela James, Dionne Warwick, and Chaka Khan. His work is featured on Dianne Reeves’s Grammy Award-winning album, “Beautiful Life.”

Omar’s first album, "I AM," debuted at #1 on iTunes Jazz Charts and peaked at #13 on the Billboard Traditional Jazz Albums Chart. His second release, "We Will Know: An LGBT Civil Rights Piece in Four Movements," has been hailed by Grammy Award-winning drummer, composer, and producer Terri Lyne Carrington as being a "thought provoking, multi-layered masterpiece" which has "put him in the esteemed category of great artists." "We Will Know" was awarded two OUTMusic Awards, including "Album of the Year." For this work, Omar was named the 2014 Lavender Rhino Award recipient by The History Project, acknowledging his work as an up-and-coming activist in the Boston LGBTQ community. Says Terri Lyne: "Omar Thomas will prove to be one of the more important composer/arrangers of his time."
Rocky Point Holiday | Ron Nelson

Ron Nelson received his Bachelor of Music degree in 1952, the Master’s degree in 1953, and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1956, all from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester. He also studied in France at the Ecole Normale de Musique and at the Paris Conservatory under a Fulbright Grant in 1955. Dr. Nelson joined the Brown University faculty the following year and taught there until his retirement in 1993. In 1991, Dr. Nelson was awarded the Acuff Chair of Excellence in the Creative Arts, the first musician to hold the chair. In 1993, his Passacaglia (Homage on B-A-C-H) made history by winning all three major wind band compositions – the National Association Prize, the American Bandmasters Association Ostwald Prize and the Sudler International Prize. He was awarded the Medal of Honor of the John Philip Sousa Foundation in Washington, DC, in 1994. In 2006, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Oklahoma City University.

Rocky Point Holiday was a commission from Frank Bencriscutto and the University of Minnesota band for a tour of Russia. It was composed between 1968 and 1969. Bencriscutto had heard Nelson’s orchestral work Savannah River Holiday and decided he wanted something virtuosic to take with him on the Russian tour. When asked about the limitations of the band, Bencriscutto told him there were none. “I’m going to write a tremendously difficult piece,” Nelson warned him. “That’s fine,” replied Bencriscutto, and thus Rocky Point Holiday was born. Nelson says, “This was a pivotal moment in my notion of wind ensemble scoring, in which I focused on orchestrating in an extremely transparent way.”

The bulk of the work of this composition occurred while Nelson was on vacation in Rhode Island, and the piece is tribute to the then over 100 year-old amusement park in Warwick, Rhode Island, called Rocky Point.

Program note by David Kehler

Musica Dei, donum optimi | Joel Love

Musica Dei, donum optimi is Joel Love’s first piece for large ensemble. Originally written in 2005 for the Lamar University A Capella Choir, Love transcribed his own work for large ensemble in 2013 based on the following text:

“Music, gift of the Highest God,
attracts men, attracts the gods.
Music calms sad spirits,
and calms sad minds.
Music even stirs the trees,
and calms wild beasts.”

Musica Dei, donum optimi is based around a simple opening melodic motive that resolves in unexpected and meandering ways. Albeit a seemingly inconsequential idea at the beginning, this motive works to delay conclusions and results in significant moments of prolonged anticipation for the listener. Music Dei, donum optimi is a musical representation
of the need to enjoy the simple things in life because, while they might not seem like much, it is in the little things that sometimes the most beauty can be found.

**Scenes from Home | Elena Specht**

When conceiving of *Scenes from Home*, I had a strong desire to write music in response to specific images. I chose to use the artwork hanging in my own home as inspiration. I encounter these four paintings every day, and as a composer, I thought it only logical to give a soundtrack and a story to each. The paintings I have are all second-hand art, collected from thrift stores and previous owners who no longer wanted them. Consequently, I know little or nothing about their creators, but each work brings character to my home. *Scenes from Home* is, then, drawn literally from scenes in my own home, but the subject matter of each painting is very much something not in my home. Each of these images carries me out of my house to another place. Some remind me of specific places I have been, while others are truly only scenes I can imagine from these paintings. *Scenes from Home* explores not just what is literally depicted in the paintings, but what else I imagine is occurring – what would happen if we pressed “play” on each of these snapshots. I imagine wildlife struggling for survival, seagulls cawing as they soar, children playing on a summer vacation, waves roaring as they crash against the shore, and more. *Scenes from Home* brings each painting to life, allowing us to imagine each scene in action.

Program note by the composer

**The Gallant Seventh | John Philip Sousa**

It is amazing that this march, regarded as one of Sousa’s finest and certainly one of his most vigorous, was composed while he was recuperating from a broken neck. The march takes its title from the 7th Regiment, 107th Infantry, of the New York National Guard, whose history may be traced back to the Civil War. The conductor of the famous 7th Regiment Band was Major Francis Sutherland, a former Sousa Band cornetist.

Upon America’s entry into World War I, Sutherland left his position with Sousa to enlist in the army; he was made a bandmaster in the U.S. Field Artillery. Several other Sousa men then secured their release to enlist, some for service with Sutherland’s band.

Sutherland did not return to the Sousa Band at the war’s end; he accepted the position of bandmaster of the 7th Regiment. The regiment’s commanding officer, Colonel Wade H. Hayes, made a formal request of Sousa for a march. Sousa obliged, paying tribute to the organizational ability and professional standing of one of his band’s alumni. For the official send-off of the new march at the New York Hippodrome on November 5, 1922, Sutherland’s 7th Regiment Band augmented the Sousa Band on stage.

Although no less than seven other composers had also written marches for this regiment, Sousa’s was the only one to gain wide acceptance, and Sousa was named honorary bandmaster of the regiment. Many years later, Sutherland repaid his debt to Sousa in an appropriate way. He was one of eight founders of the living Sousa memorial known as the Sousa Band Fraternal Society.

Program note by Paul Bierley
Hymn to a Blue Hour | John Mackey

The blue hour is an oft-poeticized moment of the day - a lingering twilight that halos the sky after sundown but before complete darkness sets in. It is a time of day known for its romantic, spiritual, and ethereal connotations, and this magical moment has frequently inspired artists to attempt to capture its remarkable essence. This is the same essence that inhabits the sonic world of John Mackey’s Hymn to a Blue Hour:

”I almost never write music 'at the piano' because I don't have any piano technique. I can find chords, but I play piano like a bad typist types: badly. If I write the music using an instrument where I can barely get by, the result will be very different than if I sit at the computer and just throw a zillion notes at my sample library, all of which will be executed perfectly and at any dynamic level I ask. We spent the summer at an apartment in New York that had a nice upright piano. I don’t have a piano at home in Austin - only a digital keyboard - and it was very different to sit and write at a real piano with real pedals and a real action, and to do so in the middle of one of the most exciting and energetic (and loud) cities in America. The result - partially thanks to my lack of piano technique, and partially, I suspect, from a subconscious need to balance the noise and relentless energy of the city surrounding me at the time - is much simpler and lyrical music than I typically write.”

The piece is composed largely from three recurring motives - first, a cascade of falling thirds; second, a stepwise descent that provides a musical sigh; and third, the descent’s reverse: an ascent that imbues hopeful optimism. From the basic framework of these motives stated at the outset of the work, a beautiful duet emerges between horn and euphonium - creating a texture spun together into a blanket of sound, reminiscent of similar constructions elicited by great American melodists of the 20th century, such as Samuel Barber. This melody superimposes a sensation of joy over the otherwise “blue” emotive context - a melodic line that over a long period of time spins the work to a point of catharsis. In this climactic moment, the colors are at their brightest, enveloping their surroundings with an angelic glow. Alas, as is the case with the magical blue hour, the moment cannot last for long, and just as steadily as they arrived, the colors dissipate into the encroaching darkness, eventually succumbing at the work’s conclusion with a sense of peaceful repose.

Program note by Jake Wallace

Come Sunday | Omar Thomas

Come Sunday is a two-movement tribute to the Hammond organ’s central role in black worship services. The first movement, Testimony, follows the Hammond organ as it readies the congregation’s hearts, minds, and spirits to receive The Word via a magical union of Bach, blues, jazz, and R&B. The second movement, Shout!, is a virtuosic celebration - the frenzied and joyous climactic moments when The Spirit has taken over the service.

The title is a direct nod to Duke Ellington, who held an inspired love for classical music and allowed it to influence his own work in a multitude of ways. To all the black musicians in wind ensemble who were given opportunity after opportunity to celebrate everyone else’s music but our own - I see you and I am you. This one’s for the culture!

Program note by the composer
MSU WIND SYMPHONY

KEVIN L. SEDATOLE | CONDUCTOR

FLUTE
Ju Won An, South Korea
James Brinkmann, East Lansing
Felipe Boas, São Paulo, Brazil
Stefania Neumann, Salt Lake City, UT
Mady Steffen, Rockford
Tzu Shan Fu, East Lansing

OBOE
Emily Demski, Rochester
Youjin Roh, Seoul, Korea
Andrea Silverio, São Paulo, Brazil
Aaron Woodman, Chappell, NE

BASSOON
Rachel Frederiksen, New Braunfels, TX
Octavius Hernandez, Lansing
Natalie Law, Columbia Falls, MT
Caden Ridge, Denton, TX

CLARINET
Nolan Cardenas, Indianapolis, IN
Cade Dembski, East Lansing
Lisa Lachowski, Rochester Hills
Theresa Lam, Hong Kong
Lei Min, China
Elizabeth Rodeck, Grand Ledge
Stephanie Sowers, Minneapolis, MN
Dukhyun, Sung, Seoul, Korea
Ally Szeles, Kalamazoo
Jiale Wang, Wuhan, China

SAXOPHONE
Adam Epler, Richardson, TX
Evan Harris, Lansing
Jeffrey Leung, Toronto, Canada
Tyler Young, Aberdeen, NC
Eric Zheng, Tucson, AZ

HORN
Dinah Bianchi, Belleville
Joey Essenburg, Jenison
Alex Everdeen, Dexter
Dominic Occhietti, Iron Mountain
Kyndra Sisayaket, Pasco, WA
Katharine Walters, Dearborn

TRUMPET
Michael Barkett, Youngstown, OH
Willis Dotson, South Haven
Joshua Harris, Fresno, CA
Connor Johnson, Dexter
Jeremy Perkins, Bainbridge, GA
Mason Rorapaugh, Medina, OH
Christiena Taralsen, Fargo, ND

TROMBONE
Austin Blower, Wyoming
Kevin Clancy, Lansing
Jared Jarvis, Lansing

BASS TROMBONE
Denis Jiron, Los Angeles, CA
Jamey Morgan, Boulder, CO

EUPHONIUM
Ryan Malburg, Wixom
Nathan Wood, Houston, TX

TUBA
Ben McWilliams, Augusta
Jake Molle, Bentonville, AR
Jasmine Pigott, Greenlawn, NY
Andre Thacker, Greensboro, NC

PERCUSSION
Mickey Bertelsen, Bay City
Henry Eichman, Harrisburg, PA
Noah Ende, Long Island, NY
Cameron Halls, Waterford
Dan Hartung, Aberdeen, SD
Matt Kokotovich, Romeo
Isaac Pyatt, Greensboro, NC

PIANO
Elen Kobulashvili, Tbilisi, Georgia

HARP
Belle Coty, Grand Rapids

STRING BASS
Albert Daeschle, Seattle, WA

STRING
Albert Daeschle, Seattle, WA

PERCUSSION
Mikey Bertelsen, Bay City
CONDUCTING FACULTY

BANDS
Kevin L. Sedatole Director of Bands
David Thornton Associate Director of Bands | Director, Spartan Marching Band
Arris Golden Assistant Director of Bands | Associate Director, Spartan Marching Band

CHOIRS
David Rayl Director of Choral Programs
Jonathan Reed Associate Director of Choral Programs
Sandra Snow Associate Director of Choral Programs

ORCHESTRAS
Kevin Noe Director of Orchestras

JAZZ
Rodney Whitaker Director of Jazz Studies
Etienne Charles Assistant Director of Jazz Studies
Michael Dease Assistant Director of Jazz Studies
Diego Rivera Assistant Director of Jazz Studies

WIND CONDUCTING TEACHING ASSISTANTS
Rebekah Daniel, Doctoral Brent Echols, Masters
Simon Holoweiko, Doctoral Brian Taylor, Masters
Hunter Kopczynski, Doctoral

BAND STAFF
Lupe Dominguez Administrative Assistant

LIBRARIANS
Rachel Frederiksen
Mady Steffen

SET-UP
Gabby LeVangie
Mei Lin
Kimberly Roe

INSTRUMENTS
Natalie Law

WIND & PERCUSSION FACULTY
Richard Sherman, Flute
Jan Eberle, Oboe
Michael Kroth, Bassoon
Guy Yehuda, Clarinet
Mingzhe Wang, Clarinet
Joseph Lulloff, Saxophone
Corbin Wagner, Horn
Justin Emerich, Trumpet
Ava Ordman, Trombone
Philip Sinder, Tuba/Euphonium
Kevin Brown, Double Bass
Gwendolyn Dease, Percussion
Jon Weber, Percussion
Chen-Yu Huang, Harp
Deborah Moriarty, Piano
UPCOMING EVENTS

**Symphony Orchestra |** September 27, 2019 | 8:00 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

**Concert Band & Campus Band |** October 8, 2019 | 7:30 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

**Jazz Orchestras with Tanya Darby, Trumpet |**  
October 11, 2019 | 8:00 PM  
Fairchild Theatre | MSU Auditorium  

**Concert Orchestra |** October 15, 2019 | 7:30 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

**Spartan Spectacular |** October 20, 2019 | 3:00 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

**Symphony Band |** October 22, 2019 | 7:30 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

**Wind Symphony |** October 24, 2019 | 7:30 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

**Symphony Orchestra |** October 25, 2019 | 8:00 PM  
Cobb Great Hall | Wharton Center for Performing Arts  

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2019 SPARTAN SPECTACULAR

Sunday, October 20
3:00 PM
Wharton Center

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MSU WIND SYMPHONY
MSU JAZZ OCTET 1

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