



Interlochen

ARTS ACADEMY

Interlochen, Michigan
121st Program of the 64th Year

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AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET

Tiago Linck, trumpet
Brandon Ridenour, trumpet
Eric Reed, horn
Hillary Simms, trombone
John D. Rojak, bass trombone

Wednesday, January 28, 2026 7:30pm, Dendrinos Chapel and Recital Hall

Earl of Essex Galliard/Can She Excuse My Wrongs .. John Dowland (1563–1626)
ed. Brandon Ridenour

Samsāra (2022) Anthony Barfield (b. 1983)

Common Heroes, Uncommon Land (2017) Philip Lasser
City Hero (b. 1963)
Hero of the Land
Joy
Hold Fast to Dreams
Epilogue

—Intermission—

Book of Brass (2022) Jennifer Higdon
I. Ramp Up (b. 1962)

Quinteto Concertante Osvaldo Lacerda
Chóte (1927-2011)
Scherzo
Seresta
Rondó

Sacred Geometry (2022)	David Biedenbender
Ripples	(b. 1984)
Gaudí	
Nautilus	
Helix	

The American Brass Quintet is represented by Kirshbaum Associates, New York.

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the Moe and Francine Handleman Visiting Artist Endowment.*

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PROGRAM NOTES

Earl of Essex Galliard/Can She Excuse My Wrongs **John Dowland**

ed. Brandon Ridenour

“Can She Excuse My Wrongs?” comes from English Renaissance composer John Dowland’s First Booke of Songes and Ayres, written in the late 16th century. The song is inspired by the 2nd Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, who committed treason for his rebellion against Elizabeth I. Unfortunately for him, the rebellion was unsuccessful and the queen ordered his execution by way of a beheading, a popular way to execute during this time. It seems that she did not excuse his wrongs.

“The Earl of Essex Galliard” refers to the instrumental version of this song where the melody just slightly differs, while the chords, harmony, and form are mostly the same. It seems only fitting for there to be an alternate instrumental version since the Earl no longer has a head to sing “Can She Excuse My Wrongs?”. It appears that Dowland wrote the tune right after the rebellion, while Earl Robert Devereux was still alive. There is some speculation that the lyrics could have come from Earl himself, as he was also a known poet. It was common for Dowland to hire lyricists, but also common for people/lyricists of the time to set their own words to existing melodies. Dowland also gave alternate options for various ensembles, such as lute and vocal soloist, SATB vocal ensemble, viol consort + lute, and if he had lived long enough, possibly the evolved brass instruments in the American Brass Quintet.

—Program note by Brandon Ridenour

Samsāra (2022)

Anthony Barfield

In autumn of 2020 The Juilliard School once again offered to commission a new work for the American Brass Quintet for its 60th anniversary. This one was especially significant for ABQ, as Anthony Barfield had been a trombone student in the quintet’s chamber music seminar at Juilliard before he embarked on his very successful career as a composer. The premiere was delayed by a pandemic, a bit of revising, playing injuries, and a sudden unexpected change of personnel

in the quintet. This led to an even greater anticipation of this piece. Knowing the composer since he was a first-year undergraduate was immensely gratifying as we added another excellent brass quintet to the chamber music repertoire. The premiere performance was dedicated to our beloved trombonist, Michael Powell, who was Anthony's private teacher for several years and was unable to join us due to medical reasons. The quintet is extremely grateful to The Juilliard School for this commission and support of new music. —Program note by John Rojak

From the composer:

sam·sa·ra /səm'särə/ noun

HINDUISM • BUDDHISM the cycle of death and rebirth to which life in the material world is bound.

The title, *Samsāra*, can be interpreted as "wandering" or "world," but it also is a concept of rebirth; the "cyclical of all life, matter and existence." As I started writing this piece during the winter of 2020, I would drive to my favorite place on earth, Sleepy Hollow in Tarrytown, New York. As I'd go for long walks in the woods to gain inspiration, there was one word that kept entering my mind..."Rebirth." During this time, as the events unfolded all over the world and close to home, this idea of Rebirth became a powerful message and my main source of inspiration. *Samsāra* refers to the belief that we all go through constant births and rebirths. It's about the fact that everything changes but yet everything remains the same.

—Program note by Anthony Barfield

Common Heroes, Uncommon Land (2017)

Philip Lasser

Philip Lasser is an American composer with French musical roots. Trained from an early age at Nadia Boulanger's Ecole d'Arts Americaines in Fontainebleau, France, he has created a unique sound world that blends together the harmonies of French Impressionist sonorities and the dynamic rhythms and characteristics of American music. Following his studies at Harvard College, Lasser moved to Paris to work with Boulanger's closest colleague and disciple, the Catalan composer, Narcis Bonet and continue his piano studies with Gaby Casadesus. His music has entered the repertoire in all genres with regular performances and broadcasts by artists including Frank Almond, Zuill Bailey, Steven Blier, Sasha Cooke, Natalie Dessay, Simone Dinnerstein, Elizabeth Futral, Margo Garrett, Jimmy Lin, Susanna Phillips, Liv Redpath and Brian Zeger and performances by the Atlanta Symphony, Berlin and Leipzig Radio Orchestras, and Juilliard415. Lasser received his BA summa cum laude from Harvard College, his MA from Columbia University, and his DMA from Juilliard where he studied with David Diamond. He has been on the faculty at Juilliard since 1996 and is also director for the EAMA—Nadia Boulanger Institute in Paris. Lasser is author of *The Spiraling Tapestry*, a seminal treatise on contrapuntal analysis exploring the musical universe from Bach to Debussy, and his works can be heard on the Sony, Decca, and Delos labels. (philiplasser.com)

Common Heroes, Uncommon Land was commissioned by The Juilliard School for the American Brass Quintet in honor of the ensemble's 30th anniversary.

Philip Lasser has written the following about the work:

"*Common Heroes, Uncommon Land* speaks of the glory of the everyday. It celebrates the human spirit in its daily routine and uncrushable work ethic. Based on five short poems by various poets, each movement explores a particular facet of the American experience. The first movement describes the urban heroes in their dogged morning trek towards work and sustenance. The second honors the farmers in their rural struggle with the land. The third and fourth movements celebrate our common quest for joy and the noble act of holding fast to dreams. The last movement serves as an epilogue to the work offering an ode to the everyday heroes and heroines of our land as they create the future."

Book of Brass (2022)

Jennifer Higdon

A chance meeting with Dorothy and DuWayne Hansen in October of 2017 led to a personal introduction with the great American composer Jennifer Higdon. With that introduction, ABQ asked if there was a possibility of commissioning her for a quintet since it clearly fit into the part of ABQ's mission to gain works from the leading composers of our time. Higdon kindly responded affirmatively although the piece would fall into her queue and possibly be written by 2024—seven years later. In 2020, however, we heard from Higdon that she had composed faster than expected and could deliver a piece for a premiere in October 2022, two years earlier than expected. An inquiry from the Lyrebird Quintet from Melbourne, Australia allowed us to combine funding for a major piece as well as around the world premieres.

Book of Brass is written in 4 movements, or chapters, of which any number may be played together for performance. *Ramp Up* is a lively, spirited piece that stays busy from first note to last. *Acrostic* begins leisurely and, as one might gather from the title, becomes more complex and intricate until its satisfying ending. *Glide & Fade* is slow, meditative, and harmonically rich. The final chapter is *Punch It Up*, with a funky groove and high energy eliciting virtuosity from all voices.

The American Brass Quintet is grateful to the Hansens not only for a fortuitous introduction, but also for their generous funding to create this new landmark for brass chamber music.

—Program note by John Rojak

Quinteto Concertante

Osvaldo Lacerda

Osvaldo Lacerda graduated from the Carlos Gomez Conservatory of Music in 1960 with studies in piano, harmony, and composition with Camargo Guarnieri. In 1963, he received a Guggenheim Foundation grant to study in the U.S. for a year, where he studied composition with Vittorio Giannini and Aaron Copland. He is founder and Artistic Director of three musical societies in São Paulo, and has won many national composition prizes. Lacerda acknowledges the influence of

the work of Brazilian musicologist Mario de Andrade. In addition, he shares a basic philosophy with Ralph Vaughan Williams; their music is written in a national idiom intended to be universally understood. Lacerda's music attempts to capture the essence of Brazil's musical soul through the incorporation of its folk and popular music into his own.

Note by the composer:

I had already written a brass quintet in 1977, *Fantasia e Rondó*, which was very well received and performed by brass performers, including the American Brass Quintet, that played its première in the Inter-American Music Festival in Washington D.C., April 27, 1980. So, in 1990, I decided to compose another brass quintet. Suddenly I had an inspiration: why not a concertante one, with few counterpoints but with beautiful solo melodies, accompanied by good rhythms and harmonies? Thus, this work was born.

It has the following four movements:

1. CHÓTE (=Schottisch) is a Central-European dance that came to Brazil in the 19th Century. Here it acquired some musical characteristics that make it different from its European model. It is still danced in some parts of this country. The trombone is the soloist.
2. SCHERZO explores one of the many features of the French horn, the vigor.
3. SERESTA is a Brazilian serenade that tries to make the bass trombone really sing...
4. RONDÓ, in an animated tempo, makes the two trumpets recall some features of the beautiful music of our Northeast.

First performance: Quinteto de Metais de São Paulo; October 24, 1991, in Rio de Janeiro.

Sacred Geometry (2022)

David Biedenbender

David Biedenbender (b. 1984, Waukesha, Wisconsin) is a composer, conductor, performer, educator, and interdisciplinary collaborator. He has written music for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations, and his work is often influenced by his diverse musical experiences in rock and jazz bands as an electric bassist, in wind, jazz, and New Orleans-style brass bands as a euphonium, bass trombone, and tuba player, and by his study of Indian Carnatic music. His creative interests include working with everyone from classically trained musicians to improvisers, acoustic chamber music to large ensembles, and interactive electronic interfaces to live brain data. In addition to composing, Biedenbender is a dedicated teacher. He is Associate Professor of Composition in the College of Music at Michigan State University. His composition students have achieved regional and national recognition for their creative work, including numerous awards and acceptance into renowned summer music festivals and undergraduate and graduate composition programs.

He received the Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees in composition from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the Bachelor of Music degree in composition and theory from Central Michigan University. His primary musical mentors include Evan Chambers, Kristin Kuster, Stephen Rush, Michael Daugherty, Bright Sheng, Christopher Lees, David R. Gillingham, José Luis-Maury, and John Williamson. He has also studied at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala, Sweden with Anders Hillborg and Steven Stucky, the Aspen Music Festival and School with Syd Hodkinson, and in Mysore, India where he studied South Indian Carnatic music, focusing on the Mridangam with Vidwan G.S. Ramanujan.

Note by the composer:

Sacred Geometry is inspired by the work of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926). Gaudí is best known for creating la Basílica de la Sagrada Família, a cathedral in Barcelona, Spain, which has been under construction since 1882. Gaudí integrated symbols of his faith into every detail of the Basílica, weaving them into complex geometric forms he studied in the natural world, like hyperbolic paraboloids, hyperboloids, helicoids, and cones. He also utilized Trencadís, a form of mosaic art made by cementing together recycled shards of tile and chinaware, fashioning beautiful new things out of the broken and discarded. The inside of the cathedral mimics a forest, with tree-like columns and branches supporting hyperboloid vaults in spectacular fractals, evoking the infinite—connecting God and Creation. I think of this piece like a strange liturgy—or ritual—to meditate on this striking space, to contemplate Gaudí’s way of seeing the world, and, hopefully, to discover a similar sense of awe and wonder.

The first movement, Ripples, is quite simple—a chanted invocation in the trumpets with orchestrated reverberations evoking the large spaces inside the cathedral. There are also distant echoes of William Byrd’s setting of Ave Verum Corpus (1605) in this movement. My favorite moment of Byrd’s work is this surprising, fleeting dissonance, the result of a major chord in the upper voices against a weeping, descending minor melody in the bass, coinciding with the text Miserere—have mercy. It is bittersweet and broken. The second movement, Gaudí, is playful and whimsical, even irreverent. The Latin root of Gaudí is *gaudere*, which means “to rejoice” or “to take pleasure in.” Gaudí threaded the seemingly fantastical aspects of our world into dream-like designs and surreal structures that seem unnaturally natural, or naturally unnatural. Imagine stopping to marvel at some small, unusual flower like *Orchis italica* or hearing the peculiar call of a Brown Sicklebill or a Black-throated Loon. I think of this movement as a walk through a garden of strange delights.

A nautilus is a marine mollusk with a shell in the shape of a logarithmic spiral. As the nautilus grows, it lives in the outermost chamber of the shell, sealing off the previous chamber with a wall that prevents it from returning to its old home. As a symbol, it has many meanings and connections, but, for me, I find it to be

a powerful metaphor: building anew while always leaving behind an artifact of the past—a stunningly beautiful one, in fact. The third movement, *Nautilus*, is built on a small, simple phrase that spins and rotates into longer and longer threads and swirling, circular harmonic progressions.

The final movement is called *Helix*. The helix also has many connections and connotations, appearing in everything from spiral staircases to seashells, forming the structure for the molecules from which life is built, and lying at the center of mathematical formulas that describe both infinitesimally small subatomic particles as well as the mechanics of the entire universe.

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The **American Brass Quintet** is internationally recognized as one of the premier chamber music ensembles of our time. “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 premiered works by leading composers including Elliott Carter, Eric Ewazen, Jennifer Higdon, Anthony Plog, Huang Ruo, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, William Schuman, Joan Tower, Charles Whittenberg, and John Zorn, among many others. These works have contributed significantly to both contemporary chamber music and the foundation of the modern brass quintet repertoire. The Quintet’s Emerging Composer Commissioning program, with grant assistance from the Jerome Foundation, produced brass quintets by rising stars Gordon Beeferman, Jay Greenberg, Trevor Gureckis, and Shafer Mahoney. Recent commissions include David Biedenbender’s *Sacred Geometry*, Ching-chu Hu’s *A Distant Hope*, premiered at Chamber Music Columbus, Jennifer Higdon’s *Book of Brass*, debuted at Bowling Green State University, and *Largo* by Tyshawn Sorey, premiered at The Juilliard School in 2025.

The group’s latest recordings include two digitally released EPs: Jennifer Higdon’s *Book of Brass* and David Biedenbender’s *Sacred Geometry*, both released in 2025. *Perspectives* (2017) is the latest of 12 full length albums with Summit Records and features music by Robert Paterson, Jay Greenberg, Sebastian Currier, and Eric Ewazen. It garnered praise for bringing the “utmost cohesion, balance, and expressivity to each of the scores they perform with ear-catching intensity and finesse” (*Gramophone*).

Highlights of the 2025-2026 season include performances at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC; the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston; Five Boroughs Music Festival in New York City; Chamber Music Society of Louisville; Chamber Music Raleigh; In Concert Sierra in Grass Valley, California;

Chamber Music Society of Logan in Utah and Bradley Hills Presents in Bethesda, MD, as well as concerts and educational work at Interlochen Arts Academy and Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

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 2018, 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 in 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.

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