



Rudi E. Scheidt  
School of Music

# THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS Wind Ensemble

*presents,*

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Dr. Albert Nguyen, conductor  
Dr. José Wilker Augusto, guest conductor  
Erin Duke, guest conductor  
Jean-Pierre Mora, guest conductor  
Shihao Zhu, clarinet

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MARCH 26 | 7:00 PM

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PLOUGH CONCERT HALL

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music  
Albert Nguyen, Interim Director  
College of Communication and Fine Arts  
Debra Burns, Dean

## PROGRAM

***Orpheus in the Underworld Overture*** Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)  
arr. Lawrence Odom  
Dr. José Wilker Augusto, guest conductor

***Première Rhapsodie*** Claude Debussy (1862-1918)  
*For Clarinet and Orchestra* arr. Marcel Baar

Shihao Zhu, clarinet

***Petite Symphonie*** Charles Gounod (1818-1893)  
*Pour neuf instruments à vent*  
*I. Adagio, Allegro*  
*II. Andante Cantabile*  
*III. Scherzo: Allegro Moderato*  
*IV. Finale: Allegretto*

Jean-Pierre Mora, guest conductor\*

***Ibéria*** Claude Debussy (1862-1918)  
*from "Images pour orchestre"* orch. Erin Duke  
*I. Par les rues et par les chemins*  
*III. Le matin d'un jour de fête*

-Premiere-

Erin Duke, guest conductor\*

\*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts  
degree in Wind Conducting

# PERSONNEL

## Flute

Nicole Rodriguez\*  
Catherine Balsamo  
Mackenzie Saylor  
Samuel Jesuyemi

## Oboe

Isaac Ripple\*  
Jesus Salazar  
Simon Dickerson

## Bassoon

Charles Bridges\*  
Ian West

## Clarinet

Evgenii Mikheev\*  
Shihao Zhu  
Pia Luna Victoria  
Andrew Hofmann  
Emily Ward  
Jean-Pierre Mora

## Alto Saxophone

Mark Lynch\*  
Eric Fung

## Tenor Saxophone

Paris McCann

## Baritone Saxophone

Alex Upton

## Trumpet

Christian Chiasson\*  
Oliver Buckley  
Jacob Turner  
Benjamin VanderBijl  
Fausto Mejia

## French Horn

Jimmy Rhine\*  
Kelsey Pegues  
Dean Blush  
Juan Garay  
Steven Groff

## Trombone

Dylan Mashburn\*  
Evan Green  
Colin Woods  
Daniel Wood

## Bass Trombone

Paul Henry

## Euphonium

Sophia Rivera\*  
Alfred Hernandez  
Sebastian Santos

## Tuba

Ethan Arnal\*  
Gabriella Ramsey

## Double Bass

Kaleb Ritchie\*\*

## Piano

Yun-Heng Tiao

## Percussion

Christian Davis  
Colton Renfrow  
Allison Kiefer  
Tyler Dailey  
Paul Hayes  
Erin Duke

**\*Principal Player**

**\*\*Guest musician**

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *Orpheus in the Underworld Overture*

Jaques Offenbach

Jacques Offenbach was a trailblazer of 19th-century music, often known for his sharp wit and fearless satire. Offenbach had a knack for poking fun at revered cultural and political figures. This drew criticism from the era's moral authorities. His operettas, with their lively melodies and clever humor, helped bridge the gap between "serious" classical music and the emerging world of popular entertainment. At a time when the idea of "popular music" was just beginning to take shape, Offenbach's works stood out, offering audiences a refreshing mix of charm and irreverence.

*Orphée aux Enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), first performed in Paris in 1858, is a comedic twist on the ancient myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Instead of a noble hero, Offenbach's Orpheus is a weary violin teacher, happy to be rid of his wife when she is taken by Pluto, the god of the underworld. The opera's lighthearted satire was also a thinly veiled critique of Napoleon III's government, which only added to its allure. The famous "Can-Can" melody, originally called the *Galop Infernal*, became widely associated with the high-energy dance of the Moulin Rouge years later. Offenbach's popularity soared, leading him to become the most famous musician of his time, even conducting at the 1876 American Centennial celebrations with John Philip Sousa as his concertmaster.

***Première Rhapsodie***  
***For Clarinet and Orchestra***

**Claude Debussy**  
**arr. Marcel Baar**

Claude Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Orchestra*, composed in 1909–1910, was originally intended for clarinet and piano as part of an annual performance competition at the prestigious Paris Conservatoire. Debussy had recently been appointed to the conservatory's board by Gabriel Fauré, and one of his first responsibilities was to create a piece that would challenge and showcase the talents of the student clarinetists. The *Première Rhapsodie* achieved this perfectly, combining expressive, lyrical passages with demanding technical sections that test a musician's skill and control.

Dedicated to Prosper Mimart, a leading clarinet professor at the conservatory, the piece was an instant success when first performed at the 1910 examinations. Debussy himself was delighted by the enthusiastic response from his colleagues, and he later orchestrated the accompaniment in 1911 for its official public premiere. Though the title suggests a potential "Second Rhapsody," no follow-up piece was ever composed. Nevertheless, this charming and evocative work has become a staple of the clarinet repertoire, celebrated for its lush melodies, imaginative harmonies, and the opportunity it provides for performers to shine both technically and musically.

***Petite Symphonie***  
***Pour neuf instruments à vent***

**Charles Gounod**

Charles Gounod's *Petite Symphonie*, composed in 1885, is a charming and elegant work for wind instruments that highlights the composer's gift for melody and his classical influences. Commissioned by Paul Taffanel, the foremost flutist of the era and a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, the piece was intended to showcase the artistry of the newly improved woodwind instruments of the time. Taffanel, a key figure in promoting wind music in France, founded the Société de Musique de la Chambre pour Instruments à Vent, a group that inspired Gounod's contribution to the repertoire. The *Petite Symphonie* features a wind octet with an added flute part as a nod to Taffanel's instrument, blending classical structure with the melodic warmth of the Romantic era.

The symphony's four movements reflect a balance of classical form and expressive beauty. The opening movement begins with a stately introduction followed by a lively *Allegro*. The second movement features a beautiful flute solo, demonstrating Gounod's talent for lyrical, operatic-style melodies. The third movement, a spirited *Scherzo*, evokes a lively outdoor scene, while the final movement offers a cheerful and lighthearted conclusion. Throughout the work, Gounod maintains a transparent and classical style, reminiscent of Mozart, yet infuses it with his own melodic charm and subtle humor. Despite being better known for his operas such as *Faust*, Gounod's *Petite Symphonie* remains a treasured piece in the wind repertoire, celebrated for its grace, wit, and delightful interplay among the instruments.

***Ibéria***  
**from “*Images pour orchestre*”**

**Claude Debussy**  
**orch. Erin Duke**

Claude Debussy's *Ibéria*, composed between 1905 and 1912, is a vibrant and evocative orchestral work that forms the centerpiece of his triptych *Images pour orchestre*. Originally intended as a piece for two pianos, *Ibéria* evolved into a fully orchestrated work, allowing Debussy to draw on a vast palette of symphonic colors. This new orchestration for wind band takes the string parts and translates them for winds, while keeping the integrity of the original instrumentation. Although Debussy spent only a few hours in Spain, his music captures the country's atmosphere through his own lens. Spanish composer Manuel de Falla praised *Ibéria* for its vivid depiction of Andalusian life, describing the music as filled with "echoes from the villages" and "the festive gaiety of a people dancing."

The first movement, "Along the highways and byways," sets the scene with lively, dance-like rhythms and colorful orchestration. Listeners are transported to bustling streets where snippets of melodies and rhythms weave through the air, creating a sense of movement and intrigue. The final movement, "The morning of a festival day," continues seamlessly, bringing the imaginary Spanish village to life with strumming strings and vibrant, joyous themes as the music swells to a festive and explosive conclusion. Despite his dislike of the label "Impressionist," *Ibéria* embodies the spirit of Impressionism with its shimmering sounds and rich, evocative imagery. The piece remains a testament to Debussy's unique ability to create a sense of place and atmosphere purely through music.

# MUSIC BIOGRAPHY

## DR. ALBERT NGUYỄN, Director

Albert Nguyễn currently serves as the interim director of the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music and is the Director of Bands and Head of the Conducting Area at the University of Memphis. He currently holds the Pearl Wales Professorship in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the University of Memphis in the areas of teaching, creative activity, and service. Dr. Nguyễn's responsibilities include overseeing all aspects of the University Bands program, conducting the Wind Ensemble, leading the graduate wind conducting program, and serving as the Executive Director of the University of Memphis Summer at the Scheidt Program. Ensembles under Dr. Nguyễn's direction have performed at the CBDNA Southern Regional Conference, the TNMEA All-State Conference, and Internationally in Austria and Italy. As a conductor and clinician, he has worked with ensembles and students throughout the United States, including the Mid-South as well as California, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, South Carolina, and Texas. For his contribution to the University of Memphis's educational, research, outreach, and service missions, Dr. Nguyễn was a recipient of the First Tennessee Professorship.

Dr. Nguyễn began his professional teaching career as the Director of Bands at Morrilton High School in Morrilton, AR. He holds the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music Education from Arkansas Tech University and the Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts in wind conducting from The University of Texas at Austin. He is a member of Kappa Kappa Psi, Tau Beta Sigma, Phi Beta Mu, and serves the College Band Directors National Association as a member of the Diversity Committee.