

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®**

School of Music

*presents the*

**42<sup>nd</sup> Contemporary Music Festival  
Concert II**



**Brass Band**

**Kevin Stees, *conductor***

**Gavin Higgins, *guest composer***

*featuring*

**David Zerkel, *tuba***

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

8 pm

Concert Hall



There will be one 15-minute intermission.

## Program

Fanfares and Love Songs

Gavin Higgins  
(b. 1983)

Deep, Dark Night

Drew Bonner  
(b. 1991)

David Zerkel, *tuba*

Dark Arteries Suite

Gavin Higgins

- I. Under the ground, we scream
- II. These scars across your heart
- III. Salt, Dirt, Blood

## Intermission

Jack of All Trades

Joe Jaxson  
(b. 2000)

Ivory Ghosts

Gavin Higgins

Matsuri

Eric Guinivan  
(b. 1984)

- I. The Fireworks at Ryogoku Bridge
- II. Bells on New Year's Eve
- III. The Burning of Mount Wakakusa

Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones,  
personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

The unauthorized videotaping or any other recording  
of this production is strictly prohibited  
in adherence with Federal copyright laws.

## Personnel

Principal Cornet	Olivia Ellsworth
Soprano Cornet	Owen Brown
Solo Cornet	Max Parrish
	Logan Hayungs
	Bryson Naftel
	Carter King
Repiano Cornet	Jocelyn Moyer
2nd Cornet	Theo Young
	Micah Wingfield
3rd Cornet	Jacob Fujioka
	Taylor Lowry
Flugel Horn	Steffi Tetzloff
Solo Horn	Ashlyn Craig
1st Horn	Finn Marks
2nd Horn	Jacob Taylor
	Anthony Burnett
1st Baritone	Jake Cuppernull
2nd Baritone	Jackson Varga
1st Trombone	Willie Commins
2nd Trombone	Nikhil Argade
Bass Trombone	Peyton Barrett
Solo Euphonium	Andrew Ribo
2nd Euphonium	Ben Fuller
	Daisey Kludt
Eb Bass	Logan Davis
	Henry Taylor
Bb Bass	John Kelley
	Andy Helvey
	Jackson Lee
Percussion	Blaze Benavides
	Brian McDermott
	Olivia Miller
	Jonathan Ramirez
	Shelby Shelton

## Program Notes

**Fanfares and Loves Songs** was commissioned by the National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain for their 2009 summer course. The piece is traditional in structure: an exciting fanfare opening is followed by an expressive love song. The final movement revisits the fanfares of the first movement whilst a fast-paced dance brings the work to a triumphant and breathless close.

**Deep, Dark Night:** Night is the place and time where our thoughts fill the void left as the world falls asleep. Sometimes, we find ourselves at peace. Other times, as the world winds down, our minds rev up through reflection and reminiscence, anxiety and regret, defeat and resilience. Written in two movements, the first is deeply introspective, beginning with the twinkling of stars at twilight. Where the first movement allows the listener to sit with their thoughts, the second movement encompasses the feelings of angst, anxiety, uncertainty, and frustration leading to the moment of resilience. Bombastic and primal, the movement is in constant motion. *Deep, Dark Night* was commissioned and written for Velvet Brown, David P. Stone Chair and Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at Penn State University.

The **Dark Arteries Suite** is adapted from the ballet of the same name which was composed to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Miners' Strike looming, he made a second successful approach. Higgins is proud of his brass band and mining heritage. His family were banders and miners in the Forest of Dean and his work plays on the inextricable social and cultural links between the two. The title *Dark Arteries* comes from a line in Mervyn Peake's poem *Rhonda Vale*, whose subject is coal mining in Glamorgan. *Dark Arteries* celebrates the musical legacy that the pit bands have left behind, music that came from "blood, sweat and dirt, where men who worked all day down a dangerous pit would come up to make music." At the heart of the work is a short, highly dramatic second movement, full of pounding percussion and stabbing syncopated chords is a visceral response to the Battle of Orgreave - the confrontation between police and picketing miners at the British Steel coking plant on 17 June 1984.

**Jack of All Trades** is a symphonic poem inspired by the famous quote coined originally for actor-turned-playwright William Shakespeare. The full quote is, "A jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a master of one." The desire to try and be good at multiple things can be helpful, but sometimes it can be overwhelming, taking you on a fast track to burnout. It translates to how I feel the want to explore different musical areas and aesthetics, to learn how they all can contribute to my overall voice.

Gavin Higgins wrote **Ivory Ghosts** in 2006 for brass ensemble as one of a collection of short pieces composed in support of the charity Brass Band Aid. It is a haunting miniature created in response to the horrors of the illegal trade in African elephant ivory. This definitive version for brass band and percussion was prepared for the Tredegar Town Band.

**Matsuri (Festivals)** is a musical celebration inspired by scenes from three traditional Japanese festivals. The first movement, "Fireworks at Ryogoku Bridge," is inspired by the many Edo-period paintings of autumn evening fireworks festivals over the Sumida River in Tokyo.

## Program Notes *continued*

The second movement, “Bells on New Year’s Eve,” is inspired by the ceremonial ringing of temple bells at midnight on New Year’s Eve, known as *Joya no Kane* (除夜の鐘). In this ceremony, the temple bell is rung 108 times with the final ring of the bell just after midnight. Each tolling of the bell represents one of the 108 worldly desires of Buddhist teachings, and the ceremony signifies the cleansing of these desires to begin the year spiritually renewed. A gesture representing the tolling of bells occurs exactly 108 times over the course of the movement. The final movement, “The Burning of Mount Wakakusa,” is inspired by the annual festival *Wakakusa Yamayaki*, during which the grass hillside of Nara’s Mount Wakakusa is set on fire. This movement reawakes the fiery excitement of the first movement’s pyrotechnics, pitting huge shouts and explosions of color against a current of danger and the threat of the festivities growing out of control.

## Artist Biographies



**David Zerkel** is Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at the University of Michigan, leading an active career as both a performer and educator. Before his arrival at Michigan, he taught in a similar position at the University of Georgia. His students have distinguished themselves by winning international and national competitions and attaining positions with professional performing

organizations. He is a Past President of the International Tuba Euphonium Association and was selected as the inaugural recipient of the ITEA Teaching Award.

David began his performing career as a member of the United States Army Field Band and The United States Army Band, both located in Washington, DC. He has had the good fortune to perform with many orchestras and brass ensembles through the course of his career. David has performed as a featured soloist at many workshops and symposia, including the Leonard Falcone Festival, several International Tuba Euphonium Conferences, and the United States Army Band Tuba Euphonium Workshop. In addition, he has performed as a solo recitalist at many of the leading colleges and conservatories in the United States. He has released three solo CDs: *American Music for Tuba*, *Tuba Helper*, and his latest CD, *Journey*, which features the music of John Stevens.

David has served as the President of the International Tuba Euphonium Association. His summer teaching activities include a position at the Interlochen Arts Camp. He lives in Dexter, Michigan with his lovely bride, Kristin.

## Artist Biographies *continued*



Described as ‘boldly imaginative’ [the Times], ‘a talent to watch’ [New York Times] and ‘one of the most interesting voices of his generation’ [Limelight], **Gavin Higgins** is one of Britain’s most exciting and gifted compositional talents.

Higgins was born in Gloucestershire (1983) and studied french horn and composition at

Chetham’s School of Music, The Royal Northern College of Music, and the Royal College of Music.

Significant commissions include *Der Aufstand* for the 2012 BBC Proms, *Rough Voices* for the 2020 BBC Proms, and the ‘fast, exciting and brilliantly scored’ [the Telegraph] *Velocity* for the Last Night of the 2014 BBC Proms; the Ivor Novello Award winning trombone concerto, *The Book of Miracles* (2019) – premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and soloist Helen Vollam; and the premiere of his first opera *The Monstrous Child*, (2019) at the Royal Opera House which opened to critical acclaim, described as ‘a triumph’ [the Guardian ★★★★★] and ‘a spectacular new opera’ [Culture Whisper ★★★★★]. His biggest and most ambitious piece to date, the ‘ingenuous work’ [the Observer ★★★★★] *Concerto Grosso for Brass Band and Orchestra* was recently premiered at the 2022 BBC Proms to great acclaim; whilst his ‘bold and brilliant’ [the Times] cantata, *The Faerie Bride*, with librettist Francesca Simon, was premiered at the Aldeburgh Festival with Marta Fontanals-Simmons and Roddy Williams.

Higgins comes from a long lineage of working-class brass band musicians dating back to 1895 and his passion for this heritage has resulted in a number of vigorous, daring works for brass such as *Destroy, Trample as Swiftly as She* (2011), *Prophecies* (2017) and *So Spoke Albion* (2019) commissioned for the European Brass Band Championships.

Higgins was appointed Rambert Dance Company’s inaugural Music Fellow in 2010, writing ballet scores including *What Wild Ecstasy* (2012) and the award winning *Dark Arteries* (2016). Higgins has received BASCA nominations for *A Forest Symphony* (2009), *What Wild Ecstasy* (2012), *Diversions After Benjamin Britten* (2013), *The Ruins of Detroit* (2015), and *A Dark Arteries Suite* (2018). *Dark Arteries* was shortlisted for a Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award (2016) and in 2019 he won an Ivor Novello Award for *The Book of Miracles*.

His debut album of chamber music, *Ekstasis* — ‘seductively sinewy and sensuously gritty’ [Limelight ★★★★★], was released in 2019 to wide acclaim. An album of chamber works that confirms ‘a fastidious and arresting compositional voice’ [Gramophone], with music that, ‘constantly intrigues and fascinates with its combination of sophisticated instrumental writing and magical textures’ [Planet Hughill ★★★★★]

## Artist Biographies *continued*

His career thus far has seen Higgins commissioned by – and work with – orchestras, ensembles and soloists including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Manchester Camerata, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble 10:10, The Royal Opera House, Rambert, the Carducci Quartet, the Fidelio Trio, the Piatti Quartet, David Cohen and Mark Simpson.

Gavin is currently Composer in Association with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

**Drew Bonner** (b. 1991) is a musician, composer, performer, and teacher. He is currently a DMA student at the University of Iowa where he is a recipient of the Iowa Performance Fellowship. He is a founding member of FivE, a euphonium quartet that performs theatrical shows and incorporates staging, choreography, singing, acting, and comedy into each performance. Drew is also a very active composer and arranger. Each year he writes dozens of arrangements for high school and college marching bands across the country. His compositions have also been played around the world. His most recent piece, *A Moment of Truth* for euphonium and piano, was premiered in July 2021 by Kevin Fenske at the Texas Low Brass Academy. Drew has a Bachelor's degree from The Pennsylvania State University and a Master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin. His primary teachers are Velvet Brown, Charles Villarrubia, and John Manning. Drew is a Besson performing artist and plays exclusively on a Besson Prestige 2051 euphonium.

**Joe Jaxson** is a composer whose music challenges the familiar and connects with his audience while pursuing versatility in writing in numerous styles and genres ranging from Contemporary Classical to Cinematic Screen Scoring. He likes to write for many performance mediums including but not limited to: Orchestra, Wind Band, British Brass Band, Chamber, and media projects.

Born in NY (b.2000) and raised in Staunton, VA, the Jackson household was filled with the euphonious sounds of Smooth Jazz, Soul, R&B, and more thanks to his father; whereas on his mother's side was Classical and Christian Gospel. Having grown up with these genres blended every which way contributed to Joe developing a strong ear for music and sound. Now in Graduate School at UT Austin, studying with Professors Donald Grantham, Yevgeniy Sharlat, Omar Thomas, and Sam Lipman, Joe aims to work in multiple mediums (Band, Orchestra, Chamber, Film, etc.) to create a diverse and multi-faceted portfolio writing everything from beginning band to experimental foley however championing his want to collaborate and connect with mass audiences.

Joe currently holds a Bachelor's of Music in Composition from James Madison University (studied with Professors Eric Guinivan and Jason Haney, and is now studying at the University of Texas at Austin for his Master's.)

## Artist Biographies *continued*

**Eric Guinivan's** music is characterized by propulsive rhythmic layers, slowly shifting harmonic fields, shimmering orchestration, and a strong sense of drive. His works have received notable honors from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, BMI, ASCAP, the Theodore Presser Foundation, and Meet the Composer. Eric has received commissions from Chamber Music America, the Fromm Foundation, New York Youth Symphony, the International Horn Society, Lake Union Civic Orchestra, the Firebird Ensemble, Staunton Music Festival, the Lotte Lehmann Foundation, and the Society of Composers, Inc., among others. His output includes works for orchestra, wind ensemble, percussion, brass band, chamber orchestra, film, and a wide variety of chamber ensembles and solo instruments.

Also active as a percussionist, Eric was a founding member of the GRAMMY-nominated Los Angeles Percussion Quartet and has performed with orchestras and chamber ensembles across the country. During his time with LAPQ, Eric presented concerts throughout California and recorded his work *Ritual Dances* at Skywalker Sound on the Sono Luminus label. Eric made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2011 performing as soloist with the New York Youth Symphony in the premiere of his work *Meditation and Awakening* for percussion and orchestra. The New York Times subsequently described the work as "engaging," praising its "shimmering colors" and "frenetic energy." Eric has also performed as soloist with the Downey Symphony and the University of Southern California Thornton Symphony and regularly performs with the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival and Staunton Music Festival in Virginia.

Eric received Bachelor of Music Degrees in Composition and Percussion Performance from Indiana University and holds Masters and Doctoral degrees in composition from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. Eric joined the faculty of the James Madison University School of Music in 2013 and is currently Associate Professor of Composition.

### About the Band

Under the direction of Professor Kevin Stees, The JMU Brass Band is one of the most successful collegiate brass bands in the world today. Formed in the Fall of 2000, the band was named the North American Brass Band Association 1st Section Champion in 2004 and 2005, and was the 2006, 2007, 2010, 2016, 2019, and 2022 NABBA Championship Section Runner-up. The group maintains an active schedule, performing regularly throughout the academic year, and has been a featured ensemble at numerous festivals and conferences around the globe. In the summer of 2008, the ensemble embarked on a concert tour of England sharing the stage with many outstanding bands including the No. 1 ranked brass band, Cory Band. In 2009, the group became the first brass band to perform a full-length concert at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. In 2022, the ensemble was invited to Kerkrade, the Netherlands to represent the United States in the Championship Division of the 19th World Music Contest. Always interested in showcasing new repertoire, the band has given the North American premiere of over a dozen major works for brass band. The JMU Brass Band is currently ranked in the top 100 brass bands worldwide.