

WISCONSIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



MUSICAL LANDSCAPES IN COLOR, VOL II:

Convergence

October 10 at 7:30 PM

Capitol Theater, Overture Center





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Good Evening!

Thank you all for attending tonight's special performance and kick-off to the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's 24/25 season. We are thrilled to present the second concert recording of our five-year recording initiative *Musical Landscapes in Color*.

Dr. Bill Banfield – our first Composer in Residence – wrote a book in the '90s called *Musical Landscapes in Color*, where he interviewed over 40 Black American Composers about their work and life. The WCO's recording project emanates from this seminal book, and will feature several of these renowned composers, as well as the next generation of composers that are following in their footsteps.

On the heels of the inaugural performance and recording in 2023 – *Harmony in Black* – tonight's performance, *Convergence*, features some of the top composers today including music by Grammy® nominees as well as a Pulitzer Prize winner. We are privileged to experience these compositions together in one night.

Thank you to all of our partners and sponsors for *Convergence*. A special thank you to our generous lead sponsor, American Family Insurance, who has supported and believed in our vision to unite our community through projects like *Musical Landscapes in Color*.

We hope you are inspired by tonight's performance and appreciate you getting closer to the music with us.

Joe Loehnis
CEO

Musical Context

ANDREW SEWELL, MUSIC DIRECTOR

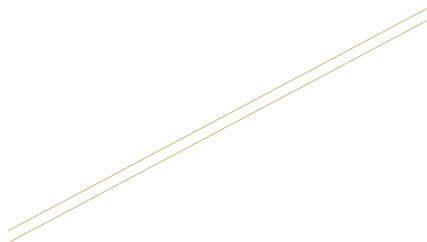
We open with Patrice Rushen's *Fanfare and Fantaisie*. A short and peppy work designed to set the evening alight. A robust brass fanfare over busy strings gives way to a more contemplative, lilting fantasy theme in high strings and woodwinds. The fanfare theme later returns for an exciting finish.

Changes by Andre Myers, which we introduced in 2022, is a minimalist work with a gently changing soundscape. Written for smaller chamber orchestra, it transitions seamlessly, using rhythmic and melodic patterns, to bring a sense of order, calm, and peace.

Michael Abels' *Nope* Suite consists of seven short movements from the 2022 film score. Jupiter's Claim sets the scene with its opening horn fanfare. The following movements inform the action by their title - *Preparing the Trap, The Run, A Hero Falls, Pursuit*, and *Winkin' Well*. They oscillate from brooding to more incisive, rhythmic shapes. The *Nope* theme ends the Suite bringing a soulful conclusion to this sci-fi thriller.

Valerie Coleman's *Umoja - Anthem of Unity*, we performed in 2021 at Breese Stevens Field. Originally composed for wind quintet in 2001, this orchestral version has gained in popularity since its commission by the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2019. The work begins with a slow and reflective introduction extending to a wider palette of orchestral colors, before the playful and dance-like flute theme takes over. This catchy and delightful theme resonated among youth during Covid, resulting in several online flash mobs .

Global Warming is an uplifting and energizing finale for tonight's program. Written 32 years ago, it has stood the test of time receiving many performances and its universal language infusing various folksong styles, speaks to a generation. Its message of optimism giving us pause to reflect on our current times.



MUSICIAN ROSTER

Violin I

Suzanne Beia+
Leanne Kelso++
Hillary Hempel
Sherri Zhang
Katherine Floriano
Kristian Brusubardis

Violin II

Gerald Loughney*
Timothy Kamps
Anna Carlson
Wes Luke
Xavier Pleindoux

Viola

Nora Frisk*
Diedre Buckley
Janse Vincent
Chris Dozoryst

Cello

Karl Lavine*
Timothy Archbold
Trace Johnson

Bass

Matthew Boothe*
Victor Stahoviak

Flute

Brandon LePage*
Dawn Lawler
Linda Nielsen Korducki

Piccolo

Dawn Lawler
Linda Nielsen Korducki

Oboe

Christine Kim*
Izumi Amemiya

English Horn

Andrea Gross Hixon

Clarinet

Bernard Parish*
Laura McLaughlin

Bass Clarinet

Bethany Schultz

Bassoon

Amanda Szczys*
Midori Samson

Horn

Michael Szczys*
Bill Muir
Dafydd Bevil
Sarah Gillespie
Emma Potter**

Trumpet

Dave Cooper*
Robert Rohlfing
Matthew Onstad

Trombone

Michael Dugan*
Jamie Kember
Brian Whitty

Tuba

Tom Curry*

Percussion

Lana Wordel*
Nick Bonaccio
Kevin Kosnik
Jamie Ryan

Timpani

Kent Barnhart*

Piano

Beth Wilson*

Harp

Johanna Wienholts*

+ *Concertmaster*

++ *Asst. Concertmaster*

* *Principal*

** *Assistant*

MUSICAL LANDSCAPES IN COLOR, VOL II: CONVERGENCE

October 10, 2024

COMPOSERS:

Michael Abels

Valerie Coleman

Andre Myers

Patrice Rushen

REPERTOIRE

RUSHEN | Fanfare and Fantaisie

MYERS | Changes

ABELS | Nope Suite

1. *Jupiter's Claim*
2. *Preparing the Trap*
3. *The Run*
4. *A Hero Falls*
5. *Pursuit*
6. *Winkin' Well*
7. *Nope*

Intermission

COLEMAN | Umoja

ABELS | Global Warming

Run Time: 1 HR, 20 MINUTES



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Composer Notes

PATRICE RUSHEN

This piece offers the listener the opportunity to resonate with the emotions of triumph, excitement and strength alongside the feelings of wonder, whimsy, and imagination. Sometimes for me, thoughts come in organized bursts and at other times in seemingly disconnected spurts. This piece intends to capture that energy, musically. It will be communicated by the colors, voices, and textures of the orchestra.

One of my dreams has always been to compose for orchestra. The richness and multi colors of the orchestra's sound have always been attractive to me. In 1999, I composed my first symphony, *Sinfonia*. I just wanted to experiment with using every part of the orchestra. Up to that point, most of the ensembles I'd written for were smaller. I enjoyed that challenge and learned a lot, but I never thought I'd have the chance to work with a large orchestra... but it was my goal then.

I still have much to learn about this "instrument", the orchestra, as the sounds and possibilities are as intriguing to me as ever. I wish to be as creative as possible with this wonderful "box of colors" to express the many sides of my musical interests. This, too, is part of my journey. It celebrates the love I have for what some would classify as "classical" music... and for me, it's part of a large bouquet of flowers which can be arranged in any number of ways.

ANDRE MYERS

The first iteration of *Changes* was for clarinet quintet. Composed in the winter of December 2004 and January 2005, I wrote the piece to accompany an art gallery opening at the University of Michigan's central campus museum. Andrew Tholl and his new-music ensemble, Warped Consort, premiered the piece at a concert celebrating the opening of an exhibition of minimalist art. We were all students back then just trying to make music and wade through the winter.

I was later commissioned to compose an orchestral arrangement of the piece by my friend Nan Washburn for the Michigan Philharmonic. That work, which is what you will hear tonight, was done in the waning months of 2011 and premiered in January 2012.

The best way I know how to describe the piece is to say it draws its energy from autumn and winter, not spring and summer; from soul, not spirit; from yin, not yang. Quiet and contemplative, *Changes* was born from what I love of the harmonic, rhythmic, and aesthetic properties of early process, or "minimalist" music. Folks often think Process Music celebrates repetition, but I believe this music celebrates change. It is a meditation on the beauty change. I hope you enjoy *Changes*.

Composer Notes

MICHAEL ABELS

Nope Suite

Nope is Jordan Peele's most ambitious film to date. It focuses on humanity's fascination with spectacle, even when that fascination threatens our common sense and personal safety. The story is set in Hollywood — that American shrine to spectacle — where a brother and sister from a family of horse trainers for media productions attempt to capture evidence of aliens using techniques they've learned in the business. The result is a work that is part family drama, part science fiction adventure, part horror film, and part Western. The score touches on all these genres and provides some connection between them.

"The Run" captures the excitement of riding a horse at full gallop through a scenic valley, while being chased by a giant flying alien that intends to swallow you whole. "A Hero Falls" begins with a solemn moment between two siblings before one of them turns to face death to save the other's life. "Pursuit" is another chase, this time on a motorcycle, leading to an exciting climax. And the final movement, "Nope," is an homage to classic Westerns, as the dust on the horizon lifts to reveal the hero, still on horseback.

Global Warming

Global Warming was written in 1990, at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Cold War was ending, and there was a warming of relations between east and west. I was very interested in folk music of other cultures, and was noticing similarities between music of certain cultures from different corners of the world. I had also become aware of a phenomenon called "global warming" which at the time was considered a scientific observation rather than a political talking point. I decided to write a piece that explored musical cultural similarities and used the title "Global Warming" as a play on words to represent that.

The majority of the piece is quite joyful. It bursts with melodies, rhythms and harmonies derived from folk music. But this joy is preceded by a more stark, somber depiction of a desert scene, a true global warming tableau as predicted by climatologists. And rather than ending joyfully, the piece suddenly returns to the desert scene at its conclusion. My thought at the time was to ask the question, "Which kind of global warming do we want to see in our world?" Thirty years later, the question remains.

Composer Notes

VALERIE COLEMAN

In its original form, *Umoja*, the Swahili word for Unity and the first principle of the African Diaspora holiday Kwanzaa, was composed of a simple song for women's choir. It embodied a sense of 'tribal unity', through the feel of a drum circle, the sharing of history through traditional "call and response" form and the repetition of a memorable sing-song melody. It was rearranged into woodwind quintet form during the genesis of Coleman's chamber music ensemble, Imani Winds, with the intent of providing an anthem that celebrated the diverse heritages of the ensemble itself.

Almost two decades later from the original, the orchestral version brings an expansion and sophistication to the short and sweet melody, beginning with sustained ethereal passages that float and shift from a bowed vibraphone, supporting the introduction of the melody by solo violin. Here the melody is a sweetly singing in its simplest form with an earnest reminiscent of Appalachian style music. From there, the melody dances and weaves throughout the instrument families, interrupted by dissonant viewpoints led by the brass and percussion sections, which represent the clash of injustices, racism and hate that threatens to gain a foothold in the world today. Spiky textures turn into an aggressive exchange between upper woodwinds and percussion, before a return to the melody as a gentle reminder of kindness and humanity. Through the brass led ensemble tutti, the journey ends with a bold call of unity that harkens back to the original anthem.

Umoja has seen the creation of many versions, that are like siblings to one another, similar in many ways, but each with a unique voice that is informed by Coleman's ever evolving creativity and perspective.

"This version honors the simple melody that ever was, but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, Umoja has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today."

- Valerie Coleman

Michael Abels

COMPOSER

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Michael Abels' latest original score is for the series *Star Wars: The Acolyte* on Disney Plus, featuring the original song "The Power Of Two" which Abels co-wrote with Grammy-winners Victoria Monet and D'Mile.

He is best known for his genre-defying scores for the Jordan Peele films *Get Out*, *Us*, and *Nope*. The score for *Us* won a World Soundtrack Award, the Jerry Goldsmith Award, a Critics Choice nomination, and was named "Score of the Decade" by The Wrap. The score for *Nope* was also shortlisted for the Best Original Score Oscar®.



Abels' film music has been honored by the Vancouver International Film Festival, the Middleburg Film Festival, the American Black Film Festival, and the Museum of the Moving Image. He was also an Emmy® Nominee for the docuseries *Allen V. Farrow*. Other recent media projects include the films *Bad Education*, *The Burial*, *Landscape With Invisible Hand*, and *Megan Thee Stallion: In My Words*.

Abels' creative output also includes many concert works, including the choral song cycle *At War With Ourselves* for the Kronos Quartet, the Grammy®-nominated *Isolation Variation* for Hilary Hahn, and the opera *Omar*, co-composed with Grammy®-winning recording artist Rhiannon Giddens. Abels concert music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Master Chorale and many others.

Recent commissions include *Emerge* for the National Symphony, the guitar concerto *Borders* for Grammy®-nominated guitarist Mak Grgic, and *Unbound*, a symphonic tribute to Olympic champion Jesse Owens.

Upcoming projects include new works for The Silkroad Ensemble, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and scores for the limited series *Sirens* starring Julianne Moore, and Korean auteur Na Hong-Jim's next film.

Abels is a frequent guest lecturer at universities and was the commencement speaker for the USC Thornton School of Music for 2024. Abels is co-founder of the Composers Diversity Collective, an advocacy group to increase visibility of composers of color in film, gaming and streaming media.



michaelabels.com



@_michaelabels

Valerie Coleman

COMPOSER

Internationally acclaimed, Grammy® nominated composer and flutist Valerie Coleman is one of the most performed living composers in the world. Named Performance Today's 2020 Classical Woman of the Year, her works have garnered multiple awards including the Van Lier Fellowship Award, Herb Alpert Awards' Ragdale Prize and MAPFund.

In addition to multiple commissions at Carnegie Hall and with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Coleman's works have been performed by The Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra among many others.

Coleman is the founder of the acclaimed ensemble Imani Winds and holds positions at The Juilliard School, Tanglewood Institute, and Manhattan School of Music. Her works are published by Theodore Presser and her own company, Coleman Page.



valeriecoleman.com

Andre Myers

COMPOSER

Andre Myers is an artist and musical educator based in California's Inland Empire. He serves on the faculty of the University of Redlands Conservatory of Music, teaching literary & musical composition, music theory, and computer music. Called "an insightful and skillful new voice" (Times Union), and "ingenious... powerful" (icareifyoulisten.com), his music mixes narrative drama, poetry, and meditations on color to create work that aspires moments of honesty, poignancy, and depth. A native of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Myers has received multiple commissions from the Albany Symphony and Michigan Philharmonic, where he served as composer-in-residence for the Philharmonic's CLASSical music outreach program. His second commission from the Philharmonic, a musical adaptation of Holling C. Holling's picture book *Paddle to the Sea*, has been performed regularly since 2005 as a part of the orchestra's "Konzert for Kids" series, and the composer has narrated the work for tens of thousands of school children.



Recent commissions include works for the Walla-Walla Chamber Music Festival and the Boston-based non-profit Castle of our Skins. His music is featured on recordings by Timothy McAllister, Aaron Solomon Hill, Brett Duebner, and the Michigan Philharmonic.

Myers has composed for orchestra, choir, solo, and chamber ensembles, as well as for theater and dance. His works have been featured at the African-American Art Song Alliance Conference, Videmus@25 Academic Conference, and performed by the Albany Symphony, Detroit Symphony, University of Michigan Symphony, Santa Monica Symphony, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, and Occidental/Cal-Tech Orchestra. Honors include an Outstanding Faculty Award from the University of Redlands; the University of Michigan's Rackham Merit Fellowship, King Spirit Award, and Willis Patterson Medal; and an associate artist residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts.

Myers received his B.M. in composition from the Eastman School of Music, and his M.M. and D.M.A. in composition from the University of Michigan. His principal teachers in composition were William Banfield, Warren Benson, Samuel Adler, Joseph Schwanter, David Liptak, Robert Morris, Bright Sheng, William Bolcom, Evan Chambers, and Erik Santos. He has previously served on the faculty of Occidental College and Renaissance Arts Academy in Los Angeles, and the San Jacinto Valley Academy in San Jacinto. Andre Myers lives in Redlands, California with his wife, Andrea, and their dogs Walter and Charlotte.



andremyers.com

Patrice Rushen

COMPOSER

Patrice Rushen is an award-winning musician and composer who is also one of the most sought after artists in the music industry. She is a classically trained pianist who originally found success in the '70s and '80s with her signature fusion of jazz, pop and R&B. During this era, she composed and recorded the hit song, "Forget Me Nots," which has been frequently covered and sampled by other artists.



Rushen is also a four-time Grammy® nominee who has composed scores for movies and television. She has been the first female musical director for many of the entertainment industry's top award shows, which include the Grammy Awards®, the Emmy Awards®, the People's Choice Awards, the NAACP Image Awards and HBO's "Comic Relief V."

Considered one of the world's top jazz pianists, she has performed with many artists. Among them such esteemed names as Stevie Wonder, Herbie Hancock, Prince, Nancy Wilson, Ndugu Chanler, Carlos Santana, Christian McBride, and Lee Ritenour. She is a record producer and an award-winning composer of symphonic music, some of which was commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Rushen is the "Ambassador of Artistry In Education" at Boston's Berklee College of Music, and has been the Chair of the Popular Music Program at USC's Thornton School of Music from 2013 till 2023.

Rushen also spends time working with the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, NARAS "Grammy® In The Schools" program and other organizations dedicated to establishing music education and mentorship programs for underprivileged youth.



patricerushen.com



[@patrice.rushen](https://www.instagram.com/patrice.rushen)

Andrew Sewell

CONDUCTOR

Andrew Sewell enters his 25th season as Music Director for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra this summer, and 8th season with the San Luis Obispo Symphony on California's central coast. A conductor in demand, he has successfully built the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra into a regional and nationally known ensemble. In California, he has inspired the central coast community with exhilarating performances at CalPoly's Performing Arts Center in San Luis Obispo.

During his tenure with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Maestro Sewell has raised the orchestra to new artistic heights, expanded the repertoire, and provided new experiences for the audiences through innovative and adventuresome programming. In March 2024, the WCO released *Harmony in Black*, the first album of a five-year recording project, *Musical Landscapes in Color*.

Maestro Sewell has served previously as Music Director of the Wichita Symphony (2000–2010), Mansfield (OH) Symphony (1997–2002) and Resident Conductor of the Toledo Symphony (1995–2000), and Assistant Conductor of the Memphis Symphony (1994–1995). As a guest conductor, he has led the Toronto, Detroit, Milwaukee, Florida, Columbus, Toledo, Syracuse, Illinois, Monterey, Gulf Coast, and Eugene Symphony Orchestras as well as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, Christchurch Symphony, Dunedin Symphony, National Symphony of Mexico, Kyushu Symphony (Japan), City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, OK Mozart Festival, Peninsula Music Festival (WI), and Masterworks Festival, Spartanburg, (SC).

A native of New Zealand, Maestro Sewell received his music training on the violin, piano and cornet, and began conducting at age 16. Six years later, he made his professional opera debut with the Mercury Opera and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Winning the Australian Guarantee Corporation's Young Achiever's Award allowed him to further his studies abroad. Sewell holds a Master of Music degree with Honors in Conducting from the University of Michigan.

In 2017, he was awarded the Service to Music Award from the Association of Wisconsin Symphony Orchestras and in 2013, the Rabin Arts Youth Award for Individual Achievement, by the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra, for his services to youth and education. He and his wife, Mary, live in Madison, WI.



About the WCO

No other arts organization in Wisconsin performs free for more people each year.

Founded in 1960, the orchestra is built on a foundation of quality musicianship with top-tier musicians. As a smaller ensemble, we're able to showcase music at an intimate level, providing attendees with a unique experience. Under the direction of Maestro Andrew Sewell, we make classical music accessible to our community from concert halls to Madison's Capitol Square, reaching over 250,000 music lovers annually.

We are driven in our mission to strengthen communities through innovative, high-quality artistic experiences that entertain, inspire, and unite diverse audiences. And we're passionate about creating a sustainable future through our strategic plan.

Our core artistic programs include the four-decade tradition of Concerts on the Square®, the Masterworks Series at the Overture Center for the Arts, annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, educational programming and concerts for families and children that serve over 2000 youth each year and performing with local arts groups like Madison Ballet. In 2023, the WCO launched the Composer Collective series with a five-year, five-album project titled *Musical Landscapes in Color* with the goal of expanding the orchestral canon to include new works by living composers of color.

We strive to create a vibrant and inclusive space where music creates a sense of togetherness and connection, and that's why we're relentless about finding new ways to collaborate and partner with local groups in our community.

As a member of the League of American Orchestras, we take our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion seriously. Working with Nehemiah, Inc. through the Catalyst Incubator Grant, our goal is to become a cultural ambassador to Madison while creating relationships that allow for authentic conversation, partnerships, and accessibility to musical experiences.

While headquartered in Madison, we believe in extending our mission to communities across Wisconsin when there are opportunities to do so.

To learn more visit wcoconcerts.org.



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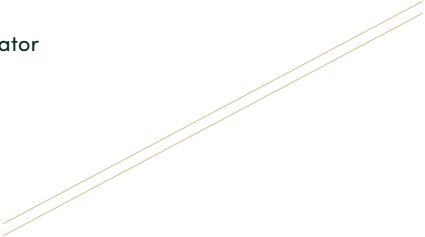
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Transformation Through Exposure

What is the UW-Madison Odyssey Project?

The UW Odyssey Project offers University of Wisconsin-Madison humanities classes for adult students facing economic barriers to college. The majority of students that participate in Odyssey are from racial and ethnic minority groups (~90%) and are often overcoming the obstacles of single parenthood, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, incarceration, depression, and domestic abuse. Odyssey students report transformative outcomes, and some have even moved from homelessness to bachelor's and master's degrees. Students also say that they read more to their children, feel that they are better parents and advocates for their children in school, have more hope about their own futures, and are more likely to vote and become involved in their communities.

How is it connected to Musical Landscapes in Color?

For all five albums of the five year project, the WCO will incorporate the composers into the UW Odyssey Project.

Students will be assigned readings related to the music they're going to experience over the course of the year. Composers will visit the classroom and speak to the students about music and contemporary culture, and their own professional transformation. UW Odyssey Project students will then attend the pre-concert discussion, performance, and the post-concert reception in the Fall. In the Spring, students will attend the release event.

“Plan your work, and work your plan”

-DR. BILL BANFIELD



“The UW Odyssey Project loves partnering with the WCO on the Musical Landscapes in Color project. Odyssey students have faced tremendous adversity, from homelessness to incarceration to racial discrimination. Having acclaimed Black composers visit our class and then being welcomed to WCO concerts and receptions at the Overture Center inspires our Odyssey students and makes them feel like the VIPs they are.”

- Emily Auerbach

UW Odyssey Project Executive Director, Co-Founder

Scan the QR code for a short
testimonial video from students
on their experience.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hands playing a violin. The person is wearing a dark suit. The violin is a rich brown color. The background is dark and out of focus.


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WISCONSIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
COMING NEXT



Fialkowska on Fire

November 8 at 7:30 PM
Capitol Theater, Overture Center

Janina Fialkowska

piano



Handel's Messiah

November 22 & 23 at 7:00 PM
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Festival Choir of Madison



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