



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Wednesday, February 4, 2026 • 8:00 PM

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DEPAUL WIND  
SYMPHONY

*Erica Neidlinger, conductor*

*Dexter Zollicoffer, narrator*

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Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall  
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

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Wednesday, February 4, 2026 • 8:00 PM  
Gannon Concert Hall

# DEPAUL WIND SYMPHONY

*Erica Neidlinger, conductor*

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## PROGRAM

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William Bolcom (b. 1938)  
**Liberty Enlightening the World (1985)**

Alan Fletcher (b. 1956)  
**An American Song (2001)**

Charles Ives (1874–1954); trans. William Schuman/William E. Rhoads  
**Variations on America (1891/1968)**

William Grant Still (1895–1978)  
**Summerland (1937/2013)**; trans. Dane Teter  
**Scherzo (1930/1970)**; trans. Robert O'Brian

Aaron Copland (1900–1990); trans. Walter Beeler  
**Lincoln Portrait (1942/1951)**

Dexter Zollicoffer, narrator

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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**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 Kirchhoff. Her research applies Laban's Effort Shape Theory to the expressive development of conductors.

**Dexter Zollicoffer** most recently appeared at Court Theatre in Shakespeare's, *The Taming of the Shew*. Other Court theatre shows include: *King Hedley ii*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Electra*, *Water by the Spoonful*, and *The Mystery Cycle: Creation and Passion*. Other local theatre credits include: *Charm* at Northlight Theatre (Jeff Award, lead actor). At the Goodman Theatre: *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Little Foxes*, *Dartmoor Prison*, *The Odyssey*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, and *A Christmas*. At Steppenwolf theatre: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Lesson Before Dying*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Victory Gardens theatre credits: *Relatively Close*, *Knock Me a Kiss* and *The Sutherland*. *The Overwhelming* at Next Theatre. Regionally, Mr. Zollicoffer appeared in *Blues for an Alabama Sky* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival, *The Odyssey* at McCarter Theatre Center, and Seattle Repertory Theatre, *Our Country's Good* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *The Recruiting Officer* and *Our Country's Good* at Madison Repertory Theatre, *Voice of Good Hope* at BoarsHead Theater. Television and Film credits include: *Ghostlight*, *Force*, *South Side*, *Joe Pera Talks to you*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, *Detroit 1-8-7*, and *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain* and *Who Gets the Dog*. He is an administrator at The Theatre School at DePaul University where he received best director, best ensemble, and Special Jury Prize nominations for his original work, *Ma Fille, Ma Naturelle* at the 6th annual International Theatre Festival of University Theatre in Tangier, Morocco. He is a 2011-12 recipient of the Spirit of DePaul award.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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William Bolcom (b. 1938)

### **Liberty Enlightening the World (1985)**

*Duration: 6 minutes*

"Liberty Enlightening the World," the statue that is today more popularly known as the Statue of Liberty, was a gift from the French to the people of the United States. The statue was to be given to the United States on the occasion of our centennial in 1876, and French sculptor Frederic Bartholdi was commissioned to design the gift. Due to a variety of complications, the statue was not unveiled until October 28, 1886.

Although the Statue of Liberty means 'America' to us, it is really of international significance as the idea of liberty transcends nationalism in every sense, having inflamed all the revolutions that followed our example worldwide.

My composition was commissioned by the American Wind Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the reopening of the statue in celebration of its centennial, following extensive repairs. The work is based on a simple, recurring melodic fragment I labeled as a 'hymn to liberty.' Ironically, the light of liberty has not always shown within our borders as we continue to struggle with the concept of 'liberty and justice for all.'

### *Note by William Bolcom*

Alan Fletcher (b. 1956)

### **An American Song (2001)**

*Duration: 8 minutes*

In the fall of 2025, Alan Fletcher retired from his position as President and CEO of the Aspen Music Festival and School. Known for his excellence in music administration, Fletcher is also a highly respected composer. He spent 16 years teaching theory and composition at the New England Conservatory and was Head of the School of Music at Carnegie Mellon before his position at Aspen.

*An American Song* was written in 2001 in honor of the retirement of Frank Battisi, conductor of the wind ensemble at the New England Conservatory. It is a collage of American folk and popular tunes that are woven into three underlying verses of *America, the Beautiful*. Fletcher views this collage as a symbol of the motto *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one). Familiar tunes are "set into the collage like thin,

translucent glazes, producing a musical surface that evokes the greatness and the struggle inherent in the American identity.”

The product is reminiscent of the style of Charles Ives. In fact, Fletcher once stated that Ives’s *Central Park in the Dark* had a huge impact on him as a composer. It is a clear example of Ives’s technique of layering “strata of sound and texture and meaning and pulses.” Ives created a complete independence of sounds that float over each other – a trait shared by *An American Song*. Fletcher deepens the meaning by inserting certain melodies at critical moments in the *America* text. The result is at times exhilarated and at times sorrowful as he carefully shades the following verses:

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,  
Whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness,  
And every gain divine!

Charles Ives (1874–1954); trans. William Schuman/William E. Rhoads  
**Variations on America (1891/1968)**

*Duration: 8 minutes*

Charles Ives is widely regarded as one of the first American composers of international significance. His father was a former Civil War bandmaster who taught his son piano, cornet, and drums, while also encouraging him to experiment with polytonality, microtones, and other unusual techniques. Charles played in the town band and in churches as a child. He later attended Yale University where he studied composition.

As a Civil War bandmaster, Ives' father, George, was well aware of the power of vernacular music. He believed the value of music was not necessarily found in a beautifully composed and well-performed piece, but instead in the emotional reaction of the listener and performer. A very imperfect performance could be just as affective, if not more so, than a perfect performance. This line of thinking influenced much of Charles' work, including *Variations on America*. The familiar tune can evoke profound emotions as it takes on many characters, sometimes with simple alteration to the melodic or accompaniment material, but also in variation that may challenge the tolerance of the listener through bi-tonality or tongue-in-cheek alterations. The text of *America* is ever present in the mind's ear, making a more than century old composition still remarkably relevant and perhaps thought provoking.

My country, 'tis of Thee,  
Sweet Land of Liberty  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
From every mountain side  
Let Freedom ring.

William Grant Still (1895–1978)

**Summerland (1937/2013)**; trans. Dane Teter

*Duration: 5 minutes*

**Scherzo (1930/1970)**; trans. Robert O'Brian

*Duration: 3 minutes*

Born in 1895, William Grant Still's career as a highly influential American composer, conductor, and musician spanned much of the 20th Century. Still studied violin as a child and was greatly influenced by listening to opera recordings given to him by his stepfather. He began making a noticeable mark as a composer during the 1920s in

New York and received many honors throughout his career, including a Guggenheim fellowship, commissions from major ensembles such as the Cleveland Orchestra, and honorary doctorates from the New England Conservatory and the Peabody Conservatory to name a few.

Still lived during a time that, as a minority, being recognized as a successful classical musician was challenging. He was labeled a pioneer due to his many "firsts," including being the first African American to have a major orchestral work performed by a major American orchestra and to have conducted a major American orchestra (in addition to many other "firsts"). Still was a gifted musician whose voice was truly American and spoke to a diverse population during a time that American society was not always receptive.

*Summerland* is the second movement of Still's *Three Visions* for piano (1936), written for his wife who was a journalist and concert pianist. He scored instrumental versions of the second movement the following year. It easily evokes the image of the title but can be interpreted with metaphorical meanings as well.

The Scherzo is the third movement from Still's *Afro-American Symphony*, arguably his best-known work. A familiar quote of *I've Got Rhythm* appears (raising the question of the true origin of this material) as well as cross-rhythms taken from African American dance. The scherzo is subtitled "humor (expressed through religious fervor)." It is based on a couplet from Dunbar's poem, *An Ante-Bellum Sermon*. The serious subject matter of the source material (about emancipation and citizenship) is set as a joke in the scherzo, one of many symbols used by Still to reflect the social and racial tensions of his time.

Aaron Copland (1900–1990); trans. Walter Beeler  
**Lincoln Portrait (1942/1951)**

*Duration: 14 minutes*

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York and began studying the piano at a young age. As a teenager he immersed himself in classical music by attending many New York performances. At age twenty, he moved to Paris to study composition with Paul Vidal. He began to attend classes with Nadia Boulanger instead and spent two years under her guidance. Copland was greatly influenced by his years in France; having found a musical community unlike any he had known.

As the United States entered WW II Andre Kostelanetz, conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony, commissioned Copland, Jerome Kern, and Virgil Thomson to compose portraits of eminent Americans to express the “magnificent spirit of our country.” *Lincoln Portrait* was premiered by the Cincinnati Symphony on May 14, 1942. The work was an immediate success and was transcribed for wind band in 1943.

Copland structured the piece in three sections. The opening introduces a dotted rhythmic motive that unifies the work and suggests the “mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln’s personality.” Solo oboe also quotes the folk song “Springfield Mountain.” A lively middle section represents the time during which Lincoln lived by utilizing the spirited folk song “Camptown Races” (which, with alternate lyrics, was used to promote Lincoln’s Presidential campaign in 1860).

Of the concluding section Copland stated, “my sole purpose was to draw a simple but impressive frame about the words of Lincoln himself.” Copland chose narrative passages not for their familiarity, but for what he believed were their relevance at the time. Pearl Harbor had recently been bombed, and the United States was entering into WW II. The text he chose contained excerpts from the Lincoln vs. Douglas debates of 1858, and an annual message to Congress in December 1862, just one month before the Emancipation Proclamation. Both of these sources strongly expressed Lincoln’s disapproval of slavery (and were deemed relevant due to the political and moral challenge of fascism facing the American democracy). The closing excerpt is drawn from the Gettysburg address, November 1863. The battle of Gettysburg, fought in July 1863, was a turning point during the Civil War. It ended the Confederate attempt to invade the North but resulted in an overwhelming number of casualties. Powerful in 1863, Lincoln’s words, “...these dead shall not have died in vain... and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth” were relevant again in 1942 due to the tremendous loss at Pearl Harbor.

*Notes by Erica Neidlinger*

## PERSONNEL

### FLUTE

Jacob Cornejo  
 Simone Graczyk  
 Noam Niv  
 Jesse Perez  
 Zoe Strange  
 Emma Tomita

### OBOE

Reed Cawley\*  
 Charlie Janka  
 Ana Martinez

### CLARINET

Natalie Alexander  
 Rose Bittle\*  
 Christy Faller\*  
 Aniela Meza  
 Alainna Pack  
 Megan Rideout Redeker  
 Jay Savoy  
 Michael Thompson\*  
 Dani Zannoni

### BASSOON

Peter Breyer  
 Alejandro de Jesus  
 Lukas Jaskunas  
 Anya Johnson  
 Finn McCune

### SAXOPHONE

Ella Bergeron  
 Sophia Fontana  
 Nickoli Kumm  
 Kissiany Melecio  
 Aarush Palli

### HORN

Henry Dix  
 Tyler Goldsmith  
 Darlyne Hidalgo  
 Eli Hoffmann  
 Finn Moore  
 Olivia Owen  
 Leah Robin  
 Brooks Wallace

### TRUMPET

Melody Alonso  
 Erin Dangerfield  
 Katelyn Fahey  
 Jesse Hamilton  
 Jhoan Garcia  
 Julian Ramcharan

### TROMBONE

Rix Barlow  
 Vasilios Malamis  
 Agustin Martinez  
 Noah Ochander  
 Ashley Rands  
 Ryan Saladin

### EUPHONIUM

Rix Barlow  
 Nat Garbe

### TUBA

Daniel Bulpitt  
 Castin York

### HARP

Eva Anderson

### PERCUSSION

Toby Elliott  
 Mason Gilbertson  
 Socrates Hwang  
 Odell Jackson  
 Kevin Tan  
 Zachary Wittenborn

### STRING BASS

Sebastian Sanchez

*\*denotes guest musician*

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Gannon Concert Hall  
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February 10 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
Christopher Basset Bass Trombone  
Recital

February 14 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
Jeffrey Ray Studio Recital

February 16 • 7:00 P.M.  
Allen Recital Hall  
Viola Studio Recital

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Jon Nakamatsu, piano

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