

WUSTLMUSIC

Thursday, February 22, 2024 - 7:30 P.M.
E. Desmond Lee Concert Hall, 560 Music Center

Washington University Wind Ensemble

Chris Becker, conductor

Program

Percussion Ensemble

"Spice Runner" from *Quartets that Travel* (2022)

Jessica Flannigan
(b. 1988)

Wind Ensemble

Overture in B-flat (1966)

Cesar Giovannini
(1925 - 2017)
arr. Wayne Robinson

The Thunderer (1889)

John Philip Sousa
(1854 - 1932)

Symphony in Themes of John Philip Sousa (1991)
II. *After the Thunderer*

Ira Hearshen
(b. 1948)

Tight Squeeze (2012)

Alex Shapiro
(b. 1962)

Slavonic Dances (1878/1984)

Antonín Dvořák
(1841 - 1904)
trans. James Curnow

Program Notes

Each summer, my husband and I drive across the country with our children, visiting national parks and spending all our time outdoors. I often think of how great it would be to play music amidst these incredible landscapes, but loading a marimba or drumset into the car isn't always practical. **Quartets that Travel** is a collection of 13 short quartets for small auxiliary percussion where all instruments can be carried in one trip, and no sticks or mallets are required. The sequence of this set progresses from basic techniques through more advanced articulations and structure.

-Note from the composer

Overture in B-flat is a spirited composition written in a contemporary manner and in one tempo throughout. The opening sounds are those of energetic brass fanfares answered by legato woodwind passages. This is followed by a brief developmental section ending in transitional material which leads to the first thematic statement.

-Note from Program Notes for Band

Other than the fact that Sousa's "thunderer" was undoubtedly a Mason, this identity has never been revealed. **The Thunderer** march was dedicated to Columbia Commandery No. 2, Knights Templar, of Washington, D.C., and was composed on the occasion of the Twenty-fourth Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment. The conclave was held in October 1889, and was sponsored by Columbia Commandery No. 2. Sousa had been "knighted" in that organization three years earlier.

The Thunderer was Mrs. John Phillip Sousa's favorite march. Their daughter Helen revealed this, who had surmised that *The Thunderer* might have been her father's salute to the *London Times*, which was known as the "thunderer." It was since then determined that Sousa probably had no association with the newspaper at that time, however. The "thunderer" might have been one of the ones in charge of making arrangements for the 1889 conclave — in particular Myron M. Parker, who worked tirelessly to make the event the spectacular success that it was.

In the second section of the march, Sousa included an adaptation of earlier trumpet and drum piece, *Here's to Your Health, Sir!*

-Note from John Philip Sousa: A Descriptive Catalog of His Works

Symphony on Themes of John Philip Sousa, Movement II: After The Thunderer is dedicated to Lt. Col. Lowell E. Graham.

Stirred and fascinated by the music of John Philip Sousa since childhood, I still get a chill upon hearing the piccolo obligato in the trio of *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. While the thought of transforming popular march music into a legitimate piece for concert stage had a lot of intellectual appeal, I figured that any attempt I made to pay homage to Sousa would be misunderstood. But

artistic challenge won out and I started working on what was to become the second movement of the symphony in the winter of 1990-1991. I began this piece by taking the "trio" theme of the march *The Thunderer*, slowing it down to a tempo of 48 beats per minute and casting it in the style of the Finale of Mahler's *Third Symphony*.

From the audience reaction to the first performance of (after) *The Thunderer*, I knew I was involved with something unusual in the realm of band music. The weight of the piece and its eight-minute time performance meant that the idea of a light concert suite of four to six movements as originally commissioned was out of the question. It was at this time I realized that I had the beginning of a full-scale symphony in both length and depth.


I began to envision this work as a four-movement symphony classically constructed. It would have a first movement written in "sonata-allegro" form, a slow movement, a scherzo, and a finale. Each of the four sections would be based on a different Sousa march and the outer movements must be at least twice as long as the internal two so that the work would have integrity of true symphonic form.

There are two problems that had to be solved: each movement had to be playable as a separate piece, and there needed to be some unifying melodic material that could bring four different Sousa marches together. I found the solution in Sousa's scores. There was a four-note melodic fragment common to virtually every tune I wanted to use, the same four notes that begin the "Dies Irae" portion of the Catholic Requiem Mass. The intervals are a minor second down, a minor second up, followed by a minor third down. In the key of C Major or A minor, these notes would be C-B-C-A. This melodic motive occurs in the trios of both *Hands Across the Sea* and *Washington Post* as well as in the introduction to *Fairest of the Fair*. In fact, these are the first four notes one hears in *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.

I used this four-note Sousa "signature" to introduce and end the symphony, in the construction of the scherzo, and to create the finale. The coda of the last movement became extended as a prologue to the entire symphony preceding the first movement. Thus, the symphony became a cyclical work unified in its construction, with each movement playable as a separate entity.

Sousa's melodies are all strong and of a wide variety of architectural styles. They range from complex (*Hands Across the Sea*), to simple (*Washington Post*), and are all stirring, intense, and above all, really fun to listen to. This is what makes Sousa's music "classic." I hope listeners have as much of an adventure listening to this as I did putting it together.

-Note from the composer



From the acclaimed composer of *Paper Cut*, Alex Shapiro, this unique, high-energy work could be described by the following: imagine Arnold Schoenberg, Henry Mancini, and Charlie Parker walking into a dance club in Havana, and staying for three minutes. **Tight Squeeze** ventures into new territory as it explores chromaticism and syncopation against a prerecorded percussion groove. The result is the repertoire's first electroacoustic twelve-tone techno Latin bebop band piece! Okay, maybe Schoenberg did all that first, but it never sounded quite like this!

-Note from publisher

Five Dances from **Slavonic Dances** was arranged by James Curnow and consists of Dances 1, 2, 8, 4, and 3 (in that order) from Dvořák's original work. These pieces display brilliantly suspenseful changes in both tempo and dynamics that exhibit the joyfulness of the Slavic soul. This remarkable transcription of Dvořák's dances into the wind band's voice captures all of the magic of the orchestral transcription, while highlighting sonorities unique to the symphonic band.

-Note from the United States Marine Band



Wind Ensemble

Flute

Lillie Kang (Global Public Health, Louisville, KY)

Jimin Lee (Data Science, South Korea)

Priya Ramotar (Biology, Frisco, TX)

Angelica Han (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology: Cognitive Neuroscience, Beijing, China)

Olivia Lee (English, Oak Park, IL)

Jason Tung (Chemistry, Crown Point, IN)

Alexa Wienhoff (Chemical Engineering, Springfield, IL)

Yael Shaw (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology and Marketing, Glencoe, IL)

Mel Mallard (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Apopka, FL)

Dalia Heller (History, Buffalo Grove, IL)

Megana Paidela (Environmental Biology, Springfield, IL)

Tanvi Gorre (Computational Biology, Westport, CT)

Riya Pant (Applied Mathematics and Economics & Strategy, Atlanta, GA)

Cherie Liu (Anthropology: Global Health and Environment, Overland Park, KS)

Oboe

Ethan Penn (Statistics, Glenview, IL)

Michelle Zhang (Computer Science and Music, Ballwin, MO)

Bassoon

Lucas Neres (Undeclared, Winter Haven, FL)

Haley Jetter (Neurosciences (PhD), East Windsor, New Jersey)

Clarinet

Eric Miao (Biology, Modesto, CA)

Andrea Carbonell (Chemical Engineering, Fort Lauderdale, FL)

Felix Guo (Environmental Biology, Lawrence, KS)

Q Negrete (Psychological & Brain Sciences, Morgan Hill, CA)

Abby Matthews (Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, Cartersville, GA)

Julia Tompkins (Systems Engineering, Westfield, NJ)

Tyler Teague (Mechanical Engineering, Eureka, MO)

Connor Gusky (Biology: Neuroscience, Psychological & Brain Sciences, St. Louis, MO)

Kelly Dale, E-flat (Community Member)

Bass Clarinet

Grayce Cooper (Design, Laurel, MD)

Saxophones

Brett Carnes, alto (Physics, Springfield, MO)

Sarah Baek, alto (Studio Art, Atlanta, GA)

Steven Chi, alto (Biochemistry, North Huntingdon, PA)

Matthew Yu, alto (Physics, Sunnyvale, CA)

Grant McIntyre, tenor (Physics and Mathematics, Darien, CT)

Connor Higano, bari (Mathematics and Finance, Wildwood, MO)

Wind Ensemble Cont.

Trumpet

Gabi Grasso (Psychology and Music, San Diego, CA)

Ankit Chhajed (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, Bolingbrook, IL)

Juliet Ainsley (Environmental Science; Anthropology: Global Health and the Environment, Wilmette, IL)

Jake Tillman (Economics, Strafford, MO)

Nathan Pravda (Physics, Natick, MA)

Seth Peters (Mechanical Engineering, Barnhart, MO)

French Horn

Ceresa Munjak-Khoury (Cognitive Neuroscience, Kansas City, MO)

Ethan Holtzman (Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology, St. Louis, MO)

Grace Teuscher (WashU Alum, South Bend, IN)

Will Corbin (Classics, Shaker Hts, OH)

Trombone

Sean Wang (Biochemistry, Pleasanton, CA)

Julian Mitchell (Biology, O'Fallon, IL)

Henry Wasserman, bass (Biochemistry, Concord, MA)

Euphonium

Grace Moore (Neurosciences (PhD), Keller, TX)

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 (Design, Gulfport, MS)

Maya Irvine (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Camdenton, MO)

Phoenix Jarosz (Computer Science and Mathematics, O'Fallon, MO)

Jake Page (Biochemistry, St. Louis, MO)

Jessica Flannigan (WashU Staff)

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, the College Band Directors National 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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