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Symphonic Band Excellence

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SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2025 • 3 P.M.

Dr. Christian Carichner, Music Director & Conductor

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CENTRAL IOWA WIND ENSEMBLE

Symphonic Band Excellence



The Central Iowa Wind Ensemble (CIWE) is an adult symphonic band with musicians drawn from the greater Des Moines area. The ensemble was founded in 2003 by a group of central Iowa music educators under the leadership of Dr. Evan Feldman, who led the group until 2005. To this day, the ensemble maintains a strong contingent of educators, but membership has expanded to include musicians from a wide variety of musical backgrounds and occupations. Recent recognitions include performing under the director of Colonel Jason Fettig, former director of “The President’s Own United States Marine Band” in May 2023 at the Iowa Bandmasters Association Conference and in April 2024 performed by invitation at the Regional Conference of the Association of Concert Bands in Omaha, Nebraska. CIWE annually performs a series of four concerts plus special events. CIWE has expanded its audiences to reach underserved constituencies by partnering with various local human services agencies. They also sponsor a competition for high school students that awards winners cash prizes. The Central Iowa Wind Ensemble is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization registered as a corporation in the State of Iowa.

MISSION: To build lifelong engagement in the arts by providing meaningful and challenging concert band experiences.

VISION: The Central Iowa Wind Ensemble will be the Midwest’s premier wind ensemble performing conscientious programming to appreciative, loyal, and diverse audiences.

VALUES: We believe in the power of music to positively impact people. We believe our performances should be accessible to everyone.

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Symphonic Band Excellence

The Central Iowa Wind Ensemble is honored to have received the 2025 Spotlight Award from Bravo Greater Des Moines - recognizing our impact on our community, our audiences and the broader cultural sector.



DR. CHRISTIAN CARICHNER - MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR



Dr. Christian Carichner serves as the Associate Director of Bands and Director of the Cyclone Marching Band at Iowa State University. He oversees all aspects of the Athletic Band program including the 350-member Iowa State University Cyclone Football 'Varsity' Marching Band, Men's and Women's Basketball bands, Volleyball Band, Wrestling Band and State Storm. In addition to his athletic band duties, Christian also teaches the Marching Band Methods course and instructs the applied Tuba and Euphonium studios. Previously, Christian served as Assistant Director of Bands at ISU in addition to instruction of the low brass

studios, teaching low brass methods, and directing both the Concert and Campus bands.

While serving as director of the Cyclone Marching Band, the band was awarded the prestigious Sudler Trophy – the highest honor bestowed upon a collegiate marching band in the United States.

Christian attended Ithaca College where he earned degrees in music education and performance while studying tuba with Dave Unland and brass pedagogy with Alex Shuhan, as well as conducting studies with Stephen Peterson, Jeffery Grogan and Janet Galvan. After Ithaca, Christian earned a Master of Music degree in Tuba Performance from Arizona State University where he studied with acclaimed Tubist and pedagogue Sam Pilafian. Christian also studied tuba with Patrick Sheridan, Charles Villarrubia and Matt Good.

Christian has performed or taught in 47 states and 12 different countries across the globe. Recently, he was a clinician/presenter at The Midwest Clinic, the CBDNA Athletic Band Symposium and a performer/clinician at the International Tuba Euphonium Conference.

Christian has also performed with the Arizona Musicfest Orchestra, the Tampa Tradewinds, the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, Conway Symphony, Pinnacle Brass, Rhythm and Brass, Proteus 7, Salt River Brass and has performed with the national tour of the hit Broadway musical Chicago.

Christian served for many years as Brass Caption Head for the Phantom Regiment and The Academy Drum and Bugle Corps, as well as a lead brass instructor for the Aimachi Marching Band from Nagoya, Japan. Currently, he is in demand as a guest clinician, judge and show designer/arranger.

Christian is a member of CBDNA, Pi Kappa Lambda, Phi Kappa Phi and the International Tuba Euphonium Association. He is an honorary member of both Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma. Christian is also the first marching brass artist for Pearl/Adams where he consults on the design of their marching brass instruments and is also an Adams Custom Brass artist.

GUEST SOLOIST: DR. MEI-HSUAN HUANG - PIANO



Mei-Hsuan Huang is an Associate Professor of Piano at Iowa State University and a member of the Ames Piano Quartet. Praised by the New York Woodstock Times, “Huang’s pianism worked beautifully, demonstrating flexibility... technical fluency... sensitivity... an excellent player.” The Boston Musical Intelligencer described her performance as “thrillingly indefatigable” [with] “irresistible energy.”

Huang has been a prizewinner in several international piano competitions, including the USASU International Piano Competition in Tempe, Arizona, the 57th Wideman Piano Concerto Competition in Shreveport, Louisiana, and the International Chopin Piano Competition in Taipei, Taiwan. She regularly performs over fifty solo and chamber recitals every year in the United States, Europe, Canada, and Taiwan.

She has been invited to summer festivals including the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Pianofest in the East Hamptons, the Orford Music Festival in Quebec, the Atlantic Music Festival in Maine, the Banff Music Festival in Alberta, and the International Summer Music School Pucisca Festival in Croatia. Festivals increasingly ask for her presence on their artist rosters. Recently, Huang presented a piano recital in the National Taiwan Concert Hall (Taipei) as a result of being nominated for the prize of “Excellent Musician Series” by ProArtist. She gave sold-out concerts in 2017 at both the National Taiwan Concert Hall and the TaiChung Opera House.

Huang has performed with the Ames Piano Quartet at the Colours of Music Festival in Barrie, Ontario and in numerous concert series across the United States. The quartet released a compact disc in 2018, which included the Fauré quartets.

Besides performing, Huang is dedicated and passionate about teaching. Her students have won and placed in numerous competitions, including the Central Iowa Young Artist Competition, Terrace Hill Piano Competition, Iowa State Fair Talent Show, and Music Teachers National Association competition. Her students have received full scholarship to prestigious schools including The Juilliard School of Music and the New England Conservatory.

Huang received her bachelor’s degree at the National Taiwan Normal University. She received her master’s degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with Sergei Babayan, Margarita Shevchenko, and Paul Schenly. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree at The Ohio State University under full scholarship.

In 2014, Huang was named a Steinway & Sons Artist. She is also the recipient of the 2019 and 2023 Steinway Top Teacher Awards and named to the 2021 Steinway Teacher Hall of Fame.

JOHN BURNETT-LARKINS - ANNOUNCER



John Burnett-Larkins is an accomplished host of musical ensembles and events. He’s been the announcer of the Iowa State University Cyclone Football Marching Band since 2000, has been the emcee for Ames Municipal Band concerts for an equal number of years, and is also known as the host of Ames Tubachristmas since that event’s premiere there in 2010.

John also has a significant background as an announcer for Iowa State University sports events and currently serves in that role for Cyclone gymnastics meets.

His full-time job is serving as a communication specialist in Iowa State University’s College of Engineering where we works with the Department of Aerospace Engineering and Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering in news and feature writing, web site and social media work, publications, photography and more.

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AIMEE KRUG MEMORIAL STUDENT SOLO COMPETITION

Held annually since 2011, the Aimee Krug Memorial Student Solo Competition seeks to encourage and reward high school instrumentalists from across central Iowa. Student musicians are judged by CIWE's directors and members who dedicated their careers to music education. Cash prizes of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250 are awarded to the top three performers. This years' awards went to:

1st Place: **Carson Menke**, Marimba, Norwalk

2nd Place: **Lauren Bosworth**, Trumpet, Waukee Northwest

3rd Place: **Brody Haugh**, Trombone, Waukee Northwest

A founding member of the Central Iowa Wind Ensemble, Aimee shined as a gifted oboe instructor and performer. Her passion for teaching students was demonstrated by having several All-State qualifying students over the years. Aimee passed from this life on Saturday, April 3, 2010 following a courageous battle with breast cancer. Aimee was a cherished member of the Central Iowa Wind Ensemble and we are dedicating this solo competition to her memory.

2025 WINNER: CARSON MENKE - MARIMBA



Carson Menke is a student at Norwalk High School where he plays percussion in the school marching, concert, and jazz bands. As a percussionist he specializes in marimba performance, specifically in four mallet literature. He has performed internationally and has been selected for both the Iowa All-State Band and Iowa All-State Orchestra. Carson has also performed in honor bands and ensembles such as the All-Iowa 8th grade honor band, SCIBA honor band, ISU honor percussion ensemble, Drake honors wind ensemble, Drake honor jazz band, and little hawkeye conference honor band. He has received multiple outstanding

soloist awards and received school board medals of honor for his selection in the Iowa All-State music festival. Additionally, he has performed as a soloist with the Central Iowa Symphony and as a percussionist with the Des Moines Choral Society. Carson has studied percussion for seven years, working with Daniel Krumm throughout his three years of studying four-mallet marimba, and has additionally worked with Robert Meunier of Drake University and Jeff Heltman. Outside of band Carson is involved in Cross County, Tennis, Student Council and is the Student School Board representative for Norwalk High School.

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Flute

Elysia Crecelius

Elly Hartbecke

Sarah Howell

Joni Kinnan

Rose Kundel

Oboe

Kristin Rasmussen

Colleen Schulze

Bassoon

Janet Benest

Emily Casteline

Clarinet

Lauren Cassaidy

Christopher Goodson

John Kahrl

Gayle Lundak

Elizabeth Peterson

Bryce Sederburg

Katie Seehusen

Carrie Siepel

Sura Smadi

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Dana Thacker

Esther Ware

Bass Clarinet

Jessica Larson

Bass Clarinet/Contrabass Clarinet

Tony Pappas-Garton

Alto Saxophone

Cameron Mitchell

Joseph Thering

Tenor Saxophone

Jacob Lemons

Baritone Saxophone

Jennifer Williams

Trumpet

Brian Burke

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Euphonium

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Justin Wells

Tuba

Brian Kinnan

Leo Salazar

Chad Thompson

Percussion

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CONCERT PROGRAM

To Be Selected From

Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin
arr. Thomas Verrier and Ferde Grofé

Mei-Hsuan Huang, piano

Concerto for Marimba and Wind Orchestra Emmanuel Séjourné arr. Jordan Gudefin

Movement I – Arpeggione

Carson Menke, marimba

Remaining program subject to today's trivia game!

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PROGRAM NOTES

***Rhapsody in Blue* (1924/1998)**

- George Gershwin (1898-1937)

- arr. Thomas Verrier and Ferde Grofé

George Gershwin, his brother Ira, and the songwriter “Buddy” De Sylva were killing time in a pool-hall on January 3, 1924, when Ira, engrossed in the *New York Tribune*, happened on an article announcing that the bandleader Paul Whiteman, a one-time violist with the Denver and San Francisco symphonies but now a leading light of popular music, would shortly present a concert in New York that promised to broaden concert-goers’ conception of what serious American music could be. Neither Ira nor his brother were prepared for the article’s revelation that “George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto, Irving Berlin is writing a syncopated tone poem, and Victor Herbert is working on an American suite.” A new jazz concerto was news to Gershwin.

A phone call to Whiteman the next day elicited the explanation that the bandleader had been planning such a concert for some time in the future; but a rival conductor had suddenly announced plans for a similar program of pieces drawing on both classical and jazz styles, a development that forced Whiteman to move up his schedule if he didn’t want to look like a copycat. Whiteman also reminded Gershwin that he had broached the idea of such a work a year and a half earlier, when his orchestra had unveiled Gershwin’s song “I’ll Build a Stairway to Paradise” in *George White’s Scandals of 1922*. Later Gershwin would come around to allowing that there was at least some connection between the two projects when he wrote of the *Scandals*: “My association with Whiteman in this show I am sure had something to do with Paul’s asking me to write a composition for his first jazz concert. As you may know, I wrote the *Rhapsody in Blue* for that occasion, and there is no doubt that this was my start in the field of more serious music.”

He rose to the challenge, though not without extracting certain concessions from Whiteman. Given the short lead-time (not to mention the novelty of such a piece), a full-length concerto was out of the question. But Gershwin would commit to a free-form work, a rhapsody of some sort, which would spotlight him as the soloist backed by the Whiteman band, which was to be expanded for the occasion by quite a few instruments. He was uneasy about the prospect of orchestrating his piece; in his Broadway work, he had always followed the customary practice of simply writing the tunes and leaving the instrumentation to an arranger. Whiteman promptly informed Ferde Grofé, his own staff arranger since 1920, to clear his desk for a new project.

On January 7, Gershwin began setting down notes for his rhapsody, which he notated in a score for two pianos—one representing the solo part, the other the orchestra (including certain suggestions about possible instrumentation). Grofé later recalled, “I practically lived too in their uptown Amsterdam and 100th Street apartment, for I called there daily for more pages. . . . He and his brother Ira had

a back room where there was an upright piano, and that is where *Rhapsody in Blue* grew into being.”

It was Ira who came up with the title, inspired by a visit to a gallery showing an exhibit of paintings by James Abbot McNeill Whistler. Whistler was drawn to titling his paintings—no matter how representational—with completely abstract titles, such as the famous “Arrangement in Gray and Black” (popularly nicknamed “Whistler’s Mother”). The Gershwin brothers took a shine to the concept, and found a musical equivalent in the title *Rhapsody in Blue*. The word “blue” naturally evokes “the Blues,” and, by extension, jazz. Various aspects of jazz vocabulary certainly are prominent in the *Rhapsody in Blue*—this was the point of the repertory Whiteman programmed in his “Experiment in Modern Music”—but at heart this is a symphonic work, and its ancestry lies more in the direction of Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, and Liszt than Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, and W.C. Handy.

Gershwin devoted about a month to writing the piece, but it shared his schedule with other projects, including a trip to Boston for the premiere of his musical *Sweet Little Devil*. Gershwin recalled: “It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattlety-bang that is often so stimulating to a composer. . . . And there I suddenly heard—and even saw on paper—the complete construction of the rhapsody, from beginning to end. . . . I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America—of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance.”

Gershwin notated the work’s opening as a low clarinet trill followed by a scale rising rapidly through seventeen notes. At a rehearsal, Whiteman’s clarinetist Ross Gorman—perhaps out of boredom, perhaps as a joke—elided the notes into a sweeping ribbon of uninterrupted pitches, after which there was no turning back. That opening glissando became an iconic sound of American music. After that, Gershwin presents forthright thematic material: an oscillating bluesy tune, then a brazen march-like melody, finally a grandly romantic theme in the winds.

Concerto for Marimba and Wind Orchestra (2005)

- Emmanuel Séjourné (b. 1961)

- arr. Jordan Gudfin

Emmanuel Séjourné’s *Concerto for Marimba and Strings* is originally a two-movement work, with a slow opening movement and a lively second part. One of the wonderful features of this work is the emphasis on the expressive qualities of the instrument. The opening movement played here today, *Arpeggione*, starts with a pensive statement from the wind orchestra. The soloist then begins with a cadenza-like passage, a rather remarkable and virtuosic statement. This section seems to draw upon lush Romantic harmonies and phrasing. The marimbist must be skillful enough to bring out the phrases on what is a percussive instrument. The winds offer a lush bed of sound as a counterpoint to the soloist’s lines.

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Like what you hear today? We need your help to ensure we can continue providing quality musical experiences for audiences throughout Central Iowa. Donations are welcome for this concert in the boxes by the doors or any time at ciwe.org. Central Iowa Wind Ensemble is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

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For more information, contact Rich Thimmesch at 515-991-8653 or via email at rich.thimmesch@ciwe.org.



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