

10-13-2015

Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Matthew M. Marsit

Wendy Mehne

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

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Recommended Citation

Marsit, Matthew M.; Mehne, Wendy; and Ithaca College Wind Ensemble, "Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble" (2015). *All Concert & Recital Programs*. 1262.

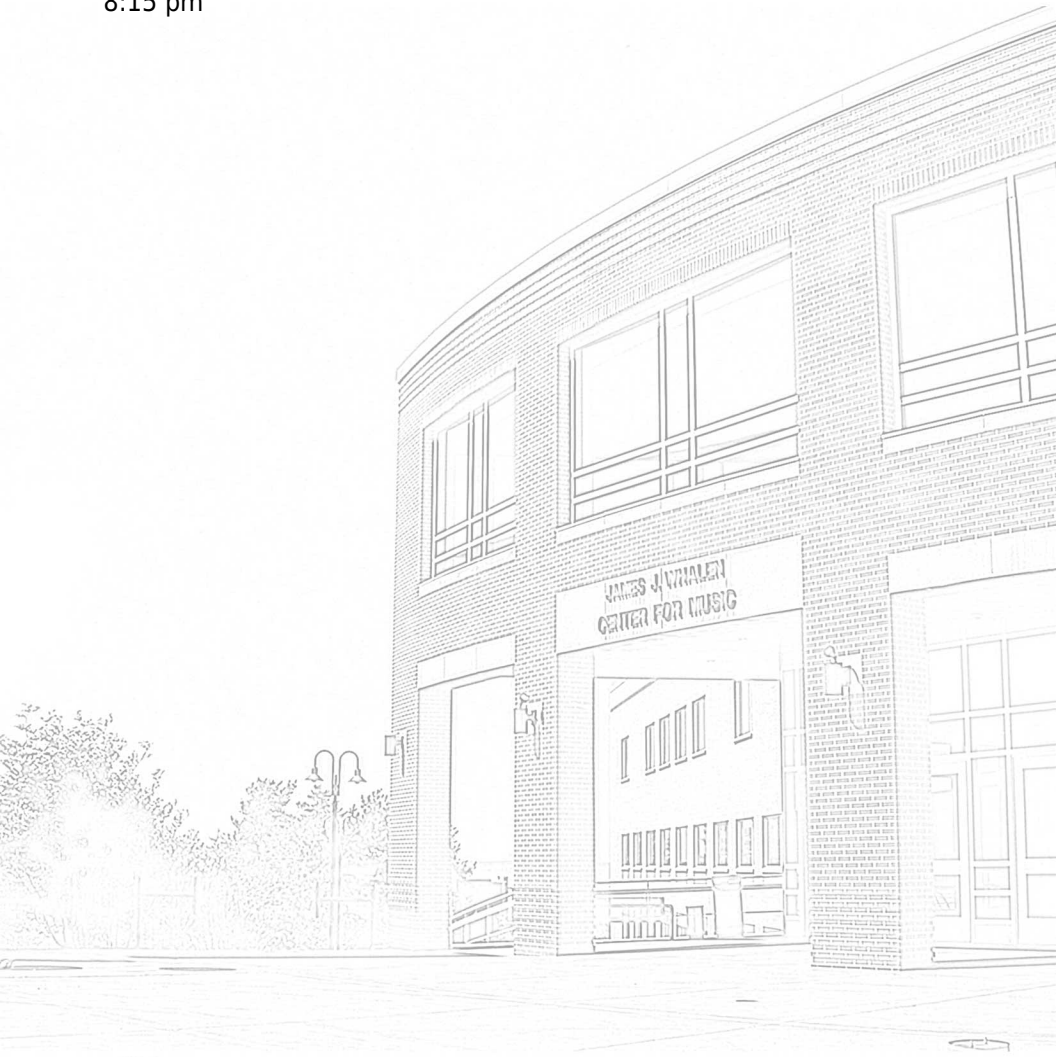
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Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Matthew M. Marsit, conductor
Wendy Mehne, flute

Ford Hall
Tuesday, October 13th, 2015
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Dark Tides

Music for Prague, 1968

Karel Husa
(b. 1921)

The Conjuror (2015)

Wendy Mehne, flute

Dana Wilson
(b.1946)

Intermission

Farewell (2008)

Adam Gorb
(b. 1958)

L'Homme Arme (2003)

Christopher Marshall
(b. 1956)

Biographies

Dana Wilson

The compositions of Dana Wilson have been performed throughout the United States and Europe, and in much of East Asia and Australia. Works have been commissioned and performed by such diverse ensembles as the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Formosa String Quartet, Xaimen Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony, Dallas Wind Symphony, Voices of Change, Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Syracuse Symphony, and Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra. Solo works have been written for such renowned artists as Gail Williams, Larry Combs, James Thompson, Rex Richardson and David Weiss. Most recently, his trombone concerto was commissioned by thirty-five soloists and ensembles around the country. He has received grants from, among others, the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, New York State Council for the Arts, Arts Midwest, and Meet the Composer. His music can be heard on Klavier, Albany, Summit, Centaur, Innova, Meister Music, Elf, Open Loop, Mark, Redwood, Musical Heritage Society, and Kosei Recordings.

Dana Wilson is currently Charles A. Dana Professor of Music in the School of Music at Ithaca College, and holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music. He is co-author of *Contemporary Choral Arranging*, and has written on his own compositional process in *A Composer's Insight* and *Composers on Composing for Band*. He has been a Yaddo Fellow (at the artists' retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York), a Wye Fellow at the Aspen Institute, and a Fellow at the Society for Humanities, Cornell University.

Wendy Mehne

Wendy Herbener Mehne is professor of flute at Ithaca College where was a 1995-96 Dana Teaching Fellow and the 2004 London Sabbatical Scholar. She is a member of the Cohen-Mehne Duo, a flute and guitar duo that is one of the School of Music's faculty ensembles, and principal flutist with the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra. With Pulitzer prize-winning composer, Steven Stucky, and colleagues from Ithaca College and Cornell University, she was a founding member of the new music group, Ensemble X. Together they made recordings of chamber music by Steven Stucky, Judith Weir, and John David Earnest. Dr. Mehne has been a guest artist and given master classes throughout the United States, and has performed with the Chautauqua Symphony and at the Skaneateles Festival. As a member of the Ithaca Wind Quintet, she gave the world premiere of Karel Husa's *Cayuga Lake (Memories)* at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Dana Wilson's *Mirrors* at the 1993 National Flute Association convention in Boston. She has also performed at Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Constitution Hall, the national ACDA and SEAMUS conferences, the International Guitar Festival in Fort de France, Martinique, numerous National Flute Association conventions, and in broadcasts by affiliates of National Public Radio and Public Television. Dr. Mehne is a contributing author for *Flutist Quarterly*, *Flute Talk* and the *Instrumentalist* and has recorded for Koch, Albany, Mark, and Open Loop labels. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Flute Association.

Christopher Marshall

Christopher Marshall is based in Orlando, Florida. In the years since his arrival from New Zealand in 2006 he has continued to carve out a successful freelance career, securing commissions from top conductors and performers around the world. His music has featured on concert programs in such venues as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Barbican in London.

Born in France of New Zealand parents, Christopher received his early music education in New South Wales, Australia. He holds a Masters Degree in Music with Honors from the University of Auckland, New Zealand and a Fellowship in Composition from Trinity College, London. He has twice held the Mozart Fellowship at the University of Otago, New Zealand and in 1996 was Fulbright Composer in Residence at the Eastman School of Music. Prior to taking up these positions he spent three years teaching and composing in the South Pacific island nation, Samoa, and for ten years prior to that taught English to Indochinese refugees in Auckland.

Many influences can be heard in Christopher Marshall's works, from Bach and Brahms to Webern to traditional Polynesian music, particularly Maori chant. The foundation of his work is the strong belief that music is primarily a means of expressive communication with the listener.

Matthew M. Marsit

An active conductor and clarinetist, Matthew M. Marsit has led ensembles and performed as a solo, chamber, and orchestral musician throughout the United States. Currently on the artistic staff of the Hopkins Center for the Performing Arts at Dartmouth College as Director of Bands and as the Artist-in-Residence in Winds at Williams College, Matthew has previously held conducting positions with Boston's Charles River Wind Ensemble, Cornell University, Drexel University, the Chestnut Hill Orchestra, the Bucks County Youth Ensembles, the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary and the Eastern US Music Camp. Serving at Ithaca College for the Fall 2015 academic term, Matthew is conducting the Wind Ensemble, plus teaching graduate courses in wind literature and heading the graduate wind conducting program.

A champion for new music and advancing the repertoire of original works for wind ensemble, Matthew has commissioned and led premiere performances from dozens of the world's leading living composers, including Christopher Marshall, Daniel Basford, Christopher Theofanidis and Louis Andriessen. Also an advocate for the use of music as a vehicle for service, Matthew has led ensembles on service missions, collecting instruments for donation to schools, performing charity benefit concerts and offering workshops to benefit struggling arts programs.

A native of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Matthew moved first to Philadelphia to complete his studies in music at Temple University, where he studied clarinet with Anthony Gigliotti and Ronald Reuben and conducting with Luis Biava and Arthur Chodoroff. Additionally, Matthew has studied conducting with some of the world's most prominent instructors including Mark Davis Scatterday of the Eastman School of the Music, Timothy Reynish of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK and Gianluigi Gelmeetti at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. Matthew also holds a graduate degree in Orchestral Conducting from The Boston Conservatory.

Program Notes

Music for Prague, 1968

Karel Husa's *Music for Prague 1968* is the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer's response to the Soviet Union's 1968 invasion on his native Czechoslovakia. In the first half of 1968, Czechoslovakia started reforms, now known as the "Prague Spring," to make their government more liberal and democratic. On August 20, 1968, the Warsaw Pact, led by the Soviets, invaded Czechoslovakia with over 200,000 troops, tanks and heavy artillery, and by sundown of the next day had completely occupied the country. Czechoslovakia did not respond to the invasion with its military. Instead, the citizens engaged in non-violent protests, which have become some of the most powerful examples of civilian-based defense in history. Husa, after learning about the events through radio broadcasts in the United States, was inspired to compose this most famous of his works, *Music for Prague 1968*, for the Ithaca College Concert Band. The composer presents these words to explain his piece:

"Three main ideas bind the composition together. The first and most important is an old Hussite war song from the 15th century, 'Ye Warriors of God and His Law,' a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years, whenever fate lay heavy on the Czech nation. It has been utilized also by many Czech composers, including Smetana in *My Country*. The beginning of this religious song is announced [sic] very softly in the first movement by the timpani and concludes in a strong unison (Chorale). The song is never used in its entirety.

The second idea is the sound of bells throughout; Prague, named also The City of 'Hundreds of Towers,' has used its magnificently sounding church bells as calls of distress as well as of victory.

The last idea is a motif of three chords first appearing very softly under the piccolo solo at the beginning of the piece, in flutes, clarinets, and horns. Later it reappears at extremely strong dynamic levels, for example, in the middle of the *Aria*.

Different techniques of composing as well as orchestrating have been used in *Music for Prague 1968* and some new sounds explored, such as the percussion section in the *Interlude*, the ending of the work, etc. Much symbolism also appears: in addition to the distress calls in the first movement (*Fanfares*), the unbroken hope of the Hussite song, sound of bells, or the tragedy (*Aria*), there is also the bird call at the beginning (piccolo solo), symbol of the liberty which the City of Prague has seen only for moments during its thousand years of existence."

What was originally planned to be a four-day invasion took nearly eight months. Even after a resolution was reached, the Soviets occupied Czechoslovakia until 1989. Just months after the end of the occupation, Husa returned to his native Prague to conduct a performance of *Music for Prague 1968*.

The Conjurer

“The Conjurer” was commissioned by and dedicated to a consortium of flutists lead by Gabe Southard who premiered the piece in April, 2015. This piece was inspired by the world’s shamanic traditions, giving it a ritualistic character without replicating any particular tradition. A shaman is a person who is believed to have a connection to the world of good and evil spirits. Typically, they enter a trance-like state during a ritual and practice divination and healing. A Conjurer is the equivalent English term referring to a person who has the power to call upon or command spirits by invocation or spell. According to Wilson, “the flutist in this piece is the conjurer, who in the first movement calls for the spirits. As they emerge, the spirits begin a ritualistic dance, hesitant at first but—with ever intensified conjuring by the flute—increasingly exorcising. Finally, the conjurer departs, having exorcised the spirits.”

Farewell

Adam Gorb is a prolific composer who has won the Walter Beeler Memorial Prize for *Metropolis*, the Purcell Composition Prize, and three British Composer Awards, among many others. Throughout his career he has taught at universities in the United States, Canada, Japan and many European countries and is now the head of the School of Composition at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. *Farewell* is the 2009 British Composer Award winning piece commissioned by the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Whales, which has been described by the British Composer Awards panel as a “... highly original work... beautifully scored, brave and epic. The climax is aurally devastating.”

A truly engaging and emotional work for both listeners and performers, Gorb offers these notes to better understand his addition to the contemporary wind band repertoire:

“Farewell is a large-scale symphonic Adagio lasting about twenty minutes. In this piece I’ve decided to split the Wind Ensemble into two separate ‘orchestras.’ The first ensemble consists of clarinets, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, tubas and harsh sounding percussion; and the music is predominantly desperate and anguished. The instruments in the second ‘orchestra’ are flutes, oboes, bass clarinet, bassoons, horns and more gentle percussion, and the mood is more calming and introspective. At first the ensembles play exclusively from each other, but eventually they merge and reach a massive climax focusing on a chord of D minor. At this point a third ‘ensemble’ is heard for the first time – the notes C and F sharp (which have not been played at all in the work so far). These notes are played ppppp and come to haunt the end of the work. The title refers to Haydn’s Farewell Symphony, but instead of all the players walking off leaving two instrumentalists to finish, here a solo oboe and clarinet step forward and quietly lament while the rest of the band quietly intone an eternal *modus in diabolis*.”

L'Homme Arme

L'homme armé was commissioned by Timothy and Hilary Reynish in memory of their son, William, and premiered in by the Guildhall Symphonic Wind Ensemble in 2003 at the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles in Sweden. The work is a set of variations based on the L'homme armé chant which has been used countless times by composers like Josquin, Palestrina, and Ockeghem, among others, because of its strong affinity for inspiring interesting contrapuntal accompaniment. The text translates to, "The armed man should be feared. Everywhere it has been proclaimed that each man shall arm himself with a coat of armor. The armed man should be feared." Marshall began writing this piece during the United States' second invasion of Iraq, and notes that he had to balance his intentions of the piece becoming a partial statement of his personal beliefs about war with his hope to honor the immense tradition of compositions based on this song throughout the past five centuries. Also, since some historical evidence says that this tune may have originated as a drinking song, it was important to him that the piece maintain an element of enjoyment and exuberance.

Though it seemed like an impossible task to balance these potentially conflicting ideas, he came to discover that they were more compatible than he initially thought. The element of war can be found in the sirens which open and close the piece as well as the rhythmic statements of Te Rauparaha's war chant "ka mate, Ka ora" (If I live, If I die), a "pleading" motif derived from a 'waiata tangi' (mourning song), and a brief march and funeral procession. His homage to musical tradition came in the formal structure of the piece: variations on a theme. Lastly, his 'enjoyment theme' can be found in the elements of dance and popular song which have been incorporated into the piece. Marshall's final comment about his piece is particularly telling: "Gradually I came to see that my three intentions for this piece were not entirely incompatible. In my research for a programme note I discovered the following curious quotation with which Pierre de la Rue (1460-1518) concluded one of his two exquisite mass settings on 'L'homme armé': '*Extreme gaudii luctus occupant*' (the extremes of joy can ward off sorrow). Perhaps one antidote to the sorrows of war can be found in the art and joy of music."

Program notes written by Richard Laprise and Kaitlyn Laprise

Personnel

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Piccolos

Kirsten Schmidt
Sarah Peskanov*

Flutes

Kaitlyn Laprise
Tom Barkal
Marissa Mediaty*

Oboes

Jake Walsh+
Melissa DeMarinis
Phoebe Ritrovato

E♭ Clarinet

Miranda Schultz

B♭ Clarinets

Brooke Miller+
Anna Goebel+
Nicholas Alexander+
Erin Dowler
Alice Hinshaw
Nathan Balester
Olivia Ford*
Kevin Harris*
Griffin Charyn*

Bass Clarinet

Vivian Becker+

Bassoons

Sonja Larson+
Cynthia Becker
James Smith

Alto Saxophones

Gregory Sisco
Deniz Arkali

Tenor Saxophones

Matthew Stookey
Jocelyn Armes*

Baritone Saxophone

Richard Laprise

Bass Saxophone

Matthew Stookey*

Horns

Jacob Factor+
Jeremy Strauss
Lizzie DeGroff
Shannon O'Leary

Trumpets

Matthew Brockman+
Joseph Brozek
Matt Venora
Alex Miller
Stephen Gomez
Michael Stern
Jonathan Tompkins*
Kristen Warnokowski*

Trombones

Ben Allen+
Matt Sidilau

Bass Trombone

Paul Carter

Euphonium

James Yoon
Danielle Wheeler

Tuba

Luke Davey
Andrew Satterberg

Timpani

Tom Smith

Percussion

Corey Hilton+
Grace Asuncion
Benjamin Grant
Derek Wohl+

String Bass

Alex Toth+

Piano

Ni Zhang+

*denotes involvement
in Husa only

+denotes involvement
in Wilson