

Ithaca College Concert Band

Brian Diller, conductor

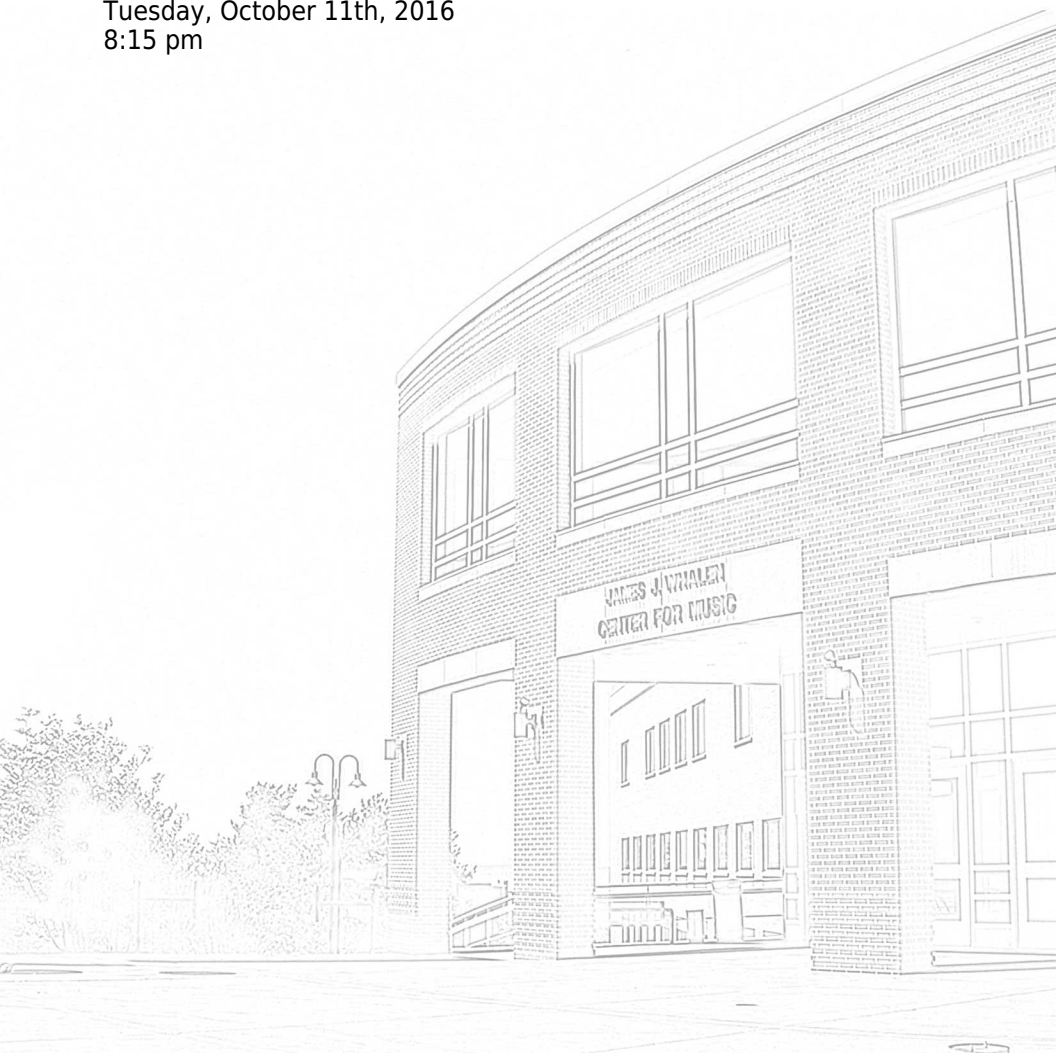
Justin Cusick, graduate conductor

Steve Danyew, Composer-in-Residence

Ford Hall

Tuesday, October 11th, 2016

8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Magnolia Star (2012)

Steve Danyew
(b. 1983)

Justin Cusick, graduate conductor

Divertimento (1949)

Vincent Persichetti
(1915-1987)

1. Prologue
2. Song
3. Dance
4. Burlesque
5. Soliloquy
6. March

Intermission

Symphony No. 1: *Lord of the Rings* (1988)

Johan De Meij
(b. 1953)

1. Gandalf, the Wizard. Shadowfax.
2. Lothlórien, the Elvenwood.
3. Gollum.
4. Journey in the Dark: The Mines of Moria. The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm. Andante funèbre.
5. Hobbits.

Funding for Mr. Danyew's residency was provided by the Ithaca College School of Music Special Events and Guest Artist Committee.

Biographies

Brian Diller is Visiting Assistant Professor of Music Education at the Ithaca College School of Music where he teaches courses in conducting and music education. He was recently awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) where he served as Music Director of the University of Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. He has previously served on the faculties of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and the University of Dayton.

Diller's scholarly research centers on integrating chamber music in the school music program. He was invited to present a paper on this topic at the 2014 College Band Directors National Association Conference on Music Education. Other research on band pedagogy has appeared as an article in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, volume 10, and two articles in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Middle School Band*, both published by GIA. He recently released a professional CD with the Cincinnati Chamber Soloists.

Diller received a Masters degree in wind conducting from Ithaca College where he studied conducting with Stephen Peterson and Jeffrey Meyer. From 2007-2010 he served as Associate Director of Bands at Brentwood High School in suburban Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Diller holds undergraduate degrees *summa cum laude* in Music Education and Piano Performance from Miami University (OH). While at Miami, he was honored as winner of the Undergraduate Artist Performance Competition and received the 2007 Presser Scholar prize for excellence in music scholarship and performance.

An active pianist, Diller performs regularly as soloist, chamber recitalist, and studio musician; he has completed additional study in piano, chamber music, and conducting at France's Fontainebleau Conservatory. Having prepared arrangements in the recording studios of A. R. Rahman, India's most celebrated film composer, Diller is also an avid arranger and his works have been performed by orchestras, wind ensembles, and choirs across the country. Experienced in the marching milieu, he has also arranged and instructed brass with Nashville's Music City Drum Corps and various high school bands.

Program Notes

Magnolia Star

When I was playing saxophone in my middle school jazz band, we started every rehearsal the same way – with an improvisation exercise that our director created. It was a simple yet brilliant exercise for teaching beginning improvisation and allowing everyone in the band a chance to “solo.” As a warm-up at the opening of each rehearsal, the whole band played the blues scale ascending, resting for one measure, descending, and resting for another measure.

During the measures of rest, each member of the band took turns improvising a solo. Looking back, this exercise not only got the band swinging together from the start of rehearsal, but it made improvisation, a daunting musical task to many, seem within everyone’s abilities. This experience was my introduction to the blues scale, and I have long wanted to write a piece inspired by this group of pitches. In *Magnolia Star*, I explore various ways to use these pitches in harmonies, melodies, and timbres, creating a diverse set of ideas that will go beyond sounds that we typically associate with the blues scale. I didn’t want to create a “blues” piece, but rather a piece in my own musical voice that uses and pays homage to the blues scale.

Nearly all of the pitches used in *Magnolia Star* fit into the concert C blues scale. It is interesting to note that embedded within the C blues scale are both a C minor triad, an Eb minor triad, and an Eb major triad. I explore the alternation of these tonal areas right from the start of the piece, and continue to employ them in different ways throughout the entire work.

When I first started improvising ideas for this piece based around the blues scale, I began to hear the influence of driving rhythms and sonorities which reminded me of trains. The railroad became an important second influence of this piece alongside the blues scale.

The American railroad not only provides some intriguing sonic ideas, but it also provides an intimate connection to the growth of jazz and blues in America. In the late 19th century, the Illinois Central Railroad constructed rail lines that stretched from New Orleans and the “Delta South” all the way north to

Chicago. Many southern musicians traveled north via the railroad, bringing "delta blues" and other idioms to northern parts of the country. The railroad was also the inspiration for countless blues songs by a wide variety of artists. Simply put, the railroad was crucial to the dissemination of jazz and blues in the early 20th century. Magnolia Star was an Illinois Central train that ran from New Orleans to Chicago with the famous Panama Limited in the mid 20th century. --Steve Danyew

Divertimento

Divertimento was premiered by The Goldman Band on June 16, 1950 with the composer conducting. The composition was started during the summer of 1949 in El Dorado, Kansas. In stories related to various sources, Persichetti began writing the work with a clash between choirs of woodwinds and brass, with a timpani "arguing" with them. After looking at this, he realized that the strings were not going to become a part of this piece. In an article from 1981 Persichetti stated:

"I soon realized the strings weren't going to enter, and my *Divertimento* began to take shape. Many people call this ensemble Band. I know that composers are often frightened away by the sound of the word "band", because of certain qualities long associated with this medium - rusty trumpets, consumptive flutes, wheezy oboes, disintegrating clarinets, fumbling yet amiable baton wavers, and gum-coated park benches! If you couple these conditions with transfigurations and disfigurations of works originally conceived for orchestra, you create a sound experience that's as nearly excruciating as a sick string quartet playing a dilettante's arrangement of a nineteenth-century piano sonata. When composers think of the band as a huge, supple ensemble of winds and percussion, the obnoxious fat with drain off, and creative ideas will flourish."

It is because of the scoring of this work and the attitude the composer showed in the creation of the work which Fennell felt was new for the "band" medium. The resulting piece has been described as "alternating between a sense of mischief and a poignant vein of nostalgia" and has become one of the most widely performed works in the entire wind band repertoire. -- William V. Johnson

Symphony #1: Lord of the Rings

Johan de Meij's first symphony "The Lord of the Rings" is based

on the trilogy of that name by J.R.R. Tolkien. This book has fascinated many millions of readers since its publication in 1955. The symphony consists of five separate movements, each illustrating a personage or an important episode from the book.

The symphony was written in the period between March 1984 and December 1987, and had its première in Brussels on 15th March 1988, performed by the "Groot Harmonieorkest van de Gidsen" under the baton of Norbert Nozy. In 1989, The Symphony The Lord of the Rings was awarded a first prize in the Sudler International Wind Band Composition Competition in Chicago, and a year later, the symphony was awarded by the Dutch Composers Fund. In 2001, the orchestral version was premiered by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Although it is difficult to summarize such an extensive and complex work, the main outline is as follows: the central theme is the Ring, made by primaeval forces that decide the safety or destruction of the World. For years it was the possession of the creature Gollum, but when the Ring falls into the hands of the Hobbits the evil forces awake and the struggle for the Ring commences. There is but one solution to save the World from disaster: the Ring must be destroyed by the fire in which it was forged: Mount Doom in the heart of Mordor, the country of the evil Lord Sauron. It is the Hobbit Frodo who is assigned to carry out this task, and to assist him a company, the Fellowship of the Ring, is formed under the leadership of Gandalf, the wizard, which includes the Hobbits Sam, Peregrin and Merin, the Dwarf Gimli, the Elf Legolas, Boromir and Aragorn, the later King. The Companions are secretly followed by Gollum, who does not shun any means, however perfidious, to recover his priceless Ring. However, the Companions soon fall apart, after many pernicious adventures and a surprising dénouement Frodo and Sam can at last return to their familiar home, The Shire.

I. GANDALF (The Wizard)

The first movement is a musical portrait of the wizard Gandalf, one of the principal characters of the trilogy. His wise and noble personality is expressed by a stately motif which is used in a different form in movements IV and V. The sudden opening of the Allegro vivace is indicative of the unpredictability of the grey wizard, followed by a wild ride on his beautiful horse "Shadowfax".

II. LOTHLORIEN (The Elvenwood)

The second movement is an impression of Lothlórien, the elvenwood with its beautiful trees, plants, exotic birds, expressed through woodwind solo's. The meeting of the Hobbit Frodo with the Lady Galadriel is embodied in a charming Allegretto; in the Mirror of Galadriel, a silver basin in the wood, Frodo glimpses three visions, the last of which, a large ominous Eye, greatly upsets him.

III. GOLLUM (Sméagol)

The third movement describes the monstrous creature Gollum, a slimy, shy being represented by the soprano saxophone. It mumbles and talks to itself, hisses and lisps, whines and snickers, is alternately pitiful and malicious, is continually fleeing and looking for his cherished treasure, the Ring.

IV. JOURNEY IN THE DARK

The fourth movement describes the laborious journey of the Fellowship of the Ring, headed by the wizard Gandalf, through the dark tunnels of the Mines of Moria. The slow walking cadenza and the fear are clearly audible in the monotonous rhythm of the low brass, piano and percussion. After a wild pursuit by hostile creatures, the Orks, Gandalf is engaged in battle with a horrible monster, the Balrog, and crashes from the subterranean bridge of Khazad-Dûm in a fathomless abyss. To the melancholy tones of a Marcia funèbre, the bewildered Companions trudge on, looking for the only way out of the Mines, the East Gate of Moria.

V. HOBBITS

The fifth movement expresses the carefree and optimistic character of the Hobbits in a happy folk dance; the hymn that follows emanates the determination and noblesse of the hobbit folk. The symphony does not end on an exuberant note, but is concluded peacefully and resigned, in keeping with the symbolic mood of the last chapter "The Grey Havens" in which Frodo and Gandalf sail away in a white ship and disappear slowly beyond the horizon. --Johan de Meij

Personnel

Piccolo

Ashley Watson

Flute

Laurel Albinder

Emily Eakins

Stephanie Feinberg

Abby Ferri

Madeleine King

Robin Leary

Catherine Sangiovanni

Leandra Stirling, *principal*

Oboe

Hailey Dziendziel

Meagan Priest, *principal*

Courtney Webster

Giulia Zurlo

E♭ Clarinet

Hannah Blanchette

Clarinet

Griffin Charyn

Barbara Chelchowski

Katherine Filatov, *principal*

Zachary Kalik

Tessa Perchansky

Rebecca Rice

Ciara Solby

Alec Targett

Mikaela Vjonik

Morgan Volk

Caleb Will

Bass Clarinet

Rebecca Butler

Thea Hallman

Bassoon

Aiden Braun

Emily Roach, *principal*

Emma Whitestone

Alto Saxophone

Scott Byers

Alex Clift, *principal*

Chiara Marcario

Gregory Waloski

Tenor Saxophone

Matt Kiel

Sara Merario

Baritone Saxophone

Jared Banker

Trumpet

Jason Bennett

Kevin Biernat

Hayden Bustamante

Keara Doherty

Alec Donowitz

Thomas Iandolo, *principal*

Caitlin Mallon

Nick Paraggio

Austin Ramestad

Stephen Ryan

Michael Salamone

Jason Springer

Dan Yapp

Horn

Abby Bracco

Sarah Capobianco

Shannon O'Leary, *principal*

Kayla Shoster

Trombone

Ryan Brady

Hunter Burnett

Samantha Considine

Eric Coughlin

Nicholas Denton, *principal*

Kristen Jennotti

Josh Poffenberger-Twomey

Lucas Wood

Steven Obetz, bass

Euphonium

Matthew Della Camera, *principal*

Colleen Grady

Tuba

Ryan Masotti

Nik Seger, *principal*

Cameron Seib

String Bass

Adam Siegler

Piano

Xiaoyi Shen

Timpani

Caitlin Mellen

Percussion

Kelsey Bocharski

Ben Brown-McMillin, *principal*

Keegan Fountain

Giancarlo Levano

Julia Lavernoch

