

UWEC – BC Communiversiity Band Program Notes

Friday, April 28, 2023

Procession of the Nobles, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), arr. Eric Leidzen

During the season of 1869-1870, the director of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg conceived the idea of staging an elaborate opera ballet based on a subject from Slavic mythology, for this work, to be known as *Mlada*, he commissioned music from the Russian school of composition. The project was never realized, however, and most of the music which the composers had written found its way into other of their works. Not until 20 years later did Rimsky-Korsakov decide to use the subject for an opera ballet of his own. His *Mlada* was begun in 1889 and produced at the Marinsky Theater in 1892.

- Program Note from Program Notes for Band

Australian Up-Country Tune, Percy Grainger (1882-1961), arr. Glenn Bainum

Grainger's *Australian Up-Country Tune* is based on the composer's *Up-Country Song*, written for unaccompanied and wordless voices. "In the tune," the composer wrote, "I had wished to voice an Australian up-country feeling as [Stephen Foster](#) had with American country-side feelings in his songs."

- Program Note by Heritage Encyclopedia of Band Music

Overture to "Candide", Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), arr. Clare Gundman

Candide was Leonard Bernstein's third Broadway musical, following *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. Adapted by Lillian Hellman from Voltaire's 18th-century satire on blind optimism, Bernstein's *Candide* is an operetta set in the castle of the Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh in the mythical European land of Westphalia. Within these walls live the Baron and Baroness; Cunégonde, their beautiful and innocent virgin daughter; Maximilian, their handsome son; Candide, their handsome bastard nephew; and Paquette, the Baroness' buxom serving maid. They are taught by Dr. Pangloss, who preaches the philosophy that all is for the best in "The Best of All Possible Worlds."

Candide and Cunégonde kiss, and Candide is banned from Westphalia. As he leaves, Bulgarians invade, kidnap him and slaughter everyone except for Cunégonde, who they prostitute out to a rich Jew and the Grand Inquisitor. Candide escapes and begins an optimistic, satirical journey, taking with him his sweetheart Cunégonde and Pangloss. Candide journeys to Lisbon, Paris, Buenos Aires, and even the legendary El Dorado, only to discover reality in the forms of crime, atrocity, and suffering. He returns to Venice with Cunégonde, stripped of his idealism. His ultimate emotional maturation concludes in the finale with “You’ve been a fool, and so have I, but come and be my wife, and let us try before we die, to make good sense of life. We’re neither pure nor wise nor good; We’ll do the best we know; We’ll build our house, and chop our wood, and make our garden grow.”

Opening on Broadway on December 1, 1956, *Candide* was perhaps a bit too intellectually weighty for its first audiences and closed after just 73 performances. Bernstein was less concerned over the money lost than the failure of a work he cared about deeply. The critics had rightly noted a marvelous score, and Bernstein and others kept tinkering with the show over the years. With each revival, *Candide* won bigger audiences. In 1989, the already seriously ill Bernstein spent his last ounces of vital energy recording a new concert version of the work. “There’s more of me in that piece than anything else I’ve done,” he said.

The sparkling overture captures the frenetic activity of the operetta, with its twists and turns, along with Candide’s simple honesty. From the very beginning, though, the overture was a hit and swiftly became one of the most popular of all concert curtain raisers. Brilliantly written and scored, flying at breakneck speed, it pumps up the adrenaline of players and listeners alike. It features two of the show’s big tunes: the sweeping romantic one is Candide’s and Cunégonde’s love duet “Oh Happy We,” while the wacky up-tempo music is from Cunégonde’s fabulous send-up of coloratura soprano arias, “Glitter and Be Gay.”

- Program note by San Luis Obispo Wind Orchestra concert program, 12 May 2012

Excerpts from Appalachian Spring, Aaron Copland (1900-1990), arr. Robert Longfield

Written in 1943-44 as a ballet for Martha Graham, *Appalachian Spring* is one of Aaron Copland's most celebrated compositions and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1945. In this edition for concert band, Robert Longfield has skillfully adapted the most striking and beautiful sections from the orchestral suite. The work ranges in scope from delicate and soloistic to the overpowering force of the full ensemble, culminating with Copland's signature setting of *Simple Gifts*.

- Program Note from publisher

The Peanut Vendor, by Moisés Simons (1898-1945), arr. John Moss

The fame of *El Manisero* (***The Peanut Vendor***) led to Moisés Simons' own worldwide recognition. It sold over a million copies of sheet music for E.B. Marks Inc., and this netted \$100,000 in royalties for Simons by 1943. Its success led to a 'rumba craze' in the U.S. and Europe which lasted until the 1940s.

The number was first recorded and released by singer, Rita Montaner, in either 1927 or 1928 on Columbia Records. The biggest hit for *El Manisero* came from the 1930 recording released by Don Azpiazzú and his Havana Casino Orchestra in New York City on Victor Records.

The lyrics were based on a street vendors' cry, a *pregón*; and the rhythm was a *son*, so technically this was a *son-pregón*. On the record label, however, it was called a rumba, not only the wrong genre, but misspelled as well. On the published score both music and lyrics are attributed to Simons, though there is a persistent story that they were written by Gonzalo G. de Mello in Havana the night before Montaner was due to record it in New York.

In 1947, ***The Peanut Vendor*** had a second life as a hit number when Stan Kenton and his big band recorded and released it on Capitol Records. Several films included versions of *El Manisero*. It appeared in the MGM movie, *The Cuban Song*, with Ernesto Lecuona as musical advisor; Judy Garland sang a fragment of the song in the 1954 film, *A Star is Born*.

- Program Note from Wikipedia

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First Suite Fanfare, by Erika Svanoë (b. 1976)

First Suite Fanfare pays homage to [Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E-flat*](#). The fanfare utilizes and transforms material from the opening movement, specifically the *Chaconne's* familiar melody that is heard throughout. In much the same way that Holst utilized the starting notes of his melody to unify all three movements of *First Suite in Eb*, the first four pitches of the *Chaconne* (Eb, F, C, Bb) are rhythmically altered in the energetic opening measures of the fanfare. Longer

portions of the *Chaconne* and its inversion are also reworked as melodies, countermelodies, short motives, and the central chorale.

- *Program Note by composer*

Commissioned by the Eagan High School Wind Ensemble, Eagan, MN.

- *Program Note from score*

***Luminescence*, by David Biedenbender (b. 1984)**

Luminescence is based on fragments from the melody *Ermuntre dich, mein schwacher Geist* (Rouse Thyself, My Weak Spirit), which was written by [Johann Schop](#) and subsequently harmonized in several settings by [Johann Sebastian Bach](#). It is most known as the Christian hymn *Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light*. It may enrich the overall musical experience, both for the ensemble and for the audience, to hear the original chorale before the piece is played.

- *Program Note by composer*

Luminescence was written for the 2009 WELS National Band Festival by Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

- *Program Note from score*

***Play!* by Carl Holmquist (b. 1983)**

This is a work that seeks to capture the essence of the word “play”, both as a noun and a verb. Play, as a noun, is a state of being that blends joy, excitement, and innocence. It comes so naturally to young children but becomes a bit elusive as the years go by. As a verb, play is an action that is completely free and whimsical. And yet at the same time it is a 100% serious outpouring of heart, soul, and imagination. When you play, you hold nothing back! Musically, this expression flows from a simple melodic idea, one that perhaps a child would create out of thin air while skipping along on a sunny day. The tune travels through the ensemble on a winding path of delicate moments and joyous outbursts, with each instrument adding its own character to the mix. The work is flavored with a bit of Cajun seasoning, as the rhythms and drum cadences are derived from the New Orleans second-line style that the brass bands play as they parade down Bourbon Street.

- Program Note from University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire University Band concert program, 26 November 2018

Up and Down, by Molly Joyce (b. 1992)

Up and Down is an exploration between wide and contracted ranges within the wind ensemble, along with arpeggios to sustained chords. The inquiry stems from research into social uniformity and particularly through the social model of disability, which states that people are disabled by barriers in society rather than by impairment or difference. Therefore, by highlighting the differences between expanded and contracted registral facets, I hope to illuminate overriding challenges in such a polarizing categorization, as well as utilize the singular body of the wind ensemble, an optimal instrumentation to execute such differences.

Up and Down was commissioned by and dedicated to Hope College [Holland, Mich.] Wind Ensemble and Dr. Gabe Southard, made possible by a Hope College Patrons for the Arts grant.

- Program Note by composer

Concerto for Trombone Quartet, by Eric Richards (b. 1959)

I. Molto ritmico

II. Molto espressivo

III. Molto fuoco e l'anima

I. Molto ritmico

The compositional goal of the first movement is the exposition and interplay of two primary themes. The solo quartet presents the thematic material and then performs variations and commentary on the themes.

II. Molto espressivo

In much of the music of the Western common practice, the musical role of the trombone in ensemble music is closely aligned with the voice, either in terms of support (e.g., doubling) or in function as a representation of the human voice. The intent of the second movement is to explore the beautiful, singing possibilities of the bass trombone. This movement emerged as an aria for bass trombone, trombone quartet and wind ensemble.

III. Molto fuoco e l'anima

The trombone plays a major role in the various tributaries of Afro-Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Brazilian music (e.g., son, mambo, bomba, plena, samba, partido alto, et al), and trombone artists such as Juan Pablo Torres, Raul de Souza, Papo Vasquez, and Conrad Herwig are well

known among aficionados of these genres. Since many Latin bands use four trombones as the horn section to complement the singers and rhythm section, I decided to craft an energetic final movement using the solo quartet in a similar way. My goal was to create something sounding like “Bela Bartok meets Willie Colon.”

This work was commissioned for the Continental Trombone Quartet (Peter Madsen, Mark Rabideau, Doug Farwell, and Steve Wilson) by a consortium of four university band programs and one solo artist: the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Texas at El Paso, the University of Wyoming and Dr. Doug Farwell of Valdosta State University. The piece premiered on April 6, 2010, by the University of Texas at El Paso Wind Symphony under the direction of Dr. Ron Hufstader.

- Program Note by composer

Hands Across the Sea, by Joh Philip Sousa (1854-1932)

Hands Across the Sea, composed in 1899, might well be considered as Sousa’s farewell to the nineteenth century that had been so crucial to the evolution of the United States of America. The two final decades of that century were also very good for Sousa, for in those years he emerged as a world-famous music personality. His magnificent band was one of the first American success stories in music, for it captured audiences wherever it played. Sousa, his band, and his thrilling marches spoke for all of us. Together they just might possibly have been the best ambassadors for the Republic since Benjamin Franklin. *Hands Across the Sea* could also have been Sousa’s sincerely confident and patriotic view of the years ahead at the dawn of what he hoped might be a bright new era for mankind.

The title of the march has the ring of history in it. Since Sousa was almost as fascinated by words as he was by music, this happy combination finds him joining one of his most mature and compelling marches with words to match, for the prophetic title was original to him.

There are, of course, as many ways to play Sousa marches as there are conductors to lead them, and no official “system” of performance was either provided or approved by him. Those many admirers among his players who subsequently conducted provided viable options, but Sousa’s approval on proofs for publication make them all that is ultimately correct.

- Program note by Frederick Fennell