



**POINSETT**  
WIND SYMPHONY

# **MADE IN AMERICA**

Furman University Lakeside Concert Series

Thursday, June 11, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.

McAlister Auditorium

Jay Bocook  
Leslie W. Hicken  
Sue Samuels  
David J. Stanley  
*Conductors*

**Poinsett Wind Symphony**  
***Made in America***

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7:30 p.m., McAlister Auditorium

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- The National Anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner”** (1773/2009)      John Stafford Smith  
arr. Jay Bocook
- Rocky Point Holiday** (1969)      Ron Nelson  
(1929-2023)
- Summon the Heroes** (1996/2009)      John Williams  
(b. 1932)  
arr. Paul Lavender
- The Liberty Bell** (1893/1982)      John Philip Sousa  
(1854-1932)  
ed. William D. Revelli
- Summerland from “Three Visions”** (1937/2013)      William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)  
arr. Dane Teter
- Back to the Future** (1985/2026)      Alan Silvestri  
(b. 1950)  
tr. Jay Bocook
- Groundswell** (2026)      Jay Bocook  
(b. 1953)
- An Outdoor Overture** (1938/1948)      Aaron Copland  
(1900-1990)
- Porgy and Bess** (1935/1998)      George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)  
arr. James Barnes
- America the Beautiful** (1882/1963)      Samuel Augustus Ward  
(1847-1903)  
arr. Carmen Dragon



## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Rocky Point Holiday** (1969) (6')

**Ron Nelson** (1929-2023)

After hearing Ron Nelson's premiere orchestral work, Savannah River Holiday, conductor Frank Bencriscutto asked the composer to write a virtuosic piece for the University of Minnesota Band to play on their tour of Russia. When Nelson asked about the limitations of the wind ensemble, Bencriscutto claimed there were none. Nelson set out to write a "tremendously difficult piece," creating **Rocky Point Holiday**. The piece was written while Nelson vacationed at a Rhode Island seaside resort. Near the resort lay the namesake amusement park, Rocky Point. The music alludes to the New England waves crashing and the whimsy of a Saturday afternoon in the park. Rocky Point Holiday is certainly a "roller-coaster" from start to finish.

*Note compiled from Nikk Pilato.*

### **Summon the Heroes** (1996/2009) (6'45")

**John Williams** (b. 1932)

arr. Paul Lavender

John Williams has become closely associated with epic storytelling ever since his giant orchestral scores for '70s disaster movies like *Earthquake* and *The Towering Inferno*. The popularity of *Star Wars* nearly single-handedly jump-started the use of the lush, Romantic orchestra used perennially in Hollywood's "Golden Age" of the 1930s and '40s. Errol Flynn-worthy themes composed for contemporary mythic characters like *Superman*, *Indiana Jones*, and, more recently, *Harry Potter*, have become part of our collective unconscious.

It stands to reason that Williams would have been approached to compose themes for the real-live athletes competing on an epic scale in the Olympic Games. Williams has composed works for the competitions on several occasions over the last two decades: his first, and still immensely popular, *Fanfare and Theme* for the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles, *The Olympic Spirit* commissioned by NBC Sports for the Olympics in Seoul Korea in 1988, and this evening's work **Summon the Heroes** for the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. Williams eloquently connects the mythic scale of athletic competition and his own creative endeavors:

*I remember seeing a photograph of a female athlete suspended above the ground, every fiber of her being stretching for a ball just beyond her reach... captured in a shot, freezing time and denying gravity. There is unquestionably a spiritual, non-corporeal aspect to an athletic quest such as this that brings us close to what art is all about.*

As with his *Liberty Fanfare*, *Summon the Heroes* is representative of Williams' works that favor more complex, even dissonant harmonies, heard most in the unaccompanied brass gestures which follow the opening statement of the work. Some of the chords seem to hearken back to Williams' roots as a jazz pianist. There is no shortage, however, of the Americana quality that has helped Williams carry the legacy of composers Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein.

*Note adapted from Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli (writing for the Los Angeles Philharmonic).*



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## **The Liberty Bell** (1893/1982) (3'25")

**John Philip Sousa** (1854-1932)

ed. William D. Revelli

For \$500 more, this march probably would have been named "The Devil's Deputy." Sousa was composing music for an operetta of that name at the request of the famous comedian Francis Wilson. Sousa asked \$1500 for the work, but Wilson offered \$1000. When they could not come to an agreement, Sousa withdrew his partially completed manuscript, which included a lively march.

Sousa and George Frederick Hinton, one of the band's managers, were in Chicago witnessing a spectacle called America when a backdrop, with a huge painting of the Liberty Bell, was lowered. Hinton suggested **The Liberty Bell** would be a good title for Sousa's new march. By coincidence, the next morning Sousa received a letter from his wife in which she told him that their son had marched in his first parade in Philadelphia—a parade honoring the return of the Liberty Bell, which had been on tour. The new march was then christened *The Liberty Bell*. It was one of the first marches Sousa sold to the John Church Company and was the first composition to bring Sousa a substantial financial reward.

According to a story told by the Sousa Band's first soprano, Marcella Lindh, she contributed one of the themes of the march. Sousa had heard her whistling a catchy tune of her own and had asked her permission to incorporate it into one of his marches. Several years later she heard *The Liberty Bell* march being performed by a band in Europe and recognized her own melody in the march.

-Paul E. Bierley

## **Summerland from "Three Visions"** (1937/2013) (5'20")

**William Grant Still** (1895-1978)

arr. Dane Teter

William Grant Still was an American composer and conductor and the first African American to conduct a professional symphony orchestra in the United States. Raised by his mother and grandmother in Little Rock, Arkansas before turning to music. He first studied composition at Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, Ohio, then under the conservative George Whitefield Chadwick at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, and later under Edgard Varèse during the latter's most radical avant-garde period. The diversity of Still's musical education was extended when, in the 1920s, he worked as an arranger for the bandleader Paul Whiteman and for the blues composer W.C. Handy. Early orchestral works included *Darker America* and *From the Black Belt* for chamber orchestra.

Still's concern with the position of African Americans in U.S. society is reflected in many of his works, notably the *Afro-American Symphony*; two ballets; and two operas, including *The Troubled Island*, with a libretto by Langston Hughes.

Originally a work for piano, **Summerland** is the second of a three-movement work entitled *Three Visions*. The suite aims to tell a story of the human soul after death: the body expires, and the soul

goes on to an apocalyptic judgment, captured in the first movement “Dark Horsemen.” If the past life has been a good one, the soul may enter heaven, or “Summerland.” This movement evokes the promised beauty of the afterlife. The last Vision, “Radiant Pinnacle,” is a vision of aspiration that is ever-climbing, never-ending, possibly representing reincarnation and continual learning.

*Note adapted from Emily Mariko Eng.*

## **Back to the Future** (1985/2026) (6’30”)

**Alan Silvestri** (b. 1950)

tr. Jay Bocoock

For a film comedy about time travel, music plays a surprisingly large role in ***Back to the Future***. Along with Alan Silvestri’s score, the movie features hits of the ’50s and original songs that became chart-toppers in the ’80s. The film follows Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox), who goes back in time to secure the future. Before Marty takes off in a DeLorean time machine, the film introduces his band, the Pinheads. After Marty lands in the ’50s, he goes back to the music as he performs with the band the Starlighters.

Of the film’s soundtrack, executive producer Steven Spielberg has declared: “Alan’s score is the heartbeat of ‘Back to the Future.’ His music is so powerful and emotional, it transcends the screen and becomes part of the audience’s experience of the film. It’s timeless.” Director Robert Zemeckis had worked with Alan Silvestri on the score of “Romancing the Stone” (1984). Silvestri reports that the only direction Zemeckis gave him for “Back to the Future” was “it’s got to be big.” To accomplish that, Silvestri composed an orchestral score to create a sound that contrasted with the film’s small-town setting and the time-changing events occurring there. In addition, Silvestri wrote a heroic theme designed to be recognizable in just a few notes.

In tonight’s new concert band transcription, written by Jay Bocoock for the United States Marine Band “The President’s Own,” take your seat in the DeLorean and enjoy the American tradition of great movie music.

*Note adapted from the 2025 Chicago Symphony Orchestra series, CSO at the Movies.*

## **Groundswell (From Dusk ’til Dawn)** (2026) (6’)

**Jay Bocoock** (b. 1953)

A groundswell is defined as a strong, spontaneous surge of support or feeling that builds from the ground up rather than being imposed from above. This work draws its inspiration from the groundswell of pride, excellence, and unity that emerged for the University of South Carolina, the city of Columbia, and the state of South Carolina following the arrival of Dawn Staley at USC as the women’s head basketball coach.

***Groundswell*** begins in a slow, somber, and introspective atmosphere, representing the uncertainty and darkness before her arrival. From this quiet landscape emerges a simple four-note theme, passed deliberately from voice to voice. This move functions as both a signal and a call—subtle at first, searching, and unresolved—symbolizing the early stirrings of belief and potential.

As the piece unfolds, the tempo changes, mirroring the momentum generated by Staley's success and the steady rise of confidence, excellence, and collective pride that followed. The music continues to build in energy and intensity, reflecting how this groundswell expanded beyond the program itself to embrace the university, the city, and the entire state. In the final moments, the four-note call returns, transformed. No longer tentative, it is now bold and triumphant, affirming the lasting impact of leadership, vision, and a community united by shared purpose.

Jay Bocoock

## **An Outdoor Overture** (1938/1948) (9'30")

**Aaron Copland** (1900-1990)

**Aaron Copland** was a prize-winning composer, conductor, and author, sometimes called "the Dean of American composers." During middle of the twentieth century, Copland's classical training, combined with his fondness of Americana and folk themes, captured a nationalistic spirit. His music evokes at once the broadness of the country's landscape and the ideals of a democratic society, even when Copland's own opinion and experience of his county did not reflect those ideals. Innovative and traditional, appealing and avant-garde, Copland created a soundtrack for America with broad appeal to audiences and musicians of all levels.

High school conductor Alexander Richter commissioned Copland to create "American music for American youth." **An Outdoor Overture** was premiered by Richter in December 1938. Although written for an indoor concert, musical scenes of awe, curiosity, exploration, and play invite the audience to an outside adventure. This, however, is not strictly "light music." Solemn fanfares and weighty marches are thoughtful moments where one might consider an adventurer's place in larger context of the outdoor world. At the time of the premiere, the piece represented the beginning of changes to Copland's overall style. Today, it is in the catalog of his most popular and oft performed compositions (including *Billy the Kid* and *Appalachian Spring*). Unlike many of his works, tonight's transcription for band was made by Copland himself, ten years after the premiere.

-David Stanley

## **Porgy and Bess** (1935/1998) (8'20")

**George Gershwin** (1898-1937)

arr. James Barnes

In the 1920s, George Gershwin had an ambition to compose an American opera. In 1926, he read a powerful novel by an upper-class white South Carolinian, DuBose Heyward, called *Porgy*. Written the previous year, it was a series of vignettes of life in a black Charleston ghetto called Catfish Row, where a cripple named Porgy falls blindly in love with a woman named Bess, whose inconsistent affections both torment and inflame him. Bess is torn between the rough men of Catfish Row, like Crown, who offers her a more glamorous life, and Porgy, who can only offer his pure devotion. Eventually, Bess is lured to New York by Sportin' Life, a gambler and drug dealer, and Porgy begins a journey to find her.

Having found the source material he was looking for, Gershwin took many years and constant negotiations to put together what he defined as a “folk tale.” By 1933, Heyward and George’s brother, Ira, were on board to collaborate on the lyrics. George went to South Carolina to study the native culture and absorbed much of it into his opera.

***Porgy and Bess*** opened to mixed reviews, and a disappointingly short run, huge for an opera but meager for a Broadway show. *Porgy and Bess* was first performed on October 10, 1935, at the Alvin Theater in New York City. James Barnes’ concert band arrangement features five of the most popular songs. Three of those are recognized in *The Great American Songbook*, a collection of the most important and influential American popular songs and jazz standards from the early twentieth century: *I Got Plenty o’ Nuttin’*, *It Ain’t Necessarily So*, and *Summertime*.

*Note adapted from Heritage Encyclopedia of Band Music and The Wind Repertory Project.*

## **America the Beautiful** (1882/1963) (3’20”)

**Samuel Augustus Ward** (1847-1903)

arr. Carmen Dragon

The version of this patriotic song popular today was first published in 1910 as a combination of Samuel Ward’s hymn tune “Materna” (1882) and Katharine Lee Bates’s poem “America” (1893). Bates, an English professor at Wellesley College, wrote the poem after having traveled to the top of Pikes Peak in Colorado via covered wagon and mule. From the top of the mountain, she could see almost to Kansas to the east and across to the Rocky Mountains to the North—a view that inspired gratefulness and hope. “All the wonder of America seemed displayed there.” The poem was set to a number of tunes over time, but the tune that eventually stuck was Ward’s “Materna”—a melody originally meant for the hymn “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem” by the Scottish theologian David Dickson. In 1904, Bates published an updated version of the poem that simplified its phrasing and rhyme, easing its musical setting, but the song’s unrelenting optimism and splendid vision remained.

The original text for the first verse of Bates’s poem:

O beautiful for halcyon skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the enameled plain!  
America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee,  
Till souls wax fair as earth and air  
And music-hearted sea!

-Jessica Getman

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We offer several sponsorship levels. Please review the list below for the appropriate level of giving for yourself or your organization.

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The personnel listing is alphabetical, acknowledging each performer's important contribution to our organization.

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