Syracuse University Bands: Symphony Band, Wind Ensemble

Symphony Band, Setnor School of Music
Wind Ensemble, Setnor School of Music

Bradley P. Ethington  
*Syracuse University*

Justin J. Mertz  
*Syracuse University*

John M. Laverty  
*Syracuse University*

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**Recommended Citation**
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Symphony Band
Bradley P. Ethington, conductor
Justin J. Mertz, conductor
Alicia Arcaro, clarinet

Wind Ensemble
John M. Laverty, conductor
Justin J. Mertz, conductor

Thursday, February 28, 2008 ~ 8:00 p.m. ~ Setnor Auditorium
Symphony Band

Three Dances from “The Bartered Bride” ~~~~~~~~~~Bedrich Smetana
(1824-1884)
trans. Jack Kline
I. Polka
II. Furiant
III. Dance of the Comedians

Blue Shades ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Frank Ticheli
(b. 1958)

Justin J. Mertz, conductor
Alicia Arcaro, clarinet

La Fiesta Mexicana ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~H. Owen Reed
(b. 1910)

III. Carnival

*****INTERMISSION******

Wind Ensemble

Polka and Fugue from “Schwanda, the Bagpiper” ~~~~~~~~~~Jaromir Weinberger
(1896-1967)
arr. Glenn Cliffe Bainum

Shadowcatcher ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Eric Ewazen
(b. 1954)

I. Offering to the Sun
IV. Dancing to Restore an Eclipsed Moon

Stefan Schuck, trumpet
Jennifer Luzzo, trumpet
Kirsten Trachte, horn
Nicholas Meyer, trombone
Richard Liebowitz, bass trombone

Molly on the Shore ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Percy Aldridge Grainger
(1882-1961)

Justin J. Mertz, conductor

The Pines of Rome ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Ottorino Respighi
(1879-1936)
trans. Guy M. Duker

IV. The Pines of the Appian Way
Symphony Band Program Notes

Three Dances from “The Bartered Bride”

Bedřich Smetana
(1824-1884)
trans. Jack Kline

Known as the founder of the Czech school of composition, Bedřich Smetana was born in Litomysl, Bohemia in 1824. As a child, he was a gifted violinist as well as an accomplished pianist. By the age of 24, he had established a successful piano school in Prague. After years of composing, teaching, and conducting around Europe, he returned to Prague and became the conductor of the Provisional Theater in 1866. During the most trying physical and emotional time of his life, battling syphilis and uncontrollable outbursts of rage, he composed his most famous work, Ma Vlast (My Fatherland). He died in 1884 at the age of 60.

One of his most famous operas, The Bartered Bride, began as a two-act play by Karel Sabina with incidental music by Smetana. It eventually turned into a three-act opera that premiered in 1870. This came after a four-year revision due to the poor reception of the initial premiere. The premise of the opera is that the main character, Marenka, is being forced to marry Vasek even though she and Jenik plan to be married. In Act II Jenik makes a tricky deal with the marriage broker, and accepts money in order to give up the rights to marry Marenka under the condition that Marenka marries the son of Micha. In Act III Vasek joins the circus to court one of the gypsies, Esmerelda, and everyone realizes Jenik is actually the long-lost son of Micha from a previous marriage. Everyone rejoices as they embrace Marenka and Jenik.

This arrangement features the “Polka, Furiant and Dance of the Comedians,” transcribed for band by the 24th Director of the United States Marine Band, Lieutenant Colonel Jack Kline. The “Polka,” a Bohemian dance, comes at the end of Act I. The townspeople in the opera are celebrating at a holiday festival in town. The lively “Polka” tilts its way to the close of Act I. The “Furiant” was written for the final version of the opera and appears in Act II. Here the villagers dance at a local inn. This folk-inspired piece is a peasant dance that consists of complex rhythms. The final movement, the “Dance of the Comedians,” appears at the beginning Act III when a circus comes to the town to entertain the villagers.

Blue Shades

Frank Ticheli
(b. 1958)

Frank Ticheli currently teaches composition at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California. He earned both his Masters and Doctoral degrees in composition from the University of Michigan. Ticheli is currently one of the most sought-after composers in the country, garnering commissions from American Music Center, Pacific Symphony, University of Michigan, Indiana Bandmasters Association, and Worldwide Concurrent Premieres Inc., as well as many others.

Blue Shades comes out of a desire to create a more authentically personal piece after Ticheli’s experience with another piece he wrote for the San Antonio Symphony. His passion for jazz inspires this piece, and even though it is titled Blue Shades, it is not specifically “bluesy.” Ticheli did not include any 12-bar blues progressions, or other overt references to the blues form. What gives the title its name is the prevalence of “blue” notes and the different kinds of “blue” articulated throughout the piece. For example, Ticheli refers to the clarinet solo towards the end as “hot” whereas the quiet section in the middle is referred to as “dark” and “smoky.”

The opening introduces the importance of the “blue” notes, specifically the flat third, fifth and seventh scale degrees, with an emphasis on the flat third. Later, the piece develops through polyrhythmic passages, polymodal chords, as well as seemingly virtuosic improvisation (although nothing in the work is actually improvisatory). With regard to avoiding any improvisatory idioms, Ticheli states that “part of the piece’s success lies in its understatement of these conventions."
The middle section of *Blue Shades* exhibits a slower and darker feel – picture a smoky bar or lounge. After this, we escape to a bright, big band homage. This section’s highlight is the clarinet soloist, who takes center stage and is directed by the composer to play with “unabashed gustiness and bravado.” The piece roars to a finish with an intense tutti section. The brass wails and Ticheli describes the end as “a pressure cooker of excitement – exploding one last time into the final climax.”

**La Fiesta Mexicana**

Another living composer featured on this concert began his musical career listening to his father playing the fiddle and the family player piano. **H. Owen Reed** is currently Professor Emeritus at Michigan State University where he taught until 1976. Dr. Reed did extensive research in other countries and brought these folk idioms to his compositions. He traveled to Mexico, the Caribbean, and Norway in addition to his studies in Native American music in New Mexico and Arizona. This exposure to different music is apparent in his composition *La Fiesta Mexicana*.

*La Fiesta Mexicana* was composed with the aid of a Guggenheim Fellowship. The piece exhibits influences of Aztec music and mariachi bands as it depicts a religious festival in the streets of Mexico. Dr. Reed makes a distinct attempt to represent all aspects of the festival from the celebratory to the introspective. It is noted as “serious and comical, festive and solemn, devout and pagan, boisterous and tender.”

The last movement, “Carnival,” depicts the more celebratory aspect of the festival. At the beginning of the movement, Dr. Reed imagines a circus for us. After this event, we are taken to hear a mariachi band, where the brass’s bright sound makes a memorable impression. Later we are brought into the market where the celebration is still taking place and the mariachi band continues to follow us. After a reiteration of the opening thematic material, the audience is brought down a darker alley and into the heart of a bullfight. Excitement builds as the woodwinds play the same rhythmic figures in ascending fashion as the brass quietly builds underneath the upper voices, culminating in a bold finish!

**Wind Ensemble Program Notes**

**Polka and Fugue from “Schwanda, the Bagpiper”**

*Schwanda the Bagpiper* is Weinberger’s greatest masterpiece. When it was first performed at the Czech National Theater in 1927, its success brought him international celebrity. Schwanda, the finest bagpiper in the region, lives with his wife Dorota in great happiness. One day, however, the robber Babinski arrives and persuades Schwanda to go with him to visit a sad Queen, in the spell of a wicked Magician, whom nothing can cheer up. With Babinski, he soon arrives in the Queen's palace, where his music making has the desired effect, making the entire courtiers dance and the Queen herself smile. She is so pleased that she offers to marry him and — momentarily forgetting Dorota — he agrees. However, a very angry Dorota turns up and asks him if he kissed the Queen. Schwanda replies that he will go to hell if he did — and instantly finds himself there. The devil tricks Schwanda into signing away his soul, but Babinski saves him by beating the devil at a game of cards. At last, he can return home, but Babinski — who wants
Dorota for himself—tells Schwanda that in his long absence she has become an old woman. This proves not to be the case, and she and Schwanda are finally reunited.

By joining two separate orchestral excerpts from the opera, the Polka and Fugue has become a highly popular concert piece. Sophisticated symphonic treatment of a catchy folksy dance tune sets up the statement of a new upbeat theme for the fugue, where every instrument in the ensemble is given a chance to shine. Then toward the conclusion, the polka theme returns simultaneously with the continuing fugue.

Shadowcatcher

Shadowcatcher was commissioned in 1996 by the American Brass Quintet. Ewazen drew his inspiration for the composition from the photographs of American Indians by Edward Curtis, who was known to his subjects as Shadowcatcher. Ewazen was captivated by the beauty and mystery of Curtis’ photographs, which were taken during his travels throughout the West in the early 1900s. Four of the photos—“Offering to the Sun,” “Among the Aspens,” “The Vanishing Race” and “Dancing to Restore an Eclipsed Moon”—each provided a theme for a movement of Shadowcatcher.

The composer says of the first and fourth movements:

"Offering to the Sun" (Tewa, 1925) – between the rock cliffs at San Idelfonso, a Tewa Indian, clutching feathers, raises his arms in supplication to the brilliant sunrise. The opening by the brass quintet is influenced by the complex and improvisational music of the Native flute. A quiet, prayerful chorale leads to music portraying the beauty and excitement of a new day.

"Dancing to Restore an Eclipsed Moon" (Kwakiutl, 1914) – dancers surrounding a smoking fire. The Kwakiutl of the Pacific Northwest believed a creature of the night sky was swallowing the eclipsed moon. By burning old clothes and hair in a bonfire, they believed they could make the monster sneeze and disgorge the moon. The music evokes this legend. On a cold, dark night, clouds roll in front of the moon before the beginning of the eclipse. The fire is lit to the sound of heavy drumbeats and the frenetic dancing begins. The dance culminates in a brass quintet cadenza, a "sneeze," and the quiet return of the moon as feelings of joy and peace bring the work to a close.

Eric Ewazen, born in 1954 in Cleveland, studied under Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Warren Benson, Gunther Schuller and Joseph Schwantner at the Eastman School of Music (B.M., 1976), Tanglewood and The Juilliard School (M.M., 1978; D.M.A., 1980), where he has been a member of the faculty since 1980. A recipient of numerous composition awards and prizes, Ewazen has written works that have been commissioned and performed by many chamber ensembles and orchestras in the United States and abroad. His music has been heard at festivals including Tanglewood, Aspen, Caramoor and the Music Academy of the West. His works are highly performed and recorded both in the United States and abroad and is in high demand as a composer worldwide.

Molly on the Shore

Percy Aldridge Grainger was born in the frontier world of 18th century Melbourne, Australia and is widely celebrated in America as one of the masters of wind band composition. At the age of 19, he and his mother moved to London when his musical career began to take off, and at the outset of World War I, he emigrated to the United States and continued to be a huge success as a concert pianist. However, when America joined WWI, he joined the US Army as Bandsman 2nd Class, 15th Band, playing the saxophone. It was as a member of the army band that he began to write music specifically for the wind band, or military band, which led to compositions including Children's March and Lincolnshire Posy. In spite of his
eccentric and outspoken nature, as well as his unconventional behavior for popular figures of the time, Grainger continued to gain high acclaim in the United States and abroad as a composer, musicologist, teacher, and performer until his death in 1961, and is still celebrated today for his contributions.

In the spring of 1920, Grainger completed his last piece for wind orchestra made in his Army period, Molly on the Shore. It is based on two reel tunes from Cork: Temple Hill and Molly on the Shore, both from Charles Stanford Villiers’s The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music. Grainger wrote his first setting of the tune for string quartet as a birthday gift for his mother Rose in 1907. Like Sheperd's Hey, Molly on the Shore is known for its rhythmic intensity and highly subtle usage of the original themes. The many chromatic lines, one of Grainger's signatures, the rapid technical work in instruments throughout the ensemble, but especially woodwinds, and the high level of variation in the instrumentation give Molly on the Shore unprecedented energy. This piece is particularly challenging for the clarinet section, especially first clarinet that is featured throughout the piece. Like Country Gardens and Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon, Molly on the Shore is 'lovingly and reverently' dedicated to Edvard Grieg.

Of this work, Grainger wrote:

*In setting Molly on the Shore, I strove to imbue the accompanying parts that made up the harmonic texture with a melodic character not too unlike that of the underlying reel tune. Melody seems to me to provide music with an initiative, whereas rhythm appears to me to exert an enslaving influence. For that reason, I have tried to avoid rhythmic domination in my music -- always excepting irregular rhythms, such as those of Gregorian Chant, which seem to me to make for freedom. Equally, with melody I prize discordant harmony, because of the emotional and compassionate sway it exerts.* August 6, 1959

The Pines of Rome

Ottorino Respighi

(1879-1936)

*Misty dawn on the Appian Way: solitary pine trees guarding the magic landscape; the muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps. The poet has a fantastic vision of bygone glories: trumpets sound and, in the brilliance of the newly-risen sun, a consular army bursts forth towards the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph to the Capitol.* – Ottorino Respighi

Ottorino Respighi is credited with being the first Italian composer in that period to achieve both fame and popularity for purely orchestral works. His three most famous works, the tone poems Fontane di Roma (Fountains of Rome, 1917), Pini di Roma (Pines of Rome, 1924), and Feste Romana (Roman Festivals, 1929), exemplify the eclectic, pictorial style that won him such popularity.

Respighi began working on Pines of Rome in 1924. The piece combines his skills in colorful orchestration and programmatic composition with his interest in older music, including references to medieval plainchant and to folk tunes -- in this case, children's songs that his wife, Elsa, an accomplished singer and composer, had taught him. The premiere was held on December 14, 1924, at the Teatro Augusteo in Rome, and just as Respighi predicted of his creative effects, the audience did boo -- at the atonal trumpet blasts at the end of the first movement, and at the nightingale. However, the finale's triumphal brass won the audience over and earned the piece a standing ovation. It has enjoyed popularity ever since, with Respighi's friend Arturo Toscanini championing the work in the United States and leading its premiere in New York in 1926 and then under the direction of Respighi himself with the Philadelphia Orchestra the day after.
Symphony Band Personnel

Piccolo
Alison Soccio

Flute
Stephanie Burke
Jeffrey Ellis
Jessica Fleming
Jessica Miller
Erica Scarano

Oboe
Steff Rainess
Diana Zarick

Clarinet
Stephen Chuba
Julia Kelley
Kelsey Kobik
Katie Kranz
Colleen Reynolds
Ashley Smith
Megan Speidel
Shannon Wampler

Contrabass Clarinet
Oliver Bojanic

Bassoon
Allie Duggan
Kevin Muldoon

Alto Saxophone
Allen Graham
Jeff Wiseman

Tenor Saxophone
William MacGuire
Ryan Mantell

Trumpet
Brett Chipman
Stephen George
John King
Cathy LaPointe
Thomas Mika
Jason Sector
William Valenti
Kevin Witmer

Horn
Mary DeMauro
Nick Monzi
Allison Thurnherr

Trombone
Tom Goldstein
Cathrine Paliga
Jonathan Stark

Euphonium
Cedric Solice

Tuba
Brady Clark
Chris Cresswell
Pericussion
Kyle Ashby
Casey Callaghan
Brian Ludwig
Chris Mandry
Bobak Shafiei

Wind Ensemble Personnel

Piccolo
Alison Soccio

Flute
Jessica Fleming
Sarah Kenney
Krystal Larish
Jessica Miller
Steff Rainess
Alison Soccio

Clarinet
Alicia Arcaro
Katharine Fidler
Kevin Leonardi
Alyssa LoPresti
Amy Mertz
Hunter Plude
Trevor Roche
David Stokes

Bass Clarinet
Jason Lehrer
Alicia Arcaro

Bassoon
Kristen Lamore
Kate Roarty

Oboe
Abby Drumm
Laura Long
Sara Turnbull

English Horn
Laura Long

Saxophone
Joe Frateschi
Christopher Howard
Zach Moser
Marissa Roe
James Sector

Trumpet
William Kaleta
Jennifer Luzzo
Nathan Meredith
Katy Messere
Stefan Schuck
Adam Stagnitta
Joshua Symborski
Andrew Wiley

Horn
Mary DeMauro
Sky Harris
Megan Kirsch
Jason Wysocki

Trombone
Lauren Hannahs
John Sellmeyer

Bass Trombone
Nick Roberts

Tuba
Avery Parker
Alec Sim
Stephen Salem

Euphonium
Richard Liebowitz
Anna Palsma
Cedric Solice

Percussion
Kyle Ashby
Steven Gior
Dianna Hnatiw
Brian Ludwig
Mike Monacelli
Syracuse University
Setnor School of Music

Wind and Percussion Faculty

Cornelia Brewster, Flute
Michael Bull, Percussion
Melissa Bushee, Trumpet
Ronald Caravan, Clarinet/Saxophone
Deborah Coble, Flute
Jill Coggiola, Clarinet
Michael Coldren, Euphonium/Tuba
Jon Garland, Horn
William Harris, Trombone
Stephen Laifer, Horn
Philip MacArthur, Oboe
Daniel Sapochetti, Trumpet
Martha Sholl, Bassoon