

UNIVERSITY BAND & SYMPHONIC BAND PROGRAM NOTES

MARCH 7, 2023 7:30PM

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The University of Kansas

UNIVERSITY BAND

Aggressivo..... Randall Standridge

Aggressivo is a piece that explores aggressive rhythmic patterns and musical expression. The main two-measure motive is presented in the beginning and is presented in various forms. A secondary theme is introduced and is intended to “grind” against the primary theme. The two themes “do battle” until they meld into a final resolution.

The KUUB is joined on stage by the Southwest Middle School 8th Grade Band. They are directed by Ms. Debbie Woodall and have enjoyed a long tradition of excellence under her baton. The KU Band is proud to welcome them to the stage!

An American Elegy..... Frank Ticheli

Nearly 25 years ago the town of Littleton, Colorado was rocked by the events of the Columbine High School shooting. Ticheli was commissioned to compose a piece to honor those that lost their lives and to honor the survivors. In the words of the composer “I hope the work can also serve as one reminder of how fragile and precious life is and how intimately connected we all are as human beings.”

The work begins at the bottom of the ensemble’s register and ascends gradually to a heartfelt cry of hope. The main theme that follows, stated by the horns, reveals a more lyrical, serene side of the piece. A second theme, based on a simple repeated harmonic pattern, suggests yet another, more poignant mood. These three moods – hope, serenity, and sadness – become intertwined throughout the work, defining its complex expressive character. A four-part canon builds to a climatic quotation of the Columbine Alma Mater. The music recedes, and an offstage trumpeter is heard, suggesting a celestial voice – a heavenly message. The full ensemble returns with a final, exalted statement of the main theme.

For the New Day Arisen..... Steven Barton

This lively fanfare was written in 1997 to commemorate the opening of the George Washington Carver School in Chesterfield County, Virginia. It is written in 6/8 and frequently uses two versus three beats per measure throughout. The piece is presented in an ABA form with a drum section feature that leads back to the recap of fanfare.

Symphonic Episode I..... Satoshi Yagisawa

This work, commissioned by Shizuoka Prefecture Iwata Band Association, was composed in May 2008. The first performance, in October that year, was conducted by the composer, and performed by the festival band, consisting of selected members from junior high schools in the Iwata Band Association, as well as high school students and adults. The title was chosen by Atsuo Yamagata, the band director of Shizuoka Prefectural Futamata High School, and the work uses a fresh musical style designed to enhance the development of the association. “I” represents the initial letter of Iwata, as well as the number one, expressing the composer’s hope for a future series in the same style. *Symphonic Episode I* starts with a slow introduction and develops alternating fast, slow, fast sections. The slow part is full of emotion and reflects the composer’s characteristically warm chorale-line manner.

- Program Note from the score

Encanto..... Robert W. Smith

Robert W. Smith was a prolific composer of band music in the United States. With over 600 published works to his name, he is one of the most played band composers in public school band rooms across the nation. Smith passed away unexpectedly in September of 2023 from complications following cardiac surgery. *Encanto* (Spanish for “charm”) is one of his most played compositions. It opens with a brass fanfare and evolves into an infectious rhythmic statement. The opening fanfare reappears at the end of the piece and leads decisively to a powerful ending.

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Lauds.....Ron Nelson

Lauds (Praise High Day) is an exuberant, colorful work intended to express feelings of praise and glorification. *Lauds* is one of the seven canonical hours that were selected by St. Benedict as the times the monks would observe the daily offices. Three (terce, sext, and none) were the times of the changing of the Roman guards and four (matins, lauds, vespers, and compline) were tied to nature. *Lauds*, subtitled *Praise High Day*, honors the sunrise; it is filled with the glory and excitement of a new day.

- Program Note by the composer

Divertimento for Band.....Vincent Persichetti

Divertimento is one of Persichetti's lightest and most entertaining works. It was written in a log cabin schoolhouse in Kansas in 1949 and premiered by the Goldman Band in Central Park, New York City, the composer conducting, on June 16, 1950. In a June 1980 letter to Fredrick Fennell, Persichetti wrote, "*Divertimento* was completed in 1950 (but most of it was written...in El Dorado, Kansas, in 1949)...The work was not commissioned! I was writing a piece in which the brasses were tossing the woodwinds about while the timpani were commenting. I began to realize that the strings were not going to enter. I guess when strings do not enter into such a combination, one calls the medium 'Band.'" The word 'Band' has always sounded good to me...."

The six short movements demonstrate rhythmic and contrapuntal savoir-faire blended neatly with tongue-in-cheek humor and lyrical nostalgia. The work was Persichetti's first for band and is still one of his most popular compositions.

- Program Note by Norman E. Smith

Toccata, Adagio and Fugue Johann Sebastian Bach, trans. Paynter

Originally composed for organ, *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue*, BWV564, was written, as was the bulk of Bach's keyboard music, during his tenure at Weimar between the years of 1708 and 1717. The influence of Vivaldi is readily apparent in this stunning experiment with a concerto-like form in three movements. The well-defined outer lines and rhythmic precision provide further evidence of the influence of the Italian school of on Bach's contrapuntal style. In this arrangement, John Paynter has captured the dramatic blending of the clarity of the Italianate forms with the rich interwoven complexity of the North German organ style.

- Program Note from the score

Rolling ThunderHenry Fillmore, arr. Foster

Rolling Thunder is a great circus march, as breath-taking in its excitement as the action feats by horsemen riding full tilt around the narrow confines of a sawdust track under canvas. The track is known in the circus as the Hippodrome and the music played by the band to accompany the riding is invariably exciting and driving in its manner, and it is always played at an appropriate breath-taking speed.

- Program Note by Frederick Fennell