

**THE VERNACULAR MADE ARTFUL:
AN ANALYSIS OF DANA WILSON'S WORKS FOR WIND ENSEMBLE**

ABSTRACT

Intended as a resource for conductors interested in performing the wind music of Dana Wilson, this presentation explores the composer's life and influences, shares his personal reflections about the creative process, provides an overview of his compositional style, and presents detailed analyses of several of his works for wind ensemble. Analytical discussion includes: stylistic similarities of formal architecture, melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, texture, and orchestration; the role of binary opposition and extramusical associations in the communication of dramatic intent; and Wilson's highly organic approach to composition, as seen in the principal motives and themes explored in his works. The presentation offers direct insight into the composer's philosophy and practice, illustrating how Wilson's musical training, performance experience as a jazz and rock pianist, and life interests combine to form his unique compositional voice—the juxtaposition of American vernacular styles, non-Western cultural practices, and contemporary concert music.