

# “Rising Above the Flood”

## Coe College Festival of Bands Gala Concert



Renowned band composer Robert W. Smith will join the Coe College Concert Band and their conductor, Dr. William S. Carson, in a tribute to the determination and resilience of the Cedar Rapids community in the face of the floods of 2008 and 2016 for the Festival of Bands Gala Concert. “Rising Above the Flood” concert will be held on Saturday, April 8, beginning at 8 p.m. in Sinclair Auditorium.



In late August of 2005, the normally festive skies over the city of New Orleans began to change. As Hurricane Katrina approached the city, the skies promised a weather event of unprecedented proportions. Smith was commissioned by the United State Marine Forces



Reserve Band of New Orleans to create “Promising Skies,” a symphonic tone poem recreating and commemorating the Katrina experience that will be performed by the Coe Concert Band and conducted by the composer during this concert. Beginning with “Blue Sky,” the jazz of the historic city provides the musical inspiration. Soon, the “Threatening Sky” arrives giving way to the “Raging Sky.” Finally, the “Dawn of a New Sky” brings hope as the city is reborn to share its musical gifts once again.

The leader of the United State Marine Forces Reserve Band of New Orleans at the time, CWO4 Michael J. Smith, is a former student of Dr. Carson, and will visit Coe that week to work with the band in preparation for the Saturday performance. He will also participate in the concert as a percussionist and vocalist.



In addition to music composed and conducted by Smith, the program also features works by Cedar Rapids-born composers Andrew Boysen, Jr., and Michael Daugherty, who recently won several Grammy awards, and was awarded an honorary doctorate by Coe in 2012.

XZDaugherty conducting the Coe College Concert Band in 2012, at the ceremony awarding him an honorary doctorate from Coe College

The program will also commemorate local composer David John, who spent a semester directing the Coe College Concert Band, and will feature Coe's trumpet professor Al Naylor in an exciting showpiece composed for him by Coe's Emeritus Professor of Composition, Jerry Owen. This concert will celebrate our city, our state and our success in overcoming the challenges posed by the floods of 2008 and 2016.



Al Naylor rehearsing Jerry Owen's "Soaring on Air" with the Coe Concert Band for the April 8 "Rising Above the Flood" concert.

More than 500 musicians of all ages from across Eastern Iowa will participate in this year's Coe College Festival of Bands concerts, April 6-9. With four performances featuring eight bands, the Coe Festival of Bands has grown to become one of the largest non-competitive events of its kind in Iowa.

Featured ensembles performing during the event include the Coe College Concert Band, the Coe College Jazz Ensemble, the Kirkwood Community College Concert Band, the New Horizons Band, and honor bands featuring elementary, middle school and high school students.

### **Guest composer/conductor Robert W. Smith**

Robert W. Smith is a professor of music and coordinator of the music industry program in Troy University's John M. Long School of Music. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he is one of the most popular composers in the world today with over 700 published works. The majority of his work was published through his long association with Warner Bros. Publications. Smith is the president/CEO of RWS Music Company, exclusively distributed through C. L. Barnhouse.

Smith's works for band and orchestra have been programmed by countless professional, university and school ensembles throughout the North America, Europe, Australia, South America and Asia. His music has received extensive airplay on network television as well as inclusion in multiple motion pictures and television productions. His "Into The Storm" was featured on the 2009 CBS Emmy Awards telecast for the HBO's mini-series documenting the life of Winston Churchill.

Smith's teaching responsibilities at Troy University are focused in media composition, audio and live event production, publishing and entrepreneurship.

**The specific Festival of Bands events are as follows:**

**Thursday, April 6** – Kirkwood Community College Concert Band conducted by Dr. Joe Perea and the New Horizons Band directed by Alan Lawrence, at 7 p.m. in Sinclair Auditorium. The concert is free and open to the public.

**Saturday, April 8** – Elementary School Honor Band Concert at 4 p.m. in Sinclair Auditorium, under the direction of Coe alumna Beth Davies and composer/conductor Robert W. Smith. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and seniors, and they are available at the door or by emailing [honorbandtickets@coe.edu](mailto:honorbandtickets@coe.edu).

This concert marks the 15th time elementary honor band students have been selected to perform at Coe College. Students in grades four through six will be playing in two separate bands, which are designated as the Coe College Crimson Elementary Honor Band and the Coe College Gold Elementary Honor Band.

**Saturday, April 8** – Festival of Bands Gala Concert featuring the Coe College Concert Band directed by William Carson, with guest composer/conductor Robert W. Smith, at 8 p.m. in Sinclair Auditorium. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and seniors, and they are available at the door.

During this concert, Smith will serve as guest conductor for several of his own works.

**Sunday, April 9** – Coe College Junior Honor Band conducted by Steve Shanley, and Coe College Senior Honor Band directed by William Carson, with special guest composer/conductor Robert W. Smith, at 4 p.m. in Sinclair Auditorium. In addition, the Coe College Jazz Ensemble will perform, under the direction of Steve Shanley. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students and seniors, and they are available at the door or by emailing [honorbandtickets@coe.edu](mailto:honorbandtickets@coe.edu).

For more information on Festival of Bands events, contact the Coe Music Department at 319-399-8521 or Dr. Carson by email: [wcarson@coe.edu](mailto:wcarson@coe.edu).