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Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Cynthia Johnston Turner

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

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ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Cynthia Johnston Turner, conductor

Ford Hall
Tuesday, February 21, 2006
8:15 p.m.
PROGRAMME

Pantomime (1948)  
Pierre Mercure (1927-1966)

Octet (1924, revised 1952)  
Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

PAUSE

Toccata Marziale (1924)  
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Spin Cycle (2001)  
Scott Lindroth (b. 1958)

Toccata and Fugue in D Minor  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)  
Trans. Erik Leidzen
Program Notes

Pantomime

Pierre Mercure was a Canadian composer, television producer, and professional bassoonist who died tragically at the age of 38 in an auto accident. The integration of the creative media (a combination of theatre, music, dance, painting, and sculpture) was the axis around which Pierre Mercure's life and work revolved. He studied composition in Paris, principally with Nadia Boulanger and Darius Milhaud. In 1951, he was introduced to twelve-tone music by Luigi Dallapiccola at Tanglewood, but later rejected dodecaphony for his own more melodic, lyrical style. Influenced by Pierre Schaeffer during a second stay in Europe, he turned to electroacoustic music and, after organizing the Semaine internationale de musique actuelle (1961), returned to Europe to study electronic music.

Pantomime is a neoclassical work for orchestral winds. It was chosen for Leopold Stokowski's 1953 all-Canadian program at Carnegie Hall. Subsequently, many other Canadian composers were inspired to compose works for wind ensembles ranging in size but favoring the chamber-music principle of one player per part to the denser concert and symphonic band instrumentations. In Pantomime, Mercure utilizes a kind of spontaneous lyric expression realized through traditional forms. It is the best illustration of the composer's intention to develop a personal, independent style while remaining musically "objective," that is, by the study of contrasts in the lines, and the examination of form and new sonorities.

Paraphrased from the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada

Octet for Winds

'The Octet began with a dream, in which I saw myself in a small room surrounded by a small group of instrumentalists playing some attractive music ... I awoke from this little concert in a state of great delight and anticipation and the next morning began to compose the Octet ..." Robert Craft, Dialogues and a Diary, (New York: Doubleday, 1963).

So Stravinsky speaks of the genesis of one of the greatest works for winds. The Octet is set in three movements: "Sinfonia," a 'Haydnesque' sonata form with a slow introduction, "Tema con Variazioni," and "Finale." The innovations in this work come not only from its eclectic instrumentation but from Stravinsky's use of octatonic scales, particularly in the second movement, and harmonies that shift seamlessly from one tonic center to another throughout the work. He gives further acknowledgement to music of bygone eras by ingeniously incorporating fragments of the Dies Irae chant into the second movement before the first, third, and fifth variations. Like many variation works of the past, Stravinsky changed mood and character in quick succession. The second variation is martial sounding, the third is a waltz, the fourth a "can-can" and the final variation is a magnificent, majestic fugue.

The work was dedicated secretly to Vera Soudeikine, whom Stravinsky had met in 1920, and with whom he had fallen in love. She was eventually to become his second wife.

Paraphrased from Dr. Beth Fleming for the Symphony Silicon Valley Chamber Music
Toccata Marziale

Ralph Vaughan Williams is most noted for his compositions for orchestra, theater, and chamber groups; however, his two works for winds (Folk Song Suite and Toccata Marziale) demonstrate his impressive skill in scoring for this medium. Together with the two Holst Suites for band, this music forms a set which has become a traditional cornerstone of concert band literature. Composed for the commemoration of the British Empire Exhibition of 1924, the Toccata Marziale is a brilliant and elegant composition.

Spin Cycle

Scott Lindroth studied composition with Joseph Schwantner and Samuel Adler at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York and later with Jacob Druckman, Bernard Rands, and Martin Bresnick at the Yale School of Music in New Haven, Connecticut.

Lindroth's music has been performed by orchestras and ensembles in the United States and Europe, including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic. Since 1990, Lindroth has lived in Durham, North Carolina, where he serves on the composition faculty of Duke University.

Regarding Spin Cycle, the composer writes:

"Spin Cycle was commissioned by H. Robert Reynolds for the University of Michigan Wind Ensemble. This piece marks the beginning of a series of works which tend to have fast tempi, conspicuous virtuosity, and a generally lighter expressive character than some of my earlier work. My first musical ideas were swirling and spinning melodic figures which are heard throughout the piece. As it happens, these gestures circulate in a fairly rigorous cyclical pattern, leading to the whimsical title."

Toccata and Fugue in d minor

The Toccata and Fugue in d minor consists of a brilliant introduction, typically rhapsodic and ornamental, alternating slow and fast, followed by the fugue, the subject of which is a short three-note figure in sixteenth notes. Apart from transcriptions for flute, brass choir, saxophone choir, orchestra, violin, piano, and wind ensemble, this great work has enjoyed success in popular culture. Hollywood films such as Fantasia, Rollerball, Sunset Boulevard, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, and Phantom of the Opera, as well as the video game Gyruss, have all used some version of Bach's original work for organ.

In an influential paper ("BWV 565: a toccata in D minor for organ by J. S. Bach?" Early Music, vol. 10, July, 1981, pp. 330-337), Peter Williams argued that the work is not by Bach. He cites that there is no autograph score, the copyist who created the oldest known manuscript (Johann Ringk, 1717-1778) was a student-of-a-student of Bach, who had access to some of the Bach manuscripts and whose reputation is dubious, the work abounds in fermatas and dynamic markings, not ordinarily used in organ music in Bach's day, and lastly, that various musical passages in the work are simply too crude musically to have been Bach's work. William's views have more recently been endorsed in a book-length study by the musicologist Rolf Dietrich Claus. This view is further endorsed by the proliferation of undisguised consecutive fifths in the piece (no less than 10 bars in), which Bach was always careful to avoid. Even if the piece were a transcription of a solo instrumental work, these fifths still form an integral part of the work.

Program Notes compiled by Andrew Krus and Dominic Hartjes
ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE
Cynthia Johnston Turner, conductor

Piccolo
Melissa Bravo

Flute
Jacquie Christen
Mary Parsnick *

Oboe
Monica Eason
Emily Mure
Christopher Neske *

Eb Clarinet
Lauren Del Re

Bb Clarinet
Kaitlyn Alcorn
Will Cicola *
Meggan Frost
Amanda Kellogg
Caryn Poulin
Anne Woodard

Bass Clarinet
Kelly Bochynski

Bassoon
Katie Barker *
Jessica Tortorici
Jeff Ward

Alto Saxophone
Heidi Bellinger
Allison Dromgold *

Tenor Saxophone
Deanna Loertscher

Baritone Saxophone
Andrew Lawrence

Trumpet
Bridget Colgan
Gregory Harris
Lindsey Jessick *
Calvin Rice
Omar Williams
Tim Winfield

Horn
Chelsey Hamm
Carlie Kilgore *
Jenna Troiano
Rose Valby *
Gina Zurlo

Trombone
Megan Boutin *
Alan Danahy
D. Phillip Truex

Euphonium
Phil Giampietro *
Mike Vecchio

Tuba
Jessica Mower *
Susan Wheatley

Timpani
Valerie Vassar

Percussion
Matt Donello *
Jennie Herreid
Vincent Malafronte
Evan Peltier
Lee Treat

Celeste
Joshua Horsch

String Bass
Justin Wixson

Graduate Assistants
Andrew Krus
Dominic Hartjes