

concert program notes...

***An Irish Suite for Band* by Charles Richard Spinney**

Mvt. I *As I Roved Out*

Numerous folk songs have dealt with the old and popular theme of disillusioned love. The lyrics of this song tell the sad story of a young girl overcome by the romantic appeal of a roving soldier.

Mvt. III *Johnny, I Hardly Knew You*

It may come as a surprise to learn that a melody so “American” as “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” originally told the tragic story of an Irish boy returning broken and disfigured from some long forgotten war.

***John Williams: Movie Adventures* by John Williams arranged by Michael Sweeney**

In 1958, the silver screen was introduced to who would become the most popular film composer ever, John Williams. Working with great directors, such as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and Oliver Stone, his music has captured our hearts, music that tells its own story. In 1977, John Williams composed the music for Star Wars, a score that saw the return of symphonic music to the big screen and changed the film music industry forever.

In this carefully crafted medley by ASCAP award-winning composer Michael Sweeney, several of Williams’ most popular film themes are woven together into an exciting work for wind band, including music from Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace, E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial, and Jurassic Park.

***Old Churches* by Michael Colgrass**

Born in Chicago in 1932, Michael Colgrass grew up in Brookfield, IL. He was first drawn to music when he saw drummer Ray Bauduc in a movie playing Big Noise from Winnetka with the Bob Crosby Band. Colgrass went on to study classical music at the University of Illinois during the day, but still played jazz six nights a week. After college, he spent twenty-one months as a timpanist in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Stuttgart, Germany, then moved to New York City, where he continued playing and composing in both jazz and classical arenas. Today, Colgrass lives with his wife in Toronto and works as a composer, writer and lecturer.

Old Churches is one of the most challenging pieces he can remember writing. His goal was to create music that was interesting, expressive, and challenging, yet playable by students in the early stages of performing on their instruments and who are also unfamiliar with modern music techniques. *Old Churches* uses Gregorian chant to create a slightly mysterious monastery scene filled with the prayers and chanting of monks in an old church. Gregorian chant is ancient church music and that has been in existence for over 1500 years. The chant unfolds through call and response patterns. One monk intones a musical idea, and then the rest of the monks respond by singing back. This musical conversation continues throughout the piece, with the exception of a few brief interruptions. Perhaps they are the quiet comments church visitors make to one another.

***Wingspan* by John David Hazlett**

Wingspan takes its name and inspiration from the expansiveness of a bird or airplane in majestic flight. The music is expansive in nature and builds upon an opening three note motive in the solo trumpet but has moments of contemplative and reverential quality. Beginning with a solo trumpet, reminiscent of Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*, the work utilizes many short motives in the upper woodwinds contrasted against sustained melodic lines in the brass. The work comes to an exciting and boisterous close after one last moment of contemplative quality, this time accompanied by a percussion roll, simulating the final moment on the ground before taking flight.

***On an American Spiritual* by David Holsinger**

David R. Holsinger was born on December 26, 1945, in Hardin, Missouri. He was educated at Central Methodist College, Fayette, Missouri, Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg, and the University of Kansas, Lawrence. His primary composition study has been with Donald Bohlen at Central Missouri State and Charles Hoag at the University of Kansas. In 1999, following 15 years of service as music minister, worship leader, and composer in residence to Shady Grove Church in Grand Prairie, Texas, he joined the School of Music faculty at Lee University, Cleveland, Tennessee, as Conductor of the Lee University Wind Ensemble. Holsinger’s duties include teaching advanced instrumental conducting and composition.

In Holsinger's Hymnsong Series, the listener may notice that *On an American Spiritual* is a surprising departure from his previous hymnsong compositions. We expect the plaintive opening ("Were you there when they crucified my Lord? . . .") and majestic closing portions ("Were you there when He rose up from the dead? . . ."), but the chaotic, brutal nature of the center section would seem greatly out of place until one reminds oneself of the lyrics of this Easter lament, where the center verses recount how they nailed Him to a tree and laid Him in the grave. With this in mind, we realize that Holsinger has composed a variation very dependent on extramusical events (the traditional verses) for inspiration and understanding.

***Irish Tune from County Derry* by Percy Aldridge Grainger**

The son of an architect in Australia, Percy Aldridge Grainger was a precocious pianist. He gave a series of concerts at the age of twelve, the proceeds from which enabled him to study at Frankfurt for six years. After this he began his European career as a concert pianist, settling in London in 1901. He came to the United States in 1915 and became a United States citizen in 1919. It was during his stay in England that he became passionately involved in collecting and arranging folk songs and country dances. Grainger was a picturesque nationalist who tried to retain the original flavor of British folk songs and their singers by strictly observing their peculiarities of performance, such as varying beat lengths and the use of techniques such as parallelism.

A cornerstone of the wind band repertoire, *Irish Tune from County Derry* is based on a tune collected by Miss J. Ross of New Town, Limavady, County Derry, Ireland, and published in 1885. The original setting was an *a capella* version for mixed voices, which was much admired by Edward Grieg, with whom Grainger developed a strong friendship. Grainger's knowledge of instrumental voicings lends richness to the sound and a blending of the interwoven melodies. This tune is familiar to many of us as "Danny Boy."

***A Spider Suite* by John David Hazlett**

Many things come to mind when one mentions spiders. There is a strong emotional tie to these eight-legged creatures. A Spider Suite is designed to stir these thoughts and emotions in the listener's mind. Here is the narrative that perhaps may help you understand the thoughts and sequence of events behind the music:

The Spider makes its appearance in the corner of the room; moving quickly, yet sometimes slowly, the spider explores other areas of the room. Next, the spider is seen up close; bulging, black, beady eyes and all. The spider has found an appropriate spot to begin spinning her web, very slowly at first. The spider takes great care and pride in spinning the web. This task is an arduous one, labored, and toiled.

Finally, the web is complete. The web is an impressive and beautiful creation, yet one cannot forget it is really a killing machine. We realize the spider can be a bit clumsy and falls halfway down towards the ground, yet the spider makes it back up quite easily and quickly. Finally, the spider eyes its prey. The spider and the prey begin a dance of death; eventually the spider sinks its teeth into its meal.

***Clowns* by Philip Parker**

Philip Parker (b. 1953) is Associate Professor of Music at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, AR, where he has been a member of the faculty for twenty-three years. He received degrees from Indiana University and Wichita State University where he studied composition under Walter Mays. He is a past recipient of an Arkansas Arts Council Fellowship for outstanding achievement in composition and has numerous publications for a variety of media to his credit. Two of his compositions for flute were winners in the National Flute Association contest (1996).

As the title suggests, *Clowns* is a piece in the style of a gallop that depicts the frantic pace of clowns running around performing their zany antics at the circus. While the piece uses a vague tonal center in B-flat, the freely tonal melodies and harmonies are as unpredictable as the clowns themselves.