



P R E S E N T S

## American Brass Quintet



Photo: Matt Dine

Kevin Cobb, *trumpet*

Eric Reed, *horn*

John D. Rojak, *bass trombone*

Louis Hanzlik, *trumpet*

Michael Powell, *trombone*

Sunday, September 22, 2019  
3:00 p.m.

John H. Williams Theatre  
Tulsa Performing Arts Center

This concert weekend is underwritten by the Charles and Marion Weber Foundation.

## American Brass Quintet

Hailed by Newsweek as “the high priests of brass,” the American Brass Quintet is internationally recognized as one of the era’s premier chamber music ensembles. “The most distinguished” of brass quintets (American Record Guide), the group has earned its stellar reputation through its celebrated performances, genre-defining commissioned works, and ongoing commitment to the education of generations of musicians. Since its founding in 1960, the American Brass Quintet has performed on five continents, made nearly 60 recordings, and premiered more than 150 contemporary works for brass.

The American Brass Quintet has commissioned works by leading composers that have contributed significantly to both contemporary chamber music and the foundation of the modern brass quintet repertoire. Such composers include Robert Beaser, William Bolcom, Elliott Carter, Eric Ewazen, Anthony Plog, Huang Ruo, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, William Schuman, Joan Tower, and Charles Whittenberg, among many others. The Quintet’s Emerging Composer Commissioning program produced brass quintets by rising stars Gordon Beeferman, Jay Greenberg, Trevor Gureckis, and Shafer Mahoney. The group’s latest album *Perspectives* (2017), one of 12 albums with Summit Records, features music by Robert Paterson, Jay Greenberg, Sebastian Currier, and Eric Ewazen, and has earned praise for bringing the “utmost cohesion, balance, and expressivity to each of the scores they perform with ear-catching intensity and finesse” (Gramophone).

Celebrating its 60th anniversary season, the American Brass Quintet performs across the continental United States. Season highlights include the world premiere of a commission by Nina C. Young at Baltimore’s Shriver Hall

and wide-ranging programs featuring works by composers spanning five centuries, including Claudio Monteverdi, Josquin des Pres, Anthony Holborne, Luca Marenzio, Osvaldo Lacerda, Joan Tower, Jennifer Higdon, David Sampson and Eric Ewazen, among others. The Quintet will make appearances in New York, NY; Chicago, IL, Lewiston, ME; Waterford and Norfolk, VA; Youngstown and Columbus, OH; Troy, NY; and Carmel, IN.

Committed to the development of brass chamber music through higher education, the American Brass Quintet has served as Ensemble-in-Residence at The Juilliard School since 1987 and at the Aspen Music Festival since 1970. President Emeritus Joseph Polisi has said of the group’s residency at Juilliard, “With intelligence, artistry, and imagination, the American Brass Quintet has exemplified the highest standards of chamber music for brass instruments during its remarkable existence.” In 2017, the group launched the ABQ Seminar @ Aspen, a four-week brass chamber music intensive at the Aspen Music Festival that offers the highest caliber of training for emerging brass quintets and musicians. Since 2000, the Quintet also has shared its expertise in chamber music coaching and performance through a program of short residencies that feature regularly into the group’s touring schedule. Offering young musicians an intense chamber music experience over several days, the Quintet’s residencies have been embraced by schools and communities throughout the United States and in a dozen foreign countries.

Among its numerous distinctions and citations, the American Brass Quintet is the 2013 recipient of the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award for significant and lasting contributions to the field, the highest honor accorded by Chamber Music America.

The American Brass Quintet’s recordings are available on the Albany, Bridge, New World and Summit labels.

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October 11, 2019 – Lysander Piano Trio at ahha Tulsa  
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October 28, 2019 – Book Club at Magic City Books  
November 8, 2019 – Harlem Quartet at DUET  
November 9 & 10, 2019 – Harlem Quartet at Tulsa PAC

For ticket and more information, visit [ChamberMusicTulsa.org](http://ChamberMusicTulsa.org)

## Program

### Three Madrigals

*Scendi dal paradiso, Venere* (“Come down from heaven, Venus”)  
*Qual mormorio soave* (“Like the sweet murmur”)  
*Già torna a rallegrar l’aria e la terra* (“The air and the earth are already rejoicing”)

Luca Marenzio  
(Italian, ca. 1553–1599)  
edited by Raymond Mase

### Luminosity

Jessica Meyer  
(American, born 1974)

### Copperwave

Joan Tower  
(American, born 1938)

## I N T E R M I S S I O N

### Fanfare Quintet

Jennifer Higdon  
(American, born 1962)

*Performed in tribute to Chamber Music Tulsa founder Rosalie Talbott*

### Fantasia e Rondó

Osvaldo Lacerda  
(Brazilian, 1927–2011)

### Chansons

*En l’ombre d’ung buissonet* (“In the shade of a thicket”)  
*El grillo* (“The cricket”)  
*Pleine de deuil et de mélancolie* (“Full of pain and sadness”)  
*De tous biens plaine est ma maistresse* (“My mistress possesses everyday virtue”)  
*Kanon – N’esse pas ung grant déplaisir* (Canon – “Isn’t it a great discomfort”)

Josquin des Prez  
(French, ca. 1450–1521)  
edited by Raymond Mase

### Frost Fire

*Bright and Fast*  
*Gentle and Mysterious*  
*Tense and Dramatic*

Eric Ewazen  
(American, born 1954)

We ask that the audience please hold their applause until after the last movement of each work.

Today’s concert is preceded by a lecture by Dr. Jason Heilman, host of Classical Tulsa on Classical 88.7 KWTU.

Chamber Music Tulsa’s concerts and educational outreaches are presented with the assistance of  
the Oklahoma Arts Council and Arts Alliance Tulsa.



## About the Program

by Jason S. Heilman, Ph.D., © 2019

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### Luca Marenzio

Born October 18, 1553 or 1554, in Coccaglio, Italy  
Died August 22, 1599, in Lucinia, Italy

### Three Madrigals

Composed circa 1580; duration: 7 minutes  
Edited by Raymond Mase

By the late Renaissance, the madrigal was the most important secular vocal form in Italy. Based on poetry in Italian, which had only recently replaced Latin as the language of high culture, the madrigal was a song for two to eight voices, each singing its own line in polyphony. By the mid-17th century, it would be displaced by opera, but the 16th century was the heyday of the madrigal, and one of its leading composers was Luca Marenzio.

From humble origins in a small northern Italian town, Marenzio's singing career took him to Rome, Ferrara, and Florence, where he keenly absorbed the latest musical styles and adapted them into his own music. Between 1580 and 1599, Marenzio published no less than 23 books of madrigals, which brought him enormous international acclaim. By 1595, Marenzio's fame was such that English composer John Dowland made the long trip to Italy just for the chance to study with him.

Former American Brass Quintet trumpeter Raymond Mase has adapted several of Marenzio's five-voice madrigals for brass quintet, including the wedding madrigal *Scendi dal paradiso, Venere* ("Come down from heaven, Venus"), *Qual mormorio soave* ("Like the sweet murmur"), which marks the springtime feast of the Annunciation, and the pastoral madrigal *Già torna a rallegrar l'aria e la terra* ("The air and the earth are already rejoicing").

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### Jessica Meyer

Born April 19, 1974, in New York

### Luminosity

Composed in 2016; duration: 6 minutes

Rising musical star Jessica Meyer has won accolades for her "fierce and lyrical" performances on the viola as well as her "other-worldly" and "evocative" compositions. Originally from New York, Meyer received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School before launching her career as a freelance violist, performing in a wide range of styles from baroque to contemporary. Branching out into composition, Meyer's music has been premiered by such groundbreaking ensembles as Roomful of Teeth, Vox Clamantis, Sybarite5, and the PUBLIQuartet. A passionate educator, Meyer inspires the next generation of musicians as a mentor and coach for Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect and the Juilliard-Nord Anglia Performing Arts Programme.

Meyer's first piece for brass quintet, *Luminosity*, was commissioned for the 2016 Women Composers Festival

of Hartford and premiered there by the Nautilus Brass. Regarding her inspiration for the vibrant piece, Meyer wrote:

*"Luminosity explores how brass instruments can convey the essence of various forms of light, both visible and invisible. While combining both expected and unexpected colors and textures that are unique to brass instruments, this work strives to capture a series of moments – from light that illuminates certain aspects of nature to the ineffable kind that radiates from within a particular person. More importantly, it is dedicated to my son Ethan, because 'within you is the light of thousand suns.'"*

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### Joan Tower

Born September 6, 1938, in New Rochelle, New York

### Copperwave

Composed in 2006; duration: 11 minutes

A living legend among American composers, Joan Tower credits a childhood spent in Latin America for broadening her musical horizons and igniting a lifelong passion for rhythm, which is manifest in much of her work. Born just outside of New York City, in New Rochelle, Tower moved with her family to Bolivia at age nine. After learning the piano as a teenager, she returned to America to begin her formal musical education at Vermont's Bennington College. Tower went on to complete her doctorate in composition at Columbia University, where her teachers included electronic music pioneers Otto Luening and Vladimir Ussachevsky, and subsequently co-founded the Da Capo Chamber Players, a New York-based contemporary music ensemble that premiered many of her compositions. Over a career spanning half a century, Tower has built an extensive catalogue of orchestral, chamber and solo works, including a series of five *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* (1987–93). Her 1986 orchestral composition *Silver Ladders* was honored with the Grawemeyer Award, and her single-movement orchestral work *Made In America* won the 2008 Grammy for Classical Contemporary Composition. Tower currently holds an endowed chair in music at Bard College in upstate New York.

In 2005, Tower was commissioned by the Juilliard School, with support from Francis Goelet, to compose a piece for the American Brass Quintet marking the school's 100th anniversary. The resulting composition is a single-movement work that, according to the composer, took its inspiration from the metallurgy of the instruments themselves:

*"The title of the piece is Copperwave. What it means is that copper (in brass) creates a weighty (and heavy) motion and feeling that travels in waves (and circles) throughout the piece. Another more 'background' story is that my father was a mining engineer and dealt with copper in some of his jobs in Latin America,*

where the family lived for nine years – hence the ‘conga’ rhythm.”

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## Jennifer Higdon

Born December 31, 1962, in Brooklyn, New York

### Fanfare Quintet

Composed in 2002; duration: 3 minutes

One of the most frequently performed composers in America today, Jennifer Higdon has developed a musical style that is both intuitive and complex, drawing upon a wide variety of influences. Born in Brooklyn, Higdon grew up in Georgia and Tennessee. She came to music relatively late, starting on percussion in high school before switching to flute, and was encouraged to pursue composition while studying flute performance at Bowling Green State University. Higdon went on to earn a diploma in composition from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she studied with David Loeb and Ned Rorem, and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, as a student of George Crumb. She currently holds an endowed chair in composition at the Curtis Institute.

The recipient of numerous awards for her music, Higdon won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, composed for her former Curtis Institute student Hilary Hahn. She has also received two Grammy awards for Contemporary Classical Composition, first in 2010 for her Percussion Concerto and then in 2018 for her Viola Concerto. Her first opera, *Cold Mountain*, based on the 1997 novel, was premiered by the Santa Fe Opera in 2015. In 2002, Higdon adapted a fanfare she had originally composed for organ into her *Fanfare Quintet*, a brief yet virtuosic work for chamber brass ensemble.

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## Osvaldo Lacerda

Born March 23, 1927, in São Paulo, Brazil

Died July 18, 2011, in São Paulo

### Fantasia e Rondó

Composed in 1977; duration: 7 minutes

Following in the footsteps of his fellow countrymen Heitor Villa-Lobos and Francisco Mignone, Osvaldo Lacerda created music that highlighted the folk songs and dances of his native Brazil. Born in São Paulo, Lacerda began taking piano lessons at age nine, but showed little interest in composing until he was asked to write a piece for a local string quartet in 1952. It was at that point that he began studying with the eminent Brazilian composer Mozart Camargo Guarnieri and subsequently enrolled in the music program at the University of São Paulo. In 1962, Lacerda received a Guggenheim fellowship to come to the United States and study with composers Vittorio Giannini and Aaron Copland. After returning to Brazil in the mid-1960s, Lacerda taught at several schools in São Paulo until his retirement in 1992, writing no less than four textbooks on composition and music theory. He continued composing up until his death in 2011, receiving numerous honors and awards, both in his native Brazil and abroad.

Lacerda’s music blends Brazilian dance rhythms with the neoclassical forms he learned from his teachers. He had written works for piano, orchestra, chorus, and other chamber ensembles but not for brass when he composed his *Fantasia e Rondó* for brass quintet in 1977. Cast in two movements, the *Fantasia* opens with nebulous music that eventually coalesces into a brief contrapuntal section before returning. The livelier *Rondó* is imbued with the rhythms of traditional Brazilian dance music; its recurring opening theme gets juxtaposed against contrasting melodies as the quintet hastens to its climax.

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## Josquin des Prez

Born circa 1450 near Hainaut (today in Belgium)

Died August 27, 1521, in Condé-sur-l’Escaut, France

### Chansons

Composed circa 1500; duration: 8 minutes

Edited by Raymond Mase

Though he was one of the first composers to excel equally in both sacred and secular music, Josquin des Prez remains an elusive figure. Born in the far north of France about twenty years after the death of Joan of Arc, he started his musical career in Provence as a singer in the chapel of the Duke of Anjou, who may have later brought him to Paris. By the 1480s, Josquin seems to have found his way into the service of a noble Italian family in Milan, and from 1489 to about 1495, he led the Papal Choir in Rome. This position, combined with the recent invention of music printing, brought Josquin both fame and wealth, and after brief stints in the courts of French King Louis XII and the affluent Duke of Ferrara, Josquin retired to the northern French town of Condé-sur-l’Escaut, where he spent his final decades not far from his birthplace.

A century before the Italian madrigal swept Europe, the chanson, based on vernacular French poetry, was the dominant secular vocal form. Like the madrigal, the 15th-century chanson was written for a group of voices, who imitated each other’s melodies in a simple form of counterpoint. Written over the course of his career, Josquin’s chansons helped to establish the genre and were highly influential to later generations. The American Brass Quintet has recorded several of Josquin’s chansons in arrangements by trumpeter Raymond Mase, including *En l’ombre d’ung buissonnet* (“In the shade of a thicket”), *El grillo* (“The cricket”), *Pleine de deuil et de mélancolie* (“Full of pain and sadness”), *De tous biens plaine est ma maistresse* (“My mistress possesses everyday virtue”), a contrapuntal *Kanon* (“canon”) and *N’esse pas ung grant déplaisir* (“Isn’t it a great discomfort”).

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## Eric Ewazen

Born March 1, 1954, in Cleveland, Ohio

### Frost Fire

Composed in 1990; duration: 15 minutes

With its unabashed tonality and rhythmic drive, the music of American composer Eric Ewazen has become a staple of concerts around the world. A composer of chamber,

orchestral and choral music, Ewazen has written for such ensembles as the Ahn Trio, the U.S. Military Academy Band and the Buffalo Philharmonic, as well as for the principal players from the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra and many more. Originally from Cleveland, Ewazen studied composition at the Eastman School of Music and the Juilliard School as a student of Milton Babbitt, Samuel Adler, Joseph Schwantner and Gunther Schuller. Formerly composer-in-residence with New York's Orchestra of St. Luke's, Ewazen has been on the faculty of the Juilliard School since 1980.

In 1989, Ewazen was commissioned by the American Brass Quintet, with support from the Jerome Foundation, to compose a new work to mark the ensemble's thirtieth anniversary. The piece, which he titled *Frost Fire*, has since become one of the most widely performed works in the contemporary brass quintet repertoire. Regarding its structure, Ewazen notes:

"The work, based on traditional musical forms and

models, is in three movements. The first movement, marked *Bright and Fast*, is a joyous celebration of sonorous chords, playful motives, and rhythmic gestures. It is in a strict sonata-allegro form with a clearly defined and classically proportioned exposition-development-recapitulation framed by complementary introduction and coda sections. The second movement, marked *Gentle and Mysterious*, has a waltz-like feel to it. In a ternary (A-B-A) form, the outer sections consist of ribbons of melodies being gently passed from instrument to instrument. The middle section is a stately fugue that builds in intensity, volume and rich-sounding resonance. The final movement, *Tense and Dramatic*, brings back material from the first movement, but sets it in a much more turbulent and frenetic environment. Although this movement is based on the skeletal outlines of a sonata-allegro form, it is much freer and more erratic, with shifting meters and contrasting, interpolated passages, ultimately leading the way to a heroic and dynamic conclusion."

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