

THE CRANE WIND ENSEMBLE

Program Notes • 21 November 2016

CHARIOT OF HELIOS

Stacy Garrop

In Greek mythology, Helios was the god of the sun. His head wreathed in light, he daily drove a chariot drawn by four horses (in some tales, the horses are winged; in others, they are made of fire) across the sky. At the end of each day's journey, he returned to earth and slept in a golden boat that carried him on the Okeanos River back to his sun palace on Mount Olympus, where he mounted his chariot and rode into the sky again. The cyclic journey of Helios is depicted in this short work. The first half is fast-paced and very energetic, while the second half is slow and serene, representing day and night.

Helios was originally commissioned by Gaudete Brass Quintet in 2011. I made the wind ensemble arrangement in 2015 for maestro Stephen Squires and the Chicago College of Performing Arts Wind Ensemble.

Note by Stacy Garrop

LEGEND & LEGEND NO. 2

Barton McLean

Barton McLean is no stranger to Crane, having received his B.S. there in 1960. Upon graduating, he was immediately hired to teach music theory and double bass and to teach at the Campus School as well. Back in those days there was no composition program, but McLean became the first undergraduate "composition major," invited by Helen Hosmer to convert his last semesters of instrument major to composition study. Other early opportunities at Crane included the equivalent of two fully orchestrated music comedies produced by Delta Kappa fraternity (The DK Show), where he experimented with various modes of orchestration. As a charter member of Willard Musser's Crane Wind Ensemble on double bass, he became familiar with the wind ensemble literature and in rapid succession wrote a trilogy of wind ensemble works, two of which were premiered by the CWE in 1962 and 1964, the latter being his *Legend for Symphonic Winds and Percussion*, conducted by John Shorge of the CWE. This work still shows influence of Sibelius along with Faure, being pastoral and lyrical in nature. In 1965 McLean wrote his *Legend No. 2 for Symphonic Winds and Percussion* and left Crane shortly thereafter, leaving the work unperformed in a concert until now. One can sense a progression of style in this work towards a more idiomatic contemporary wind/percussion concept, and at the very end, which was later revised, a Hindemith influence.

Legend No. 2 was also greatly influenced by Robert Washburn, whose *Symphony for Band* was performed by the CWE about that same time (1964). McLean's

dedication reads, "Dedicated to Robert Washburn: mentor, teacher, colleague, and friend."

Note by Barton McLean

NEW ENGLAND TRIPTYCH

William Schuman

William Schuman was a native of New York, where he attended public schools and formed a jazz ensemble in high school. He completed his studies at Malkin Conservatory in New York, Teachers College of Columbia University and at the Mozarteum Academy in Salzburg, Austria. He became music instructor at Sarah Lawrence College and later was appointed president of the Juilliard School of Music. His compositions include 10 symphonies, numerous orchestral and chamber pieces, band works, cantatas, an opera, ballet music, piano pieces and music for films. He was the first person to win the Pulitzer Prize in composition — for his 1943 work *Secular Cantata No. 2*. Although he considered himself a composer first, Schuman championed American music, composers and performers as an educator and administrator.

Schuman's *New England Triptych* was originally written for orchestra in 1956 and is based on hymns by William Billings. The composer wrote the following program note:

William Billings (1746-1800) is a major figure in the history of American music. The works of this dynamic composer capture the spirit of sinewy ruggedness, deep religiosity and patriotic fervor that we associate with the Revolutionary period. Despite the undeniable crudities and technical shortcomings of his music, its appeal even today is forceful and moving. I am not alone among American composers who feel an identity with Billings, and it is this sense of identity that accounts for my use of his music as a point of departure. These pieces do not constitute a 'fantasy' on themes of Billings, nor 'variations' on his themes, but rather a fusion of styles and musical language.

Be Glad Then, America is the first movement. Billings' text includes these lines:

Yea, the Lord will answer	Be glad then, America
And say unto his people—behold!	Shout and rejoice
I will send you corn and wine and oil	Fear not, O land,
And ye shall be satisfied therewith.	Be glad and rejoice.
	Hallelujah!

A timpani solo begins the short introduction. This music is suggestive of the "Hallelujah" heard at the end of the piece. Trombones and trumpets begin the main section, a free and varied setting of the words "Be glad then, America, Shout and rejoice." The timpani again leads to a middle fugal section stemming from the words, "And ye shall be satisfied." The music gains momentum, and combined themes lead to a climax. There follows a free adaptation of the

“Hallelujah” music and a final reference to the “Shout and rejoice” music.

Billings set *When Jesus Wept* as a “round,” and Schuman used in this original form. The composition calls for controlled, sensitive, legato playing from the ensemble. The solo parts, given to the euphonium and trumpet, are demanding in range, color and intonation. The text is:

When Jesus wept the falling tear
In mercy flowed beyond all bound;
When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear
Seized all the guilty world around.

The tune on which *Chester* is based was born during the American Revolution, appearing in 1778 in a book of tunes and anthems by Billings. It was subsequently adopted by the Continental Army and sung around campfires or played by fifers on the march. The music and words expressed the burning desire for freedom that sustained the colonists through the difficult years of the Revolution. In the opening section, Schuman introduces the tune first in the woodwinds and then in the brasses. In the next section, the melody is given a more contemporary setting with mid-twentieth century rhythmic and harmonic devices used to sustain interest. The closing section brings back the hymn-like treatment of the theme, and the work is brought to a dramatic close:

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,	The Foe comes on with haughty stride
And Slav'ry clank her galling chains,	Our Troops advance with martial noise.
We fear them not, We trust in God,	Their Vet'rans flee, before our Youth
New England's God forever reigns.	And Gen'ral's yield to beardless Boys.

SINFONIETTA

Ingolf Dahl

The form of the *Sinfonietta* is akin to an arc or the span of a large bridge: the sections of the first movement correspond, in reverse order and even some details, to the sections of the last. For example, the fanfares by the back-stage trumpets at the opening of the work balance the closing fanfares; the thematic material that ends the first movement opens the last, although in altered form. The middle movement itself is shaped like an arch; it begins with an unaccompanied line in the clarinets and ends with a corresponding solo in the alto clarinet. The center of the middle movement – which is the center of the whole work (a gavotte-like section, and the lightest music of the whole *Sinfonietta*) – is the “keystone” of the arch. The tonal idiom of the work grows out of the acoustical properties of the symphonic band: a wealth of overtones. Thus I feel that bands call for music with more open and consonant intervals than would a string ensemble or piano. The *Sinfonietta* is tonal, and centered around A-flat major. At the same time, however, its corner movements are based upon a series of six tones (A-flat, E-flat, C, G, D, A) that, through various manipulations, provide most of this work's harmonic and melodic ingredients and patterns. The six tones were chosen to permit all kinds of triadic formations. Furthermore, their inversion at the interval of the major sixth

yields a second six-tone set comprising the remaining six tones of a complete twelve-tone row.

The six-tone set is introduced tone by tone in the opening back-stage trumpets, and as it reappears in its original form and in transpositions, it constitutes the entire tonal content of this fanfare. Throughout the two corner movements, the set appears in various guises, from the blunt unison statement opening the last movement to the almost unrecognizable metamorphoses elsewhere. It also provides melodic as well as harmonic frameworks. Thus, in the first movement, it serves as a focal point in the march tune opening the principal rondo section; it also motivates the succession of tonalities in the cadenza-like modulatory episode for the clarinet section, which goes from A-flat via E-flat and C major, and so forth, to A major, i.e., to the farthest key removed from the initial A-flat. When the cadenza reaches the A, the rondo section returns.

The *First Movement* – “Introduction and Rondo” – proceeds by simple alternation between march-like refrains and rhythmically looser episodes. A culmination is reached at the point where the entire clarinet section, punctuated by brass and percussion, breaks into the brilliant cadenza mentioned above. The movement closes in a full tutti and with a drum pattern which traditionally would stand at the beginning of a march, but which here ends it.

The *Second Movement* – “Notturmo Pastorale” – proceeds by simple alternations and superimpositions of several musical forms in a single movement. These forms are: a fugue, a waltz and a gavotte. The fugue subject first hides in a lyrical saxophone solo. It is derived from the tetrachord E-flat, F, G-flat & A-flat, but through octave displacements and rhythmic shifts, etc., each of its appearances is slightly different from all others, as if refracted by different lenses at each entry. Superimposed upon the fugue is the waltz which alternately recedes into the distance and returns to the foreground. By contrast, the middle section – Gavotte – is of a much simpler fabric: a lightly accompanied oboe tune.

The *Third Movement* – “Dance Variations” – begins with the most straightforward presentation of the six-tone set. Thereupon the set, serving as the basso ostinato of this passacaglia-like movement undergoes countless set-derived transformations. The term “variations” here refers to the ostinato. Appearing above these bass variations we hear a multitude of different little tunes in shifting colors. And this all proceeds along a key-scheme that goes through most of the circle of fifths, beginning over several times on the key level of A-flat. The lyrical middle section provides contrast. Toward the end, after a rhythmic tutti, the instruments – in *commedia dell'arte* fashion, bow out one by one.

Note by Ingolf Dahl