

Cultural Events

AT CONCORDIA COLLEGE | 2025-26



Athena Brass

7:30 p.m. Friday, March 27

Christiansen Recital Hall, Hvidsten Hall of Music

MOORHEAD  MINNESOTA
CONCORDIA
COLLEGE

ATHENA BRASS

Trumpet: Stacy Simpson, Erika Izaguirre • Horn: Emelie Pfaff

Euphonium: Danielle VanTuinen • Trombone: Karen Marston • Tuba: Heather Ewer

PROGRAM

City Stroll	Jennifer Oliverio (b. 1989)
Mexican Suite	Jack Gale (1936-2022)
Green Sky	Madison Anglin (b. 1999)
D'un Matin de printemps	Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) arr. by Karen Marston
A Sea Suite	Dorothy Gates (b. 1966)
Two Latin Dances	Lauren Bernofsky (b. 1967) arr. by Karen Marston
Golden from Demon Hunters	arr. by Heather Ewer

Join the musicians for a reception in the lobby following the concert.

ATHENA BRASS BAND is the first women's brass band in the United States. Named after Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, the ensemble was founded in 2003 by Laura Lineberger for a debut performance at the International Women's Brass Conference under the direction of Anita Cocker Hunt. That landmark appearance led to numerous invited engagements and the commissioning of new works that continue to enrich the brass repertoire. Since 2012, Athena has been under the baton of Music Director Jessica Sneeringer.

In recent seasons, Athena's reach has expanded internationally to the United Kingdom, Japan, and Spain, in addition to numerous appearances throughout the U.S., establishing Athena as a leading artistic voice in the global brass community.

Athena's musicians represent an extraordinary breadth of experience and artistry. Members include current and former performers with the United States Army Band, United States Coast Guard Band, Brass Band of Battle Creek, and New Sousa Band. The ensemble also includes college professors, public school educators, conductors, music therapists, sound engineers, publishers, composers, and distinguished professionals from fields as varied as physics, biology, sociology, business, and literature. Many members are also active performers in ensembles affiliated with the North American Brass Band Association.

Athena Brass Band is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors appointed by its membership in 2021. The board includes President Amber Love, Vice President Gail Robertson, Treasurer Janet Tracy, Secretary Shannon Sheldrick, Music Director Jessica Sneeringer, Founder Laura Lineberger, Colleen Callan, Rachel Zephir, Olivia Malin, Jasmine Pigott, Danielle Moreau, Deborah Eastwood, Samantha Keehn, Amy Millesen, and Becky Amato. The organization was incorporated in the State of Texas and received 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in 2022.

Athena Brass is deeply committed to championing the advancement of women musicians and composers by commissioning and promoting new works and arrangements, creating meaningful performance opportunities, and fostering pathways for emerging artists to gain valuable professional experience.

For each project, Athena thoughtfully brings together a dynamic blend of returning and new performers from across the United States and abroad.

CONCORDIA HONOR BAND FESTIVAL

March 27-29

The Athena Brass concert and residency is in conjunction with Concordia's annual High School Honor Band Festival and in celebration of Women's History Month. All events free and open to the public.

SCHEDULE: ConcordiaCollege.edu/HonorBand



HEATHER EWER is a freelance tuba player and educator from the Front Range, currently based in New York City. She plays in an assortment of ensembles from brass bands of multiple genres to orchestras, and loves teaching low brass lessons and master classes.

Favorite performance opportunities to date include being the chairholder in the orchestra for the Christmas Spectacular starring the Radio City Rockettes, playing in a chamber ensemble for Queens of the Stone Age, playing the Mardi Gras season at Universal Studios Orlando with the Beads and Brass Band, and performing Balkan music with Slavic Soul Party in Brooklyn.

Ewer taught 6 years of middle school band full-time, and continues to prioritize middle school music education through the afterschool Music Partners Program with the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

She maintains private tuba and euphonium studios at both BKCM and as an adjunct instructor at Molloy University on Long Island.

Ewer earned her bachelor's degree in music education from Western Michigan University, and her master's in tuba performance from Colorado State University.



DR. ERIKA IZAGUIRRE is the assistant professor of trumpet and director of the Jazz Ensemble II at Concordia College. She leads an active career as a solo performer, teacher, and clinician.

As an international soloist, Izaguirre maintains a dynamic schedule with a recent performance with the International Pride Orchestra at World Pride and Athena Brass Band in Valencia, Spain.

Izaguirre has commissioned and premiered works in Minnesota, New York, and abroad by composers such as Marcus Grant, John Wallace, and Madison Anglin. She is also actively involved in consortiums including a solo piece for trumpet and electronics by Dr. Whitney George, an unaccompanied work by Dr. Roy Magnusson to bring awareness to gun violence, and a brass ensemble work by Katahji Copley.

She earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music.

Currently, Izaguirre is focused on helping young musicians and composers from underrepresented communities by elevating their voices and providing resources.



DR. KAREN MARSTON is a trombonist, educator, and conductor whose work bridges performance, education, and advocacy. She serves as chair of music, director of the wind ensemble, and professor of trombone at Mt. San Antonio College in Los Angeles, and is the director of the International Trombone Festival.

An active performer and clinician, Marston has appeared at the International Trombone Festival, International Women's Brass Conference, Trombonanza (Argentina), the Brazilian Trombone Festival, and the Royal Northern College of Music Brass Band Festival. She performs regularly with Athena Brass Band and has appeared with the Brass Band of Battle Creek.

Marston founded several chamber ensembles, including the TexiCali Trio and the Empress Trombone Quartet, and is committed to advancing equity in music through initiatives such as the International Women's Trombone Choir and the nonprofit She Can Play Brass. She is also an active arranger and researcher, with work published in the Journal of the International Trombone Association.

She holds degrees from the University of North Texas, Rice University, and Columbia University, and is an artist for Rath Trombones.



Originally from Sweden, **EMELIE PFAFF** earned a Master of Music in French horn performance from Colorado State University, as well as a Bachelor of Music in performance and a Bachelor of Music in music theory from the University of Kansas City, Conservatory of Music and Dance.

Pfaff is an avid brass bander since joining the Fountain City Brass Band in 2011, traveling throughout the U.S., Europe, and Japan performing and teaching with the Fountain City ensemble, Athena Brass Band, Colorado Brass, and many regional groups.

She has performed at many state Music Educators Association conferences, International Women's Brass conferences, international and regional horn conferences, the Collegiate Band Directors National Association and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic. While playing with the Fountain City Brass Band, she won three US Open Championships and a North American Brass Band Championship, and also placed at the All England Masters and the Euro Brass Competition.

Pfaff is an avid advocate for women in brass playing and the music manufacturing industry. She is an active member of the International Women's Brass Conference, North American Music Merchants Young Professionals, and Smart Women in Music.



DR. STACY SIMPSON is a Grammy Award-winning trumpeter whose career spans orchestral, chamber, commercial, and solo performance across the United States and internationally. She performs regularly with the Louisville Orchestra and appears on its Grammy Award-winning Deutsche Grammophon recording "The American Project."

A former member of the St. Louis Symphony, Simpson has performed with leading orchestras across the United States and abroad, with appearances throughout Europe, New Zealand, Japan, and Ecuador.

Her achievements include first prize in the International Trumpet Guild Mock Orchestra Competition and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition with Canterbury Brass. She has won numerous concerto competitions and has appeared as soloist with orchestras in the trumpet concertos of Tomasi, Haydn, Neruda, Arutiunian, Böhme, and Hummel, and was the winner of the WGUC Solo Competition, performing a live on-air broadcast recital.

Simpson serves as assistant professor of trumpet and director of bands at Bellarmine University and is an active clinician and presenter for the International Trumpet Guild and International Women's Brass Conference.



DR. DANIELLE VANTUINEN is a performer, educator, and entrepreneur based in Gainesville, Florida. She currently serves as associate professor of tuba and euphonium and director of the University of Florida Brass Band.

Previously, VanTuinen was lecturer of music at Plymouth State University, teaching low brass methods, chamber music, and applied lessons. Her experience also includes roles as low brass faculty at the Portland Conservatory of Music, adjunct staff for the University of New Hampshire marching band, private instructor, and low brass instructor for the Phoenix Youth Symphony. She is also a sought-after adjudicator.

As co-founder of the Moreau | VanTuinen Duo, she has performed at venues and conferences including the Spanish Association of Tubas and Euphoniums, Northern Arizona University, Ithaca College, the Miraphone Academy of the Southwest, the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" Tuba-Euphonium Workshop, and the International Women's Brass Conference.

Her dedication to expanding the low brass repertoire has led her to commission 20 works and an additional 80 for low brass and percussion.

VanTuinen holds a Doctor of Musical Arts and a Master of Music in performance from Arizona State University, and a Bachelor of Music in performance from Central Michigan University.