

CRANE CONCERT BAND

Program Notes • 5 October 2016

FLAG OF STARS

Gordon Jacob

Like so many twentieth century British composers, Gordon Jacob studied composition at the Royal College of Music, a student of both Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. He later returned to the Royal College of Music where he taught composition for a period of forty years. His students included Malcolm Arnold and Imogene Holst, daughter of Gustav Holst. Jacob composed for orchestra, chorus, and wind band as well as music for film. Among his compositions are several concertos for neglected instruments at the time: *Cameos for Bass Trombone and Band*, *Concertino for Tenor Trombone and Band*, *Fantasy for Euphonium and Band*, *Miscellaneous for Alto Saxophone and Band*. He also authored several texts including *Orchestral Technique* (1931) and *The Composer and His Art* (1960).

Flag of Stars is a symphonic overture commissioned by the Pi Kappa Omicron Band Fraternity. The work was written in 1954 and published in 1956. The dedication reads, “For the Symphonic Band of Louisville University, Kentucky, USA.” Though written by a British composer, the work is infused with American patriotism. The title is taken from the Walt Whitman poem “Flag of Stars! Thick-sprinkled Bunting!” Jacob referred to *Flag of Stars* as “a gesture from an inhabitant of the Old World to those of the New.” So unsubtle are the patriotic references that in the closing measures, Jacob quotes the final couplet of “The Star-spangled Banner.”

Gordon Jacob wrote of *Flag of Stars*,

The introductory fanfare and the slow section which follows it recalls the sacrifices made by your country in both world wars in the struggle with dark forces of destruction. The allegro is prompted by thoughts of the energy, vitality, and cheerfulness of the American people— young, optimistic, and full of their faith in their destiny. The second subject in 3/4 time might perhaps suggest a sort of national song.

In the foreword to the published score to *Flag of Stars*, Jacob offers one more American patriotic gesture by quoting the final stanza of Walt Whitman’s “Song of the Redwood Tree.”

Fresh come to a New World indeed, yet long prepared,
I see the Genius of the Modern, child of the Real and Ideal,
Clearing the ground for broad humanity, the true America,
 heir of the past so grand,
To build a grander future.

PASSACAGLIA AND FUGUE IN C MINOR, BWV 582

J. S. Bach

From 1708 to 1717, J. S. Bach served as a member of the Court Orchestra and Organist to the Court of Duke Wilhelm Ernst in Weimar, Germany. As Organist to the Court, Bach wrote profusely for organ during these years. *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor* was composed during this period, most likely between 1708 and 1712. While the original manuscript to *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor* is lost, one extant score includes the annotation *cembalo ossia organo* indicating that Bach may have intended the work for either pedal harpsichord or organ. A surviving manuscript of the first forty-nine measures of the *Passacaglia* once owned by Bach’s son C.P.E. Bach includes heavy ornamentation that is common in much of the harpsichord music of the time. Today, the work is most commonly performed on organ.

A passacaglia is a musical form usually set in triple meter in which a simple eight-bar melody called an ostinato or ground bass is repeated throughout the work while a series of continuous variations are layered over it. The C-Minor Passacaglia consists of a set of twenty variations. The fugue follows immediately and without pause, the ground bass from the passacaglia now serving as the subject for the fugue.

Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor is considered by historians and critics to be one of Bach’s greatest keyboard compositions. Composer Robert Schumann once described the variations in the *Passacaglia* as “intertwined so ingeniously that one can never cease to be amazed.”

The work has been orchestrated numerous times, including by composer Ottorino Respighi and conductor Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski’s 1922 orchestration of the *Passacaglia and Fugue* for the Philadelphia Orchestra is arguably the most famous transcription of the work. The wind band transcription is scored by Nicholas D. Falcone, Director of Bands at the University of Michigan from 1926 to 1935.

EL CAMINO REAL – A LATIN FANTASY

Alfred Reed

Alfred Reed first developed his compositional skill during World War II when he served as Radio Production Director and Associate Conductor of the 529th Army Air Corps Band, producing over 150 weekly broadcasts and composing and arranging nearly 100 works for band. Following the war, Reed studied composition with Vittorio Giannini at the Juilliard School. He later received his BM and MM degrees from Baylor University. For years, he taught composition and conducting at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida. In his lifetime, Reed composed over 250 published works for wind band, chorus, orchestra, chamber ensemble, and solo instrument.

El Camino Real (“The Royal Road” or “The King’s Highway”) is a fantasia based on the harmonic movement of traditional Spanish folk dances often performed by flamenco guitarists. Reed considered the harmonic motion and resulting key relationships to be “the true Spanish idiom.” He commented, “Together with the folk melodies they [Spanish guitarists] have underscored, in part derived by a procedure known to musicians as the ‘melodizing of harmony,’ they have created a vast body of what most people would consider authentic Spanish music.”

El Camino Real begins with a spirited setting of the Jota, a traditional Spanish dance form commonly danced with castanets and accompanied by guitar. The slow middle section is loosely based on the Fandango, but is a much more tranquil derivation of the dance, incorporating tempo and metric alterations that differ significantly from the dance’s more traditional style characteristics. Rather than utilizing the common triple meter generally associated with the Fandango, Reed sets the dance in slow 7/8 (3+2+2), 8/8 (3+2+3) and 5/8 (3+2) meters. This practice of altering the traditional style and meter of folk songs and dances is not new to composer Reed. A decade earlier in *Armenian Dances*, Reed set the folk song “Hoy, Nazan Eem” in 5/8 time (alternating 2+3 and 3+2 division of the pulse), a drastically different rhythmic setting from the original folk song that remains in 6/8 meter throughout its entirety. The fantasy returns to the opening material and drives forward to a fiery conclusion.

El Camino Real was commissioned by and dedicated to the 581st Air Force Band and Commander Lt. Col. Ray E. Toler. The work was premiered by the band in April 1985 in Sarasota, Florida.

CRANE SYMPHONIC BAND

Program Notes

HUDSON RIVER SUITE

John O’Reilly

Commissioned by the Bethlehem School District, Del Mar, NY, this suite consists of three movements representing three distinct areas of the Hudson River: “The Lady of the Harbor” (Statue of Liberty); “Pastoral Highlands” (Hudson Valley, West Point region); and, “The Source” (Adirondack mountain streams that feed the Hudson).

The **New Horizons** program began at the Eastman School of Music in 1991, under the direction of Roy Ernst, now Professor Emeritus. Since that time, more than 100 such ensembles have formed throughout the United States and Canada.

While New Horizons was designed in particular for senior adults, there is no minimum or maximum age or ability requirement. All are welcome, especially beginners. Members include those with little or no experience, those who have postponed participating in an ensemble due to career and family, and seasoned

musicians. All agree that New Horizons is a community of music-makers flourishing in a non-competitive, collaborative, and supportive environment.

The New Horizons Band of Northern New Work began in September of 2009, led by Ron Berry and hosted within the Crane School of Music. This is the first collaboration between the Crane Bands and this community ensemble.

MILESTONE

Roshanne Etezady

Milestone was commissioned in 2008 by the Plymouth (MN) Concert Band for the organization’s 10-year anniversary. I wanted this piece to be connected to this group specifically, so I took an informal poll of the ensemble members -- adult-aged, amateur performers, many of whom had been with the ensemble since its creation --- about some of their favorite things the PCB could do. For example, the flute section liked playing in the low register, so I wanted to feature that in the opening of the piece. I wanted to give them a piece that showed off many musical skills and characteristics, so *Milestone* features changes in mood, tempo, and timbre throughout the piece. The overall exuberant nature of the work is due to its origins as a celebratory work.

Note by Roshanne Etezady

COLOR

Bob Margolis

Color is based upon five English folk dances: “Stanes Morris,” “Stingo,” “Daphne,” “Argeers,” and “The Slip.” The musical treatment is improvisatory, playful, mischievous, and generally compact in structure, with a strong emphasis on style and tone color.

Quite a few melodies were looked over before settling on the ones for this suite. The entire *English Dancing Master* (1651) of John Playford, and most of van Eyck’s *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* (1646) were consulted for the tunes, which are all English country dances – that is, instrumental folk dances. Yet the fact is, the focus of this music is not the melody, but rather setting – that is, the accompaniment, the texture, the color, and the harmony.

It might be argued that to some extent not only the focus but the very reason-for-being of this piece is its setting; that the style has become the thing itself; and more specifically, the aspect most important thereof is the timbre, or instrumental color. This the title: *Color*.

Note by Bob Margolis

OCTOBER

Eric Whitacre

October is my favorite month. Something about the crisp autumn air and the subtle change of light always makes me a little sentimental, and as I started to sketch I felt that same quiet beauty in the writing. The simple, pastoral melodies and subsequent harmonies are inspired by the great Romantics (Vaughan Williams, Elgar) as I felt this style was also perfectly suited to capture the natural and pastoral soul of the season. I'm quite happy with the end result, especially because I feel there isn't enough lush, beautiful music written for winds. *October* was premiered on May 14th, 2000, and is dedicated to Brian Anderson, the man who brought it all together.

Note by Eric Whitacre

SYMPHONY NO. 2

John Barnes Chance

John Barnes Chance was a gifted composer whose originality and fine musicianship is readily demonstrated in his splendid works for band: *Blue Lake Overture*, *Elegy*, *Incantation and Dance*, and his most famous work, *Variations on a Korean Folk Song*.

Symphony No. 2 for Winds and Percussion is a brilliant and stunning work based upon an earlier *Symphony for Winds*, composed in 1961. It was revised just before his death in 1972. It is cast in three movements, all based upon the four-note motif of C#, D, F and E.

Note by Boosey & Hawkes

AMERICANS WE

Henry Fillmore

By 1928, Henry Fillmore was the conductor of his own 24-member professional band in Cincinnati. They performed a very popular series of concerts at the Cincinnati Zoo, a venue conducive to presenting new works. On one such occasion, a new, as yet untitled work premiered to a warm reception and instantaneous success. However, Fillmore had difficulty titling the work. In early performances it went by *The Cincinnati Zoo*, and at other times *Pure Food and Health*. Neither of these titles seemed appropriate for a published work, particularly one his Fillmore's finest. At long last, the work was published in 1929 under the title, *Americans We* and simply dedicated, "To All of Us."

Note adapted from Paul Bierley