

5-2-2017

Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Christopher Hughes

Justin Cusick

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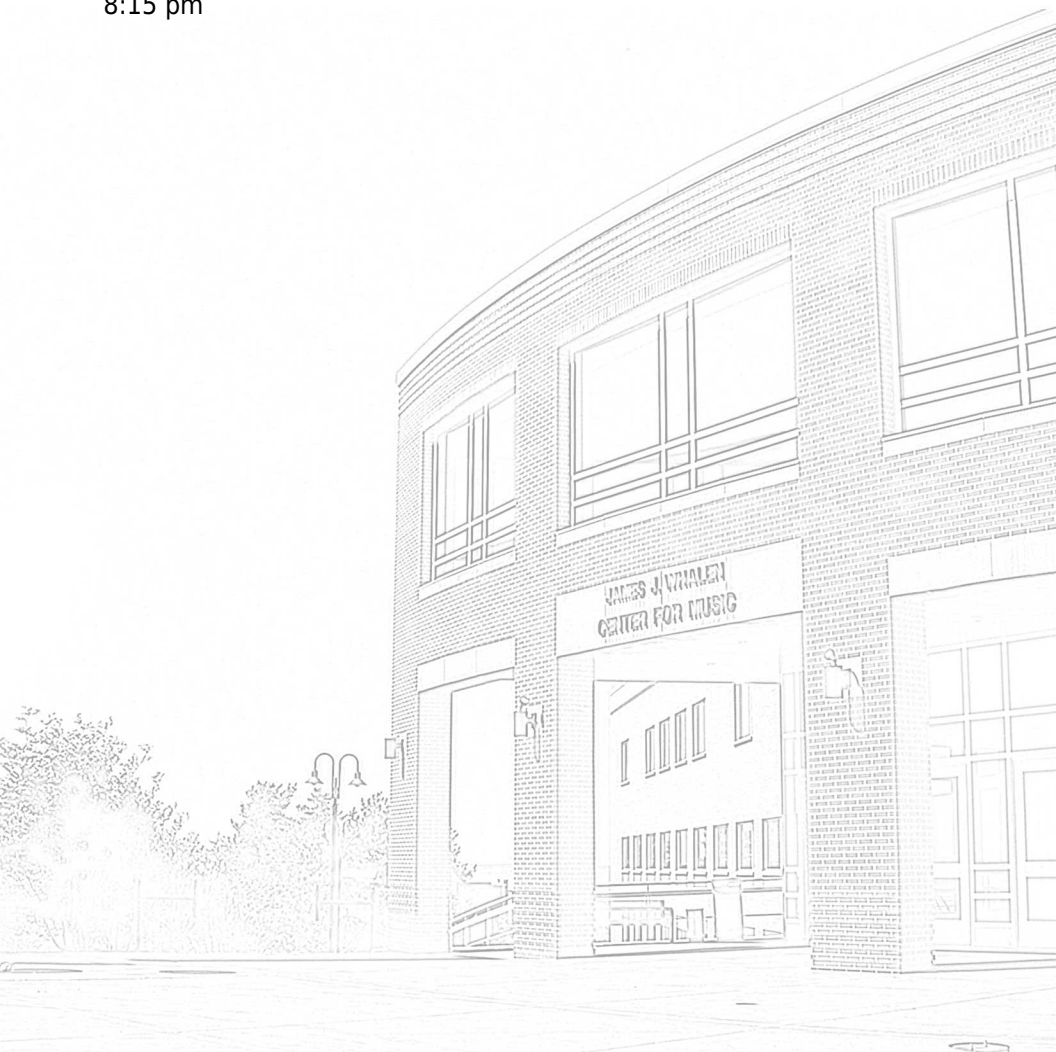
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Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Christopher Hughes, conductor
Justin Cusick, graduate conductor

Ford Hall
Tuesday, May 2nd, 2017
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Fanfare for the Common Man (1943)

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

Justin Cusick, graduate conductor

Dionysiaques (1913)

Florent Schmitt
(1870-1958)

Interval

Petite Symphonie (1885)

- I. Adagio, Allegro
- II. Andante cantabile
- III. Scherzo: Allegro moderato
- IV. Finale: Allegretto

Charles Gounod
(1818-1893)

Southern Harmony (1998)

- I. The Midnight Cry
- II. Wondrous Love
- III. Exhilaration
- IV. The Soldier's Return; Thorny Desert

Donald Grantham
(b. 1947)

Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral
(1848)

Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)
Trans. by Lucien Cailliet

Joined by members of the Ithaca College Concert Band

Personnel

Flute

Kaitlyn Laprise
Kathleen Barnes
Dana Herbert
Claire Park

Oboe

Ellen O'Neill
Morgan Atkins
Meagan Priest

Bassoon

Andrew Meys
Olivia Fletcher
Julia Ladd

Clarinet

Erin Dowler
Courtne Elscott
Nikhil Bartolomeo
Nicholas Alexander
Jeffrey Elrick
Madeline DeNofio
Bryan Filetto
Katherine Filatov

Saxophone

Deniz Arkali
Richard Laprise
Ashley Dookie
Matthew Snyder

Trumpet

Michael Stern
Shawn Henderson
Aleyna Ashenfarb
Peter Gehres
Stephen Russell
Averi Parece
Kristen Kasky

French Horn

Benjamin Futterman
Patrick Holcomb
Sydney Rosen
Elizabeth DeGroff

Trombone

Julie Dombroski
Dante Marrocco
William Esterling III
Sean Bessette

Euphonium

Christian Dow
Colleen Grady

Tuba

Jasmine Pigott
Steven Wilkinson

String Bass

Christian Chesanek

Timpani

Dan Syvret

Percussion

Lillian Fu
Ken O'Rourke
Corey Hilton
Katie McInerney
Alex Hoerig
Jacob Close

Graduate Assistant Conductor

Aaron Burgess
Justin Cusick

Program Notes

Fanfare for the Common Man: In 1942, in the midst World War II, conductor Eugene Goossen of the Cincinnati Symphony approached Aaron Copland with a request to write a fanfare. As assistant conductor of Thomas Beecham's Queen's Hall Orchestra during the first world war, Goossens had asked British composers to write fanfares with which the orchestra would open each concert. He wished to repeat this gesture during the current conflict, and engaged 18 composers to write fanfares for the 1942 - 43 season. Of them, only Copland's has stood the test of time. Goossen suggested to the composers that the works be titled after various allies and fighting organizations; some of the fanfares included A Fanfare for Russia by Deems Taylor, Fanfare for the Signal Corps by Howard Hanson, Fanfare de la Liberte by Darius Milhaud, and A Fanfare for the Fighting French by Walter Piston. Even Goossens tried his hand at one, with Fanfare for the Merchant Marine. But when Copland, who toyed with Fanfare for a Solemn Ceremony and Fanfare for Four Freedoms, finally chose the common man as his dedicatee, Goossen declared the work's title "as original as its music," and chose what he thought was a suitable special occasion for its premiere: March 12, 1943, near the time to file income tax. Copland is said to have replied, "I [am] all for honoring the common man at income tax time." Copland's fanfare is by now so familiar that it is difficult to assess what makes it so memorable. Copland himself knew he had something notable, and he used the theme again in the final movement of his Third Symphony (1946). Certainly it evidences the strong, spare open-fourth and -fifth harmonies that were so integral to Copland's compositions during this "populist" period. It is also remarkably slow, for a fanfare: Copland marked it "Very deliberately." It begins with a call to arms from the percussion (timpani, bass drum, and tam tam), then we wait for a full measure as the tam tam dies away. But it is the heroic trumpet theme that draws us in, with both its majesty and energy. The theme is soon passed between trombones and tuba, and then horns and trumpets. With each repetition and additional voice it increases in grandeur, until the work closes with a crescendo in the percussion matched by a swelling chord in the brass. The whole is one of those happy works that seem so 'right,' it is as if the composer had discovered a force of nature and simply set it to paper. (Notes by Barbara Heninger)

Though he is often forgotten nowadays, Florent Schmitt (1870-1958) was one of the most important French composers of the 20th century along with contemporaries Maurice Ravel and Albert Roussel. He won the coveted Prix de Rome in 1900 for a cantata entitled *Sémiramis*, and his subsequent travels took him throughout Europe, Turkey, Algeria, and Morocco before he settled in Paris in 1906. Traveling influenced his early impressionist style (learned from teachers including Massenet and Fauré) and his scoring became increasingly colorful and exotic. His output includes two symphonies, ballet music, film and stage music, vocal music, and many works for piano, organ, and chamber ensembles. **Dionysiaques** was composed for the 100-member Garde Républicaine Band in Paris in 1913, mere months after Schmitt attended the premiere performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Its own premiere had to wait until 1925 because of World War I but it has been performed frequently since the mid-20th century and it now stands as one of

the cornerstone pieces of the early wind band repertoire. The title comes from the "Dyonisia" - ancient Greek celebrations honoring Dionysus, the god of wine. He was thought to have provided man with the vineyard, and subsequently the harvest, winemaking, drunkenness and the means for mystical trances. The piece itself begins ominously as the low brass and woodwinds set the stage for an exotic and almost hypnotic journey. Schmitt's impressionistic tendencies are immediately evident; wandering melodies emerge in the woodwinds and gradually gain momentum. Their fluidity is slowly abandoned in favor of festivity, perhaps encouraged by the 'fluid' of Dionysus, be it red or white. The bacchanal eventually bursts forth, brimming with rhythmic vitality and a relentless insistence on partying all the way to the verge of control, and perhaps a bit beyond. (Notes by Cynthia Johnston Turner)

The music and sensibilities of Charles Gounod fluctuated throughout his life between the poles of sacred and profane love, often ambiguously. Well-educated in the theory, practice, and history of music, his earliest successes as a composer came with settings of the mass in an austere, a capella style inspired by Palestrina. A brief flirtation with the priesthood in the late 1840s gave way to an infatuation with the famed opera singer Pauline Viardot, who led him to switch to opera, but his first efforts, marred by an effort to imitate Meyerbeer, were failures. His greatest mass, the Messe solennelle de Sainte Cécile of 1855, with full orchestra and soloists added to the choir, was florid, almost operatic in style, thus blending the two extremes. For the next decade, Gounod was at the height of his powers, and his engagement by the Theater Lyrique in 1858 led to the composition of the five operas for which he is remembered today. Dispensing with Meyerbeerian pretense, Gounod embraced his natural gift for writing unpretentiously lyrical music, wedding it to familiar stories. His greatest success came with his 1859 setting of the love story from Goethe's Faust. Rejecting spectacle for its own sake and seeking to humanize even the lesser roles, Gounod mixed song types and singing styles, formal expression and informal, to musically delineate character in ways never before seen in opera. Though Gounod wrote little instrumental music, the two symphonies of 1855, the **Petite Symphonie** of 1885, and a handful of late string quartets are all skillfully wrought essays in traditional forms, graceful and unpretentious. We can be grateful to the flutist Paul Taffanel, who commissioned the **Petite Symphonie** for a Paris concert series devoted to wind chamber music. Gounod took the Mozartian wind octet consisting of pairs of clarinets, oboes, horns, and bassoons and added a single prominently featured flute to the mix. With an overall character of elegant conversation, the work features a Haydn-esque slow introduction to a lively allegro, and a slow movement like an operatic aria for flute over sonorous winds. In the Scherzo and Finale, the musical ideas are beguiling both in their charm and in the manner of their distribution amongst the players. (Notes by Ron Drummond)

In 1835, William "Singin' Billy" Walker's songbook *Southern Harmony* was first published. This remarkable collection contains, according to its title page, "a choice collection of tunes, hymns, psalms, odes and anthems; selected from the most eminent authors in the United States." In fact, few of the numbers in

the book are identified as the work of a particular composer. Many are folksongs (provided with religious texts), others are traditional sacred tunes, while some are revival songs that were widely known and sung throughout the south. The book was immensely popular, selling an amazing 600,000 copies before the Civil War, and was commonly stocked "along with groceries and tobacco" in general stores across the American frontier. From 1884 until World War II, an annual all-day mass performance of selections from Southern Harmony, called the "Benton Big Singing", was held on the Benton, Kentucky, courthouse lawn. The event drew participants from Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri and Illinois. The music of **Southern Harmony** has a somewhat exotic sound to modern audiences. The tunes often use modal or pentatonic rather than major or minor scales. The harmony is even more out of the ordinary, employing chord positions, voice leading and progressions that are far removed from the European music that dominated concert halls at the time. These harmonizations were dismissed as crude and primitive when they first appeared. Now they are regarded as inventive, unique, and powerfully representative of the American character. In his use of several tunes from **Southern Harmony**, the composer has attempted to preserve the flavor of the original vocal works in a setting that fully realizes the potential of the wind ensemble and the individual character of each song. (Notes by Donald Grantham)

Richard Wagner is considered one of the world's greatest composers. As a teenager he became very passionate about music after hearing works by composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Wagner drew on this musical inspiration and his familiarity with theater to not just compose operas, but to bring the genre to a whole new level. The legend of the Holy Grail is the inspiration for the opera *Lohengrin*. In the opera, Elsa is unfairly accused of killing her brother. Lohengrin, a knight and guardian of the grail, protects Elsa from any harm. The music heard in **Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral** is overflowing with medieval color and has an ageless elegance that has made this piece a repertoire standard. Transcriber Lucien Cailliet was a clarinetist in the Philadelphia Orchestra for many years and also served as associate conductor of The Allentown Band in Pennsylvania. This ensemble, with whom Cailliet frequently tested his transcriptions, is the oldest civilian concert band in the nation and has a proud history of talented musicians gracing its roster. His imaginative transcription of this bridal procession from *Lohengrin*, which dates from 1938, seamlessly combines the chorus and the orchestra into a setting that has proved to be one of Cailliet's most successful and popular adaptations for band. (Notes taken from Unites States Marine Band concert program on August 18, 2016.)

Our Conductor

Dr. Christopher Hughes is Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Music for the School of Music at Ithaca College in New York. Hughes serves as conductor of the renowned Ithaca College Wind Ensemble while leading the acclaimed graduate program in wind conducting. Prior to this position, Dr. Hughes served as Director of Bands and Graduate Conducting Coordinator at NM State University and as Director of Bands and Chair of the Conducting and Ensembles Faculty for the College of Music at Mahidol University, a conservatory setting in Bangkok, Thailand. Prior to his move overseas, Dr. Hughes held positions on the faculties at Lander University in South Carolina and the University of Colorado at Boulder. Hughes's former students hold conducting and teaching positions in China, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, The Philippines, Burma, Mexico and throughout the United States.

Born on Bloomsday in Aspen, Colorado, Hughes's interest in the expressive beauty of music began early. He decided to pursue conducting as a profession after experiencing the artistry of many of the legendary conductors who were in residence at the Aspen Music School. In 2005 Hughes was awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in instrumental conducting and literature at the University of Colorado at Boulder where he was a student of world-renowned conductor and Distinguished Professor Allan McMurray.

Developing an impressive profile that is both national and international, Dr. Hughes has conducted ensembles in concert on four continents including Europe, Asia, Australia and North America. He is also in constant demand as a guest conductor and clinician. Engagements have taken him to several US states, Washington, D.C. and ten foreign countries including England, Ireland, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Indonesia. In 2016 the NM State Wind Symphony performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington, D.C. as invited guest artists representing the southwest region of the United States. The ensemble performed at the 2014 NM Music Educators Association Convention and, in the October of 2015, gave the world premiere of Symphony No. 1 by Serbian composer Nebojsa Macura.

In addition to numerous performances as Resident Guest Conductor for the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Dr. Hughes led the Mahidol University Wind Symphony in a critically acclaimed performance during the proceedings of the 15th World Saxophone Congress. This subsequently led to an invitation for the musicians to appear as the guest artist ensemble for the Australian National Ensemble Championships. Hughes has conducted at the Southeast Asian Youth Orchestra and Wind Ensemble Festival in Bangkok, Thailand and the Honor Ensemble Festival of the Interscholastic Association of Southeast Asian Schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Hughes was honored to serve as guest conductor for the National Symphony Orchestra players of Taiwan during his invited visit to Chiayi City. In 2013 and again in 2014 Hughes ventured to China to conduct the Directors Ensemble of Guangzhou Province and appeared in ShanXi, ShanDong, and Chengdu provinces in as well. Known for his sensitive interpretation of music for large and small instrumental ensembles, Hughes's conducting has drawn praise from composers and conductors in the United States, Canada, Southeast Asia, China, and Australia. A champion of new music, Dr. Hughes has conducted numerous world and regional premieres and he has become a conductor of choice for contemporary works.

Dr. Hughes has, on several occasions, been included in the Who's Who Among America's Teachers publication and, for the past 13 years, he has been listed in Who's Who in America. He was recently honored with induction into Who's Who In The World. Hughes's affiliations include the International Conductor's Guild, College Band Directors National Association, World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, New York State School Music Association, Phi Mu Alpha (honorary), and Kappa Kappa Psi (honorary).