

Spring 2021

Graduate Wind Conducting Recital Program Notes

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Recommended Citation

Purdue, Leigh Ann, "Graduate Wind Conducting Recital Program Notes" (2021). *Conducting Student Scholarship*. 61.

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Messiah University

Graduate Wind Conducting Recital Program Notes

Leigh Ann Perdue, *Conductor*

MUAP 621-TW

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Messiah University Graduate Wind Conducting Recital
Leigh Ann Perdue, *Conductor*

First Suite in Eb for Military Band (1909)..... Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss (1989).....David Holsinger (b. 1966)

Clouds (1994).....Anne McGinty (b. 1945)

Lincolnshire Posy (1937)..... Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961)

- 1. Libson**
- 2. Horkstow Grange**
- 4. The Brisk Young Sailor**
- 5. Lord Melbourne**
- 6. The Lost Lady Found**

Shenandoah (2019).....Omar Thomas (b. 1984)

Circus Bee (1908)..... Henry Fillmore (1891-1956)

Greater Harrisburg Area Concert Band
Parmer Hall, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

Messiah University Graduate Wind Conducting Recital

First Suite in Eb for Military Band (1909)- Holst's *First Suite in E-flat*, composed in 1909, was the first important original work for the wind band.¹ Holst's *First Suite in Eb for Military Band* premiered eleven years after its' completion at the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall by a one hundred and sixty five piece ensemble. Responding to the new desire for original works for band and composition contests, Holst based the suite on a three note melodic motive presented in the first movement's opening statement. The first movement, "Chaconne", favors the styles of Henry Purcell with the use of ground bass in the opening low brass and string bass soli. This opening melody is restated and modified throughout the different sections of the first movement. The second movement, "Intermezzo", accentuates new beginnings and styles for military bands with a brisk scherzando theme. Holst was able to show the more delicate side of wind band by incorporating many soloistic passages primarily found in the oboe, clarinet, and cornet but also the dexterity needed to perform the second movement as a whole. The final movement, "March", brings this masterpiece to an end in a comfortable and familiar style for the military band. Starting in a marcato march style, the movement shifts to the woodwinds' lyrical

¹ Battisti, Frank L., and Thomas C. Duffy. In *The New Winds of Change: The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band/ Ensemble and Its Music*, 15. Delray Beach, FL: Meredith Music Publications, 2018.

lines redolent of those heard in “Chaconne”. The movement is concluded with the two melodies intertwining in a grand ending.

Gustav Holst (1874-1934) was an English composer, performer, conductor, and teacher. Coming from a musical family, Holst began playing the violin as a child, however, he did not enjoy playing the instrument and started on piano as soon as he was big enough. Holst’s professional career began as an organist and choirmaster, giving him great understanding as to how the choir functions. After a very successful debut of his two act operetta, *Lansdown Castle*, his father sent him to the Royal College of Music where he studied with Charles Stanford. As Holst started to lose function in his right arm, he took up the trombone to continue performing. After the death of his father, Holst put down the trombone and focused on composing. Following continuous rejections from publishers, Holst moved onto one of his most notable teaching positions at St. Paul Girl’s School.² During his time as an educator, Holst continued writing for local ensembles and entering into contests. Holst also received high praises for the successful premiere performances of his pieces *The Planets* and *The Hymn of Jesus*.

² Lace, Ian. “Gustav Holst (1874–1934) | 1. The Early Years.” Gustavholst.info, 2019. <http://www.gustavholst.info/biography/index.php?chapter=1>.

On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss (1989)- *On A Hymnsong of Philip Bliss*, written in 1988, is a notable departure from the style for which David Holsinger became known in the band idiom. The slow, flowing, almost breathing melodies and traditional brass choir moments make for an emotional experience. *On a Hymnsong of Phillip Bliss* is based on *It Is Well With My Soul* penned by Horatio Spafford and composed by hymn writer, Phillip Bliss. Horatio Spafford was a successful real estate investor, lawyer, and devout Presbyterian church elder in Chicago where he and his wife, Anna, had one son and four daughters. Spafford unfortunately lost his four year old son to illness and soon after lost the entirety of his real estate investments to the Chicago Fire of 1871. Two years later, Horatio, Anna, and their four daughters planned a vacation to Europe. Horatio was held back for business but sent along his wife and four daughters aboard the S.S. Ville du Havre anticipating he would follow a few days later. Utter tragedy struck the family once more as the ship carrying Horatio's wife and four daughters was hit by the Lochearn, an English vessel, and sank. Days later, the survivors were able to contact their families. Anna cabled Horatio simply saying, "Saved alone."³ The father could only express his grief through writing, "When sorrows like sea billows roll..." and remembered that no matter to not dwell on

³ Hawn. "History of Hymns: 'It Is Well with My Soul.'" Discipleship Ministries. Hawn, June 7, 2013. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-it-is-well-with-my-soul>.

life's sufferings and coming to learn, "It is well with my soul". Hymn song writer, Phillip Bliss was so moved by this that he wrote the music along to the given words, making it the last hymn he composed. Following a train wreck involving Bliss and his wife, a note was recovered from his trunk reading, "I know not what awaits me, God kindly veils my eyes..."⁴ *On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss* was written to honor the retiring principal of Shady Grove Christian Academy.

David Holsinger, originally from Missouri, is a composer and conductor known for his exuberant tempos, colors, and styles. After his fifteen years serving as the music minister, worship leader, and composer with the Shady Grove Church in Grand Prairie, Texas, he became the inaugural conductor of the Lee University Wind Ensemble. In addition to countless other awards and accolades, Mr. Holsinger is a two-time recipient of the Ostwald Composition Prize of the American Bandmasters Association.⁵

Clouds (1994)- *Clouds*, written in 1994 by Anne McGinty, is a programmatic piece for the beginning band that tells a story based on the imagery of the different types of clouds found in nature. McGinty communicates cirrus clouds through flowing and wispy melodic lines provided by the upper woodwinds. Through the use of accents, cluster chords, rich textures, and

⁴ "On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss." Wind Repertory Project. Accessed January 19, 2021. https://www.windrep.org/On_a_Hymnsong_of_Philip_Bliss.

⁵ Holsinger, David. "David R. Holsinger – Composer | Conductor | American Bandmaster." davidrholsinger.com. Accessed January 19, 2021. <http://davidrholsinger.com>.

approximately ten seconds of improvisation for the percussion, the composer conveys the dark and foreboding thunderclouds. The section ends with the bells playing a repetitive descending eighth note line to clear the rain and bring in new hope. To end, McGinty replicates the thick, rolling cumulus clouds with ascending and descending eighth note lines passed back and forth between the low brass and the upper woodwinds.

Anne McGinty (b. 1945) is a flutist and prolific composer. As a flautist, she studied at Ohio State University and Duquesne University, performed principal flute with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Tucson Pops Orchestra, and in the TSO Woodwind Quintet. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the National Flute Association. Ms. McGinty has composed two hundred and twenty-five pieces with fifty of them being commissions.⁶ McGinty composes for all styles, groups, and abilities but she loves composing for middle school the most. McGinty studied under the tutelage of Joseph Wilcox Jenkins and was notably the first female composer to be commissioned by the United States Army Band. She is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. She is a recipient of the Golden Rose Award from the Women Band Directors National Association. McGinty is also featured in the “Who’s Who of American Women” and the International “Who’s Who in Music.”

⁶ Pease, Andy. “Clouds by Anne McGinty.” Wind Band Literature, June 18, 2013. <https://windliterature.org/2013/06/18/clouds-by-anne-mcginty/>.

Lincolnshire Posy (1937)- *Lincolnshire Posy* is a suite made up of six movements that include: “Lisbon”, “Horkstow Grange”, “Rufford Park Poachers”, “The Brisk Young Sailor”, “Lord Melbourne”, and “The Lost Lady Found”. Grainger collected “Libson” from the singing of Mr. Deane, an ailing workhouse laborer, in 1905. The first movement, originally entitled “Dublin Bay”, begins with a simple, cheerful 6/8 rhythm and depicts a young sailor leaving his love for Libson.⁷ In measure 36, the counter melody played by the horns is based on the first phrase of “The Duke of Marlborough.” Movement two, “Horkstow Grange”, is an English folksong in strophic form. The melody is presented by the horns and first saxophones and repeated throughout the different sections for the remainder of the piece. The third installment in Grainger’s work, “Rufford Park Poachers” was collected in 1906 and tells the story of a fight between poachers attacked by gamekeepers. With the use of asymmetrical melodies, uncommon rhythms, and constantly shifting time signatures, “Rufford Park Poachers” is one of the piece’s trickier movements. “The Brisk Young Sailor” was recorded by Gainger in 1906 and depicts the tale of a sailor coming home to his love. The fourth movement is also in strophic form with the melody first presented by the clarinets. The movement also features a solo in the baritone accompanied by the upper woods. “Lord Melbourne” is a war song. The movement, originally

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“Libson.” Golden Hind Music. Accessed April 2, 2021. <http://www.goldenhindmusic.com/lyrics/LISBON.html>.

entitled “Lord Marlborough” referring to the first Duke of Marlborough, opens in free time with the conductor giving a gesture for every beat. Such as “Rufford Park Poachers”, this movement was not performed at the premiere. The finale movement, “The Lost Lady Found” was noted by Lucy E Broadwood and sang to her by her nurse, Ms. Hill. With the lilting, 3/4 melody, this is in strophic form and recounts the story of a woman who is kidnapped by three gypsies. When her uncle was wrongfully blamed, condemned to death, and finally released, the villagers celebrated the lady’s return. As this movement was not complete at the time of the premiere, it was also omitted.

Based on folk songs Grainger and Lucy Broadwood collected in Lincolnshire in 1905 and 1906, Grainger explored the use of a phonograph and collected his recordings using wax cylinders, eventually collecting over 500 recordings. Composed in 1937, this piece was commissioned by the American Bandmaster Association to be performed at their annual convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.⁸ Grainger (1882-1961) was a piano prodigy born in Australia. Grainger was homeschooled by his mother. From her, he gained his appreciation for the arts. Starting as a pianist, Grainger moved to Frankfurt to continue his studies at Hoch Conservatory studying piano under James Kwast and composition under Iwan Knorr. After

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Battisti, Frank L, and Thomas P Duffy. *The New Winds of Change : The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band/ Ensemble and Its Music*. Delray Beach, Florida: Meredith Music Publications, 2018.

starting his career as a pianist and private teacher in London, he moved to Berlin to study with composer, pianist, conductor, editor writer, and teacher, Ferruccio Busoni. While touring with Ada Crossley, a contralto vocalist, he began collecting and transcribing English folksongs using the phonographs. Grainger arrived to the United States at the start of World War 1 as an Army bandsman where he played the oboe and soprano saxophone. He is recognized for his love of folk music, fascination of the saxophone, and co-creation of the Free Music Machine.⁹

Shenandoah (2019)- *Shenandoah*, 2019, is an arrangement of the famous folk song. This piece includes a variety of musical elements such as: dissonance, dramatic dynamics, body percussion, explorations of tone colors, and sudden tempo changes. The arranger, Omar Thomas, explains his piece best saying, “This arrangement of *Shenandoah* is at times mysterious, somewhat ominous, constantly introspective, and deeply soulful.” Thomas uses tension and release to add the moments of uncertainty to the piece as well as manipulating time signatures relaying an underlying feeling of discomfort. As the rainfall begins, Thomas invokes the image of the beauty of the Shenandoah Valley. It is not what is normally considered beautiful in nature as it is covered in low hanging clouds with often spurts of heavy rainfall. The brass interjections heard

⁹ “Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Grainger.” Wind Band Literature, November 23, 2010. <https://windliterature.org/2010/11/23/lincolnshire-posy-by-percy-grainger/>.

without signify the sun attempting to shine through the clouds, however, in the end the rain comes again.

Omar Thomas was born in Brooklyn, New York to Guyanese parents in 1988. Thomas is known for his works for jazz, and concert band, arrangements, and soulful use of rhythm and harmony. Omar Thomas is currently an Assistant Professor of Composition at University of Texas at Austin. Among his other vast awards, recognitions, and successes, Thomas was named the 2014 Lavender Rhino Award recipient by The History Project acknowledging his work as an up-and-coming activist in the Brooklyn LGBTQ+ community.¹⁰

Circus Bee (1908)- *Circus Bee* was written by Henry Fillmore in 1908. This blistering march features the fast fingers of the woodwinds, the robust sounds of the low brass, and a driving splash of color from the percussion. *Circus Bee* is named after an imaginary circus newspaper and also reflects Fillmore's love of the circus. The composer even ran away to join the circus three separate times. Fillmore also started the Shrine Circus in Cincinnati. He founded the circus to fund his Shrine Band. As he was well awaited with the members of the circus, as they performed, his Shrine Band would perform the music for the performances.¹¹ *Circus Bee* is

¹⁰ "Shenandoah." omar-thomas, n.d. <https://www.omarthomas.com/shenandoah>.

¹¹ Fillmore, Henry. Edited by Foster, Robert. *The Circus Bee*. New York NY. Carl Fischer. 2003.

performed in a march style, so the notes are separated. The march has a wide range of dynamics to feature different melodies in different sections. At the time of its' premiere, *Circus Bee* was the most difficult composition from Fillmore yet.

Fillmore's compositional career started at the age of 18 with his published march, *Hingam*. Fillmore also played the flute, piano, guitar, violin, and fell in love with the slide trombone in secret from his father who felt the instrument was sinful. Fillmore started his education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1901 and went on to write over 250 songs and arranged hundreds more.¹² Mastering the art of composition and becoming one of the most prolific conductors in Florida, Fillmore was also tremendously loved because of his sense of humor and outstanding personality. Fillmore also composed under eight other pseudonyms including: Harold Bennett, Al Hayes, Gus Beans and Henrietta Moore.¹³ While Fillmore was most noted for his screamers and marches; he also composed a plethora of waltzes, foxtrots, hymns, novelty numbers, and overtures.

¹² "Henry Fillmore." Wind Repertory Project. Accessed February 9, 2021. https://www.windrep.org/Henry_Fillmore.

¹³ Fillmore, Henry - Discography of American Historical Recordings. Accessed April 2, 2021. https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/mastertalent/detail/103881/Fillmore_Henry.