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ACU Bands in Concert, with Dr. Steven Ward and Dr. Brandon Houghtalen as Conductors

Abilene Christian University

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THE ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

PRESENTS

ACU Bands In Concert

Dr. Steven Ward
&
Dr. Brandon Houghtalen

Conductors



Saturday, February 28, 2015

7:30 pm

Cullen Auditorium

Program

Concert Band

Requiem for a Hummingbird	Marc Mellits
Stargazing	Donald Erb
I. The Stars Come Out	
II. Comets, Meteors, Shooting Stars	
III. The Surface of the Sun	
The Machine Awakes	Steven Bryant
Prelude on a Gregorian Tune	David Maslanka
Variations on a Shaker Melody	Aaron Copland

Wind Ensemble

Overture to <i>Candide</i>	L. Bernstein/arr. Clare Grundman
Two American Dances:	
St. Louis Blues	W.C. Handy/arr. Brandon Houghtalen
Spoon River	Percy Grainger/ed. Carson & Naylor

Short Stories	Joel Puckett
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Part I:

1. Somewhere near the end
2. Introit
3. The Priests

Part II:

4. Recitative
5. Mother and child

Part III:

6. sonno agitato
7. The Bridge [cadenza]
8. Ma Fi

Permian Basin String Quartet

Program Notes

Requiem for a Hummingbird

Marc Mellits

Composer Marc Mellits is one of the leading American composers of his generation, enjoying hundreds of performances throughout the world every year. From Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, to prestigious music festivals in Europe and the US, Mellits' music is a constant mainstay on programs throughout the world. His duo “Black” alone has been performed nearly 1,000 times since its premiere. His unique musical style is an eclectic combination of driving rhythms, soaring lyricism, and colorful orchestrations that all combine to communicate directly with the listener. Mellits' music is often described as being visceral, making a deep connection with the audience. He started composing very early, and was writing piano music long before he started formal piano lessons at age 6. He went on to study at the Eastman School of Music, Yale School of Music, Cornell University, and Tanglewood. Mellits often is a miniaturist, composing works that are comprised of short, contrasting movements or sections. His music is eclectic, all-encompassing, colourful, and always has a sense of forward motion.

- Program note by Andrew Russo & Gerald Blackhammer

Stargazing

Donald Erb

Stargazing (composed in 1966) combines traditional and non-traditional elements with electronically produced sounds to uncover a new world of band sonorities. Each of its 3 movements concerns itself with exploring a different sound sphere. The 1st movement employs a quasi-aleatory technique to build tension through increasing density; the 2nd movement is a scintillating interplay of brief chromatic fragments; the 3rd movement throws bright stabs of light against an ominously rumbling background. The taped sounds add a unique dimension to the work.

Donald Erb was an important composer and teacher. He won numerous awards, including Ford, Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundation grants and two prizes from the National Council on the Arts. In 1968-69 he was composer-in-residence for the Dallas Symphony.

- Program note by the composer and Brandon Houghtalen

The Machine Awakes

Steven Bryant

The genre of wind band plus electronic sounds has evolved in the fifty years following the composition of *Stargazing*. Rather than a continuous sound played from a tape or CD, the electronic component of *The Machine Awakes* is controlled via an app. The composer writes of the music:

The Machine Awakes is the sound of something not human (but of humans hands) - something not entirely organic, but most definitely alive - waking up for the first time. From the opening swirling textures, we sense the first hesitant sparks of thought, attempting to find form and coherence. This new machine - sentient, aware - comes fully awake, possessed of emphatic self-determination and unfathomable purpose.

Prelude on a Gregorian Tune

David Maslanka

The tune which inspired the *Prelude on a Gregorian Tune* originated in the Liber Usualis, the traditional book of words and music for Christian services. The music is from a short Responsory.

Christ, Son of the Living God, Have mercy on us.

Prelude on a Gregorian Tune evokes the ancient Christian mysticism as found in the music and words of Gregorian chants. This mild and harmonious work is a non-sectarian piece, which emerges as a small ritornello form, ababa.

- Program note by by the composer

Variations on a Shaker Melody

Aaron Copland

One of Aaron Copland's most recognized works, *Variations on a Shaker Melody*, is an excerpt from his Pulitzer Prize winning ballet, *Appalachian Spring* (1944). This setting for concert band was completed by the composer during 1956 and premiered at Northwestern University on March 2, 1958. Copland selected the then obscure Shaker tune *Simple Gifts*, for his variations. The melody, dating from as early as 1848, appropriately depicts the Shaker culture and helped establish a period atmosphere. The unsung text, "Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free," was also relevant to the ballet's larger themes of peace, war, remembrance, and national identity.

- Program note by by Jacqueline Clarys

Overture to *Candide*

Leonard Bernstein/Clare Grundman

Candide was Leonard Bernstein's third Broadway musical, following *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. It opened in New York in 1956, but, unlike its predecessors, was not a commercial success. Adapted by Lillian Hellman from Voltaire's 18th-century satire on blind optimism, the story concerns a young man, Candide, who has been led by his tutor, Dr. Pangloss, to believe that everything is for the best “in this best of all possible worlds.” Taking with him his sweetheart, Conegonde, 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 Conegonde, stripped of his idealism. His ultimate emotional maturation concludes in the finale with “And let us try before we die/To make some sense of life./We're neither pure nor wise nor good;/We'll do the best we know.” The sparkling overture captures the frenetic activity of the operetta, with its twists and turns, along with Candide's simple honesty.

-Program note by Foothill Symphonic Winds

St. Louis Blues Spoon River

**W. C. Handy/arr. Brandon Houghtalen
Percy Grainger/ed. Carson & Naylor**

First published and performed in 1914, *The St. Louis Blues* is widely known as the first published blues. To this day, it remains a widely performed jazz standard. The arrangement performed today reflects the performance practice developed by the 369th Infantry Regiment Band led by James Reese Europe. The influence of Europe and his band (recorded in 1919 by Pathé Records after a wildly successful US tour) can be heard in many subsequent performances, including those by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and Bessie Smith. James Reese Europe is an important, though lesser known, figure in the development of jazz and American music in the early years of the 20th Century.

Percy Grainger's setting of the American fiddle tune “Spoon River” was begun in 1919 and was completed in 1929—but unfortunately the music was lost shortly after its premiere. Without referencing the original parts Glenn Cliffe Bainum created the popular arrangement that wind bands performed for decades. Thanks to the discovery of the manuscript parts, and a skillful performance edition by William S. Carson and Alan Naylor, this classic in the wind band repertoire has been restored to its original luster.

Grainger's innovative harmonic language and use of folk song is perfectly emblematic of the time period. The extended harmonies in *Spoon River* are clearly influenced by early jazz music that was popular (including the music of the above-mentioned James Reese Europe and W.C. Handy). Indeed, the pairing of these "Two American Dances" highlights the common musical threads inherent in each.

-Program note by Brandon Houghtalen

Short Stories

Joel Puckett

Named as one of National Public Radio's listeners' favorite composers under the age of 40, Joel Puckett is one of the most performed composers in America. Hailed by the *Washington Post* as "visionary," Mr. Puckett believes in the life-changing power of music to heal and provide comfort to those who need it. *Short Stories* is a string quartet concerto commissioned by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, The University of Michigan, The University of Texas, Northwestern University and the University of Colorado and dedicated to Kevin Gerald.

What makes the construct of the short story itself so unique among other literary devices is the demands placed on the author to create a meaningful narrative. They must describe the relationships between characters, present a conflict, and resolve it in a remarkably short span. It takes a deft writer to cleverly craft within these restrictions, and yet some have pushed the genre further by creating collections of stories that seem at first disparate, but eventually are revealed to be intertwined. Much like these painstakingly crafted works of literature, Joel Puckett's *Short Stories* is a study in structure. On the surface, it bears the appearance of eight vignettes strung together into a concerto for solo string quartet and wind ensemble. Upon listening, however, the work's movements reveal themselves as inextricably linked through a layered thematic language that plays out through a sort of "game of pairs."

The external movements of the work serve as a frame story, not unlike Chuck Palahniuk's novel *Haunted*, which the composer cites as an influential on the structure of the work. Between the external movements, Puckett presents three pairs of linked movements. Each of these sections highlights two of the solo voices, featured at the section's conclusion with a virtuosic duo cadenza. The final internal grouping—the sixth and seventh movements—takes the independent duo cadenzas and superimposes them. It is only at this climactic moment that we hear that the concerto's primary theme—the basis for both the first and last

movements—is the combination of the elements within these cadenzas. In a sense, the entire work evolves from the constituent solo playing of its stars.

The opening—amusingly titled “Somewhere near the end”—introduces the notion of pairs in its own way. There is diametric conflict between both the soloists and the ensemble as, until the end of the movement, the two groups play almost exclusively in isolation. The harmonic language likewise poses friction, first hinting at the unbridled optimism of D major, and almost immediately thereafter shattering it with a tempestuous dissonance of extended harmonies in G minor. The effect is that of a series of dramatic wailings that set the stage for the players.

The first internal section, comprising the movements “Introit” and “The Priests,” is based on ancient liturgical materials. The introit itself is a part of the Proper of the Catholic mass, and this placid movement also presents a part of the Mass’ Ordinary by way of a “Kyrie,” passed from instrument to instrument in the movement’s center. The dramatic beginning of “The Priests” is a stark contrast with its bold chorale scored solely for brass and saxophones, and the rhythmic ostinato from the low strings (“Regina Coeli”: a reference to the antiphon to the Virgin Mary). Complex mixed meters dominate the pulse as a punchy homophonic accompaniment supports the vivid rhythms of the soloists.

The contrasting middle pairing (“Recitative” and “mother and child”) has a basis in Baroque opera, modeling a recitative and aria. “Recitative” serves mostly as an introduction, with a sparse accompaniment of vibraphone, celesta, and harp. The opening of “mother and child” expands the instrumentation to include the woodwinds and horns, dancing about gracefully with a patient, yet lilting tempo. This middle section is the longest single segment of the piece, and harmonically the most static, as it floats past slowly in a cloudy, dreamlike E-flat major. The gentle caress of the violin duet is both captivating and endearing throughout.

The tonal center of E-flat remains for the sixth movement, but little else is held as the pleasant dream of the middle section is roused by “sonno agitato”—literally, “restless sleep.” This movement, solely for the ripieno, harkens back to the most tumultuous moments of the first movement. The pulse quickens unrelentingly and the ensemble spills over, out of control, into “The Bridge,” a cadenza for the concertino. Here the previous duo cadenzas are pressed into conflict with each other in a manner that seems incompatible and dissonant. As the soloists play

together, however, the argument between them is sated and they begin to find a synergy in their florid and virtuosic variations. The energetic realization of the work's opening motive ushers in the ebullient "Ma Fin" (a nod to Machaut's rondeau "Ma fin est mon commencement"—literally, "my beginning is my end"). This finale starts with a return to the first movement, but this time, the soloists come together as one and, with a battering of thirty-second notes, breaks through the restlessness of the ensemble and forces them back on track into the brilliant opening, finally moving together toward their happily ever afters.

-Program note by Jacob Wallace

"Danza Final" from *Estancia* Alberto Ginastera/arr. David John

Much of Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera's music draws inspiration from folklore. The ballet *Estancia* was commissioned in 1941 for the American Ballet Caravan, but the troupe subsequently disbanded and the work was not performed as a full ballet until 1952. In the meantime, Ginastera extracted a four-movement suite that was premiered by the Teatro Colon Orchestra in 1943. It quickly became well known as orchestra piece and also as a band transcription, played from manuscript by the U.S. Navy Band.

Estancia is the Argentine word for "ranch," and the work reflects many aspects of Argentine ranch life. As the story unfolds, a city boy finds difficulty in winning a ranch girl who considers him a weakling and unable to compete with the athletic *gauchos* on the ranch. The city boy is finally successful in the courtship through a series of events in which he demonstrates that he can emerge victorious in the *gaucho* environment. The final dance is a malambo, which is a lively, exciting, and often lengthy dance tournament between two *gauchos*.

Concert Band

Flute

Lorrie Moya
Sarah Gonzalez
Brittany Burks
Catherine Longest
Rachel Murphy
Kittie Sandlin
Sea Shim
Alicia Clark

Oboe

Kaitlyn Tudor
Bridget Glass

Clarinet

Paige Foster
Tamika Braye
Celicia Henderson
Madison Pamplin
Ruth Martin
Phoebe Head
Kelsey Tykal
Glory Woods

Bass Clarinet

Elizabeth Chellette
Angela Hall
Brianna Rideout

Bassoon

Joram Alford

Alto Saxophone

Taylor Humphrey
Luke Proctor
Nikki Settlemyre
Cole Drew

Tenor Saxophone

Dakota Mathews

Bari Saxophone

Trevor Wyatt

Trumpet

Josh Smith
Bryan Landis
Austin Welborn
Andrew Thompkins
Heather Bishop
Jesse McGaha
James Spears
Anthony Brown
Raul Quintanilla Jr.

Horn

Caitlin Norquist
Caitlin Kohler

Trombone

Noah Hancock
Alyssa Ross
Benjamin Johnston
Tim Kang
Marc Gutierrez,
bass

Euphonium

Stephanie Puga
Zach Beggs
Neander Howard II

Tuba

Marvin Estes
Cooper Johnson
Troy Spears

Percussion

Eric Ambrose
Seth Carson
Ethan Hernandez
Angelique Kimble

Wind Ensemble

Flute

Michelle Dulock
Hannah Hamilton
Bre Heinrich
Jennifer Lovett*
Dakotah Martinez
Lauren Peters
Andrea Trujillo

Oboe

Abby Alford*
Megan Cromis
Parker Gordon

Clarinet

Enrique Barrera
Kaitlin Bush
Dayna Coppedge*
Lizzie Dunham
Jennifer Magill
James Loera
Ali Ryan
Danna Swearingen

Bass Clarinet

Chandler Amador*
Megan Cooper
Shannon Rohde

Bassoon

Janelle Ott#
Rachel Sakakeeny

Alto Saxophone

Abigail Kellogg*
Mary Potts*

Tenor Saxophone

Anna Lawson

Bari Saxophone

James Nix

Piano

Robert Hull

Harp

Helen Cooley+

Trumpet

Cedric Dario
Grayson Hancock
Andrew Jolliffe
Andrew Penney*
Zach Miller
Jordan Morris

Horn

Daniel Archer*
Brennan Ballew
Justin Rangel
Cole Spears

Trombone

Geoffrey Driggers*
Ben Kimble
Noah Kitts

Bass Trombone

George Galindo
Adam Lubbers

Euphonium

Garrett Holland*
Connor Smith

Tuba

Taylor Lovett*
Brendan Phillips

String Bass

Gao Chatchawarat

Percussion

Eric Ambrose
Patrick Cason
Jonathan Dannheim
Robert Herrera
Travis Houy
Austin Lemmons*

*Principal
#ACU Faculty
+Guest Musician

Guest Artists

The Permian Basin String Quartet



The Permian Basin String Quartet is the resident string quartet of the Midland-Odessa Symphony & Chorale, and is comprised of the principal string players of the orchestra. The quartet members have developed a loyal audience and a reputation as a leading ensemble in the Permian Basin and throughout the region. John Madura, violin; Alex Norris, violin; Melissa Madura, viola; Amy Huzjak, cello.

Wind Ensemble Tour Itinerary

Frenship High School

Monday, March 2 – 9:00 am
Wolfforth, TX

Lubbock Christian School

Monday, March 2 – 3:15 pm
Lubbock, TX

Lee High School

Tuesday, March 3 – 8:45 am
Midland, TX

Coronado High School

Tuesday, March 3 – 2:30 pm
Lubbock, TX

Upcoming Events

Recital: Julie Brinkman, mezzo-soprano	March 22, 2:00 pm Recital Hall
ACU Opera: Magic Flute	March 26, 7:30 pm March 28, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
University Chorale and Chamber Singers	March 31, 7:30 pm Chapel on the Hill
ACU Opera: Violet	April 10, 7:30 pm April 11, 2:30 pm Recital Hall
Percussion Ensemble Concert	April 13, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
ACU Choirs with the Abilene Philharmonic Beethoven Symphony No. 9	April 18, 7:30 pm Abilene Civic Center
Jazz Ensemble Concert	April 21, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Bands Concert	April 24, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Orchestra Concert	April 28, 7:30 pm Cullen Auditorium
Choirs Concert	April 30, 7:30 pm Recital Hall

