WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONIC BAND

TWISTED VARIATIONS

Saturday, December 2, 2023
3 p.m., Paul Davenport Theatre
Shawn Chabot, Music Director
Glenn Waugh, Graduate Conducting Associate
James Winchell, Graduate Conducting Associate

Galop
Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)
trans. Donald Hunsburger
(1932-2023)

October
Eric Whitacre
(b. 1970)

Third Suite
Robert Jager
(b. 1939)

I. March
II. Waltz
III. Rondo

Mary Shelley Meets Frankenstein: A Modern Promethean Tango
Erika Svanoe
(b. 1976)

Variations on A Korean Folk Song
John Barnes Chance
(1932-1972)

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Best known for his symphonic writing, Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich wrote a short comic operetta in 1956 whose plot centered around the Soviet housing crisis during the reign of Joseph Stalin. The Galop accompanies a chase scene between tenants and government officials around an illegally occupied apartment in the heavily subsidized neighbourhood of Cheryomushki in Moscow. In this transcription by renown American conductor and pedagogue Dr. Donald Hunsberger, the frenzied pace, whimsical nuances, terraced dynamics, and use of call and response perfectly capture the cat and mouse sentiment of the scene. Shostakovich wrote his first symphony at the age of twenty and amassed a catalogue of works which included fifteen symphonies and string quartets, two dozen solo works for piano, and music for opera, theatre, film and ballet. Following the premiere of his opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District in 1934, his often dark, minor focused, and Mahler-esque compositional style was heavily criticized by the Stalin government which led to a contentious relationship that persisted throughout his storied career.

Arranger Dr. Donald Hunsberger was a distinguished American conductor, composer, trombonists, and educator who was highly regarded as an expert in contemporary wind band pedagogy and repertoire. He spent 37 years at the helm of the famous Eastman Wind Ensemble where he premiered more than one hundred compositions including those of Karel Husa, Michael Colgrass, and Joseph Schwantner. He also worked and recorded with renown artists such as trumpeter Wynton Marsalis whose album Carnival was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1987. Dr. Hunsberger earned his bachelor, masters, and doctorate degrees from the Eastman School of Music where he continued to remain closely connected to right until his recent passing in early November 2023.

Choral composer Eric Whitacre describes October as a lush work for band that embodies the “crisp autumn air,” and the “natural and pastoral soul of the season.” Written in 2000, it was commissioned by a consortium of wind bands in Nebraska chaired by Brian Anderson. The piece opens with a haunting oboe solo followed by four distinctive melodic themes set in monophonic and polyphonic textures. Whitacre’s trademark use of suspensions, chord clusters, and rhythmic telescoping create moments of tension that build to several climatic moments. Following the return of the introductory oboe material, a gradual thickening of the harmonic texture and orchestration emerges culminating in a final peak that gradually resolves into a quiet and tranquil conclusion. Whitacre is a Grammy-Award winning composer who has an extensive catalogue of works written for choirs, bands, orchestras, and theatre. A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, he has held residencies with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and at Cambridge University, and is currently an Ambassador for the Royal College of Music in London, England. In 2010, he pioneered the virtual choir movement and has since brought over 100,000 singers from across 145 countries together in song.

Written in 1967, Third Suite is a unique three-movement work that takes creative and metrical license with the traditional march, waltz, and rondo. Although the March follows the typical first strain, second strain and trio form, it is set apart through its alternating 4/4 and 3/4 measures, with interjections of 5/8 meter for added interest. The Waltz gives the overall feeling of 5/8 through the interplay between 3/4 and 2/4 measures and features several pauses, interjections, and a complete style change in the coda for dramatic effect. The work concludes with a galloping third movement written using a similar orchestration, character, and dynamic style akin to that found in classical orchestral repertoire. American composer Robert Jager studied with William Revelli at the University of Michigan and then proceeded to serve as a Staff Arranger in the U.S. Navy. Having over 150 compositions to his credit, he has been commissioned by several prestigious ensembles including the United States Marine Band and the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra. Jager is also the only composer to have ever been awarded the American Band Association’s Ostwald Prize for composition three times.

Mary Shelley Meets Frankenstein: A Modern Promethean Tango (2019) was originally conceived as a saxophone quartet in 2015 by female composer, conductor, and clinician Dr. Erika Svanoe. The piece is a great example of programmatic music as it imagines a scenario where the young author meets her own creation. According to the composer’s own program notes:
“Mary, the author/creator, is depicted initially by the clarinet...and Frankenstein’s theme is first presented by the baritone saxophone, a half-woodwind, half-brass behemoth of the wind band. Mary is initially curious and sympathetic, while the creature pleads for compassion. They meet, circling each other in a dance reflective of a tango. In the moment when the two come together, Mary’s sympathy is overwhelmed by horror and she begins to panic, while the creature becomes furious with her rejection. With the final notes, we are left asking ourselves—who is the real monster?”

In addition to her compositional work, Dr. Svanoe is passionate about conducting and has held residencies with numerous universities and other bands including the USAF Heritage of America Band. Her works have been performed at several clinics and festivals including the American Bandmasters Association National Conference and the Midwest Clinic. She holds a DMA in Conducting from Ohio State University, earned her master’s degree at Oklahoma State University, and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. In 2014, she earned the top prize in the NBA Young Band Composition Contest for Haunted Carousel, her first major work for concert band.

Variations On A Korean Folk Song was written in 1967 by American composer John Barnes Chance and is based on the well-known Korean folk song Arrirang first heard by Chance while serving as a member of the Eighth U.S. Army Band in Seoul, South Korea. Chance first presents the pentatonic-based theme in its purest form in the clarinet section and then follows with five distinctive variations. The first consists of short bursts of sixteenth note motifs passing quickly from section to section, which is followed by a slower and more deliberate, Erik Satie inspired second variation featuring solos by the oboe and trumpet. In the third variation, he presents a rollicking 6/8 setting of the tune which elides directly into a more rhythmically augmented version of the theme set in 3/2 accompanied by the timpani. The fifth and final variation reintroduces snippets of the previous variations through canonic entries which transform into an ostinato that accompanies the return of the theme in the brass. Chance began composing as a young high school student and eventually studied with Clifton Williams during his undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of Texas. He also served as part of the Eighth U.S. Army Band in Korea and composed other well-known band works including Incantation and Dance (1960) and Blue Lake Overture (1971). Chance tragically passed away at the age of 40 after being accidentally electrocuted while working in his backyard.
**WESTERN UNIVERSITY SYMPHONIC BAND**  
Shawn Chabot, Music Director  
Glenn Waugh, James Winchell - Graduate Conducting Associates

**Piccolo**  
Sophia Brawn  
Serena (Ziqi) Liu  
Janice (Hoi Ching) Wong

**Flute**  
Sophia Brawn  
Emma-Leigh Devries  
Celia Carrasco Gil  
Nicole (Fong Lam) Iun  
Serena (Ziqi) Liu  
Heidi Renaud  
Jada Viggers*  
Shaira Williams  
Jake Winkler*  
Janice (Hoi Ching) Wong

**Oboe**  
Mateo Gomez

**Clarinet**  
Maria Con  
Amber Fox  
Clare Kneesch*  
Jerill Morales  
Justin Woong  
George Xie

**Bass Clarinet**  
Jennifer Rentner

**Bassoon**  
Logan Ouimet

**Soprano Saxophone**  
Emmanuel Papastamos

**Alto Saxophone**  
Autumn Brown*+  
Evan Cheng  
Joycey Cheng  
Nick Hertz  
Sam Logie  
Emmanuel Papastamos*

**Tenor Saxophone**  
Erin Bartlett  
Arsham Moayedi

**Baritone Saxophone**  
Carter McIntyre  
Mercedes Nebesnuik

**Trumpet**  
Abigail Cosstick  
Abby Bright  
Martin de Freese  
Jordan Dyck  
Mitchell Edwards  
Vanessa Gayle  
Kristine Guia  
Mia Haug*  
Nayli Kantule  
Austen Laprise  
Meghan Reesor  
Hailey Scott  
Rob Smith**

**French Horn**  
Chrysa Balaka*  
Ian Beausoleil  
Rebekkah Higgs  
James Winchell

**Trombone**  
Charles Amoah  
Ethan Esguerra  
Audrey Kagan*  
Sophia Ma  
Keaton Snow*  
Leon Yang

**Euphonium**  
Samuel Boudreau  
Michael Hegge  
Emmaleeah Noels

**Tuba**  
Owen Gariepy  
Callista Laffrenier  
Avery McCord*

**Percussion**  
Matthew Cinquina  
Liam Fischer*  
Cora Peters  
Rebecca Selman  
Glenn Waugh

*Section Leaders  
+Concertmaster