

UNIVERSITY BAND PROGRAM NOTES

NOVEMBER 20, 2023 7:30PM

LIED.KU.EDU/LIVE



The University of Kansas

Lightning Field (2015)..... John Mackey (b. 1973)

John Mackey's *Lightning Field* takes its title from a work of art by Walter De Maria. That work is a massive expanse, 385 acres, of New Mexico desert, claimed and transformed by the artist via an installation of 400 steel rods: planted in the earth and reaching toward the sky, they call down its power -- literally creating man-made lightning storms. Like them, Mackey's piece speaks to the ancient impulse to summon nature's power, and the magic such acts unleash.

A sense of energy runs throughout the work, with the driving onstage percussion enhanced by the sound of thunder (provided by inexpensive hand-held percussion instruments called "thunder tubes") surrounding the audience.

- Program Note from publisher

One Life Beautiful (2010)..... Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

One Life Beautiful - The title itself is a double-entendre which in one sense is referring to the person this work is dedicated to as in "one life" that was beautifully lived. The other sense is a direct observation concluding that having only one life is what makes life so sacred, tragic and so very precious. This is an impressionistic work musically describing that condition. Shakespeare's "sweet sorrow," the frailty and strength of life, the meaning of what it is to truly live *One Life Beautiful*.

The main theme, beautiful yet sad, seems to ebb and flow within the slow tempo of the piece. Although there is an abundance of agogic and dynamic markings throughout the piece, Giroux stresses that the work could be performed in a myriad of ways and encourages performers to play it with their "own heart, mind, and musicality at the helm."

One Life Beautiful was written in memory of Heather Cramer Reu for her "one life beautiful" that brought so much love and joy to our lives. The piece was commissioned by Ray and Molly Cramer, husband Phillip Reu and children, and brother Jeremy, his wife, Michelle, and children.

- Program Note from Wind Band Repertory Project

Three Ayres from Gloucester (1969)..... Hugh M. Stuart (1917-2006)

A three-movement suite written in the early English folksong style, this piece came into being as a result of the composer's fascination with an old 10th century couplet: "There's no one quite so comely As the Jolly Earl of Cholmondeley."

The resulting three compositions, "The Jolly Earl of Cholmondeley" [pronounced "Chumley"], "Ayre for Eventide," and "The Fiefs of Wembley," are in early English folk song style and are designed to capture the mood of the peasants and their life on the fiefs of Wembley castle.

- Program Note from score

UNIVERSITY BAND PROGRAM NOTES

NOVEMBER 20, 2023 7:30PM

LIED.KU.EDU/LIVE

KU

BANDS

The University of Kansas

...to the Wind (2014) Aaron Perrine (b. 1979)

Ideas for new works often present themselves in unusual ways. Because this piece was commissioned in honor of a 50th annual band festival, I decided to try to make a connection between the beginning of the band festival to the present. My grandfather was a band director in the 1960s, so I began the process of searching for connections to the past by speaking with him. We discussed some of the music that he programmed with his groups during this time (including many of his favorite Karl King marches), but none of this discussion added any clarity to the task at hand. Perhaps sensing my frustration, my grandfather advised, "Throw caution to the wind and write the piece!" As it turns out, the phrase, "to the wind," stuck!

- Program Note from score

The Witching Hour (2014) Randall D. Standridge (b. 1976)

The Witching Hour is a programmatic work for concert band which musically illustrates the time of night when dark forces gather to celebrate and do their mischief. In this piece, midnight is chimed, signaling the beginning of the terror filled night. Once the hour is chimed, "The Gathering...." begins, as the witches fly on their broomsticks to gather in the hollows of a darkened wood. As the second quarter hour begins, the witches invoke their powers during "Spells and Incantations." The witches begin to celebrate their dark ritual in the third quarter hour "The Witches Dance," a macabre parody of a waltz that begins to spiral out of control. The witches' celebration is interrupted by the final chiming, as they rush back to their lairs during "The Witches Flight." The piece ends with the clock chiming one.

- Program Note from score