

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

Lord of the Rings

JMU Wind Symphony

Dr. Christopher Cicconi, *conductor*
Johan de Meij, *guest conductor and composer*
Joshua Holsinger, *graduate conductor*

Tuesday, December 3, 2024
7:30 pm
Concert Hall



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Program

Smetana Fanfare (1984)

Karel Husa
(1921-2016)

Joshua Holsinger, *graduate conductor*

Song for Silent Voices (2018)

Wayne Oquin
(b. 1977)

The Seeker (2016)

David Maslanka
(1943-2017)

15-Minute Intermission

Symphony No. 1 “The Lord of the Rings”
(2023 Revised Edition)

Johan de Meij
(b. 1953)

- I. Gandalf (The Wizard)
- II. Lothlórien (The Elvenwood)
- III. Gollum (Sméagol)
- IV. Journey in the Dark
 1. The Mines of Moria
 2. The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm
- V. Hobbits

Johan de Meij, *guest composer and conductor*

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personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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Program Notes

Smetana Fanfare

Smetana Fanfare for Wind Ensemble was commissioned by the San Diego State University for the 1984 Festival of Music honoring the Czech composer Bedrich Smetana. It was first performed on April 3, 1984, in San Diego by the SDSU Wind Ensemble, on the occasion of the centennial celebration of Smetana's death. This short work uses two excerpts from Smetana's symphonic poem *The Wallenstein's Camp*, completed in 1859 in Goteberg, Sweden, during his exile from Prague.

- *Program note from printed score*

Song for Silent Voices

I love composing for the human voice. Nothing is more musically meaningful than finding the perfect poem, however unknown, and letting it transport me into worlds of sound I otherwise might not have considered. For me, the process of setting any text usually involves culling from the countless ways a stanza could be sung, to find the one I feel best captures the essence of the written word. I labor on every detail of the language — syllables, vowels, and consonants — giving each element its own unique melodic shape. Without fail, the music brings added meaning.

In October 2017, I began an unaccompanied choral work to honor the memory of a remarkable man, my long-time friend, Herbert M. Loyd, M.D. The text consisted of one word: *Alleluia*. I became fascinated with the idea of setting this single utterance hundreds of ways, each repetition determined to portray some new element of this ancient sacred expression.

Even before I knew the ending or how it would arrive, I was certain I wanted to explore an instrumental version. Beyond the affirmative title, beyond the emphatic nature of the repetitive lyric — alleluia ... alleluia — the slow harmonic rhythm in the opening, the song-like simplicity of the themes, the long soaring lines of the climax — at times as many as eight singing simultaneously — all urged me to undertake a transcription for the many colors of the wind ensemble.

Continually I'm drawn to music's power to connect, its gift of going beyond words. To enter music, this seemingly separate world of pitches, harmonies, rhythms, and textures, is to plunge more deeply into life itself. How true of the current work: unresolved dissonances speaking to our collective humanity in all its beauty and many imperfections; frequent modulations reflecting a world of constant change; a single solo voice signifying child-like innocence; the final diminuendo depicting life's brevity. Words alone would be inadequate.

- *Program note by Wayne Oquin*

The Seeker

The Seeker, a symphonic movement for wind ensemble, was composed by David Maslanka in 2016, commissioned by the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors' Association.

The Seeker draws its name from the Buddhist tradition, in which Buddhist followers are “the seekers” after enlightenment. Mr. Maslanka writes “it can be said that we are all seekers on this path, the path to self-understanding, of the heart of compassion, of caring for the world.”

Program Notes - *continued*

The Seeker opens with a slow melody that feels like an Appalachian folk song. It transitions suddenly and sharply into the main body of the work, an energetic and exuberant romp at a very speedy tempo. The melody returns in the context of a chorale, a recomposition of *Christe, der du bist tag und licht* (Christ, you who are day and light) from the 371 four-part chorales of Johann Sebastian Bach. The movement concludes with a partial recap of the fastmusic, and a very brief coda.

Symphony No. 1 “The Lord of the Rings”

Johan de Meij's first symphony “The Lord of the Rings” is based on the trilogy of that name by J.R.R. Tolkien. This book has fascinated many millions of readers since its publication in 1955. The symphony consists of five separate movements, each illustrating a personage or an important episode from the book.

The symphony was written in the period between March 1984 and December 1987, and had its première in Brussels on 15th March 1988, performed by the “Groot Harmonieorkest van de Gidsen” under the baton of Norbert Nozy. In 1989, The Symphony The Lord of the Rings was awarded a first prize in the Sudler International Wind Band Composition Competition in Chicago, and a year later, the symphony was awarded a grant by the Dutch Composers Fund. In 2001, the orchestral version was premiered by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Although it is not simple to summarize such an extensive and complex work, the main outline is as follows: the central theme is the Ring, made by primaeval forces that decide the safety or destruction of the World. For years it was the possession of the creature Gollum, but when the Ring falls into the hands of the Hobbits the evil forces awake and the struggle for the Ring commences. There is but one solution to save the World from disaster: the Ring must be destroyed by the fire in which it was forged: Mount Doom in the heart of Mordor, the country of the evil Lord Sauron.

It is the Hobbit Frodo who is assigned to carry out this task, and to assist him a company, the Fellowship of the Ring, is formed under the leadership of Gandalf, the wizard, which includes the Hobbits Sam, Peregrin and Merin, the Dwarf Gimli, the Elf Legolas, Boromir and Aragorn, the later King. The Companions are secretly followed by Gollum, who does not shun any means, however perfidious, to recover his priceless Ring. However, the Companions soon fall apart, after many pernicious adventures and a surprising dénouement Frodo and Sam can at last return to their familiar home, The Shire.

- Program note from printed score

Biographies

Dr. Christopher M. Cicconi is Director of Bands and Professor of Wind Conducting at James Madison University. Conductor of James Madison University School of Music's premiere concert band, the Wind Symphony, he also teaches courses in undergraduate as well as graduate conducting, wind ensemble literature, advises Masters and Doctoral Conducting students, and provides visionary leadership for as well as oversees the School of Music's comprehensive band program. Coupled with his duties at James Madison, Dr. Cicconi serves as the Principal Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Music Director of the Warren Philharmonic Orchestra, and a Conductor of the New England Music Camp Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Band.

As a strong advocate for music education and community outreach, Dr. Cicconi is in demand throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and is a sought-after guest conductor, clinician, and professional developer. He has appeared as a band and orchestra clinician in well over 200 public and private institutions and has been awarded, by the Maryland Music Educators Association, both the Outstanding Music Educator and the Corwin Taylor Music Education Leadership Awards and is a past president of the Maryland Band Directors Association. As a guest conductor, Cicconi has appeared with All-State, All-Region, and All-County Bands and Orchestras in numerous states around the country including California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wyoming, as well as the countries of Argentina and China. Finally, Dr. Cicconi frequently serves as a guest conductor for the internationally acclaimed Sewanee Music Festival as well as the United States Naval Academy and has presented clinic sessions at the field's most prestigious conferences, including the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic and the National Association for Music Education Conference.

Dutch composer and conductor **Johan de Meij** (Voorburg, 1953) received his musical training at the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague, where he studied trombone and conducting. His award-winning oeuvre of original compositions, symphonic transcriptions and film score arrangements has garnered him international acclaim and have become permanent fixtures in the repertoire of renowned ensembles throughout the world. His Symphony No. 1 *The Lord of the Rings* was awarded the prestigious Sudler Composition Prize and has been recorded by myriad ensembles including The London Symphony Orchestra, The North Netherlands Orchestra, The Nagoya Philharmonic and The Amsterdam Wind Orchestra. His Symphony No. 2 *The Big Apple*, Symphony No. 3 *Planet Earth*, Symphony No. 4 *Sinfonie der Lieder* as well as his solo concertos, *T-Bone Concerto* (trombone), *UFO Concerto* (euphonium) and *Casanova* (cello) have been enthusiastically received at many of the world's finest venues. In November 2007 he was awarded the Dutch Wind Music Award in recognition of his many years of service to the music sector. In 2017 he received the Buma Classical Award, and in 2022 the Buma Wind Music Award.

Before devoting his time exclusively to composing and conducting, Johan de Meij enjoyed a successful professional career as a trombone and euphonium player, performing with major orchestras and ensembles in The Netherlands. He is in high demand as a guest conductor and lecturer, frequently invited to speak about and perform his own works. In 2010, he was appointed regular guest conductor of the Simón Bolívar Youth Wind Orchestra in Caracas, Venezuela – part of the celebrated Venezuelan educational system *El Sistema*. He currently maintains posts with both the New York Wind Symphony and the Kyushu Wind Orchestra in Fukuoka, Japan as their principal guest conductor. Johan is founder and CEO of his own publishing company Amstel Music, established in 1989.

When not traveling, Johan divides his time between his Hudson Valley home and Manhattan- and Amsterdam apartments with his wife and muse Dyan, cats Lenny, Gustavo, Tosca & Lulu and doggy Lucy.

Joshua Holsinger is currently a graduate conducting student at James Madison University. He graduated with his undergraduate degree in Music Education from JMU in 2022 and taught at Parry McCluer High School, Parry McCluer Middle School, and most recently, Elkton Middle School.

Joshua assists with Marching Royal Dukes, the JMU Pep Band, and the Wind Symphony. He is also a member of the JMU Brass Band and manages the Massanutten Youth Brass Band.

JMU Wind Symphony Personnel

Flute/Piccolo

Vanessa Britton | Madison
Michael Discenza | Arlington
Megumi Kadarusman | Clifton
Jakob Knick | Alleghany
*#Rebecca Needham | Palm Bay, FL

Oboe

Cady Litteral | Sterling
*Will Slopnick | Norfolk
Lynette Salins | Fairfield

Bassoon

Charlie Andress | Ashburn
Hannah Gerick | Virginia Beach
*David Kang | Chantilly

Clarinet

Jona Benson | Stephens City
Robert Christianson | Stafford
Kelsey Davis | Harrisonburg
Jeanette Gilson | Chesapeake
Ian Graff | Virginia Beach
Clara Jacob | Fredericksburg
*#Geneva Maldonado | Bushkill, PA
Grey Simpson | Fredericksburg
Grace Trembl | York, PA
Leah White | Leesburg

*denotes principal/co-principal
#denotes graduate student

Alto Clarinet

Valerie Alvarado | Culpeper

Bass Clarinet/Contra

Preston Davis | Henrico
Cami Holmes | Alexandria

Alto Saxophone

Elise Donley | Carrollton
Tyrique Payne | Colonial Heights
*Dylan Royal | Martinsville

Tenor Saxophone

David Barredo | Charlottesville

Baritone Saxophone

Tyler Huffstetler | Weyers Cave

Trumpet

*Owen Brown | Charlottesville
Ryan Johnson | Centreville
Carter King | Richmond
Taylor Lowry | Forest
Jocelyn Moyer | Front Royal
Max Parrish | Woodbridge
#Peyton Phaller | Zephyrhills, FL
Micah Wingfield | Harrisonburg

JMU Wind Symphony Personnel - *continued*

Horn

Alex Childs | Springfield
Will Rapp | Virginia Beach
*#Gray Smiley | Greenville, NC
*Jacob Taylor | South Riding

Cello

Marlie Dela Cruz | Woodbridge
Christopher Hall | Chantilly
Hailey Hotek | Richmond
#John Meshreky | Alexandria, Egypt

Trombone

CJ Brown | Fredericksburg
Quin Robinson | Warrenton
*Jack Waters | Forest

String Bass

Jack Choi | Nokesville

Bass Trombone

Peyton Barrett | Midland

Percussion

Adelaide Hofmann | Lorton
Brian McDermott | Brookings, SD
Jonathan Ramirez | Manassas
*#Josh Sheppard | Powhatan
Kayden Taliaferro | Midlothian
Brian Willey | Fairfax

Euphonium

Jake Cuppernull | Herndon
*Ben Fuller | Ashburn

Piano

#Aleksandra Velgosha | Moscow, Russia

Tuba

Andy Helvey | Alexandria
Jackson Lee | Waynesboro
*Henry Taylor | Culpeper

*denotes principal/co-principal

#denotes graduate student

JMU School of Music Statement of Community and Belonging

Difference in identity enriches our community, fosters artistic and intellectual growth, and is vital to creating thriving venues for expression in a global world. In addition to welcoming all individuals and perspectives regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, socio-economic status, or citizenship status, we wish to make the following acknowledgements and affirmations, adapted from Americans for the Arts:

- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result. We resolve to educate ourselves, keep vigilant watch, and act to bring an end to systemic oppression.
- Cultural equity—which embodies values, practices, and policies that ensure all people have access to, and are represented in, the arts—is critical to the sustained engagement of music in society.
- Acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- The prominent presence of musicians in society can challenge inequities and encourage alternatives.



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