

Wind Symphony Program Notes

Saturday, April 29, 2023

Dr. John R. Stewart, conductor

Wyatt Cameron, student conductor

Rafael Puga, clarinet soloist

Springtime (c. 2022) by Chris Renaud (b. 2001)

Springtime represents the changes of the seasons as well as the universal experience we all share as members of the music community in Haas. Music is all about connection to me. We've all experienced cold and rainy days walking across the bridge, but there's a particular feeling of belonging and comradery when you step into Haas. The A sections outline this feeling, and the physical warmth that spring brings, its renewal and revival. The middle section is written to be a thunderstorm - the timpani and low brass being the thunder, while the snare drum, mallet percussion, and of course, the rain stick, are the "pitter patter" of raindrops. After this section it resolves to its major tonality, as a sign of cloudburst. The sun shines through, the brass now acting as the sun, giving once again its warm embrace to the Earth.

Program notes by composer

Pageant, Op. 59 (c. 1953) by Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

Pageant, op. 59 (1953) is the composer's third work for band, commissioned by Edwin Franko Goldman for performance at the nineteenth annual convention of the American Bandmasters Association. The premiere was on March 7, 1953, by the University of Miami Band with Persichetti conducting.

The composer's manuscript sketches show that Persichetti had originally intended to title the work *Morning Music for Band* -- the opening horn motive and the first theme in the clarinet choir have a serene, pastoral quality that evokes thoughts of sunrise. The opening horn call provides the motivic basis for the rest of the work, germinating long phrases supported by chordal harmonies. The phrases are passed around amongst various small choirs of instruments, exploiting the plethora of timbral and textural combinations possible in an ensemble of wind and percussion instruments. The tonal centers shift as often as the instrumentation, landing on a B-flat major chord that transitions into the second part of the work, the "parade." In the Allegro second section, the snare drum provides a rhythmic version of the melodic material to follow. This section utilizes polytonality with multiple key centers existing in the music at the same time.

- Program Note from University of North Carolina Charlotte Wind Ensemble concert program, 20 October 2021

Première Rhapsodie (c. 1910, tr. 2016) by Claude Debussy (1862-1918), transcribed by Marcel Baars (b. 1956)

In 1909, Gabriel Fauré, director of the *Paris Conservatoire*, named Claude Debussy to its Board of Directors. In July, Debussy sat on the jury for the conservatory's annual woodwind 'concours' (exit examinations) and that fall he was asked to compose the text piece for the following year, he obliged with the *Première Rhapsodie*.

Debussy considered the piece as 'one of the most charming I have ever written' and liked it enough to arrange the piano part for orchestra, producing one of his very few concerto-type compositions. Dutch arranger Marcel Baars transcribed the *Première Rhapsodie* for solo clarinet with accompaniment of a (small) Symphonic Band.

Program notes by transcriber

Second Suite in F for Military Band, Op. 28, No. 2 by Gustav Holst (1874-1934), (ed. Colin Matthews)

Defining "folk music" can be a difficult task, particularly in a time when we are (rightfully) concerned with cultural recognition and appropriation. While it would be easy to simply dismiss many wind band repertoire standards -- like *Second Suite in F for Military Band* -- it could instead be an opportunity to redefine why certain parts of our musical heritage are important.

Written in 1911 (though not premiered until 1922), *Second Suite* introduces and develops seven tuneful folk melodies over four movements. The introductory march begins with *Glorishears* -- a Morris-dance tune realized in the style of a British town brass band. A euphonium soloist sings out the sweeping melody of *Swansea Town* before clarinets and saxophones dance to *Claudy Banks*. A recapitulation of *Glorishears* concludes the opening movement. The second movement, *Song Without Words: "I'll Love My Love,"* features a new exploration of the ensemble's texture, pairing mournful solo voices against a brooding pulse of woodwinds and euphonium. *Song of the Blacksmith*, movement three, features a much brighter, brassier color. Alongside driving syncopations, it is easy to imagine the blacksmith hard at work, sparks flying. After an unexpected transition, the fullness of the countryside is revealed in the final movement, *Fantasia on the Dargason*. Propelled by joyful jig-like rhythms and a celebratory tambourine, a sustained setting of *Greensleeves* triumphantly arrives before the contrast of the opening's tuba and piccolo close the suite.

Celebrated English composer **Gustav Holst** wrote and revised his two suites for military band during a time of immense compositional growth. Both suites were composed before the premiere of Holst's symphonic masterwork *The Planets* (1918), which in many ways relied on his experience working with folk songs. In *Second Suite*, much of Holst's source material comes from the work of Dr. G. B. Gardiner and Cecil Sharp, anthropologists who collected field recordings throughout England. (Interestingly, Sharp later traveled to the United States and collected recordings in the Southern Appalachians that helped spur the folk revival era of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and more. A lineage from these collections can be traced to present day through countless popular recording artists.)

Too often, overemphasizing originality or pure authenticity robs us of one of the great joys of listening to music: familiarity. “The pleasures that come from popular music listening,” says scholar Keith Negus, “arise from those moments of sudden recognition or discovery, when we find a connection.” Embracing folk music as gathered, collected, and evolving -- where players and listeners alike are encouraged to infuse their own experiences -- helps us realize a richer musical tradition of connection, one Holst’s *Second Suite* continues for wind bands even now.

- Program note by David Stanley for the University of Georgia's Wind Symphony concert program, 29 September 2021

INTERMISSION

Fanfare for Spring (c. 2022) by Gwenyth Lark (b. 2001)

Fanfare for Spring was written to show what spring is like in Wisconsin. The slow realization that the cold weather of winter is leaving, to the fast and joyous feeling that comes with the flowers blooming and temperatures finally getting warmer. There's a slow B section in which I imagine the first strawberry of the season becoming ripe and falling to the ground. I also wrote this keeping in mind that this is a celebration of 100 years of University Bands, so I tried to make it a happy and typical fanfare that wrapped up this important year.

- Program Notes from Composer

Spin Cycle (c. 2001) by Scott Lindroth (b. 1958)

Spin Cycle was commissioned by [H. Robert Reynolds](#) and the University of Michigan Symphony Band. It was premiered by Michael Haithcock in March 2002, and is dedicated to [T.J. Anderson](#). In the composer’s own words:

Spin Cycle was composed during a period I was writing music for choreography as well as incidental music for theater. The nature of those projects called for slow, contemplative music, so when the opportunity to compose a work for wind ensemble came along, I was eager to write music that was quick and agile. The title refers to the swirling, spinning melodic figures that are heard everywhere in the piece. These figures alternate with syncopated repeated notes that sound something like Morse code. In fact, these rhythms are based on names of people close to me which have been enciphered as a rhythmic pattern. This breathless, energetic music soon gives way to music with a more sustained and lyrical character. Now the spinning figures appear as ornaments to syncopated riffs accompanying long-breathed melodies. Dissonant trumpet fanfares based on the rhythmic cipher figures announce the recapitulation of the opening music, followed by an extended coda to bring the music to a conclusion.

- Program Note by composer

Echoes of a Northern Lake (c. 2022) by Cait Nishimura (b. 1991)

Echoes of a Northern Lake was commissioned in celebration of the National Youth Band's 30th anniversary with support from the Canadian Band Association, the Ontario Band Association, and a consortium of 60 ensembles and individuals from across North America. As a proud alumna of the NYB, it was a great honour to write music for this occasion and for this community.

The inspiration for this piece is rooted in my relationship with the natural world. I spent much of my childhood on a lake* where I had the privilege of interacting with an abundance of plants and animals -- most notably, the common loon. This piece is my musical interpretation of the loons' song and the beautiful yet rapidly declining ecosystems they rely on. Each section of the piece is a vignette of my cherished memories and an invitation for musicians and audiences to reflect on their own relationships with nature. We all have a role to play in the health and longevity of the planet we call home, and we are much more likely to protect that which we know and love. I believe that music is one of the ways in which we can inspire and empower others to connect, care, and take action.

*I respectfully acknowledge that the lands upon which I developed these early relationships with nature are located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Huron-Wendat peoples. The land on which I live and work today is that of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples. I recognize that these lands have been cared for by indigenous peoples for time immemorial, and I exist in these spaces with immense gratitude.

- *Program Note by composer*

Symphony in Blue and Gold (c. 2023) by Erika Svanoë (b. 1976)

Symphony in Blue & Gold was commissioned to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Bands at my alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. As a starting point, I researched and studied two significant pieces in wind band literature that were composed around the time the band was first formed on campus. These were *La création du monde* (1923) by Darius Milhaud and *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) by George Gershwin, specifically the original dance band version orchestrated by Ferde Grofé. Both pieces use a combination of classical and jazz influences, and this felt very reflective of my own experience as a music student at UWEC.

Overall, the piece uses a modified four-movement symphony plan. The first movement "Blues and Fugues" alternates a standard 12-bar blues with two four-voice fugues. The opening tenor saxophone solo presents the "UWEC" melodic material that appears throughout all four movements. The second movement "in Gold" focuses on timbres played by metallic instruments and introduces the other main melodic material, which musically spells out "BLUGLD." The third movement is a waltz and the final movement, "Finale," expands and combines material from the previous three movements.

I am so honored to have the opportunity to write *Symphony in Blue & Gold* for a place where I had so much musical and personal growth. I truly took this opportunity to heart, and tried to grow my own compositional voice and craft while writing this piece as a tribute to a place that was so important in my educational journey.

- *Program Notes from the composer*