

2-22-2017

## Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble "Songs and Dances"

Christopher Hughes

Aaron Burgess

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

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### Recommended Citation

Hughes, Christopher; Burgess, Aaron; and Ithaca College Wind Ensemble, "Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble "Songs and Dances"" (2017). *All Concert & Recital Programs*. 1700.

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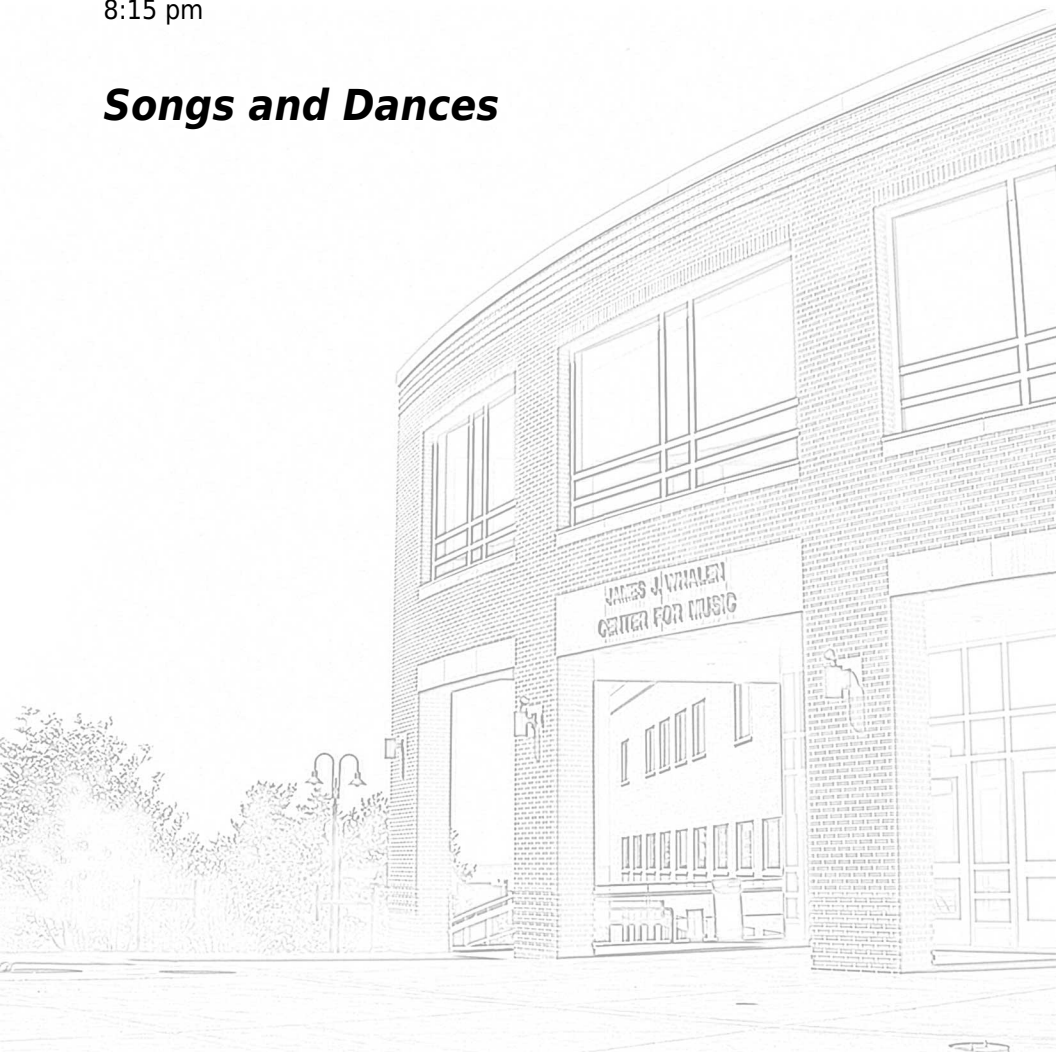
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# Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Christopher Hughes, conductor  
Aaron Burgess, graduate conductor

Ford Hall  
Wednesday, February 22nd, 2017  
8:15 pm

## *Songs and Dances*



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

# Program

- Fanfare pour précéder "La Péri"* (1927) Paul Dukas  
(1865-1935)  
2'
- O Magnum Mysterium* (1994/2003) Morton Lauridsen (b. 1943)  
Trans. H. Robert Reynolds  
6'  
*Aaron Burgess, graduate conductor*
- Circus Polka for a Young Elephant (1942) Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)  
Arr. David Raskin  
4'
- Come, Sweet Death (1736/1976) Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)  
Arr. Alfred Reed  
3'
- Serenade No. 10 in B-flat "Gran Partita" (c. 1781) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)  
20'  
I. Largo - Allegro molto  
III. Adagio  
VII. Finale

## INTERMISSION

- Arctic Dreams (1991) Michael Colgrass  
(b. 1932)  
27'  
I. Inuit Landscape  
II. Throat Singing with Laughter  
III. The Whispering Voices of the Spirits Who  
Ride With the Lights In the Sky  
IV. Polar Night  
V. Spring Light: Ice Floating In the Sun  
VI. The Hunt  
VII. Drum Dancer
- Dance of the Jesters (1873/1997) Peter I. Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)  
Trans. Ray Cramer  
5'

# Personnel

## Flute

Jeannette Lewis  
Kaitlyn Laprise  
Kathleen Barnes  
Dana Herbert  
Claire Park  
Stephanie LoTempio

## Oboe

Ellen O'Neill  
Morgan Atkins  
Meagan Priest

## Bassoon

Andrew Meys  
Olivia Fletcher  
Julia Ladd  
Emily Roach

## Clarinet

Erin Dowler  
Emma Grey  
Maggie Nobumoto  
Courtne Elscott  
Nikhil Bartolomeo  
Nicholas Alexander  
Jeffrey Elrick  
Madeline DeNofio  
Katherine Filatov

## Saxophone

Deniz Arkali  
Richard Laprise  
Ashley Dookie  
Matthew Synder

## Trumpet

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

## French Horn

Victoria Boell  
Benjamin Futterman  
Patrick Holcomb  
Sydney Rosen  
Elizabeth DeGross  
Jacob Factor

## Trombone

Julie Dombroski  
Dante Marrocco  
William Esterling III  
Sean Bessette  
Andrea Dollinger  
Ryan Kuehhas

## Euphonium

James Yoon  
Christian Dow

## Tuba

Jasmine Pigott  
Steven Wilkinson

## String Bass

Christian Chesanek

## Piano

Joon Sang Ko

## Organ

Christopher Davenport

## Timpani

Dan Syvret

## Percussion

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

## Graduate Assistant Conductors

Aaron Burgess  
Justin Cusick

# Notes on the Program

Paul Dukas' last major work was the oriental ballet *La Peri* (1912) about a man who reached the ends of the earth in a quest to find immortality and comes across a mythical Peri (an imaginary fairy-like being in Persian mythology), holding The Flower of Immortality. He steals it from her only to fall in love with her later on and lose the flower and his immortality with one kiss from the Peri. At the last minute before its premiere production, Dukas added this brilliant fanfare prelude for brass instruments. Today, this two-minute prelude is heard with considerably greater frequency than the ballet score as a whole. Some speculate that Dukas added the fanfare to allow the typically noisy audiences of the day time to settle down in their seats before the very quiet opening passages of the ballet began. - *Notes from the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra*

Francisco de Zurbarán's *Still Life With Lemons, Oranges and a Rose* normally hangs on a back wall of one of the smaller rooms in the Norton Simon Museum of Art in Pasadena. Like a large black magnet, it draws its viewers from the entry into its space and deep into its mystical world. Completed in 1633, it is the only canvas the early Baroque Spanish master ever signed and dated. We are shown a table set against a dark background on which are set three collections of objects: in the center, a basket containing oranges and orange blossoms; to the left, a silver saucer with four lemons; and, to the right, another silver saucer holding both a single rose in bloom and a fine china cup filled with water. Each collection is illuminated and placed with great care on the polished surface of the table. But it is much more than a still life. For Zurbarán (1598-1664) -- known primarily for his crisply executed and sharply, even starkly lit paintings of ascetics, angels, saints and the life of Christ -- the objects in this work are symbolic offerings to the Virgin Mary. Her love, purity and chastity are signified by the rose and the cup of water. The lemons are an Easter fruit that, along with the oranges with blossoms, indicate renewed life. The table is a symbolic altar. The objects on it are set off in sharp contrast to the dark, blurred backdrop and radiate with clarity and luminosity against the shadows. The painting projects an aura of mystery, powerful in its unadorned simplicity, its mystical quality creating an atmosphere of deep contemplation. Its effect is immediate, transcendent and overpowering. Before it one tends to speak in hushed tones, if at all.

In 1993 Marshall Rutter, then president of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, commissioned me to write a piece, in honor of his wife and their second anniversary that would have its premiere at the Master Chorale's Christmas concert in 1994. The Latin text for the Christmas Day matins responsory, *O Magnum Mysterium*, also celebrates the Virgin Mary as well as God's grace to the meek:

*O great mystery and wondrous sacrament,  
that animals should see the new-born Lord lying in their Manger!  
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!*

This brief text about the birth of Christ in the manger and the veneration of the Virgin Mary has inspired countless composers over the centuries, most notably Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), whose timeless Renaissance-era setting remains a beloved staple in the choral repertoire. I knew at once that it should be my text as well. For **O Magnum Mysterium**, I wanted to create, as Zurbarán had in paint, a deeply felt religious statement, at once uncomplicated and unadorned yet powerful and transformative in its effect upon the listener. I also wanted to convey a sense of the text's long history and theological importance by referencing the constant purity of sacred music found in High Renaissance polyphony, especially in works by Josquin des Prez and Palestrina. The harmonic palette I chose, therefore, is simpler and direct; the complex chords abounding in my *Madrigali* and *Canciones* are nowhere to be found here. Further, both the musical themes and phrase shapes in **O Magnum Mysterium** have their roots in Gregorian chant, with a constant metric flow and ebb. The piece seems to float, to hover in the air, due to a predominant use of inverted chords,

recalling the Renaissance practice of fauxbourdon. Inclusion of the *Alleluia* descant over sustained pedal tones references yet another characteristic of the era, and dynamics throughout are subdued, contributing to the aura of meditation and prayer. The most challenging part of this piece for me was the second line of text having to do with the Virgin Mary. She above all was chosen to bear the Christ child and then she endured the horror and sorrow of his death on the cross. How can her significance and suffering be portrayed musically? After exploring several paths, I decided to depict this by a single note. On the word "Virgo," the altos sing a dissonant appoggiatura G-sharp. It's the only tone in the entire work that is foreign to the main key of D. That note stands out against a consonant backdrop as if a sonic light has suddenly been focused upon it, edifying its meaning. It is the most important note in the piece. In composing music to these inspirational words about Christ's birth and the veneration of the Virgin Mary, I sought to impart, as Zurbarán did before me, a transforming spiritual experience within what I call "a quiet song of profound inner joy." I wanted this piece to resonate immediately and deeply into the core of the listener, to illumine through sound. **O Magnum Mysterium** had its 1994 premiere by the Los Angeles Master Chorale under the baton of Paul Salamunovich. Widely recorded with thousands of performances throughout the world since then, it owes much to its visual model, Zurbarán's magnificent *Still Life With Lemons, Oranges and a Rose*. This American composer, from across time and space, quietly tips his hat in gratitude. – *Notes by Morten Lauridsen, the wind band transcription of Lauridsen's choral score was completed by H. Robert Reynolds.*

It was early 1942, and George Balanchine had a commission from the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus for a ballet. Balanchine quickly contacted his friend and fellow Russian expatriate, Igor Stravinsky, and told him he needed a polka for elephants. Stravinsky was willing to take this on, perhaps because he'd made his name 30 years earlier as the shockingly modern composer of ballets, such as *The Firebird* (1910) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913) for the Ballet Russes, where the Rite's premiere had nearly caused a riot. Stravinsky quickly completed a piano version of the polka in February. Robert Russell Bennett was too busy to orchestrate it, so Bennett suggested Stravinsky hire film composer David Raksin (*Laura*, *Forever Amber*, *The Bad and the Beautiful*) to score it for wind band. **Circus Polka** premiered at Madison Square Garden in the spring of 1942, performed by the Ringling Circus Band and starring, according to the program, "Fifty Elephants and Fifty Beautiful Girls in an Original Choreographic Tour de Force, Featuring Modoc, premiere ballerina." Modoc, of course, was an elephant, and *The New York Times* reported that "Modoc the Elephant danced with amazing grace, and in time to the tune, closing in perfect cadence with the crashing finale." The act was a success and ran for 425 performances. Stravinsky later adapted the work for full orchestra and premiered that version with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1944. Befitting its subject, **Circus Polka** is brisk and bright. Stravinsky makes use of typical circus music sounds, such as thumping bass drum with cymbal or fleet piccolo lines, and frequently features the low brass, evoking images of ponderous elephants prancing. The work also includes an enthusiastic quotation from Franz Schubert's *Marche Militaire*, and a series of off-beat "stamps" bring the piece to a rousing close. —*Notes by Barbara Heninger, Boston Conservatory Wind Ensemble program, September 20, 2013*

**Come, Sweet Death** (*Komm, süsßer Tod*) is one of a group of sixty-nine so-called "Sacred Songs and Airs" attributed to J.S. Bach, each of which exists only in the form of a single melodic line with figured bass. These pieces were first published in 1736, some fourteen years before Bach's death, as the musical settings for a huge collection of 954 sacred songs and hymns assembled by Georg Christian Schemelli and edited by Bach himself. In 1832, they made their first appearance as an addendum to the 371 four part, fully harmonized chorales in an edition published by C.F. Becker. Ever since that time, there has been some disagreement among musical scholars as to just how many of these sixty-nine melodies were actually written by Bach himself, how many were merely arranged by him, or even if there were actually that number at all that were in any way composed or worked on by him. The standard Bach Gesellschaft edition, for instance, lists seventy-five such pieces, not sixty-nine, and, on the other hand, one of

the greatest authorities on German evangelical Church music, Johannes Zahn, claimed that only twenty-one of the sixty-nine (or seventy-five) should be considered as Bach's own work, and all of the rest credited to other composers. However this may be, it is interesting to observe that since the first separate appearance of this group of pieces in 1832, there have been at least eight other editions prepared and published by different authorities, and the melody of *Come, Sweet Death* appears in all of them. Its authenticity as an original work from Bach's own hand seems never to have been questioned by any of the compilers and editors of these collections during the past 150 years. For all of its apparent simplicity of musical construction (a small, two-part song form, played through twice), this music is deeply moving and of great expressiveness, culminating in an exalted singing line that perhaps signified for the deeply religious Bach the willing embrace of death as the final deliverance from earthly strife, and the entrance into eternal glory. In the present realization for winds from the original figured bass, Bach's harmonic intentions have been faithfully adhered to throughout, and except for specific choices of voicings and instrumental colors, very little has been added to one of the most lyrically expressive of all Bach's many creations. The first performance of this new setting took place on April 12th, 1976, with the University of Miami Symphonic Wind Ensemble under the direction of Frederick Fennell. - *Notes from the score*

A 1732 musical dictionary defined a serenade as "an evening piece, because such works are usually performed on quiet and pleasant nights." It was a genre favored in Salzburg in Mozart's youth, and he returned to it on occasion in Vienna, probably for the last time in the ***Serenade in B-flat Major***, the most expansive of his major works for wind ensemble, which at the same time could serve as a poster child for the elusiveness of historical facts. Fortunately, the survival of the autograph manuscript allows us to be certain of the musical text and of Mozart's authorship. However, the date "1780" on the manuscript and the description "Gran Partita" (a term that in Mozart's day indicated a large work in a number of movements) are additions by a hand other than Mozart's. In any case, the latest possible composition date is suggested by what appears likely to have been the first performance: a concert announced in the *Wiener Blättchen* for March 23, 1784, presented for his own benefit by the clarinetist Anton Stadler, "at which will be given, among other well-chosen pieces, a great wind piece of a very special kind composed by Herr Mozart." This sketchy but plausible information is reinforced by a passage in the 1785 *Literary Fragments* of one Johann Friedrich Schink, a visitor to Vienna in the spring of 1784. Under the heading "Musical concert held by Stadler, Clarinet Virtuoso," Schink praises the "brave virtuoso" and reports: I heard music for wind instruments today, too, by Herr Mozart, in four movements—glorious and sublime! It consisted of 13 instruments, viz. four *corni*, two *oboi*, two *fagotti*, two *clarinetti*, two *basset-corni*, a *contre-violon*, and at each instrument sat a master—oh, what an effect it made—glorious and grand, excellent and sublime! That description—and especially the specifics of the instrumentation—points fairly firmly to K. 361, though the reference to "four movements" suggests that the performance was abridged (not unusual at the time, especially with serenades and divertimentos). K. 361's instrumentation is as lavish as its time span, extending the more usual wind octet by two additional horns, two basset horns (alto clarinets, familiar to operagoers from two arias in *La clemenza di Tito*), and a double bass. The additional horns give Mozart wider harmonic options, while the availability of six upper-range instruments allows him a variety of melodic timbres while still maintaining a fairly full texture. And with so much sonority above, Mozart felt the need for a solid foundation an octave below the bassoons. Since contemporary contrabassoons were as yet imperfect, he specified the string bass, even calling for some pizzicato notes in the variation movement. Aside from the Adagio and Romanze in E-flat major, all movements are in the home key of B-flat major. The first, with a slow introduction, is lower in contrast and tension than would be usual in a symphonic context; its principal themes share the same head motive. The bassoon enjoys the spotlight in the first menuetto's relative-minor second trio. In the Adagio, an almost unbroken accompaniment of palpitating 16th-notes (over even eighths in the second bassoon and bass) forms a rich background for the upper winds as they exchange melodic phrases of operatic range and opulence. The first trio of the second menuetto

explores the parallel minor key. The Romanze (in 3/4 meter) is more homophonic than the earlier slow movement, and its central section (in 2/4) highlights bass horn and the bass instruments. A theme with six variations follows, in which the fifth variation recalls the tempo and mood of the Adagio and the sixth is a minuet. The concluding movement is a straightforward Rondo. - *Notes by David Hamilton, Carnegie Hall program notes*

**Arctic Dreams** is a tone poem for symphonic wind ensemble, inspired by the Arctic and by the lives and legends of the Inuit (the "Eskimos") who live there. I lived for a short time with an Inuit family in Pangnirtung, Baffin Island, just north of the Arctic Circle, and I was fascinated by their way of life, their humor, and their sense of mystery and wonder at the awesome nature around them. To me, the Arctic is like a great unconscious. Therefore, the title of Barry Lopez's wonderful book "Arctic Dreams" seemed also an apt description of this music. In the opening section, *Inuit Landscape*, a solo trombone represents the lone human being calling out over a vast space amidst the sound of wind and storm. In *Throat Singing with Laughter*, we hear the indomitable spirit of the Inuit through their sense of humor. Throat singing is a unique form of Inuit music, created by the rapid in-and-out-takes of breath on fast rhythms, which incites almost continual laughter in the singers and onlookers alike. In *The Whispering Voices of the Spirits Who Ride with the Lights in the Sky*, we hear mysterious mutterings that make a gradual transformation into "gossamer curtains of light that seem to undulate across the Arctic skies," (Lopez's description of the aurora borealis). The next section, *Polar Night*, is a montage of Arctic sounds (ghosts, wind, wolves), through which we hear the voices of Norwegian sailors whose boat is frozen in the ice for the winter. In *Spring Light: Ice Floating in the Sun*, the winter ends and the thaw begins with the light increasing to an almost unbearable brightness. This leads directly into the next-to-last section, called *The Hunt*. To the Inuit, spring is literally the resurrection of life. The ominous four-month winter darkness ends and brings back the caribou, their primary source of food. Following the hunt is a joyous celebration, led by the Drum Dancer. The sculptures of Karoo Ashevak, several of which are called *Drum Dancer*, were my inspiration for this section. **Arctic Dreams** was commissioned by Kames Keene for the 100th Anniversary of the University of Illinois Symphonic and Concert Bands, and to honor the retirement of my friend Jack McKenzie, dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts. I want to express my appreciation to The Canada Council for the Senior Arts Grant that enabled me to travel to the Arctic and do research and development for this work. **Arctic Dreams** is respectfully dedicated to Rosie Okpik and Enukie Akulukjuk of Pangnirtung. - *Notes by Michael Colgrass*

**Dance of the Jesters** is a prime example of Tchaikovsky's keen sense of musical nationalism. Originally composed as incidental music for the ballet *The Snow Maidens*, the dance forever captures the color and zest of Russian folk dance music. The ballet about the Snow Maiden, the daughter of Father Frost, tells of her forbidden love with a human, Misgir, who is already betrothed to Coupava. The Snow Maiden follows him southward with plans to interrupt his wedding, but tragically melts under the rays of the southern sun. The flurry, energetic drive and playful melodies associated with Tchaikovsky's ballet scores are all heard in this rare and invigorating music. This edition is derived from an arrangement from the ballet originally transcribed for Russian military band. Upon meeting Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in 1868, Tchaikovsky renewed his keen sense of musical nationalism. Inspired by the master composer, Tchaikovsky's compositional style would forever capture the color and zest of Russian folk dance and music. The flurry, energetic drive and playful melodies associated with his ballet scores are all heard in this rare and invigorating music. This edition comes from an arrangement from the ballet *The Snow Maidens* that was originally transcribed for a Russian military band. - *Notes from the transcriber*



## 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).