

## **Conductor, Composer, and Soloist Headshots and Biographies**

### **UWEC - University Band**

#### **Dr. Randal Dickerson, conductor**

Dr. Randal C. Dickerson is Professor of Music at UW-Eau Claire, where he taught courses in instrumental music education, marching band procedures, supervised student teachers, and directs the University Band, Blugold Marching Band, and Blugold Varsity Band. In his 23 years at UW-Eau Claire, the Blugold Marching Band has transformed from a 60-member ensemble into a highly active marching band that travels and performs around the world and includes over 450 student musicians.

A prolific arranger of marching band music, his arrangements are played by colleges and high schools around the country. Dickerson is an active consultant for high school band and orchestra educational travel and has guided countless educational groups on international experiences. Each year Dr. Dickerson conducts numerous clinics with bands and orchestras as a part of international cruise festivals, primarily in the Caribbean and in Europe. A firm believer in the value of an international component in education, Dickerson's own travels have taken him to 78 countries. Since 2008 Dr. Dickerson has organized, guided, and conducted the BMB in eight International Performance Tours to 14 countries on four continents, most recently to South America in 2023.

Dr. Dickerson will be taking a partial retirement at the end of the current semester, living abroad for part of the year, then returning each fall semester to devote his time entirely to Blugold Marching Band.

#### **Prof. David Lofy, conductor**

David Lofy is Lecturer of Music at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire where he assists in teaching and administration of the Blugold Marching Band, Varsity Band, and Blugold Athletic Band (Basketball Band), conducts University Band, and oversees departmental instruments and equipment.

David performed with the Madison Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps, and now serves as Corps Director. He holds the Master of Music Education (MME) degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he served as a teaching assistant to the Marching Illini and Illinois Athletic Bands. He obtained his Bachelor of Music Education (BME) from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire where he studied euphonium with Dr. Jerry Young.

## **UWEC – BC Communiversy Band**

### **Prof. Mike Joosten, conductor**



Mike Joosten has been the director of the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire/Barron County Communiversy Band since 2001. Mike is retired as the instrumental music director at the Cameron School District, a position he held for 32 years. He has a degree in music education from the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse, and a Masters degree from the American Band College.

## **UWEC Symphony Band**

### **Dr. Phillip Ostrander, conductor**



Phil Ostrander is Professor of Trombone and Bands at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire where he conducts the Symphony Band, teaches private trombone, and trombone ensemble. Dr. Ostrander completed his doctoral studies at the Eastman School of Music. Dr. Ostrander received master's degrees in both trombone and wind conducting from the New England Conservatory, as well as a bachelor's and Performer's Certificate from Eastman. Dr. Ostrander champions diversity in repertoire with the UWEC Symphony Band. The band performs music composed by under-represented composers in every concert, and since 2017, the ensemble's first concert of the year celebrates music written by female composers. The ensemble tours to a middle or high school with a diverse student population every year to perform and collaborate.

He has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Kansas City Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, and the popular chamber groups Rhythm and Brass and the Burning River Brass Ensemble. Currently, he is a member of the IRIS Chamber Orchestra in Memphis, Tennessee under Michael Stern and Principal Trombone of the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. He performs in Broadway shows regularly at the Orpheum and State theatres in Minneapolis. An accomplished jazz trombonist, Dr. Ostrander has collaborated with jazz artists Maria Schneider, Jim McNeely, Jimmy Heath, Claudio Roditi and Rich Beirach. He teaches jazz and created the Trombone Workshop at the Shell Lake Arts Camp in northern Wisconsin. He has recorded on Sony Classical with the Eastman Wind Ensemble and Naxos with the IRIS Orchestra. Dr. Ostrander is a clinician for the Conn-Selmer Musical Instrument Company.

### **Jason Spencer-Lima, student conductor – conducting competition winner**



Jason Spencer-Lima is a fourth-year Music Education Major from Mounds View, Minnesota. While at UW-Eau Claire, he has studied in the Tuba/Euphonium studio, studying Euphonium with Dr. Jacob Grewe. He has performed with the Wind Symphony, Symphony Band, Jazz Ensembles, Blugold Marching Band, and the Chippewa Valley Symphony Orchestra. He also is active with chamber groups on campus, such as the Trombone Choir, BASSically Brass, and a Euphonium Trio.

Outside of school, Jason also enjoys writing and recording music, and exploring the many sights and experiences around the Eau Claire area with friends. Upon graduating, Jason plans to teach concert and marching band at the high school level and hopes to complete a master's degree in conducting or composition.

### **Humerus Bones Trombone Quartet**

**Cade Passe, Jacob Miller, Kathryn Mohrhauser, Matt Sandler, trombone soloists – concerto competition winners**



The *Humerus Bones* Trombone Quartet is Cade Passe, Kathryn Mohrhauser, Jacob Miller, and Matt Sandler. They have been playing together since February 2023, but have known each other for several years through their collective time spent at the Shell Lake Trombone Camp and through their wonderful trombone colleagues and teachers.

**Cade** is a 4<sup>th</sup> year Liberal Arts Major with a Math Minor from Lonsdale, MN; **Kathryn** is a 4<sup>th</sup> year (Instrumental) Music Education Major with an Adaptive Music Certificate from Hammond, WI; **Jacob** is a 1<sup>st</sup> year (Instrumental) Music Education Major from Savage, MN; and **Matt** is 4<sup>th</sup> year Music Performance Major with a Recording Arts Certificate from Prior Lake, MN.

## UWEC Wind Symphony

### Dr. John R. Stewart, conductor



Dr. John R. Stewart is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Concert Bands at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire where he conducts the Wind Symphony, teaches courses in conducting and repertoire, coordinates the concert band program, and serves as the Wind and Percussion Division Coordinator. Under his leadership, the Wind Symphony performed at the International Tuba Euphonium Conference, the CBDNA/NBA North Central Division Regional Conference, the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic, and his ensembles have performed across Europe and Southeast Asia. Dr. Stewart maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor and clinician across the United States. An advocate for new music, Dr. Stewart has received praise from contemporary composers Jodie Blackshaw, Kevin Day, Stacy Garrop, and Dana Wilson for the musical realization of their works.

Prior to his appointment at UWEC, Dr. Stewart was Interim Conductor of the St. Cloud State University Wind Ensemble (Minnesota). Dr. Stewart served as Director of Bands at Saint Cloud High School (Florida) from 1996-2010 where he directed the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble, Chamber Winds, Percussion Ensemble, and Marching Band. In 2006, he earned his National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and in 2008 was named the St. Cloud High School "Teacher of the Year."

Dr. Stewart contributed to *Teaching Music through Performance in Band: Solos with Wind Band Accompaniment* published by GIA Publications, Inc., published articles in *Contributions to Music Education*, the *Minnesota Music Educators Association Journal*, the *NBA Journal*, and presented sessions at the Society for Music Teacher Educators bi-annual conference, the Wisconsin Music Educators Association State Conference, the National Band Association – Wisconsin Chapter State Conference, the MMEA Mid-Winter Clinic, the Florida Music Educators Association Convention, the Colorado Music Educators Association Convention, and the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles in Prague, CZ. His current research interests include Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) and repertoire.

Dr. Stewart serves as a board member for the Wisconsin Concert Band Association (WCBA) and is the Wisconsin state chair for the National Band Association. His professional affiliations include College Band Directors National Association, National Association for Music Education, Wisconsin Music Educators Association, the National Band Association, the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

He completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education (2013) at the University of Minnesota while studying conducting with Craig Kirchoff. Dr. Stewart earned his Master of Arts in Music Education from the University of South Florida (2009) and a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Central Florida (1996).

## **Dr. Erika Svanoë, guest composer and conductor**



Dr. Erika Svanoë (b.1976) is a conductor, composer, and educator, currently serving as the Conductor of the Augsburg Concert Band at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she also teaches undergraduate conducting, music theory, and instructs the clarinet studio. Prior to joining the Augsburg faculty, she was Director of Bands at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, MN, and Director of Athletic Bands at the University of New Hampshire. She is active as a guest conductor and clinician, appearing with high school, university, and festival ensembles across the United States. She earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from The Ohio State University under Russel C. Mikkelson. She also holds a Master of Music in Wind Conducting from Oklahoma State University and a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire.

Dr. Svanoë maintains an active schedule as a composer, writing music for band and chamber ensembles. Her first published work, *The Haunted Carousel*, won the 2014 NBA Young Band Composition Contest and was featured at the Midwest Clinic and the CBDNA Southern Division Conference. Her piece *Steampunk Suite* was featured on Wisconsin Public Radio, at the 2017 American Bandmasters Association National Conference, and performed by “The President's Own” United States Marine Band at the US Capitol Building. Her DMA dissertation included a critical edition of Aaron Copland's *El Salón México* for wind ensemble, with related research published in the *WASBE Journal* and presented at the CBDNA national conference. Her music is published through Alfred Music, Schirmer on Demand, and self-published through Swan Maiden Press. She is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP).

She is also the creator of *Marrying Mr. Darcy*, the *Pride & Prejudice* card game, and occasionally advocates/speaks on the topics of crowdfunding, game design, and arts entrepreneurship, with past appearances at a variety of gaming-related events and media. Originally from Whitewater, Wisconsin, she currently lives near Minneapolis with her husband, designer and graphic novelist Erik Evensen.

### **Wyatt Cameron, student conductor – conducting competition winner**



Wyatt Cameron is a fourth-year student from Roseau, Minnesota completing a degree in Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. While studying percussion under Dr. Jeff Crowell, he has been involved with many ensembles at UWEC including Wind Symphony, Symphony Band, Jazz Ensemble, and the Blugold Marching Band. Wyatt has served as president of the UWEC National Band Association Collegiate Chapter and is a member of the National Association for Music Education. He currently works with high school marching bands and their front ensembles throughout the state of Wisconsin. After his graduation, Wyatt

hopes to continue teaching music in the Midwest.

### **Rafael Puga, clarinet soloist – concerto competition winner**



Rafael Puga is a senior Clarinet Performance major at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire studying with Dr. Alyssa Powell. Other notable instructors include Sangyoon Kim, Dr. Jennifer Fraley, and Dr. Melissa Koprowski. During his time at UW-Eau Claire Rafael has performed with the university wind symphony, orchestra, and many chamber groups including the Eileen Philips String Quartet. Rafael won 2021 UW-Eau Claire orchestra concerto competition where he performed Malcolm Arnold's *Second Clarinet Concerto*. Rafael also assists in the UW-Eau Claire Middle and High school honor bands serving as a section coach and giving masterclasses on expanding clarinet fundamentals to the middle school

clarinet players. As an orchestral musician in the Eau Claire area Rafael is a section clarinet player with the Eau Claire Chamber Orchestra and the Chippewa Valley Symphony. He has participated in the Wintergreen Summer Music Festival as part of the Stony Creek Woodwind Quintet (2019), and in the pilot summer of their Lead Cooperative program where he played alongside the festival orchestra on one of their concerts. Rafael has participated in masterclasses led by Anthony McGill, Alexander Fiterstein, Dominic Desautels, and Elizabeth Adkins. Outside of performing, Rafael serves as the International Clarinet Association-Wisconsin Student Ambassador

### Gwenyth Lark, student composer



Gwenyth Lark is a fourth-year composition student at UW - Eau Claire studying under Dr. Chia-Yu Hsu. They usually write in the neo-classical style with use of extended harmony in their compositions. They also try to stay involved in the community, playing violin for Chippewa Valley Symphony Orchestra, Eau Claire Chamber Orchestra, and the University Symphony Orchestra at UWEC. This piece, 'Fanfare for Spring,' is in celebration of 100 years of University Bands. Enjoy!

### Chris Renaud, student composer



Chris Renaud is a fourth-year music composition student pursuing a recording arts certificate. He hails from the small town of Tomah, Wisconsin, and first found passion for music through church. Singing and drumming have been natural constants in his life, coming from a wide range of interest in music within his family. He is the first in his family to pursue a professional music career, and is a minimalist at heart, which is evident in his works - whether it be instrumental or choral. Chris is always open to and thankful for new opportunities to compose for all kinds of settings. Renaud is an AMCoFA (Associated Male Choruses of America) and Ross Hastings Memorial scholar and is active in leadership of *Consortium*; a composition club he co-founded with Yaki Hallett and J.M. Lee in 2020. He became a research fellow for the music department alongside Gwenyth Lark this past summer and is now pursuing other interests within the realm of music, like producing/mixing/mastering, in addition to picking up other instruments. Chris hopes to work in a studio someday while composing and arranging on the side. He is a proud member of The Singing Statesmen, Blugold Marching Band, Blugold Indoor Drumline, and is an orchestral arranger for Cabaret.

## UWEC Alumni Band

### Dr. Russel Mikkelson, conductor



**Dr. Russel C. Mikkelson** serves as the sixth Director of University Bands at The Ohio State University, a position he has held since 1998, where he is Professor of Music (Conducting), Area Head of Conducting and Ensembles, conducts the Wind Symphony, and oversees all aspects of the university's band program. Under his direction, the OSU Wind Symphony has performed twice at College Band Directors National Association Convention, the CBDNA North Central Conference, at the Ohio Music Educators Association Convention seven times, and has recorded six CD's.

In a review of the *Southern Harmony* recording, *Fanfare* magazine proclaims "The Ohio State musicians play their collective hearts out and conductor Mikkelson shapes the music with a loving hand, wringing every last drop of emotion out of the music. If this does not give you goose-bumps, nothing will."

A staunch advocate for the creation of new works, Mikkelson chairs the Big Ten Conference's Commissioning Project, serves on the American Bandmasters Association Commissioning Committee, the New Works Committee for the College Band Directors National Association, and has instituted a program of regular commissioning projects for the Ohio State Bands. He has received praise from composers Leslie Bassett, Krzysztof Penderecki, John Corigliano, Michael Colgrass, Joseph Schwantner, Aaron Jay Kernis, Jennifer Higdon, Gunther Schuller, Julia Wolfe, Augusta Read Thomas, James Stephenson, and Michael Daugherty among others, for his musical realization of their compositions. Corigliano wrote, "Russel Mikkelson is a conductor who really understands my music, and that's rare."

Professor Mikkelson made his debut with the Newark-Granville Symphony Orchestra (OH) in 2015 and was named its Music Director and Conductor in 2017. The 2022-2023 season marks the eighth year of his happy association with the orchestra. Well-known for his attractive and innovative programming, Mikkelson has earned a reputation for his ability to move seamlessly between standard orchestral literature, the operatic repertoire, and music of both stage and screen.

Dr. Mikkelson is Past President of the North Central Division of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), Past President of the Big Ten Band Directors Association, a member of NAFME, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Phi Beta Mu, and a duly elected member of the American Bandmasters Association. An enthusiastic advocate of public-school music education, Dr. Mikkelson has conducted All-State Bands, Festivals, and Honor Bands across the United States and internationally. Additionally, Mikkelson serves as Music Director and Conductor of the Heisey Wind Ensemble, a highly skilled community band.

He is recipient of the Ohio State University School of Music Distinguished Teaching Award and the Distinguished Scholar Award, in addition to serving on the editorial board of the *Journal of*



*Band Research.* Mikkelson was recently recognized by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire with the President's Award, given in recognition of his professional and personal achievements as a graduate of that institution. He has published articles in *The Instrumentalist* and *The Journal of the Conductor's Guild*, and as a composer/arranger, is published through C. Alan and Daehn Publications. Previous posts include the State University of New York at Fredonia, Stevens Point Area Senior High School (WI), and Kickapoo High School (WI).

### **Dr. Robert Ponto, conductor**



*Bob retired in 2021 from the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance where he served as Director of Bands and Assistant Dean for 29 years. Before coming to Oregon, he held similar teaching positions at the Oberlin Conservatory, East Carolina University, Pacific Lutheran University and the public schools of West St. Paul, Minnesota. He is also a resident conductor and teacher with the American Band College and Western International Band Clinic.*

*He has been blessed with many wonderful (and incredibly patient) mentors. His conducting teachers were Donald S. George, Henry Charles Smith and H. Robert Reynolds; his euphonium teachers were Rodney Hudson, Henry Charles Smith and Abe Torchinsky.*

*Bob has had the opportunity to conduct ensembles throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and to have performances featured at the Bang on a Can contemporary music festival, on National/Oregon Public Radio, and at various state, regional and national music conferences. Some of the artists with whom he has collaborated include John Adams, Julian Bliss, Steven Stucky, Lucy Shelton, Justine Chen, Michael Daugherty, Eugene Rousseau, Augusta Read Thomas, David Maslanka and others. Recent projects include conducting the West Point Band in a performance of Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and a new recording of Roy Harris's 1952 West Point Symphony.*

*As an electronic music and sound design hobbyist, he has contributed to unique projects including Postmark Sirius: In Memoriam Karlheinz Stockhausen (for trumpet and live electronics), Beta Bacher (for the Oregon Bach Festival's Bach Remix V), a digital realization of Stockhausen's Solo, and contributions to British pop singer/songwriter Imogen Heap's album Sparks and her incidental music for the play, "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child."*

*Most importantly, Bob gets to spend his time with his amazing spouse of 42 years, Lee Anne, three wonderful adult children, and one grandson. In an effort to stay out of trouble in retirement, he also plays euphonium in the Eugene Symphonic Band and Oregon Brass Society.*

## **Dr. Richard Mark Heidel, conductor**



Richard Mark Heidel is in his 15<sup>th</sup> year as Director of Bands and Professor of Music in the School of Music at the University of Iowa where he conducts the Iowa Symphony Band, teaches graduate courses in conducting and band literature, guides the graduate band conducting program, and oversees all aspects of the University of Iowa band program. Ensembles under Dr. Heidel's direction have performed at national, regional, and state conferences including those of the American Bandmasters Association, College Band Directors National Association, Music Educators National Conference, Iowa Bandmasters Association, Wisconsin Music Educators Association, Illinois Music Educators Association, and National Band Association-Wisconsin Chapter. He has led four concert tours to the Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom as well as tours throughout the Midwest and east coast.

A native of Texas, Heidel holds the Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music in Conducting from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas as well as the Doctor of Education in Music Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His principal teachers include James F. Keene, James Sudduth, Gary E. Smith, Keith Bearden, Donald Schleicher, John Grashel, Eunice Boardman, Richard Tolley, and Michael Ewald.

Prior to his appointment to the University of Iowa faculty in 2008, Dr. Heidel served as Director of Bands at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (2000-2008), Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania (1997-2000), and as a teaching assistant in the School of Music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1995-1997). In addition to his university teaching experiences, Heidel taught in Texas for nine years serving as Director of Bands at Muleshoe High School, Levelland High School, and Monterey High School in Lubbock.

Dr. Heidel has been distinguished with memberships in numerous national and international honor societies and fraternities including Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Pi Kappa Lambda, Kappa Kappa Psi, Phi Eta Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi, Pi Nu Epsilon, and Golden Key. He was the recipient of the Outstanding Musician award at Texas Tech University in both 1985 and 1986, and in 1997, he received the A. A. Harding award at the University of Illinois for the "highest possible achievement, service, and devotion to the University Bands." In 2002, Dr. Heidel was named to the "Who's Who Among America's Teachers," and in 2003 and 2010 he received the Citation of Excellence from the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Band Association. In 2005, he was initiated into Sigma Alpha Iota as a National Arts Associate, and he was elected to membership into the prestigious American Bandmasters Association in 2008. Dr. Heidel received the Collegiate Teaching Award from the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 2012,

Citations of Excellence from the National Band Association in 2016 and 2022, and a Citation of Excellence from the Wisconsin Concert Band Association in 2023.

Dr. Heidel has presented clinics and workshops at state music conferences and universities in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, and he has appeared as guest conductor and clinician in more than 35 states, Washington, D.C., and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba. In 2003, Heidel served as an adjudicator for the Limerick International Marching Band Competition and the 100th St. Patrick's Day Festival in Dublin, Ireland. Dr. Heidel was the conductor of the Asia Pacific Activities Conference APAC Band in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2016, and he was conductor of the Association of Music in International Schools High School Honor Band in Salzburg, Austria in 2019.

Heidel has three commercial compact discs to his credit including *TRADITION* featuring live performances of the Iowa Symphony Band released by Equilibrium in 2017, *Martyrs for the Faith* featuring Kenneth Tse, saxophone with the Iowa Symphony Band released by MSR Classics in 2012, and *The Voxman Project* released in 2021 featuring chamber works of Weill, Milhaud, and O'Riordan.

Dr. Heidel currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Band Association and American Bandmasters Association, is the State of Iowa Representative for the College Band Directors National Association and is Past President of the Big Ten Band Directors Association. His list of more than 30 publications includes articles in the National Band Association Journal, Teaching Music, Teaching Music Through Performance in Band, Iowa Bandmasters Association Magazine, and Iowa Music Educator. Dr. Heidel is Director of the Iowa Summer Music Camps, and he has taught for summer programs at the Shell Lake Arts Center (WI), Texas Tech University Band and Orchestra Camp, Illinois Summer Youth Music Program, and the International Music Camp. Heidel is an active trumpet player who frequently performs with orchestras and big bands in Iowa. Mark and Kelly, his wife of more than 30 years, live in Iowa City.

**Prof. Rodney B. Hudson, conductor**



Rodney Hudson, Professor of Music – emeritus at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, retired in 2003 after 32 years of service. He conducted the Symphony Band, Concert Band, Brass Choir, Trombone Choir, Tuba Ensemble and assisted with the Blugold Marching Band and taught Brass Techniques, Conducting, and Applied Trombone, Euphonium, and Tuba. Mr. Hudson founded the Trombone Choir (1972) and the Tuba Ensemble (1975).

Mr. Hudson has performed with numerous local, regional, national, and international ensembles. He taught for 35 years at the International Music Camp and performed there with the International Brass Quintet.

Mr. Hudson received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education from Minot State University in North Dakota and taught vocal and instrumental music in public schools in North Dakota. He developed a band program in the Brandon Manitoba public school system and was the Instructor of Brass at Branson University. Mr. Hudson holds a Master of Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees in Performance from the University of Iowa where he studied with John D. Hill. He is an avid bicyclist and is married to Beverly Hovland Hudson and they have three children.