

Washington University Wind Ensemble

Chris Becker, conductor

Program

Percussion Ensemble

Other Kinds (2020)

Josh Turner
(b. 1988)

Wind Ensemble

Until the Scars (2014/2019)

John Mackey
(b. 1973)

Suite Dreams (2007)

Steven Bryant
(b. 1972)

Turkey in the Straw (2008)

Michael Markowski
(b. 1986)

Russian Christmas Music (1944)

Alfred Reed
(1921 - 2005)

Folk Dances (1942/1979)

Dimitri Shostakovich
(1906 - 1975)
arr. Frank Erickson
(1923 - 1996)

Program Notes

The writing process for **Other Kinds** began without a theme in mind. Shortly into the piece, however, ideas on the intangible nature of air began to insist their way into the process. In Plato's *Timaeus*, the philosopher speculates on the nature of our world through the four classical elements: earth, air, fire, and water. When speaking of air, Plato writes that "there is the brightest variety which we call aether, the muddiest which we call mist and darkness, and other kinds for which we have no name." The piece was written for and premiered by the Choctaw High School 2019 senior percussion class.

-Note from the composer

Until the Scars is an adaptation of the first movement of *Wine-Dark Sea: Symphony for Band*, a work based on the ancient story of *The Odyssey* by Homer.

After ten years of bloody siege, the Trojan War was won because of Odysseus' gambit: A horse full of soldiers, disguised as an offering. The people of Troy took it in as a trophy, and were slaughtered. Odysseus gave the Greeks victory, and they left the alien shores for home. But Odysseus' journey would take as long as the war itself. Homer called the ocean on which Odysseus sailed a wine-dark sea, and for the Greek king it was as murky and disorienting as its name; he would not find his way across it without first losing himself.

In this section of the story, Odysseus, having filled his ship with the spoils of war, leaves for home, but he carried another, more dangerous, cargo: pride. This movement opens with his triumphal march, and continues as he and his crew maraud through every port of call on their way home.

-Note from the publisher

Suite Dreams is the fourth and final(?) of my *Parody Suite* pieces. Unlike the others (*Chester Leaps In*, *ImPercynations*, and *MetaMarch*), it's not intentionally funny and tongue-in-cheek in character. Rather, it's a dream-like fantasia based on Holst's *First Suite in E-flat*. The motivic material is drawn from the inverted *Chaconne* melody in Mvt. I and from Mvt. III.

-Note from the composer

We all know the melody, even if not by name. But for me, **Turkey in the Straw** is nostalgic, beckoning back to a childhood where grandma and grandpa would sit me in front of their TV with a bowl of orange Jell-O (in a small room papered wall-to-wall with decorative clowns), to watch old-time cartoons on VHS. From its early days in vaudeville to its silver-screen premiere in Disney's cartoon *Steamboat Willie* (1928), the tune has become a staple of Americana (and my favorite cartoons).

Most arrangements stay true to the song's Southern roots. But for a contemporary ensemble such as the concert band, I wanted my arrangement to be somewhat lvesian, and, as colleagues have described it, closer to Quirky in the Straw. Above all, I wanted this piece to resemble classic cartoon scoring. Rather than simply arranging the brief melody in a handful of contrasting styles (as

is typical of theme-and-variations), the form instead takes on an almost storytelling narrative or three-act structure.

Each successive treatment of the melody increases in orchestration and contrapuntal complexity, starting with the simplest orchestration within the first 35 measures. The melody quickly modulates, twists and turns, loses itself and finds itself in musical vignettes (already in development by measure 36). Each new scene seems to bring its own musical plot, orchestrational characterization, and many a custard pie in the face.


-Note from the composer

Originally written in November 1944, **Russian Christmas Music** was first performed in December of that year at a special concert in Denver, Colorado, by a select group of musicians from five of the leading service bands stationed in that area. Two years later the music was revised and somewhat enlarged, and in that form was one of the three prize-winning works in the 1947 Columbia University contest for new serious music for symphonic band. First performances of this second version subsequently took place in 1948: the first by the Juilliard Band under Donald I. Moore, and the second by the Syracuse University Symphonic Band under Harwood Simmons, to whom the work was dedicated. Since then this music, although not previously published, has remained in the repertory of the concert band consistently and has established the composer as one of the most important writers for the contemporary band or wind ensemble.

This published edition represents a thorough revision of the entire work by the composer in keeping with the developing instrumentation of the serious band or wind ensemble. It incorporates all of the many changes that have taken place in this area during the past years. Although the music is essentially the same, the instrumentation has been completely reworked throughout to achieve even greater clarity of texture and the utmost sonority possible. Thus we attain a degree of differentiation in the brass choirs that has come to be an accepted characteristic of the contemporary attitude toward the large-scale wind-brass-percussion ensemble.

An ancient Russian Christmas carol ("Carol of the Little Russian Children"), together with a good deal of original material and some motivic elements derived from the liturgical music of the Eastern Orthodox Church, forms the basis for this musical impression of Old Russia during the jubilant Christmas season. Although cast in the form of a single, continuous movement, four distinct sections may be easily recognized, which the composer originally subtitled "Children's Carol," "Antiphonal Chant," "Village Song," and the closing "Cathedral Chorus." All of the resources of the modern, integrated symphonic band are drawn upon to create an almost overwhelming sound picture of tone color, power, and sonority.

-Note from the score



Shostakovich wrote the suite Op. 63, *Native Leningrad*, in 1942 as a tribute to the courage of the citizens of Leningrad. This suite was culled from the incidental music for a "concert play spectacle" entitled *Native Country* or *Motherland*. It was scored for tenor and bass soloists, choir and orchestra, and was premiered on November 7, 1942, at the Dzerzhinsky Central Club.

The suite has four movements: *Overture – October 1917*, *Song of the Victorious October* (Song of the River Neva), *Youth Dance* (Song of the Sailors), and *Song of Leningrad*. The *Youth Dance* is the movement transcribed as **Folk Dances**. It first received this name when transcribed for piano by Lev Solin. The name stuck when retranscribed for military band by M. Vakhutinsky.

While the melodies used in *Youth Dance* are reminiscent of folk tunes, Shostakovich's work is original. Considering the programmatic nature of the work, it is justifiable to assume Shostakovich wished to evoke an overt Russian sentiment in the same way that Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E-flat* and Gordon Jacob's *An Original Suite* sound and feel distinctly British.

-Note from State University of New York, Potsdam



Wind Ensemble

Flute

Jimin Lee (Undeclared, Seoul, South Korea)
Mel Mallard (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Orlando, FL)
Yael Shaw (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology and Marketing, Glencoe, IL)
Jason Tung (Chemistry, Crown Point, IN)
Angelica Han (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Beijing, China)
Riya Pant (Applied Math and Global Studies, Atlanta, GA)
Dalia Heller (Undeclared, Buffalo Grove, IL)

Oboe

Emmet Klein (Psychological & Brain Sciences and Classics, Sudbury, MA)
Ethan Penn (Statistics, Chicago, IL)
Eduard Toderescu (Biological Anthropology, Sedalia, MO)
Thayne Tsuneoka (Neuroscience, Honolulu, HI)

Bassoon

Peg Bumb (Community Member, St. Louis, MO)
Jeff Panhorst (Community Member, St. Louis, MO)

Clarinet

Eric Miao (Biochemistry, Modesto, CA)
Sam Bernstein (Sociology, St. Louis, MO)
Allie Ollila (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology: Cognitive Neuroscience, Norwalk, IA)
Q Negrete (Cognitive Neuroscience, Morgan Hill, CA)
Yu-Liang Yeh (Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences PhD, Kaohsiung, Taiwan)
Tyler Teague (Mechanical Engineering, Eureka, MO)
Julia Tompkins (Systems Engineering, Westfield, NJ)
Connor Gusky (Biology: Neuroscience, St. Louis, MO)
Jean Li (Genomics and Computational Biology, Overland Park, KS)
Kelly Dale, E-flat (Community Member, St. Charles, MO)

Bass Clarinet

Grayce Cooper (Biology and Computer Science, Laurel, MD)
Dante Nicotera (MD Program (M2), Hanover, MA)

Saxophones

Trevor Schultz, alto (Master of Science: Biostatistics & Data Science, Woodbridge, CT)
Brett Carnes, alto (Physics, Springfield, MO)
Evan Xiao, alto (Biology, Broken Arrow, OK)
Leon Huang, alto (Undeclared, Zheng Zhou, Henan, China)
Brianna Duhart, tenor (Biomedical Engineering, Bartlett, TN)
Carter Wiese, baritone (Undeclared, Austin, TX)

Wind Ensemble Cont.

Trumpet

Gabi Grasso (Psychology and Music, San Diego, CA)
Ankit Chhajer (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Bolingbrook, IL)
Joseph Mosby (Undeclared, Nashville, TN)
Grace Tillman (Ancient Studies and Political Science, Strafford, MO)
Jake Tillman (Economics, Strafford, MO)
Zachary Wen (Business and Computer Science, Beijing, China)
Juliet Ainsley (Undeclared, Wilmette, IL)
Seth Peters (Mechanical Engineering, Barnhart, MO)

French Horn

Ceresa Munjak-Khoury (Cognitive Neuroscience, Kansas City, MO)
Grace Teuscher (Linguistics, Granger, IN)
Riley Novak (Global Studies and Spanish, Phoenix, AZ)

Trombone

Sean Wang (Biochemistry, Pleasanton, CA)
Joshua Adams (Community Member, St. Louis, MO)
Henry Wasserman, bass (Biochemistry, Concord, MA)

Euphonium

Jared May (Physics PhD, Grove City, OH)

Tuba

Sriharsha Gonuguntla (Biology, Ballwin, MO)
Jamie Nicholson (Economics & Strategy, Libertyville, IL)

Bass

Melissa Parkinson (Environmental Science and Secondary Education, Downers Grove, IL)

Percussion

Kobe Hayes (Communication Design, Gulfport, MS)
Maya Irvine (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Camdenton, MO)
Colleen McDermott (Environmental Analysis, Collegeville, PA)
Jake Page (Chemistry, St. Louis, MO)
Jacob Brewer (Community Member, St. Louis, MO)
Jessica Flannigan (WashU Staff, St. Charles, MO)
Neil Flannigan (Community Member, St. Charles, MO)

Director



Chris Becker is the Director of the Wind Ensemble and the Jazz Bands at Washington University in St. Louis, and serves as the director of winds and percussion. Mr. Becker graduated from the University of Missouri - Kansas City Conservatory of Music "With Distinction" in 1977, receiving the Bachelor of Music Education Degree, and earned a Master of Arts in Education from Lindenwood University.

Mr. Becker has taught instrumental music in Missouri for 46 years from the elementary to the university level. In June 2017, he retired as Director of Bands at Parkway South High School, after serving for 36 years in the Parkway School District (St. Louis County, Missouri). During his tenure there, he directed Marching Bands, Symphonic Bands, Jazz Bands, and all other related band activities.

In addition, he is the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Manchester Community Band, a highly successful ensemble founded ten years ago and enthusiastically received by the residents of Manchester. Mr. Becker has also been a frequent guest conductor for both concert bands and jazz bands in Missouri and Illinois.

Mr. Becker has served as the Jazz Vice President for the Missouri Music Educators Association, the first educator to hold that position after it was established as a part of the MMEA Board. Mr. Becker is a Past President of the Missouri unit of the International Association of Jazz Educators. During his term he helped clarify the mission and goals of the unit, and endeavored to reach out to music educators, those in the music industry, and professional players to create a broader base of support for jazz education. Becker has also served as Jazz Vice President for the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association. Becker plays the trumpet professionally with a variety of ensembles in the St. Louis area, and has taught trumpet privately in both the Kansas City and St. Louis areas.

Mr. Becker is a member of the National Association for Music Education, the Missouri Music Educators Association, the Missouri Association for Jazz Education, the Missouri Band Masters Association, and Phi Beta Mu Band Directors Fraternity. He was named "Charles Emmons Outstanding Band Director of the Year" by Phi Beta Mu in January 1999. He was nominated numerous times for the Pillar of Parkway Award, which recognizes commitment and dedication for work in the Parkway School District, and was awarded a Pillar of Parkway in April 2016. Mr. Becker was honored for his distinguished career by the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association in January 2018, and named to their Hall of Fame.

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