



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Thursday, February 26, 2026 • 8:00 PM

DEPAUL ENSEMBLE
20+

*Michael Lewanski & Erica
Neidlinger, conductors*

Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

Thursday, February 26, 2026 • 8:00 PM
Gannon Concert Hall

DEPAUL ENSEMBLE 20+

Michael Lewanski & Erica Neidlinger, conductors

PROGRAM

Kyle Craven (b. 1997)
Amazons (2026)

John Harbison (b. 1938)
Music for Eighteen Winds (1986)

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)
Konzertmusik for Piano, Brass and 2 Harps, Op. 49 (1930)

I. Ruhig gehende Viertel

II. Lebhaft

IV. Mäßig schnell, kraftvoll

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.

BIOGRAPHIES

Conductor, curator, educator, and writer **Michael Lewanski** is a champion of new and old musics. He seeks to create engaged connections between audiences, musicians, composers, and the music that is part of their culture, society, and history. His work hopes to be part of collective, systemic change in the classical music industry. He is conductor of Ensemble Dal Niente and Associate Professor of instrumental ensembles at the DePaul University School of Music, where his work focuses on helping the next generation of musicians become thoughtful artistic citizens.

Michael was Curatorial Director of Ear Taxi Festival 2021, a festival of 21st century Chicago music. He was resident conductor of the 2017 and 2019 SoundSCAPE Festivals in Italy. His guest conducting engagements have been wide-ranging and stylistically diverse, working with organizations such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW Series, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, the State Symphony Orchestra of Turkmenistan, Ensemble CEPROMUSIC (Mexico City), the Seattle Modern Orchestra, and many others. He has led hundreds of world premieres. He was the Conducting Assistant for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2010 to 2014. At the 2012 Darmstadt Summer Courses, Ensemble Dal Niente won the prestigious Kranichstein Music Prize under his direction. Michael has an extensive discography as both a conductor and a producer on US- and Europe-based labels.

A native of Savannah, Georgia, he studied piano and violin in his youth; he made his conducting debut at age 13, leading his own composition. At 16, he was the youngest student ever accepted into the conducting class of the legendary Ilya Musin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Michael attended Yale University. His post-Yale education included conducting study with Cliff Colnot and Lucas Vis. He is based in Chicago, and respectfully acknowledges the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa, Ho-Chunk, Myaaamia, Menominee, Peoria, and Illinois Confederacy among other tribal nations as custodians of the traditional Native land on which he lives and works.

Dr. Erica J. Neidlinger is the wind conductor at the DePaul School of Music. Dr. Neidlinger's conducting experiences are broad, ranging from chamber ensembles, contemporary ensembles, symphonic bands, and wind ensembles. She has collaborated with some of the finest performers in Chicago as well as with composers George Lewis and Augusta Read Thomas. Neidlinger has been featured as a guest conductor and clinician in Riga, Latvia and Moscow, Russia, and

has traveled internationally on multiple occasions as an ensemble adjudicator. Presentations at international conferences include the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles and the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. She has conducted numerous ensembles across the United States and has presented at many national conferences in addition to maintaining a highly active schedule as a clinician for ensembles visiting Chicago. Currently, Dr. Neidlinger is serving an elected term as President of the North Central Division of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA).

Before her position at DePaul, Dr. Neidlinger served on the faculty of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where she conducted university concert ensembles and directed the marching band. She has been a member of the band and music education faculty at The Ohio State University and has also served as conductor of the Nebraska Wind Symphony. Neidlinger completed her doctoral degree at the University of Minnesota under the supervision of Professor Craig Kirchoff. Her research applies Laban's Effort Shape Theory to the expressive development of conductors.

PROGRAM NOTES

Kyle Craven (b. 1997)

Amazons (2026)

Duration: 10 minutes

Amazons is based on the fictional memoir of Cleo Birdwell, the first woman to play in the National Hockey League. This book was written by Don DeLillo, under the Cleo Birdwell pseudonym, but was later disowned by the author. The book was published in 1980 and is mainly viewed as a comedy replete with social satire. However, I look at it as a sincere story of gradual acceptance. A story about finding yourself in a different world and accepting your place in it.

This piece is a collaboration with DePaul's Director of Dance, Lin Kahn, and her students Katie Nigh and Zoe Shores-Navata. The costumes have been designed by Jazz Dow. The score's cover features Caroline O'Grady's painting *Moon Tan*.

I'd like to sincerely thank my collaborators on this project, Michael Lewanski, DePaul's Ensemble 20+, Lin, Katie, and Zoe. I am so appreciative of all the hard work they have put into bringing this piece to life. I'd also like to thank my professors, Dr. Jones and Dr. Netzer, for their incredible guidance and mentorship. This dream does not exist without them. Finally, I'd like to thank my family and friends for their constant love and support. I am eternally grateful for you all.

This piece is dedicated to my family. For everything.

Note by Kyle Craven

John Harbison (b. 1938)

Music for Eighteen Winds (1986)

Duration: 12 minutes

Music for Eighteen Winds is the result of the MIT Arts Council's generous invitation to compose something for any MIT performance organization, of any length, of any intent. Commissions seldom grant this kind of freedom, and I wrote a piece I had been contemplating for some time – for winds, concise (about 11 minutes), and abstract (without extra-musical associations).

I wrote a piece that can be played by an orchestral wind section, a scaled-down band, or a scaled-up chamber music group, hoping that all three such ensembles might eventually perform it either here or elsewhere. The piece is challenging to play, but not impossible for college and music school students.

Most precious about the situation was the chance to frame the piece's first program, work with MIT students, colleagues, and friends from the Boston freelance community in its presentation, and play it for an audience in my own community. This influenced the shape of the piece, which trusts both players and audience to meet it halfway. The title is a simple reification. I looked for a more colorful one, but the piece resisted. There are two large sections, both based on the same musical materials:

1. Very fast, full ensemble, answers, urban, concrete.
2. Not as fast, solos, questions, rural, metaphorical.

Toward the end of the piece, as the music becomes more and more cursive and self-contained, it also becomes warmer and more optimistic, a paradox which is close to this composer's heart.

Note by John Harbison

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Konzertmusik for Piano, Brass and 2 Harps, Op. 49 (1930)

Duration: 18 minutes

Of the many fantastic composers throughout classical music history, few wrote as expressively and effectively for brass instruments as Paul Hindemith. A German composer, violist, violinist, teacher, and conductor, Hindemith wrote extensively for every musical medium. Besides the 19 orchestral works and 14 concertante, he wrote a number of chamber works, solo pieces, vocal settings, operas, and even a few ballets. He is well known for his unique musical voice, which is tonal in the sense that it is usually written within certain formal keys and has harmonic motion like tonal music, yet he uses all 12 notes of the chromatic scale, breaking the "tonic" tradition. Although complex and sometimes confusing, it provides the audience with an exciting auditory experience that always pays off in grand form.

The *Konzertmusik* for Piano, Brass, and Harps, Op. 49 is one of the "hidden gems" of Hindemith's repertoire. It was written in 1930, just before his *Konzertmusik* for String Orchestra and Brass, Op. 50, and precedes most of his popular orchestral works, such as the *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes* by Carl Maria von Weber or his *Symphony in B-flat*. The Op. 49 is a four-movement work that focuses primarily on the piano soloist and ten-part brass ensemble with the two harps playing a crucial supporting role. The work begins

with a solemn solo in the tuba part accompanied by a horn choir and is soon followed by the piano soloist with gentle ornaments surrounding the original theme. This first movement is lugubrious and heavy, reminiscent of a funeral procession interspersed by happy memories of the deceased, but never losing its dark and chaotic character. It closes with a reprise of the opening solo before quickly departing this idea for an invigorating and excited pianist opening the second movement. After a substantial development in the piano and raucous interjections from the brass, a gentler middle section has the brass instruments quietly accompanying rapid lines in the solo piano. Soon after, we enter a fugue-like revisit to our original theme with the brass sections handing off the melody between each other. At the beginning of the fourth movement, the brass introduces the new rhythmic motif stately by itself, and is then followed by the entrance of the piano and harps again. Towards the middle, the harps overlay these running lines with a beautiful melody that, combined with the chaotic-ness of the piano, gives memory to a hazy dream of a shepherd in fields. As the end approaches, the piano is again joined by the harps in a gentle theme accompanied by the solo tuba. The pianist plays one final winding line to descend towards the final chord played by the brass section, closing on a beautiful C-major chord.

Note by TŌN tuba player Jarrod Briley (edited by Erica Neidlinger)

PERSONNEL

FLUTE

Xander Day
Elena Rubin

OBOE

Madison Constantine
Yung-Hui Wang

CLARINET

Finley Jones
Danny Sanders

SAXOPHONE

Nickoli Kumm

BASSOON

Yu-Yu Chang
Casey Delsandro

HORN

Tyler Goldsmith
Hannah Janka
Eily Polenzani
Liam Weber
Kathryn Wolfgram

TRUMPET

Ethan Dunk
Maria Merlo Martinez
Abner Wong

TROMBONE

Leo Ernest Garcias Leite
Nick Laramée
Amanda Pinos-Fernandez

TUBA

Caden Morton

PIANO

Lleyton Choyna
Iris Shin

HARP

Jennifer Ruggieri*
Kseniya Sushkevich

PERCUSSION

John Curry
Christian Moreno

VIOLIN

Stela Mkrtychian

VIOLA

Kylie Baird

CELLO

Julianna Bray

BASS

Tony Sanfilippo

**denotes guest musician*

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July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

February 28 • 3:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
DePaul Trombone Choir

March 7 • 7:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
Wind/Mixed Chamber Showcase I

February 28 • 8:00 P.M.
Gannon Concert Hall
DePaul Chamber & Concert Choirs

March 8 • 3:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
DePaul Baroque Ensemble

March 3 • 7:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
String Chamber Showcase I

March 8 • 3:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
DePaul Jazz Ensemble

March 4 • 8:00 P.M.
Gannon Concert Hall
DePaul Concert Orchestra

March 9 • 7:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
DePaul Jazz Combos II

March 5 • 7:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
DePaul Jazz Combos I

March 10 • 7:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
DePaul Jazz Workshop

March 5 • 8:00 P.M.
Gannon Concert Hall
DePaul Wind Symphony

March 10 • 7:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
Wind/Mixed Chamber Showcase II

March 7 • 1:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
DePaul African Ensemble

March 11 • 7:00 P.M.
Dempsey Corboy Jazz Hall
DePaul Jazz Combos III

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