10-17-2006

Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Stephen Peterson

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Frank Battisti

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ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE
Stephen Peterson, conductor
Frank Battisti, guest conductor

Ford Hall
Tuesday, October 17, 2006
8:15 p.m.
PROGRAM


Apotheosis of this Earth (1971) Karel Husa (b. 1921)
   I. Apotheosis
   II. Tragedy of Destruction
   III. Postscript

INTERMISSION

   I. Sunrise: an infinite expectation
   II. Morning: all intelligences wake
   III. Afternoon: all hopes shot upward, ever so bright
   IV. Sunset: having lived the life imagined

Frank Battisti, guest conductor

Ballet Music from Le Cid (1885) Jules Massenet (1842-1912) Trans. Verne Reynolds
   I. Castillane
   II. Andalouse
   III. Aragonaise
   IV. Aubade
   V. Catalane
   VI. Madrilene
   VII. Navarraise

* World premiere performance
**PROGRAM NOTES**

*Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness (1724)*

This chorale was first used by Johann Sebastian Bach in 1724, when Bach began the Leipzig tradition of writing chorale cantatas. The melody itself is by Johann Franck, and dates from 1653. Bach may have written (or improvised) other chorale preludes on this chorale melody, since it was his custom to improvise on the chorale tune being used in the cantata he had written for each service.

Born into a musical family, Bach received his earliest instruction from his father. After his father's death in 1695, Bach moved to Ohrdruf, where he lived and studied organ with his older brother Johann Christoph. In 1723, Bach was appointed cantor at the St. Thomas Church and School, and Director of Music for Leipzig, positions which he retained for the rest of his career. During his first six years in Leipzig (1723-1729), Bach's most impressive compositions were his sacred cantatas (including Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness, written in 1724), and the St. John and St. Matthew Passions.

Bach's output embraces practically every musical genre of his time. As was normal at the time, his creative production was mostly bound up with the external factors of his places of work and his employers, but the density and complexity of his music are such that analysts and commentators have uncovered in it layers of religious and numerological significance rarely to be found in the music of other composers.

Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness, was arranged in 1990 by Alfred Reed, one of America's most frequently performed composers and arrangers. Reed died last year with more than two hundred published works for concert band, wind ensemble, orchestra, chorus, and chamber ensemble to his name.

*Apotheosis of this Earth (1971)*

The composer writes: The composition of Apotheosis of this Earth was motivated by the present, desperate stage of mankind and its immense problems with everyday killings, war, hunger, extermination of fauna, huge forest fires and critical contamination of the whole environment.

Man's brutal possession and misuse of nature's beauty – if continued at today's reckless speed – can only lead to catastrophe. The composer hopes that the destruction of this beautiful Earth can be stopped so that the tragedy of destruction – musically projected here in the second movement – and the desolation of its aftermath (the "postscript" of the third movement) can exist only as fantasy, never to become reality.

In the first movement, "Apotheosis," the Earth first appears as a point of light in the universe. Our memory and imagination approach it in perhaps the same way as it appeared to the astronauts returning from the moon. The Earth grows larger, and we can even remember some of its tragic moments (as struck by the xylophone at the end of the movement).
The second movement, “Tragedy of Destruction,” deals with the actual brutalities of man against nature leading to the destruction of our planet, perhaps by radioactive explosion. The Earth dies as a savagely, mortally wounded creature.

The last movement is a “Postscript,” full of the realization that so little is left to be said: the Earth has been pulverized into the universe; the voices scattered into space. Toward the end, these voices – at first computer-like and mechanical – unite into the words “This beautiful Earth”, simply said, warm and filled with regret...and one of so many questions comes to our mind: “Why have we let it happen?”

During the 2005-06 and 2006-07 seasons, orchestras, conductors, chamber ensembles and soloists worldwide celebrate the 85th Birthday of Czech-American composer Karel Husa. The award-winning composer/conductor enters his 85th year with "too many commissions to complete" and a true joy-of-life spirit as he continues to travel the world. Born in Prague on August 7, 1921, Karel Husa's life has geographically followed a course dictated by others. Narrowly escaping forced labor in a German factory in 1941, he continued studies at the Prague Conservatory until the final year of the war when all classes were suspended until Allied liberation in 1945. In 1946 he traveled to Paris, honing his composition and conducting skills with the French masters of the day and earning accolades (both as composer and conductor) from the international press. In 1949, the communist government of Czechoslovakia rescinded his passport, making him a man without a country. In 1953 he conducted the first European recording of Bartok's The Miraculous Mandarin. In 1954, famed American musicologist Donald Grout invited Karel Husa to America. Cornell University granted him tenure and he remained there nearly 40 years. In the ensuing years, Karel Husa was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music (Third String Quartet), the Grawemeyer Award (Cello Concerto), the Friedheim Award (Recollections), and the Sudler Award (Concerto for Wind Ensemble), among numerous other awards and honors. Like many of his generation, Karel Husa views America and its open arms as his home. The output of Karel Husa remains forever exciting, changing, and challenging. Of the 1987 premiere of his Concerto for Orchestra (a work the composer believes to be one of his most important) by the New York Philharmonic, Musical America wrote, "This is a work fervent and luminous... there is much in this concerto which recalls the intensity of Bartok and the mystical eloquence of Mahler... but there is no sense of the derivative in Husa's rhetoric; his language is personal and deeply felt."

With over 50 recordings of his music to date, the works of Karel Husa are certainly part of the musical fabric of our time.

**Day Dreams (2006)**

Day Dreams was commissioned by the Ithaca High School Band Alumni in honor of Frank Battisti. It is receiving its premiere performances this week at Ithaca College and the New England Conservatory. The composer writes:

This work, dedicated to Frank Battisti, is also based entirely on the musical pitches extracted from his name (FrAnk BAttiS[German Eb]ti) – the musical motive A B A Eb. In the true spirit of his pedagogical instincts, Frank asked...
that the work be performable by ensembles of varying technical ability, and I hope this has been achieved.

Day Dreams traces a metaphorical day. (The movement titles all come from Thoreau’s Walden — a place very close to where Frank spent a good part of his life.) The work begins with a dramatic sunrise. The second movement represents morning (or youth), and juxtaposes two extremely contrasting and perhaps irreconcilable types of material (an amorphous blurring with a precise, funk groove) typical of that stage of life. The third movement explores the afternoon (adulthood), a period of sophisticated balancing of life’s many forces. The final movement allows each player to say goodbye to Frank individually, but – true to his nature – he does not go gently. Nor do we want him to...

The works of Dana Wilson have been commissioned and performed by such diverse ensembles as the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Buffalo Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony, Washington military bands, Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Syracuse Symphony, and Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra. Solo works have been written for such renowned artists as hornist Gail Williams, clarinetist Larry Combs, trumpeters James Thompson and Rex Richardson, and oboist David Weiss. 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 compositions have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and East Asia. They have received several awards, including the International Trumpet Guild First Prize, the Sudler International Composition Prize, and the Ostwald Composition Prize; are published by Boosey and Hawkes, Ludwig Music Publishers, and Dorn Publications; and can be heard on Klavier, Albany, Summit, Centaur, Innova, Meister Music, Elf, Open Loop, Mark, Redwood, Musical Heritage Society, and Kosei Recordings. Dana Wilson holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music, and is currently Charles A. Dana Professor of Music in the School of Music at Ithaca College. He is co-author of Contemporary Choral Arranging, published by Prentice Hall/Simon and Schuster, and has written articles on diverse musical subjects. He has been a Yaddo Fellow (at Yaddo, the artists’ retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York), a Wye Fellow at the Aspen Institute, a Charles A. Dana Fellow, and a Fellow at the Society for Humanities, Cornell University.

Ballet Music from Le Cid (1885)

By the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, French opera had forever left its former association with the courts and nobility to become a lyric theater of the bourgeoisie. Jules Massanet, together with Ambroise Thomas, Charles Jounod, and others, created a number of operas tailored to please this new audience of shopkeeping escapolists. Massanet, in particular, was a prolific, workman-like master of sentimental lyricism, creating caressing melodies to encase his never really tragic figures in exotic plots and settings.

In Le Cid, based on both the Spanish drama of Guillen de Castro and the French tragedy of Corneille, Massanet took his audience across the Pyrenees to a colorful, eleventh-century kingdom. In Burgos, Spain, the opera, first produced in Paris in 1885, is known today mainly for its first-rate ballet music, and although a Spaniard might quarrel with Massanet’s
interpretation of the traditional dances of Spain – the Castillane, Arogonaise, Madrilene, etc – some of the exuberant, beguiling music has remained in the symphonic repertoire.

French composer Jules Émile Frédéric Massenet (1842-1912) was born in Montaud, St Étienne. In 1862, he won the Grand Prix de Rome and spent three years in Rome. His first opera was a one-act production at the Opéra-Comique in 1867. From 1878 to 1896, he was professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory. His greatest successes were with Manon in 1884, Werther in 1892, and Thaïs in 1894. A notable later opera was Don Quichotte, produced in Monte Carlo 1910, with the legendary Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin in the title-role.

Massenet used Wagner's leitmotiv device but gave it French lightness, a style considered by some to be saccharine. In addition to his operas, he also composed ballet music, oratorios and cantatas, orchestral works, and about two hundred songs.

Program notes compiled by Chris Dresko and Dominic Hartjes from notes by Dr. Raymond A. Barr, Verne Reynolds, Bryen Travis, Wikipedia and thep Grove Concise Dictionary of Music

GUEST CONDUCTOR

Frank Battisti is Conductor Emeritus of the New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble. Battisti founded and conducted the ensemble for 30 years. The NEC Wind Ensemble is recognized as being one of the premiere ensembles of its kind in the United States and throughout the world.

Battisti has been responsible for commissioning and premiering over 50 works for wind ensemble by distinguished American and foreign composers including Warren Benson, Leslie Bassett, Robert Ceely, John Harbison, Robin Holloway, Witold Lutoslawski, William Thomas McKinley, Vincent Persichetti, Michael Colgrass, Daniel Pinkham, Gunther Schuller, Robert Selig, Ivan Tcheripnin, Sir Michael Tippett, William Kraft, Robert Ward and Alec Wilder. Critics, composers and colleagues have praised Battisti for his commitment to contemporary music and his outstanding performances.

Battisti often appears as a guest conductor with many university, college, military, professional and high school bands and wind ensembles as well as a guest conductor/clinician and teacher throughout the United States, England, Europe, Middle East, Africa, Scandinavia, Australia, China, Taiwan, Canada, South America, South Korea, Iceland and the former U.S.S.R. Recently he has appeared as a guest conductor with the New World Symphony Orchestra, U. S. Marine Band and the Interlochen Arts Academy Band.

Past President of the U.S. College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), Battisti is also a member of the American Bandmasters Association (ABA) and founder of the National Wind Ensemble Conference, World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE), Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble (MYWE) and New England College Band Association
(NECBA). In 2000 he was appointed the inaugural conductor for the Tanglewood Institute's Young Artists Wind Ensemble. Battisti has served on the Standard Award Panel of American Society for Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and been a member of the Music Panel for the Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS) for the National Foundation for Advancement of the Arts. For many years he served as editor for various music publishing companies and is currently a consulting editor for The Instrumentalist magazine.

Frank Battisti's teaching career began as an instrumental teacher in the Ithaca City Public Schools in 1953. He was appointed Director of Bands at Ithaca (New York) High School in 1955 and remained in this position until 1967. He also served as chairperson of the Instrumental Music Department from 1961-67.

The Ithaca High School Band, under Battisti's direction, achieved national recognition as one of the finest and most unique high school bands in the nation. The concert band performed at the Ithaca College School of Music, Eastman School of Music, Music Educators National Conference (MENC), Mid West National Band and Orchestra Clinic (Chicago 1965), Rockefeller Center, the New York World's Fair (1964) and at other music conferences. In 1997 the John Philip Sousa Foundation selected Battisti's Ithaca High School Concert Band for their Historic Roll of Honor of High School Concert Bands. This Roll of Honor identifies high school concert bands whose musical excellence at the national level exerted historically significant influence on high school band programs. The Ithaca High School Band, under the leadership of Frank Battisti, has been hailed "as one of the truly great achievements of instrumental music education in the twentieth century."

In 1958 Battisti inaugurated the Ithaca High School Band Commissioning Works Project. From 1958-67, the Ithaca High School Band commissioned 24 works for band. Many of these works were published and have become part of the standard literature for the wind band medium. Composers commissioned by the band included Pulitzer Prize in Music winners Leslie Bassett, Karel Husa, Robert Ward, Warren Benson, David Borden, Carlos Chavez, Barney Childs, Walter Hartley, Vincent Persichetti, Armand Russell, Gunther Schuller and Alec Wilder.

Guest soloists and conductors appearing with the Ithaca High School Band while Battisti was conductor of the ensemble included Benny Goodman, Carl "Doc" Severinson, Donald Sinta, Harvey Phillips, The New York Brass Quintet, Jimmy Burke, Vincent Persichetti, Norman Dello Joio, Thomas Beversdorf, Clyde Roller, Frederick Fennell, William D. Revelli and Walter Beeler.

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE
Stephen Peterson, conductor

Piccolo
Melissa Wertheimer

Flute
Mary Parsnick
Megan Postoll*
Amy Thiemann

Oboe/English Horn
Luke Conklin
Meghan Kimball*
Alicia Rockenhauser

Eb Clarinet
Allegra Smith

Clarinet
Kaitlyn Alcorn
Will Cicola
Lauren Del Re
Kim Fleming
Amanda Jenne
Erik Johnson
Amanda Kellogg
Julie Pacheco
Caryn Poulin*
Mark Wolocki
Robert Yaple

Alto Clarinet
Marcus Christian

Bass Clarinet
Miles Jaques

Contra Bass Clarinet
Dominic Hartjes

Bassoon
Andrew Chapman
Amy Zordan Moore
Jen Meyers*

Alto Saxophone
Andrew Lawrence*
Hart Linker

Tenor Saxophone
Andre Baruch

Baritone Saxophone
Robin Jackson

Bass Saxophone
Michael Menzietti

Trumpet
Joe Brown*
James Covington
Christine Gregory
Carol Jumper
Nikola Tomic
Janelle Varin
Omar Williams

Horn
Michael Bellofatto
Michael Drennan
Rachel Haselbauer
Lori Roy
Andrea Silvestrini*

Trombone
Francis R. Cook
Mark Lalurnia*
Alice Rogers
D. Phillip Truex

Euphonium
Phil Giampietro*
Mike Vecchio

Tuba
Bryan Lewis*
Dan Troiano

Double Bass
Patrick O'Connor
Xander Lott

Timpani
Andrew Sickmeier

Percussion
Alan Dust*
Chris Ganey
Seth Nicoletti
Greg Sutliff
Lee Treat

Piano
Angela Triandafillou

Harp
Myra Kovary**

Graduate Assistants
Chris Dresko
Dominic Hartjes

* denotes section leader
** guest artist