

**Alfred Reed (1921-2005)**  
***A Jubilant Overture (1970)***

We open this afternoon's program with Alfred Reed's exuberant *A Jubilant Overture*. This piece is cast in traditional three-part overture form. It begins with a rousing allegro con brio statement of three related themes in quick succession. A broad, singing middle section derived from one of the opening themes follows. The music then returns to its original tempo and mood, plunging on to a brilliant coda.

Alfred Reed was born in Manhattan and considered himself to be a native New Yorker. In 1953, while completing his degree work at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Reed became conductor of the Baylor Symphony Orchestra. His Masters thesis was the *Rhapsody for Viola and Orchestra*, which later was to win the *Luria Prize*. During his two years at Baylor, he also became interested in the problems of educational music at all levels, especially in the development of repertoire materials for school bands, orchestras, and choruses. This led, in 1955, to his accepting the post of editor in a major publishing firm in New York.

In 1966 he left this post to join the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Miami (FL), holding a joint appointment in the Theory-Composition and Music Education departments, and to develop the unique Music Industry degree program at that institution, of which he became director.

Reed has composed over 250 published works for concert band, wind ensemble, orchestra, chorus, and various smaller chamber music groups, many of which have been on the required performance lists in this country for several decades. Recently, the Metropolitan Wind Symphony has performed Reed's *A Russian Christmas Music*, and *El Camino Real*.

**Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)**  
***Equus (2000)***

Eric Whitacre has achieved global fame, not only for his beautifully-crafted music, but more intriguingly for his pioneering use of social media to bring people from over fifty countries together to sing in the project known as the Virtual Choir. The concept started when Whitacre recorded a video of himself conducting his piece *Lux Aurumque* and solicited video submissions of people singing along to it. The videos were edited and compiled to create the Virtual Choir 1.0. A broader effort to recruit more participants from more countries resulted in the release in 2011 of the Virtual Choir 2.0. Eric just completed his third virtual choir offering: *Water Night* which was released this past spring. All Virtual Choir videos are easily found on YouTube.

Eric Whitacre received his Master's degree from the Julliard School in New York City and studied composition with Pulitzer Prize and Oscar-winning composer, John Corigliano. Much of Whitacre's success has been from the attention given to his stirring choral music, but the composer has also written exciting original music for winds. The Metropolitan Wind Symphony recently has performed two of Whitacre's works: *October* and *Ghost Train Trilogy*.

This 2000 wind work was commissioned by Gary Green for the wind ensemble at the University of Miami. The composer writes:

My great friend and fellow Juilliard composer Steven Bryant was visiting me in Los Angeles, and as I had just bought a new computer I was throwing out old sequencer files, most of them sketches and improvisational ideas. As I played one section Steve dashed into the room and the following conversation ensued:

Steve: "What was that!?!"

Me: "Just an old idea I'm about to trash."

Steve: "Mark my words, If you don't use that I'm stealing it."

The gauntlet had been thrown.

That was the spark, but it took me a full eight months to write the piece. There are a LOT of notes (ed. 75,000!), and I put every one on paper (with pencil). I wanted to write a *moto perpetuo*, a piece that starts running and never stops ('*equus*' is the Latin word for horse) and would also be a virtuosic show piece for winds. The final result is something that I call "dynamic minimalism," which basically means that I love to employ repetitive patterns as long as they don't get boring.

**Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)**  
***Rest (2011)***

Frank Ticheli is Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. He has written for orchestra, chamber ensemble, and choir, but he is perhaps best known for his more than twenty pieces for concert band, including *Cajun Folk Songs* and *Postcard*. Last season, the Metropolitan Wind Symphony performed his jazz inspired *Blue Shades*.

*Rest* is a concert band adaptation of Ticheli's work for SATB chorus entitled *Let There be Rest*, which included lyrics from a poem by Sara Teasdale. The composer writes:

In making this version, I preserved almost everything from the original: harmony, dynamics, even the original registration. I also endeavored to preserve carefully the fragile beauty and quiet dignity suggested by Sara Teasdale's words.

However, with the removal of the text, I felt free to enhance certain aspects of the music, most strikingly with the addition of a sustained climax on the main theme. This extended climax allows the band version to transcend the expressive boundaries of a straight note-for-note setting of the original. Thus, both versions are intimately tied and yet independent of one another, each possessing its own strengths and unique qualities.

*Rest* is exquisitely beautiful, and its melancholy nature seems to hold the ability to dissolve stress, so on this late Fall afternoon, relax and enjoy!

**Donald Grantham (b. 1947)**  
***Southern Harmony (1998)***

Donald Grantham is currently the Frank C. Erwin, Jr. Centennial Professor of Music at the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas in Austin. He studied under the famed French composer and pedagogue, Nadia Boulanger, at the American Conservatory of France. He's been the recipient of several awards and prizes, including the Prix Lili Boulanger, the Nissim/ASCAP Orchestral Composition Prize, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. In a citation awarded by American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, he was praised as a composer whose music reflects "elegance, sensitivity, lucidity of thought, clarity of expression and fine lyricism."

In 1835, William "Singin' Billy" Walker's songbook *Southern Harmony* was first published. This remarkable collection contains, according to its title page, "a choice collection of tunes, hymns, psalms, odes and anthems; selected from the most eminent authors in the United States." In fact, few of the numbers in the book are identified as the work of a particular composer. Many are folksongs (provided with religious texts), others are traditional sacred tunes, while some are revival songs that were widely known and sung throughout the south. The book was immensely popular, selling an amazing 600,000 copies before the Civil War, and was commonly stocked "along with groceries and tobacco" in general stores across the American frontier. From 1884 until World War II, an annual all-day mass performance of selections from *Southern Harmony*, called the "Benton Big Singing," was held on the Benton, Kentucky court-house lawn. The event drew participants from Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri and Illinois.

The music of *Southern Harmony* has a somewhat exotic sound to modern audiences. The tunes often use modal or pentatonic rather than major or minor scales. The harmony is even more out of the ordinary, employing chord positions, voice leading and progressions that are far removed from the European music that dominated concert halls at the time. These harmonizations were dismissed as crude and primitive when they first appeared. Now they are regarded as inventive, unique, and powerfully representative of the American character.

In his use of several tunes from *Southern Harmony*, the composer has attempted to preserve the flavor of the original vocal works in a setting that fully realizes the potential of the wind ensemble and the individual character of each song.

*Southern Harmony* was commissioned by the Southeastern Conference of Band Directors.

**John Mackey (b. 1973)**  
***Asphalt Cocktail (2009)***

John Mackey holds a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with John Corigliano and Donald Erb, respectively. Mr. Mackey particularly enjoys writing music for dance and for symphonic winds, and he has focused on those mediums for the past few years.

His works have been performed at the Sydney Opera House, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Weill Recital Hall, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Italy's Spoleto Festival, Alice Tully Hall, the Joyce Theater, Dance Theater Workshop, and throughout Italy, Chile, Japan, China, Norway, Spain, Colombia, Austria, Brazil, Germany, England, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. His score *Damn* was used by the US Olympic Synchronized Swim team at the 2004 Athens Olympics, where they won the Bronze medal.

We close the first half of the concert with the hard driving *Asphalt Cocktail*, which was commissioned by Howard J. Gourwitz as a gift to Dr. Kevin L. Sedatole and the Michigan State University Wind Symphony. Dr. Sedatole premiered the work on March 28, 2009 at the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) National Convention.

From the composer:

"Asphalt Cocktail" is a five-minute opener, designed to shout, from the opening measure, "We're here." With biting trombones, blaring trumpets, and percussion dominated by cross-rhythms and back beats, it aims to capture the grit and aggression that I associate with the time I lived in New York. Picture the scariest NYC taxi ride you can imagine, with the cab skidding around turns as trucks bear down from all sides.

Serve on the rocks.

### **John Philip Sousa (1854-1932)** ***Hands Across the Sea (1899)***

The American composer John Philip Sousa known as "The March King" was of Portuguese and Bavarian ancestry. He served with the United States Marine Band twice, starting as an apprentice, advancing to become the director, a position that he held for 12 years. After leaving the Marine Band, he formed his own band with which he toured internationally until his death in 1932. During WWI, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant Commander and led the Naval Reserve Band in Illinois. He also developed the sousaphone, a form of tuba, which is universally used by marching bands to this day.

Sousa told interviewers that the following phrase inspired him to compose the march:

*"A sudden thought strikes me; let us swear eternal friendship"*

The march was dedicated to all of America's allied countries abroad and the Highty-Tighties, the Regimental Band of the Virginia Tech Cadet Corps. It is written in cut time and follows the standard march form. It begins in the key of F major and ends in B-flat major. The trio features a memorable and lyrical melody that is repeated and layered with a piccolo obbligato and finally a low brass counter-melody.

*Hands Across the Sea* remains as one of Sousa's more popular marches.

### **Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)**

### ***O Cool is the Valley: Poem for Band, op. 118 (1971)***

Vincent Ludwig Persichetti was an American composer, teacher, and pianist. An important musical educator and writer, Persichetti was a native of Philadelphia. He was known for integrating various new ideas in musical composition into his own work as well as for training many noted composers in composition at the Juilliard School.

His students at Juilliard included Philip Glass, Michael Jeffrey Shapiro, Kenneth Fuchs, Richard Danielpour, Robert Dennis, Peter Schickele (PDQ Bach and a member of the MWS Advisory Board), Lowell Liebermann, Robert Witt, Randell Croley, William Schimmel, and Leo Brouwer. He also taught composition to conductor James DePreist at the Philadelphia Conservatory.

*O Cool is the Valley Now* is a poem by James Joyce:

O cool is the valley now  
And there, love, will we go  
For many a choir is singing now  
Where Love did sometime go.  
And hear you not the thrushes calling,  
Calling us away?  
O cool and pleasant is the valley  
And there, love, will we stay.

The band work *O Cool is the Valley* parallels the mood of the James Joyce poem. It is a colorful but quiet piece requiring sensitive and meaningful melodic playing. The opening motive generates the pastoral musical textures of two contrasting themes.

### **John Williams (b. 1932)**

***Hymn to the Fallen (1999)*** (transcribed by Paul Lavendar)

Many are familiar with John Williams' legacy as one of Hollywood's most important and successful film composers as well as from his 13-year tenure with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Williams was born in New York City, but his family moved to Los Angeles when he was young. He attended UCLA and The Juilliard School and was also drafted into the Air Force during which time he conducted and arranged for the Air Force Band. Among his impressive achievements are scores and songs to over 100 films including *Jaws* (the film that truly launched his film music career), the entire *Star Wars* series, *Jurassic Park*, *Munich* and two of the Harry Potter movies. Williams has been awarded five Oscars and 17 Grammys, among dozens of other nominations.

*Hymn to the Fallen* comes from the film *Saving Private Ryan*. While it never appears within the main movie itself, it is poignantly performed during the end credits and evokes the tragedy and sadness of the events of World War II that are portrayed in the movie. For our performance this afternoon, Music

Director Lew Buckley has added narration from a text written by General Colin Powell. This essay from 1999 was written for Time magazine to support the nomination of the American G.I. as the most influential person of the twentieth century (Albert Einstein received the honor).

Program Note by Peter Norman

**Bruce Broughton (b. 1945)**

***Silverado (2008) (arr. Randol Alan Bass)***

The year is 1985 and in the world of cinema, the studios viewed the classical western as a non-starter. Westerns hadn't been made in several years and there didn't seem to be much interest in them by the ticket buying public. It was in this environment that director Lawrence Kasdan decided to make "a beginner's guide to a western" by throwing in all the elements that made the genre so popular in years gone by. That movie *Silverado* was cast with many of the "A" list actors of the day: Kevin Kline, Scott Glenn, Kevin Costner, Danny Glover and ... wait for it ... John Cleese. Bruce Broughton, the highly acclaimed composer of film and television scores, composed the musical score for *Silverado*.

Broughton was born in Los Angeles, California, where he resides today. He has composed the soundtrack for several movies including *Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey*, *Tombstone*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *The Rescuers Down Under*, and of course *Silverado*. He has won numerous Emmy Awards for scoring *Warm Springs*, *Dallas* (original series), *JAG*, *The Blue and the Gray*, *Quincy M.E.* and *Hawaii Five-O* (original series).

The music for *Silverado* is arguably his most popular and has been adapted into several settings. Randol Alan Bass arranged the long awaited band arrangement that the Metropolitan Wind Symphony will perform this afternoon with Broughton's blessing.

So, we invite you to sit back and imagine that you are a kid again, sitting in a darkened movie theater watching the latest offering in this resilient genre!

Program Notes by Gregory C. Depp