Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Matthew Sadowski, graduate conductor

Ford Hall
Friday, March 20th, 2015
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE
School of Music

Program

Consort for Ten Winds (2005)
I. Jeux
II. Aubade
III. Sautereau

Robert Spittal
b. 1963
11'

J.S. Dances (2003)

Donald Grantham
b. 1947
8'

It Perched for Vespers Nine (2008)

Joel Puckett
b. 1977
11'

Intermission

Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber (1943)
I. Allegro
II. Scherzo (Turandot)
III. Andantino
IV. Marsch

Paul Hindemith
1895-1965
tr. Keith Wilson
25'

Program Notes

Composer **Robert Spittal**'s music reflects the range of his pursuits as a composer, conductor and teacher. Spittal (b. 1963, Cleveland, Ohio) has composed works for wind ensemble, brass choir, brass quintet, woodwind quintet, and guitar ensemble. His compositions have been performed by professional, collegiate and high school ensembles throughout the United States, and at conferences such as the College Band Directors National Association, the Iowa Bandmasters Association, and the California Band Directors Association.

Spittal maintains an active schedule as a conductor, university professor, and clinician. He is the conductor of the brass ensemble Clarion which has presented over forty premieres of works for brass choir and percussion and two critically-acclaimed CDs since 1995. Spittal conducts the Wind Symphony and Chamber Wind Ensemble at Gonzaga University, where he has served as chair of the Music Department since 2000. Dr. Spittal resides in Spokane, Washington with his wife and daughter.

About his piece, the composer writes:

"Each movement of **Consort for Ten Winds** reflects on the music of *Les Grandes Hautboise,* the court wind band of France's great 'Sun King,' Louis XIV. All musical materials in this work are original, and not based on any specific pieces of that time. The outer movements 'Jeux' (games) and 'Sautereau' (a French saltarello) are whimsical, lively dances which reflect the frivolities and excesses of the court, while the middle movement 'Aubade' (morning song) is more intimate, lyrical, and influenced by the imitative styles of vocal music of the period. This movement later evolved into *Pacem: A Hymn for Piece* for concert band.

"Consort for Ten Winds is dedicated to Eugene Corporon for his relentless devotion to chamber wind ensemble music, and for awakening my personal interest in the medium during my student days at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music."

Donald Grantham is the recipient of numerous awards and prizes in composition, including the Prix Lili Boulanger, the Nissim/ASCAP Orchestral Composition Prize, a Guggenheim

Fellowship, three grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, three First Prizes in the NBA/William Revelli Competition, two First Prizes in the ABA/Ostwald Competition, and First Prize in the National Opera Association's Biennial Composition Competition. His music has been praised for its "elegance, sensitivity, lucidity of thought, clarity of expression and fine lyricism" in a Citation awarded by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In recent years his works have been performed by the orchestras of Cleveland, Dallas, Atlanta and the American Composers Orchestra among many others, and he has fulfilled commissions in media from solo instruments to opera. The composer resides in Austin, Texas and is Frank C. Erwin, Jr. Centennial Professor of Composition at the University of Texas at Austin.

J.S. Dances is a free fantasy on “Menuet II” and “Gigue” from J.S. Bach’s *Partita I,* one of six partitas (suites) from his collection of keyboard exercises *Clavier-Übung Part I* (BWV 825-830). After a brief, slow introduction, the piece is relentlessly “fast and reckless” to the end, with the gigue character predominating. Both of Bach’s dances appear in more or less their original forms, complemented by other material that develops and elaborates upon some of the many interesting aspects of Bach’s two dances. *J.S. Dances* was commissioned for the University of Akron Symphonic Band, Robert D. Jorgensen conductor.

Named as one of National Public Radio’s listeners' favorite composers under the age of 40, **Joel Puckett** is one of the most performed composers in America. Hailed by the Washington Post as "visionary," Mr. Puckett believes in the life-changing power of music to heal and provide comfort to those who need it. Puckett has received numerous awards from organizations such as the American Composers Forum, BMI, Chorus America and the American Bandmasters Association. Currently on the classroom faculty at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, he holds advanced degrees from the University of Michigan. Among several other projects, including an opera based on the rise and fall of the 1919 Chicago White Sox, Puckett is currently at work on a commission from Northwestern University for a symphony to be premiered as part of its new Lakefront Bienen School of Music Building dedication.

About **It Perched for Vespers Nine,** the composer writes:

“My wife’s grandfather was an extraordinary man. He was an immigrant who walked around quoting poetry and whistling tunes from his childhood in Scotland. Like a character from a movie he always seemed to pull just the right verse for the occasion. In the spring of 2007, he fell into a coma following a severe stroke. After weeks of being in this state, he awoke and said:

‘In mist or cloud...
...on mast or shroud...
...It perched for Vespers nine...
...Whiles all the night...
...through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine.’

“These were the final words of a man who always chose the right words. Within the hour he was gone.

“Not recognizing the verse, I immediately ran to Google to decipher what message the old man could have been delivering. The verse is from the famous poem of condemnation and redemption, *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The poem is the story of a mariner condemned to travel the earth telling his tale of hubris and punishment in search of redemption. The mariner shot an albatross for no other reason than he felt like it and then suffered the wrath of both death and living-death for his gall.

“The verse my wife’s grandfather quoted is the verse immediately before the one containing the ill-fated murder of the albatross. As they say, the calm before the coming storm. My work entitled *It Perched for Vespers Nine* on a surface level engages the imagery from the verse itself, but at the emotional core of the work is my trying to work out what my wife’s Pop Pop might have been trying to tell us about what awaits us “In mist or cloud”.

It Perched for Vespers Nine was commissioned by the American Bandmasters Association and the University of Florida. The work was premiered by the Michigan State University Wind Symphony with Matt Smith conducting.

Paul Hindemith (b. 1895, Hanau, Germany, d. 1963, Frankfurt) was a German composer, conductor, teacher, violinist, and violist who is regarded as one of the twentieth century's most important and influential musicians. Hindemith studied conducting, composing, and violin at the Hoch Conservatory, supporting himself by playing in dance bands and musical-comedy troupes. From 1915 until 1923, he was the concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, and in 1929 he founded the Amar Quartet, playing viola.

In 1921, Hindemith was instrumental in organizing the Donaueschingen Festival, a new music festival that continues to takes place every October in the small German town of the same name, and has become the oldest festival in the world for new music. In the fifth year of the festival, Hindemith commissioned composers to write new works for winds, resulting in several ground-breaking compositions (among them Hindemith's own *Konzertmusik für Blasorchester, Op. 41,* performed by the Ithaca College Wind Ensemble in February 2014).

Hindemith emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1940 and held teaching positions at Harvard and Yale Universities, becoming an American citizen in 1946. After World War II, Hindemith returned to Europe, taking a position at the University of Zürich. He died on December 28th, 1965 from acute pancreatitis.

Hindemith began composing the music for **Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber** in 1940. He had entered into a partnership with Russian dancer and choreographer Léonide Massine to produce a ballet that would feature music based on melodies by Carl Maria von Weber (German, early Romantic, 1786-1826). The collaboration fizzled after too many artistic differences, and Hindemith decided to rework his compositions into a suite of 4 movements for symphony orchestra.

Symphonic Metamorphosis was premiered in 1944 by conductor Artur Rodzinski and the New York Philharmonic. The piece was an immediate success, and is perhaps Hindemith's best-known work today. At Hindemith's request, his Yale University colleague Keith Wilson completed a wind band transcription.

The themes Hindemith used are from some of Weber's piano duets, written between 1809 and 1819, and incidental music Weber wrote in 1804 for Friedrich Schiller's play *Turandot, Prinzessin von China* (which ultimately sparked Puccini's 1926 opera *Turandot*). Although the melodies and formal structures are mostly preserved, Hindemith alters everything else from accompaniment to phrase length -- and especially harmony. The four movements are characterized as follows:

I. Allegro – A lively, raucous march with eastern European flare. Occasional brass fanfares and tender conversations between woodwinds add variety to this staunch and impactful opening movement.

II. Scherzo (Turandot) – A playful yet ominous tune is repeated with increasingly complex layers of accompaniment added. An original middle section with a jazz-like motif features an intense exchange between brass and timpani.

III. Andantino – The most preserved of Weber's melodies. A lush and soothing 'B' section is followed by a return of the rather forlorn opening melody with an elaborate counterpoint solo for flute.

IV. Marsch – Probably the most well known movement. Originally written by Weber as a funeral march, Hindemith doubles the tempo and produces a jauntier ambience with a declaratively grand finale.

Personnel

Piccolo
Emily Nazario

Flute
Sandi O'Hare
Christine Dookie
Stephanie LoTempio
Kirsten Schmidt
Marissa Mediati

Oboe
Hannah Cerezo
Melissa DeMarinis
Ellen O'Neill

E-flat Clarinet
Jill Gagliardi

Clarinet
Ryan Pereira
Miranda Schultz
Laura Hill
Cara Kinney
Gladys Wong
Anna Goebel

Bass Clarinet
Courtnie Elscott

Contrabass Clarinet
Nathan Balester

Bassoon
Andrew Meys
Olivia Fletcher
Kailey Schnurman

Alto Saxophone
Gregory Sisco
Matthew Kiel

Tenor Saxophone
Ian Herbon

Baritone Saxophone
Matthew Stookey

Trumpet
Jason Ferguson
Matthew Venora
Matthew Allen
Michael Stern
Shaun Rimkunas
Jonathan Tompkins

Horn
Victoria Boell
Paul Shim
Elizabeth DeGroff
Brianna Volkmann
Patrick Holcomb

Trombone
Matt Confer
Matt Nedimyer

Bass Trombone
Mitchel Wong

Euphonium
Peter Best-Hall
Brian Sugrue

Tuba
Justin Chervony
Brennen Motz

Double Bass
Alex Toth

Timpani
Kengo Ito

Percussion
Taylor Katanick
Andrew Hedge
Tom Smith
Lillian Fu
Corinne Steffens

Graduate Assistants
Matthew Sadowski
Sean Smith