



Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.  
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center  
Northern Virginia Community College  
Alexandria Campus  
Captain Darren Y. Lin, conducting

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**“Sonnets, Jazz, and Morse Code”**

Michael Daugherty (b. 1954)

*Labyrinth of Love (2012)*

In This Strange Labyrinth  
Eros (Sappho Fragment 47)  
Sonnets from the Portuguese, XIII  
If I may have it, when it's dead  
On the Difficulty of Loving an Invisible God  
Liz's Lament  
Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!  
Short Talk on the Sensation of Aeroplane Takeoff

*SSgt Hannah Davis, soprano*

**INTERMISSION**

Kristin Kuster (b. 1973)

*Two Jades (2011)*

*MSgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin soloist*

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

*Sinfonia (2022)*

Noir  
Transit  
Arioso  
D-O-N-E

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# ***PROGRAM NOTES***

## ***Labyrinth of Love (2012)***

Michael Daugherty (b. 1954)

Michael Daugherty is internationally recognized as one of the ten most-performed American composers of concert music, according to the League of American Orchestras. His orchestral music has received six GRAMMY Awards, including Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2011 for *Deus ex Machina* for piano and orchestra and in 2017 for *Tales of Hemingway* for cello and orchestra. Recent commissions include orchestral works for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Amarillo Symphony, and the Omaha Symphony, as well as a concerto for violinist Anne Akiko Meyers.

Michael Daugherty was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and is the son of a dance-band drummer and the oldest of five brothers, all professional musicians. As a young man, Daugherty studied composition with many of the preeminent composers of the twentieth century including Pierre Boulez at the *Institut de recherche et coordination acoustique/musique* (Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music) in Paris; Roger Reynolds at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut; and György Ligeti in Hamburg. Daugherty was also an assistant to jazz arranger Gil Evans in New York from 1980 to 1982. Daugherty joined the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance in 1991 as professor of composition, where he is a mentor to many of today's most talented young composers. He is also a frequent guest of professional orchestras, festivals, universities, and conservatories around the world.

*Labyrinth of Love* was originally composed as a ballet score and later adapted for soprano voice and wind ensemble. The work was commissioned by a consortium which included Present Music in Milwaukee, the Rambert Dance Company in London, and the University of Miami Frost School of Music. The wind ensemble version was premiered on October 6, 2013, by the University of Miami Frost Wind Ensemble with soprano Hila Plitmann. The piece reflects Daugherty's longstanding interest in blending the literary and musical arts, and it demonstrates his ability to integrate dramatic narrative with orchestral color and textural contrast.

The work sets texts by eight women writers spanning roughly 2,500 years, chosen to represent a broad spectrum of emotional and cultural perspectives. Daugherty describes the texts he selected and the musical landscape he created as being "full of bitterness, desire, longing, ecstasy, irony, tenderness, despair, hope, sadness and humor," providing a rich palette of expressive material for the soprano and ensemble.

Scored as a chamber work with primarily solo instruments, the soprano voice acts as the protagonist, with the ensemble interacting through harmonies, counterpoint, and dynamic contrast. Throughout, Daugherty employs shifts in tempo, meter, and texture to reflect the changing moods and rhetorical contours of the text. Moments of stillness and reflection contrast with sections of heightened intensity, creating a narrative arc that mirrors the variety and depth of the chosen texts. Daugherty's approach balances variety and continuity, allowing the listener to appreciate the individuality of each poet while experiencing the work as an integrated musical journey.

The texts for this work follow, as printed in Daugherty's score:

**I. In This Strange Labyrinth**

Lady Mary Wroth (1587–1653; British)

In this strange labyrinth how shall I turn?  
Ways are on all sides, while the way I miss:  
If to the right hand, there in love I burn;  
Let me go forward, therein danger is;

If to the left, suspicion hinders bliss,  
Let me turn back, Shame cries I ought to return,  
Nor faint though crosses with my fortunes kiss;  
Stand still is harder, although sure to mourn.

Then let me take the right- or left-hand way;  
Go forward, or stand still, or back retire;  
I must these doubts endure without allay  
Or help, but travail find for my best hire.

Yet that which most my troubled sense doth move  
Is to leave all, and take the thread of love.

**II. SAPPHO 47**

Sappho (612 BC–570 BC?; Greek)

Translated by Yopie Prins

Eros  
has my  
uprooted wits  
has my  
again  
as if it's  
a wind a wind  
wind  
a whirling  
wind whipping  
wild wild  
whipping wild  
mountain  
wild trees  
mountain  
uprooted trees  
uprooted  
wild trees

### **III. Sonnets from the Portuguese, XIII**

Elizabeth Barret Browning (1806–1861; British)

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech  
The love I bear thee, finding words enough,  
And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,  
Between our faces, to cast light upon each?

I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach  
My hand to hold my spirit so far off  
From myself.. me.. that I should bring thee proof,  
In words of love hid in me...out of reach.

Nay, let the silence of my womanhood  
Commend my woman-love to thy belief,  
Seeing that I stand unwon (however wooed)  
And rend the garment of my life in brief

By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,  
Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief

### **IV. If I may have it when it's dead**

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886; American)

If I may have it when it's dead  
I will contended be;  
If just as soon as breath is out  
It shall belong to me,

Until they lock it in the grave,  
'T is bliss I cannot weigh,  
For though they lock thee in the grave,  
Myself can hold the key.

Think of it, lover! I and thee  
Permitted face to face to be;  
After a life, a death we'll say, --  
For death was that, and this is thee.

## V. On the Difficulty of Loving an Invisible God

*(Traigo conmigo un cuidado)*

Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–1695; Mexican)

I recall---were it not so---  
a time when the love I knew  
went far beyond madness even,  
reached excesses known to few,

but being a bastard love,  
built on warring tensions, it simply fell apart  
from its own dissensions

But oh, being now directed  
to the goal true lovers know,  
through virtue and reason alone  
it must stronger and stronger grow.

Therefore one might inquire why it is I still languish. My troubled heart  
would make reply:  
what makes my joy makes my anguish.

Yes, from human weakness,  
in the midst of purest affection,  
we still remain a prey  
to natural dejection.

To see our love returned  
is so insistent a craving  
that even when out of place,  
we still find it enslaving.

It means nothing in this instance  
that my love be reciprocated;  
yet no matter how hard I try,  
the need persists unabated.

If this is a sin, I confess it,  
if a crime, I must avow it;  
the one thing I cannot do  
is repent and disallow it....

## VI. Liz's Lament

Elizabeth Taylor (1932–2011; American)

*Liz and Richard*  
*The most talked about*  
*the most read about*  
*the most famous couple in the entire world*

I see myself being handed from man to man  
As if I were an amusement  
I don't think it's possible  
to really love a woman like me

Richard and Liz  
Sad/Sad/Sad

I have wasted so many words on so many men  
How strangely awake I feel  
But tonight I will begin a dream of my own  
which will never end

Richard and Liz  
Sad/Sad/Sad

*Cleopatra*  
*The Sandpipers*  
*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe*  
*The VIPs*  
*The Comedians*  
*The Taming of the Shrew*

There is only one man in my whole life who has made me happy  
Richard....my husband....my ex-husband....  
I can't remember which  
who is somewhere out there in the dark

Richard and Liz  
Sad/Sad/Sad

**VII. Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!**

Mary Shelley (1797–1851; British)

Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!  
I will not ask a dearer bliss;  
Come with the starry beams, my love,  
And press mine eyelids with thy kiss.

‘Twas thus, as ancient fables tell,  
Love visited a Grecian maid,  
Till she disturbed the sacred spell,  
And woke to find her hopes betrayed.

But gentle sleep shall veil my sight,  
And Psyche’s lamp shall darkling be,  
When, in the visions of the night,  
Thou dost renew thy vows to me.

Then come to me in dreams, my love,  
I will not ask a dearer bliss;  
Come with the starry beams, my love,  
And press mine eyelids with they kiss.

**VIII. Short Talk on the Sensation of Aeroplane Takeoff**

Anne Carson (b. 1950; Canadian)

Well you know that  
could be true love  
running towards my  
life with its arms up  
yelling *Let’s buy it!*  
*What a bargain!*

## Staff Sergeant Hannah Davis, soprano

Soprano vocalist and concert moderator Staff Sergeant Hannah Davis of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in September 2023. She is the band’s second official female vocalist. Staff Sgt. Davis began her musical instruction at age eight. After graduating from Moon Area High School in Moon Township, Pennsylvania, in 2017, she attended West Virginia University (WVU) where she studied under Hope Koehler and earned a bachelor’s degree in music in 2021. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” she performed with the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra and WVU Opera Theatre and was a private voice instructor.

### *Two Jades (2011)*

Kristin Kuster (b. 1973)

Kristin Kuster was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, and grew up in Boulder, Colorado. She earned a doctor of musical arts from the University of Michigan, studying with William Bolcom, Michael Daugherty, and Evan Chambers. Kuster serves as an associate professor of composition at her alma mater, teaching composition and contemporary music techniques. Her works have been performed by professional orchestras, university ensembles, and chamber groups across the United States. She has received commissions from organizations including the American Composers Orchestra and University of Georgia Wind Ensemble. She won the Henry Russel Award in 2015 and the Jerome Foundation Commissioning Program Award in 2007. Kuster’s music draws inspiration from architecture, weather, mythology, and storytelling, with an emphasis on clarity, color, and expressive depth.

The composer provided the following note about *Two Jades*:

The new wing of the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) houses the Shirley Chang Gallery of Chinese Art. At the base of one case are two jade objects: a *bi* disc and a *cong* tube. The forms of the *bi* (circle) and *cong* (square) date back to the Stone Age in China; yet their original meaning, names, and functions are unknown. They gained importance in the Han dynasty, where they were at the core of the earliest Chinese books on philosophy, metaphysics, and cosmology. In the *Zhou Li* (Book of Rites), an ancient book compiled in the Zhou dynasty and amended in the Han dynasty, the *cong* is described as a symbol of earth, and the *bi* as a symbol of sky, or after world. The nephrite jade used by the ancient Chinese was extremely hard, and had to be worn down with an abrasive paste to achieve the desired shape and decoration. The ceremonial *bi* and *cong* jade objects were often buried with their owners.

The cosmology of these objects is foreign to me because, as an American, I look at them from outside the Chinese culture. Their meanings are interpreted by my thought process as a means for creative inspiration, and an impetus for musical ideas. Shortly after my father passed away in February 2010, Michael Haithcock asked me to contribute a new piece to the University of Michigan Symphony Band 2011 Tour of China. My coming upon the two jade *bi* and *cong* objects at the UMMA evoked a compelling sense of two-ness: two objects, symbols of earth and sky; mother and father; the lives and deaths of my parents; our University of Michigan students experiencing a foreign culture, and the gift from that culture of listening to our students perform; and esteemed University of Michigan alumnus, violinist Xiang Gao, coupled with our symphony band.

The music of *Two Jades* is comprised of three sections, fast-slow-fast. The first section is my imagined journey of a jade rock being intensely, frenetically reshaped as it moves with the flow of a river. In the slower second section, I imagine the jade rock being non-passing, still, and carved with delicate, intricate ornamentation. The last section is a celebration of the beautiful moments in life I wish I could freeze into an object, and carve a symbol of the ceaseless joy of love and life, of earth and sky.

### **Master Sergeant Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin soloist**

Master Sergeant Sheng-Tsung Wang joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Chamber Orchestra in June 2007. He was appointed associate concertmaster and principal second violin in April 2019. Master Sgt. Wang began his musical instruction at age eight after immigrating to the United States from Taiwan. Upon graduating in 1993 from Centennial High School in Ellicott City, Maryland, he earned a bachelor’s degree in 1997 and master’s degree in 1999 both in violin performance from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he studied with Victor Danchenko. He earned his doctor of musical arts degree in 2007 at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he studied with Gerald Fischbach. His notable instructors include Eugene Drucker of the Emerson String Quartet, Elaine Mishkind, and the late Mark Ulrich. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Master Sgt. Wang founded the Gemini Piano Trio and has been heard as part of the Arts Club of Washington concert series and on National Public Radio. He has performed at the following festivals: the Quartet Program at the State University of New York in Fredonia; Yellow Barn Music Festival in Putney, Vermont; La Jolla SummerFest in California; and Taos School of Music in New Mexico. In addition, he has taught at the Peabody Preparatory in Baltimore; Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland; and the Levine School of Music in Washington, D.C.

### **Sinfonia (2022)**

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

Zhou Tian is an American composer born in Hangzhou, China, and moved to the United States at age nineteen. He began formal study of composition and piano in China and continued his musical training in the United States, earning a bachelor of music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, a master of music from the Juilliard School, and a doctor of musical arts from the University of Southern California. His teachers included Jennifer Higdon, Richard Danielpour, and Christopher Rouse. Tian currently serves as professor of composition at Michigan State University, where he teaches courses in composition, orchestration, and contemporary music techniques.

In addition to his academic work, Tian has been recognized internationally for his compositions, which have been performed by ensembles including the New York Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, and the United States Marine Band. He was named the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra’s Artist-in-Residence during the 2019 to 2020 season, allowing him to collaborate with soloists and conductors in a variety of orchestral and chamber settings. His honors include a 2018 GRAMMY nomination for Concerto for Orchestra and the 2022 Sousa-ABA-Ostwald Award for *Sinfonia*. Over the course of his career, Tian has maintained a diverse portfolio of works, ranging from orchestral and wind ensemble compositions to chamber music,

reflecting a commitment to blending traditional forms with contemporary sensibilities and cross-cultural influences.

The composer wrote the following about this work:

*Sinfonia* seeks inspirations from cultures close to my heart and mixes them into four different movements. It begins nostalgically and ends on a hopeful, uplifting note.

*I. Noir*

Grainy films and stylized black-and-white images from the 1940s and '50s inspired this nostalgic throwback. Although it starts brightly, at its core lies the night.

*II. Transit*

New York City. Subway. Rush hour. Each stop opens to a new soundscape. "Say, did I hear Jazz?" Someone asks. "STAND CLEAR OF THE CLOSING DOORS, PLEASE," New York replies.

*III. Arioso*

Shanghai. Night of the Mid-Autumn Festival. A vocalise was conceived.

*IV. D-O-N-E*

May 10, 1869. Promontory, Utah. A one-word telegraph was sent across the United States in Morse code, announcing the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad. Now the country was connected as never before: a journey between San Francisco and New York that previously took up to six months now took only days. Some 150 years later, that word, "D-O-N-E," is transformed here into music using the rhythm of the Morse code. Throughout the finale, the "done" motif is passed back and forth by numerous instruments in the ensemble. An accumulation of materials sends the piece to a climax at the end. This movement was adapted from a movement of my orchestral work *Transcend*.