For Immediate Release

University of Minnesota School of Music presents the Electric Conductor: A Musical Murder Mystery

A world premiere. A dead conductor. A locked musical hall. Everyone is a suspect... only it's an original script with a Wind Ensemble.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (11/6/2013)— Elastic Bands and the U of M School of Music will present The Musical Clue: A Murder Mystery Event in Ted Mann Recital Hall on Tuesday, November 26 at 7:30 pm at Ted Mann Concert Hall (2128 4th St. S., Minneapolis). This event is free, fun, and family friendly.

The Electric Conductor: A Musical Murder Mystery will feature the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble; actor Skyler Nowinski, alumnus the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program; original animations by Luisa Levine of Oberlin College; original jazz music by Riley Helgeson performed by a University of Minnesota Jazz Combo; all woven together by a script by Saint Paul resident Jake Jeppson, recipient of the Playwright Center’s Jerome Fellowship.

The mastermind behind this project is School of Music bands conducting student Brian Messier. This concert is a labor of love, inspired by his desire to share his passion for classical music, particularly music performed by Wind Ensemble, with a broader audience. He shares, “I was looking for a way to make classical music more interesting and relevant to the Twin Cities community. I want to make the idea of going to a Wind Ensemble concert exciting for people who have never been to one or who might not even know what a Wind Ensemble is. A murder mystery allows me to put together a lot of fun elements: theatre, suspense, classical music, jazz music, and contemporary animation, while showcasing the legitimate talents of all involved. It's like Sherlock Holmes locks you in a concert hall with a Symphony Orchestra.”

Artist Biographies

Brian Messier
The artistic director of Elastic Bands, and producer/creator of Electric Conductor: A Musical Mystery is Brian Messier. Messier is entering the final year of his Doctoral degree in conducting at the University of Minnesota with director of bands Professor Craig Kirchhoff. Messier's research has been on attracting, engaging, and retaining new audiences while maintaining artistic integrity. This line of research has led to the creation of Elastic Bands (www.elastic-bands.org), his participation in the New Audiences and Innovative Practices program in Iceland, an invited presentation at Prince Claus Conservatory in the Netherlands, and the Electric Conductor will be featured at the 2014 College Music Society National Conference in St. Louis, MO.
**Jake Jeppson**
Jake Jeppson’s plays have been developed and produced in New York, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Chicago, Estonia, and Latvia. He is a member of the Play Group at Ars Nova. Jake graduated from the MFA Playwriting Program at the Yale School of Drama, where he studied with Paula Vogel and won the ASCAP Cole Porter Prize. He has taught playwriting at Wesleyan University, Yale, the National Theater Institute, and the Orchard Project, where he co-founded the apprentice program. In addition to writing plays, Jake contributes to the National Geographic Channel. He grew up in Washington, DC. Jake is a recent recipient of the Jerome Fellowship at the Playwright's Center on Franklin Avenue in the Seward neighborhood where he will be in residence for at least one year.

**Luisa Levine**
Animator Luisa Levine is currently is pursuing a BA at Oberlin College and plans to graduate in 2016. Levine developed her first animation as part of a college-required winter project, which was picked up by the Oberlin Office of Communications. Soon after, she was hired to make three short videos, featuring the unofficial Oberlin mascot (a white squirrel) to promote the college for prospective students. Currently, she makes short videos for her own portfolio and amusement.

**The U of M Wind Ensemble**, led by professor/conductor Craig Kirchhoff, is made up of the finest woodwind, brass, and percussion musicians at the University - including all of the wind and brass players from the University Symphony Orchestra. Wind Ensembles are elite groups that unfortunately haven't enjoyed the notoriety or recognition of their peer ensembles; hopefully this event helps to change that.

**The U of M 12:20 Jazz Combo** members include Willem VanderArk (piano), Breyen Coffin (bass), Jacob Arndt (drums), Riley Helgeson (trumpet), Brandon Clayton (tenor saxophone), and Nathan DuVall (trombone). Students in the 12:20 Jazz Combo are active members of the University of Minnesota Jazz Ensembles, led by professor Dean Sorenson.

Photographs available upon request. Email requests for photographs to marsh396@umn.edu.

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**Elastic Bands** creates templates, resources, and materials – "egg-cartons" – that are available for rent or purchase in order to make innovative and engaging concerts cheaper and easier to produce for all organizations. These egg-cartons can be adapted to fit a variety of circumstances and ensembles. The purchasing ensemble can then place their own "eggs" or musical selections into the egg-cartons. Since 1982, public attendance at classical music performances has been in a steady state of decline. Performing arts organizations of all kinds are struggling, and are seeking help to improve financial performance in the short-term, while also setting themselves on a better path for the future. As a result, many organizations are focusing on audience engagement. Potential audience members have an abundance of entertainment options inside and outside the home, escalating standards for entertainment, and a decreasing ability and willingness to spend money on entertainment. Subsequently, the overall experience offered to audiences is of critical importance. Elastic Bands provides affordable, research grounded packages that will appeal to new audiences and compel them to return.

**The University of Minnesota School of Music** presents more than 400 free concerts and recitals per year. For a complete schedule of events, visit music.umn.edu or call the School of Music events hotline at 612-626-8742. Established in 1902, the University of Minnesota School of Music offers a dynamic, comprehensive program to more than 550 music students in undergraduate and graduate programs, led by a world-class faculty of more than 50 artists, scholars and teachers. The School of Music presents more than 400 free concerts per year. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.music.umn.edu or call 612-626-1094 for a brochure.

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