

Alumni Band Concert

Sunday, April 30, 2023

Program Notes

Alumni from 2000 to 2023

Peace Dancer (c. 2017) by Jodie Blackshaw (b. 1971)

Peace Dancer is inspired by the First Nations text of the same name by Roy Henry Vickers (Squamish Nation). In the words of the author:

The story *Peace Dancer* is about a song and dance that is thousands of years old originating from the time of the flood. Songs have been composed for different Chiefs up and down the Pacific Northwest coast. The Chief who is chosen to do this sacred dance is recognized as a healer in each community, and the songs and dances are a reminder of the great flood and how the people lost their way and their love for all things in creation. During the dance there is a time when the dancer shakes the eagle down from their headdress to remind the people of the flood.

While this text affords many music-making opportunities, the composer chose to focus on one moment.

We have really lost our way, we have not taught our children love and respect.

This is achieved by dividing this short piece into "moments" of meditation, awakening, realization, and humility. It takes you, the audience, on an emotional journey, similar to realizing you have been in the wrong; maybe you have been unkind or acted in a way that does not become you. Once you realize the consequences of your actions, remorse and the understanding that there is a need to move forward with grace and humility follows. Thus is the lesson of *Peace Dancer*.

- Program Note from University of British Columbia Symphonic Wind Ensemble concert program, 18 November 2017

Shimmering Sunshine (c. 2019) by Kevin Day (b. 1996)

Shimmering Sunshine is a composition that depicts the sun whenever it is positioned at high noon, at its brightest point during the day. Throughout the piece, there are different "shimmers" of bright light that bounce around from instrument to instrument, depicting moments of sunshine both beautiful and, at the same time, powerful.

This work was written in conjunction with the M.O.T.I.F triptych consortium, including *Across a Golden Sky* by Quinn Mason and *Midnight Skyline* by Josh Trentadue.

- Program Note by the composer

Color (c. 1984) by Bob Margolis (b. 1949)

Color is based upon five English folk dances: *Stanes Morris*, *Stingo*, *Daphne*, *Argeers*, and *The Slip*. The musical treatment is improvisatory, playful, mischievous, and generally compact in structure, with a strong emphasis on style and tone color.

Quite a few melodies were looked over before settling on the ones for this suite. The entire *English Dancing Master* (1651) of John Playford, and most of van Eyck's *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* (1646) were consulted for the tunes, which are all English country dances -- that is, instrumental folk dances. Yet the fact is, the focus of this music is not the melody, but rather setting -- that is, the accompaniment, the texture, the color, and the harmony. It might be argued that to some extent not only the focus but the very reason-for-being of this piece is its setting; that the style has become the thing itself; and more specifically, the aspect most important thereof is the timbre, or instrumental color. This the title: *Color*.

- Program Note by composer

Irish Tune from County Derry (c. 1918) by Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961)

Grainger's *Irish Tune from County Derry* has stood the test of time for a number of reasons: colorful sonorities, straightforward accessibility, and a memorable climax. It is also a versatile piece, playable by both younger band and mature players, symphonic bands and wind ensembles. *Irish Tune* could balance a heavier work on the concert program, or it could be a thoughtful closing piece just before intermission. The broad appeal of this piece will undoubtedly assure its position atop the wind band repertoire for years to come.

- Program Note from Great Music for Wind Band

Transcontinental March (c. 1914) by Harry R. Hughes (1891-1939)

Harry Hughes (17 November 1891, Kentucky – 5 June 1939, Pittsburgh, Penn.) was an American trombonist and composer. Although it is not known how or where Hughes obtained his music education, he became an excellent performer on trombone and also played the xylophone, marimba, and calliope.

At the age of 22, Harry left home to become a trouper-musician with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. The next year, 1914, he played trombone with the Sparks Circus, and he moved to the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in 1915. During these years, he did much arranging and composing for the circus bands in which he played. His piece *Transcontinental March* (c. 1914) was among these compositions.

- Program Notes from the Heritage Encyclopedia of Band Music

Molly on the Shore (c. 1920) by Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961)

Molly on the Shore receives frequent performances from high school and university ensembles, and it is certainly appropriate for a variety of concert programs. Although melodically straightforward, this brisk reel will provide several technical challenges, especially for younger players. For a successful performance, students must exhibit firm control over articulation and finger technique. Fast tonguing pervades the upper woodwind parts, and performers should approach the decorative triplet turns with care. Grainger's characteristically intricate tapestry of melodies and countermelodies is thoroughly enjoyed by audiences.

- *Notes from Great Music for Wind Band*

Tutued Toucan Can-can (c. 2021) by Erika Svanoë (b. 1976)

The majestic and noble toucan dons its tutu and prepares for its grand entrance. What will the toucan ballet entail? Nimble hops on delicate legs? Short but graceful flights across the stage? Rousing kicks? Dramatic splits? Perhaps the grand movement of its large, brightly colored beak would be the most effective use of its greatest asset. The toucan, inspired by other great birds of ballet, enters the stage, and begins to dance.

Tutued Toucan Can-can draws inspiration from several sources, including many melodies heard while watching cartoons and eating breakfast cereal in my youth. Walt Disney's *Fantasia* depicted the *Dance of the Hours* from Amilcare Ponchielli's opera *La Gioconda* with animated ostriches. Jacques Offenbach's *Galop Infernal* from *Orpheus in the Underworld* has worked its way into the public consciousness through multiple uses in popular culture and might be better known now simply as "the Can-can." Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and Stravinsky's *Firebird* also make brief appearances. If you listen carefully and follow your nose, you might find a few other musical nods to birds of note.

- *Program Note by composer*

Alumni from 1970 to 1999

Armenian Dances, Part 1 (c. 1972) by Alfred Reed (1921-2005)

The *Armenian Dances*, Parts I and II, constitute a four-movement suite for concert band or wind ensemble based on authentic Armenian folk songs from the collected works of Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935), the founder of Armenian classical music.

Part I, containing the first movement of this suite (the remaining three movements constituting Part II), is an extended symphonic rhapsody built upon five different songs, freely treated and developed in terms of the modern, integrated concert band or wind ensemble. While the composer has kept his treatment of the melodies within the general limits imposed on the music by its very nature, he has not hesitated to expand the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic possibilities in keeping with the demands of a symphonic-instrumental, as opposed to an individual vocal or choral, approach to its performance. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the overall effect of the music will be found to remain true in spirit to the work if this brilliant composer-musicologist, who almost single-handedly preserved and gave to the world a treasure trove of

beautiful folk music that to this day has not yet become as widely known in the Western world as it so richly deserves. Hopefully, this new instrumental setting will prove to be at least a small step in this direction.

Part I of the *Armenian Dances* was completed in the summer of 1972 and first performed by Dr. Harry Begian, (to whom the work is dedicated), and the University of Illinois Symphonic Band, on January 10, 1973, at the C.B.D.N.A. Convention in Urbana, Illinois.

Part I of the *Armenian Dances* is built upon five Armenian folk songs which were first notated, purified, researched and later arranged by Gomidas for solo voice with piano accompaniment, or unaccompanied chorus. In order of their appearance in the score, they are : *Tzirani Tzar* (The Apricot Tree); *Gakavi Yerk* (Partridge's Song); *Hoy, Nazan Eem* (Hoy, My Nazan); *Alagyaz* and *Gna, Gna* (Go, Go).

- Program Note by Violet Vagramian, Florida International University

First Suite for Military Band in E Flat (c. 1909, ed. 1984) by Gustav Holst (1874-1934), ed. Colin Matthews (b. 1946)

Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E-flat for Military Band* occupies a legendary position in the wind band repertory and can be seen, in retrospect, as one of the earliest examples of the modern wind band instrumentation still frequently performed today. Its influence is so significant that several composers have made quotation or allusion to it as a source of inspiration to their own works.

Holst began his work with *Chaconne*, a traditional Baroque form that sets a series of variations over a ground bass theme. That eight-measure theme is stated at the outset in tubas and euphoniums and, in all, fifteen variations are presented in quick succession. The three pitches that begin the work -- E-flat, F, and B-flat, ascending -- serve as the generating cell for the entire work, as the primary theme of each movement begins in exactly the same manner. Holst also duplicated the intervallic content of these three pitches, but descended, for several melodic statements (a compositional trick not dissimilar to the inversion process employed by the later serialist movement, which included such composers as Schoenberg and Webern). These inverted melodies contrast the optimism and bright energy of the rest of the work, typically introducing a sense of melancholy or shocking surprise. The second half of the *Chaconne*, for instance, presents a somber inversion of the ground bass that eventually emerges from its gloom into the exuberant final variations.

The *Intermezzo*, which follows is a quirky rhythmic frenzy that contrasts everything that has preceded it. This movement opens in C minor, and starts and stops with abrupt transitions throughout its primary theme group. The contrasting midsection is introduced with a mournful melody, stated in F Dorian by the clarinet before being taken up by much of the ensemble. At the movement's conclusion, the two sections are woven together, the motives laid together in complementary fashion in an optimistic C major.

The *March* that follows immediately begins shockingly, with a furious trill in the woodwinds articulated by aggressive statements by brass and percussion. This sets up the lighthearted and

humorous mood for the final movement, which eventually does take up the more reserved and traditional regal mood of a British march and is simply interrupted from time to time by an uncouth accent or thunderous bass drum note. The coda of the work makes brief mention of elements from both the *Chaconne* and *Intermezzo* before closing joyfully.

- *Program Note by Jacob Wallace for the Baylor Wind Ensemble concert program, 19 December 2014*

Them Basses (c. 1924) by Getty Huffine (1889-1947)

Them Basses March is subtitled "A March in which the Basses have the Melody throughout." Huffine might have included the names of all of the lower brasses and the lower woodwinds in the subtitle, inasmuch as they also have the melody -- after the introduction by the cornets. The march was written to sound complete with a minimum number of players, such as in a circus band playing for the elephant act. Because of the small number of different parts, *Them Basses March* is equally suitable for a 2,000-member massed band, a 28-piece brass band, and a marimba ensemble. It shares this characteristic with much of the music of the Baroque period. Rhythmically, it swings. It was on the J.W. Pepper list of favorite march for many years, almost since it was published in 1924, and it is still popular in many countries -- a very uncomplicated march classic.

- *Program Note from Program Notes for Band*

Riften Wed (c. 2013) by Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

Riften is a city in Skyrim located in the expansive world of Elder Scrolls, the fifth installment of an action role-playing video game saga developed by Bethesda Game Studios and published by Bethesda Softworks. Skyrim is an open world game that by any video game standard is geographically massive and more closely related to an online mmorpg (massive multiplayer online role-playing game) than to its console and pc competition.

Riften is a seedy, crime-filled and nearly lawless city. Located on a waterfront with skooma-addicted dock workers and corrupt guards, it also boasts the headquarters of the Thieves Guild. Sadly enough, it is also the location for the world's orphanage and the Temple of Mara, the place where the good citizens of Skyrim have to go to get married, you included.

Weddings in Skyrim are about survival as much as fondness or imagined love. Courtship can be as simple a dialogue as "Are you interested in me? Why yes, are you interested in me? Yes. It's settled then." Sometimes the dialogue is more along the lines of "You are smart and strong. I would be lucky to have you. I would walk the path of life beside you 'til the end of time if you will have me." Although this game feels somewhat like the iron age with magic and dragons, it has a progressive, flourishing society.

In Skyrim, if so desired, your spouse can and will fight beside you. They will die for you or with you. For most of them, that death is permanent. You cannot remarry (not without cheating anyway). What was is over and there will be no other. Being the hopeless romantic that I am, I found the whole situation intriguing and heart wrenching, especially if related or injected into

real world circumstances. In one instance while playing the game, I emerged from the chapel with my brand new husband only to have him killed later that evening in a vicious full-on vampire attack right outside the temple. (Hey! No fair! I knew I should have married a warrior and not a merchant. I restarted the game.) Skyrim weddings are happening in the middle of a world full of violence, disease, war and death, something Earth is all too familiar with.

Riften Wed is the music for loves and unions, past and present such as this. A love, a wedding, a lifetime shared by two people in the middle of a storm that threatens to tear them apart. Where “‘til death do us part” is not only a reality, it’s a given. Where love is a gift worthy of all the joy and pain it demands. One life, one love, one ending. This music is for those that are truly *Riften Wed*.

- *Program Note by composer*

Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (c. 1923) by John Philip Sousa (1854-1932)

Published in 1923, this concert-oriented march celebrates Sousa’s membership in the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners). His local chapter hosted the national convention in 1923 in Washington, D.C., and Sousa conducted a band of 6,200 members in Griffith Stadium, the largest group he ever conducted. Contemporary versions of the Janissary Band (Turkish royal bodyguards) are a vital part of colorful Shrine marching units, and this march was intended to recreate the musical style of this Turkish music. The “jingling johnny” or Turkish crescent (a marching instrument with a pole hung with jingling bells), triangle, tambourine, and a heavy bass drum are highlighted, and we hear sudden fortissimo outbursts in the first section. This march is unique in that it includes a part for the harp.

- *Program Note by Edward Harris*

Elegy (c. 1972) by John Barnes Chance (1932-1972)

Elegy is playable by a wide variety of ensembles, from high school through university levels. The challenges of this piece are not technical; rather, the ability to sustain harmonies, many of which contain dissonant elements, will be required by all performers. This is an excellent piece for sensitizing an ensemble to subtle variations in dynamics over extended periods of time. The work's majestic climax and thoughtful closing ensure a rewarding musical experience that would fit well in the middle portion of a concert program.

- *Program Note from Great Music for Wind Band*

Combined Bands (Alumni from 1970 to 2023)

Dedication Fanfare on the University Hymn (c. 2023) by James Curnow (b. 1943)

The Dedication Fanfare on the University Hymn was arranged for the opening of the Fine Arts Center (now Haas Fine Arts Center) at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire during the 1970-1971 academic year. At the time of the dedication of the Fine Arts Center, James Curonw was serving as low brass instructor and Concert Band Conductor.

Valdres (c. 2001) by Johannes Hanssen (1874-1967)

Hanssen began writing this march in 1901; it was not completed until 1904. Following its premiere, during an open-air concert in Oslo, the composer (who was playing trumpet in the band) heard only two people applaud -- his two best friends. He then arranged the work for the Orchestra of the National Theater, but Johan Halvorsen, the conductor (and also a composer), turned it down. Later he sold the march to a publisher for 25 kroner (about five dollars). From this inauspicious beginning, *Valdres* March has become known in almost every country where there are brass or wind bands. Although it was his first composition, Hanssen admitted near the end of his life that he had never written anything better.

The title has both geographic and musical connotations. Valdres is a beautiful region between Oslo and Bergen. The first three measures contain the old signature fanfare for the Valdres Battalion, an ancient melody formerly played on the lur (or lure) -- in this instance a straight wooden "trumpet" which was long enough to play the same partials played on a modern bugle. Other melodies derive from a Haranger fiddle tune and a pentatonic folk tune, above a typical Norwegian drone bass.

- *Program Notes from* Program Notes for Band