

## Ensemble Concert:

2022-11-17 – Johnson County Landmark



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# IOWA

School of Music



## ENSEMBLE CONCERT

**JOHNSON COUNTY LANDMARK**

Damani Phillips, *director*

**Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker Suite***

Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7:30pm  
Voxman Music Building Concert Hall

# Johnson County Landmark

Damani Phillips, *director*

## JCL presents: Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker Suite*

### PROGRAM

The Nutcracker Suite

Peter Iych TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)  
arr. Billy STRAYHORN (1915-1967)

I. *Overture*

Soloists: Jake Greenlee, *trombone*; Charlotte Leung, *tenor sax*; Anna Kelly, *trumpet*

II. *Toot Toot Tootie Toot*

Soloists: Charlotte Leung, *clarinet*; Lucas Wymore, *bari sax*

III. *Peanut Brittle Brigade*

Soloists: Mason O'Brien, *trumpet*; Matt White, *clarinet*;  
Charlotte Leung, *tenor sax*; Brett King, *guitar*

IV. *Sugar Rum Cherry*

Soloists: Matt White, *tenor sax*; Lucas Wymore, *bari sax*

V. *Entr'acte*

Soloists: Matt White, *clarinet*; Kolbe Schnoebelen, *trombone*;  
Lucas Wymore, *bari sax*; Charlotte Leung, *tenor sax*; Marvin Truong, *alto sax*

VI. *Volga Vouty*

Soloists: Matt White, *tenor sax*; Kolbe Schnoebelen, *trombone*;  
Marvin Truong, *alto sax*; Mason O'Brien, *trumpet*

VII. *Chinoserie*

Soloists: Matt White, *tenor sax*; Charlotte Leung, *clarinet*

VIII. *Dance of the Floradores*

Soloists: Charlotte Leung, *clarinet*; Mike May, *trombone*;  
Lucas Wymore, *bari sax*; Anna Kelly, *trumpet*

IX. *Arabesque Cookie*

Soloists: Alex Kelsh, *flute*; Marvin Truong, *alto sax*; Emma Cryer, *tambourine*

# PERSONNEL

## **SAXOPHONES**

Marvin Truong, *alto I*  
Alex Kelsh, *alto II*  
Matt White, *tenor I*  
Charlotte Leung, *tenor II*  
Lucas Wymore, *bari*

## **RHYTHM SECTION**

Askar Khaetov, *bass*  
Brett King, *guitar*  
Jerome Gillespie, *drums*

## **TRUMPETS**

Emma Cryer, *trumpet I*  
Jada Spooner, *trumpet II*  
Mason O'Brien, *trumpet III*  
Anna Kelly, *trumpet IV*

## **TROMBONES**

Kolbe Schnoebelen, *trombone I*  
Michael May, *trombone II*  
Jake Greenlee, *trombone III*  
Ryan Carter, *bass trombone*

The director would like to extend special thanks to the JCL saxophone section for their above-and-beyond work preparing for this concert. While many saxophone sections would have shied away from the high amount of doubles required for this suite, the entire section took on the challenge without an ounce of hesitation. For some, this includes the playing of instruments that they had no experience playing prior to this concert. Please know that this fearless spirit is acknowledged, respected and appreciated! -*Damani Phillips*

# PROGRAM NOTE

Few concert hall experiences compare with that of a Jazz Concert Suite. As a succession of shorter works, a suite offers a variety of engaging musical themes without the heft of a full-fledged symphonic form. *The Nutcracker Suite* (1892), Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's distillation of his ballet *The Nutcracker*, weaves the military fanfare of the Nutcracker Prince's battle with the Mouse King ("The March") together with highlights of the celebratory dance exhibition staged in honor of the Prince and Clara, his guest, after the battle is won ("Dance of The Sugar Plum Fairy," the "Russian Dance," the "Chinese Dance," the "Waltz of The Flowers," and the "Arabian Dance").

The Jazz Arrangement of *The Nutcracker Suite* by Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington and Billy Strayhorn (1960) enlivens Tchaikovsky's ballet music highlights with the added verve of jazz improvisation. You will hear this right from the start in the Overture. A deceptively relaxed groove makes room in the ensemble texture for a rollicking reed line that gives new shape, and rhythmic drive, to the original Tchaikovsky string theme (as interpreted by the brass). This is not unlike what seasoned improvisers do when they push tried-and-true jazz standards in new directions. Not an easy thing to do with 68+ year old material! In the words of Dr. Phillips, this kind of work "forces the musicians to push well beyond the comfort and convenience of typical big band musicianship."

An Ellington Concert Suite is a particularly compelling showcase of the musical versatility of a Jazz Concert Suite because an Ellington Big Band Arrangement frequently reaches across sectional divides in pursuit of new ensemble colors and textures. You will hear this in the added bite of the Reed Flute Toots ("Toot Toot Tootie Toot")—a movement that envelops the brightness of Tchaikovsky's flute theme in the raucous warmth and weight of hybrid reed-brass timbres. You will also sense this in the luscious flavorings of the Sugared Rum Cherries (Sugar Rum Cherry)—a movement in which the distinct character of individual instruments played in different registers provides additional atmosphere for a sultry breakdown of the original dance theme ("Dance of The Sugar Plum Fairy").

Indeed, the stylistic adjustments the Johnson County Landmark Orchestra has made to bring out these special characteristics of the Ellington-Strayhorn Arrangement required students to double on other instruments (particularly crucial on "Arabesque Cookie"), and deftly manipulate mutes (specifically highlighted in "Peanut Brittle Brigade," "Entracte," "The Volga Vouty," and "Dance of The Floradores"). "Just as Ellington relied heavily on the specialized talents of his orchestra members to bring his compositions to life," Dr. Phillips explains, "so too does JCL look to its members to reach into uncharted musical territory to do this substantive suite proper justice." —Dr. Sarah Suhadolnik (*Iowa Musicology*)

## FACULTY BIOGRAPHY



**Dr. Damani Phillips** is a native of Pontiac, MI, and currently serves as Jazz Studies area head and Associate Professor of African American Studies at the University of Iowa. Phillips has earned Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from DePaul University and The University of Kentucky in classical saxophone, a second Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies from Wayne State University and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder; becoming the first African American in the country to do so. An active performer, pedagogue and lecturer, Phillips has performed, taught and lectured throughout the world. He has previously served on the faculty of Grinnell College and Oakland University, and is actively sought as a guest artist, clinician, presenter and adjudicator throughout the nation. He has performed with artists/groups such as Lewis Nash, Christian McBride, Wycliffe Gordon,

Bobby McFerrin, Marcus Belgrave, Terrell Stafford, Hank Jones, Red Holloway and Pat Bianchi among many others. Phillips has released 5 albums as a bandleader and published his first book “What Is This Thing Called Soul: Conversations on Black Culture and Jazz Education” in 2017.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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## NOVEMBER 2022


30 7:30pm Gold Combo Concert Stark Opera Studio

30 7:30pm UI Symphony & UI Choirs at Hancher  Hancher Auditorium

## DECEMBER 2022

1 1:30pm UI Lab Ensemble Concert Hall

1 7:30pm Jazz Repertory Ensemble  Concert Hall

2 7:30pm Iowa Saxophonists' Workshop Fall Concert  Concert Hall

2 7:30pm Black Combo Concert Stark Opera Studio

2 7:30pm Oboe Studio Recital Choral Room

3 11:30am Woodwind Chamber Music Recital Recital Hall