

MUSIC NOTES from the Concord Band

Since 1959

56th Season
the community band with a professional attitude

Fall, 2014

Box 302, Concord, MA 01742

(978) 897-9969

www.concordband.org

MONUMENTS

The Concord Band Begins 56th Season on Saturday, October 25th, with Fall Concert

Join the Concord Band as we celebrate our 56th year of wonderful music-making, embarking on a season-long exploration of some of the great works for symphonic concert band. Our Fall Concert, *MONUMENTS*, will be presented at the Performing Arts Center at 51 Walden Street in Concord, on Saturday, October 25, 2014, at 8:00 PM. The concert features music with programmatic undertones penned by American and international composers, and represents a wide variety of musical styles and genres.

Douglas E. Wagner's scoring of *Themes from Grand Canyon Suite* is a superb and accessible concert band arrangement of Ferde Grofé's wide-ranging orchestral composition. Included are four movements—*Sunrise, On the Trail, Sunset, and Cloudburst*. Wagner's arrangement captures all aspects of the original score, preserving the rich instrumental sonorities and orchestration highlights.

British composer Philip Sparke is one of the most prolific and commissioned composers "across the pond". He won the prestigious Sudler Prize in 1997 for *Dance Movements*, commissioned the previous year by the US Air Force Band. *Spirit of the Sequoia*, commissioned for a Swiss wind ensemble and first performed in 2003, depicts the grandeur and magnificence of one of the tallest of all trees, the Sequoia. Sparke states "the work is also inspired by man's ability to overcome personal tragedy, and draws the analogy of these amazing living giants ability to create new life despite great odds by dropping their seedlings following intense natural wildfires to germinate and flourish creating new life."

From the NBC Television Production "Victory at Sea" comes the music composed by Richard Rodgers and arranged by fellow collaborator and influential arranger for symphonic band, Robert Russell Bennett. This expansive symphonic scenario for concert band, was described by the *New Yorker* as "a seemingly endless creation, now martial, now tremendously moving".

Cited by Norman Smith and Albert Stoutamire in their research publication *Band Music Notes*, "it is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of Robert Russell Bennett to the musical scene, particu-



K2 is both the second-highest mountain on earth and the subject and title of a piece by Julie Giroux on the Concord Band's Fall Concert program.

larly the American musical theater". Bennett's artful arrangements and compositions are credited with having created the "Broadway sound" with over 200 arrangements for the stage.

Threnos (A Song of Lamentation based on the Gettysburg Address) by Daniel Bukvich is a powerful and moving work that contains aleatoric (chance) performance techniques. The composer writes "A fascinating recent study examines the rhythm and words that Lincoln used, researching the drama and implications of their rhythmic content. These rhythmic implications are the basis of the effective and dramatic work, beginning, appropriately enough, with *Four Score and Seven*".

Eiffel Tower Polka comes from the one-act Ballet, *The Wedding Party on the Eiffel Tower*, with music composed by five members of *Les Six*—Georges Auric, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc and Germaine Tailleferre. This arrangement by Poulenc for two cornets and concert band is a delightful and light ren-

dering of the traditional Polka style.

The dictionary defines the word "monument" as "something designed and built as a lasting public tribute to a person, a group of people, or an event. A site or structure that is preserved because of its historical, cultural, or aesthetic importance." Robert W. Smith composed *Monument* with these definitions in mind, and writes in the published score "inspired by the poem *Spirit that Form'd this Scene* from Walt Whitman's *The Leaves of Grass*." Whitman wrote this beautiful prose as he overlooked the panoramic landscape in Platte Canyon, Colorado. Bringing to mind images of Colorado's awe-inspiring state parks, this colorful and moving work contains four distinct movements—*To Touch the Sky, Cloud Dances, Colorado Dreams, and Pioneer Spirit and Celebration*.

Unique among many American composers, Karl L. King penned over 300 works, including his 188 famous marches. Known for his love of melodies, King made sure that many of his best melodies were written in the low brass section (King was a euphonium player). While *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite* (a wildly fast Circus March) is his best known composition, his 1943 *Bunker Hill March* remains a favorite of march fans.

The music of Massachusetts native and Emmy-award-winning composer, Julie Ann Giroux, has become a favorite of the Concord Band. Her *Boston Liberties* was commissioned by the Band in 2002. Giroux's compositions span a wide range of difficulty, from pieces intended for beginning bands to those that assume the skill level of professional wind ensembles and military bands. In the program notes for *K2 The Savage Mountain* Giroux writes "K2 is massive, beautiful, and literally, can take your breath away. It calls to mountain climbers around the world with the song of a deadly siren. Most heed its warning, but few will not be thwarted. Seventy-three percent will make it to the top and will come down changed forever." JRO ♪

Full 2014–2015 Schedule

For the first time, this Newsletter mailing includes a complete schedule for the coming concert year. It is in a form suitable for display on a bulletin board or the kitchen refrigerator. We hope that the availability of this card will facilitate your attendance at several of our 2014–2015 concerts. ♪

Building the Concert Band Audience

The Concord Band has multiple objectives, and we continue to make progress on most of them.

For example, we continue to be one of the leading forces among community concert bands, world-wide, in the commissioning of new music for this ensemble.

The Concord Band, probably more than ever before, continues to present the very best in concert band music to the public in our area at reasonable cost. Why more than before? We now tackle great pieces of music for symphonic wind ensemble that would have been considered beyond our capability just a few years ago. For example, *Aerial Fantasy*, by Michael A. Mogensen, presented on our Winter, 2014, Concert program, was commissioned by the Washington, DC-based Air Force Band. Since its members are all professional musicians, they, according to Mogensen, “could play anything” he wrote—and he admits that this is a difficult piece to play.

One significant area where the Concord Band has not achieved its objective is in building our audience. And we are not alone among concert bands in this respect. Probably the best symphonic wind ensemble in New England, now that the Air Force Band of Liberty no longer exists, is the Metropolitan Wind Symphony—like the Concord Band, a community band with no paid members. However, many of its members were either trained as music performers or as music teachers. They are a wonderful group, but they have as much trouble building an audience as does the Concord Band.

Just as there is an audience for what community orchestras deliver at their formal concerts, one would like to believe that there is an audience for what serious community symphonic wind ensembles deliver at ours. Why do better community bands have a hard time building their audiences? We suggest that there are four principal reasons.

It's Time to Make Your Concord Band **Holiday Pops** Reservations

Now is the time to make your reservations for the Concord Band's annual **Holiday Pops** concerts, to be held at the Performing Arts Center at 51 Walden Street in Concord on December 12th and 13th at 8:00 PM.

There's no better way to celebrate the holiday season than to enjoy an evening of great music and fun in the festive 51 Walden holiday atmosphere! Holiday Pops with the Concord Band has become a tradition with many area families and sells out early. Seating at tables is priced at \$25 per adult and \$15 per child (under 12), including beverages and snacks. Return your reservation card today! Holiday Pops reservations can also be made by visiting concordband.org or by calling 978-897-9969. ♪

First, there are very few professional wind ensembles in the United States. Aside from military bands, the number of which has been in decline in recent years, there are essentially none. On the other hand, cities of almost any size have had their own professional orchestras for many decades. Such orchestras educate the public about composers and their music and create demand for community orchestra concerts.

John Philip Sousa wrote 136 marches for band.

Joseph Haydn wrote 106 symphonies for orchestra.

Second, as suggested by Roger Cichy, who writes prolifically for both band and orchestra, the latter is more interesting to watch. Except for our trombonists, percussionists, one string bass player and an occasional harpist, all of our musicians play their instruments only with the mouth and fingers, not providing much of visual interest to the audience. At the same time, the orchestra provides a greater variety of sound types than does the concert band.

Third, the instrumentation of the orchestra, as it is constituted today, has been fundamentally unchanged for the past 300 years, or so. This also means that its repertoire has been that long in development. On the other hand, the age of the concert band and its repertoire is less than 150 years. Like orchestras, concert bands present symphonies, tone poems, marches, suites, *concerti*, *concerti grossi*, as well as vocal and choral works.

While the public has a strong sense of their favorite orchestral composers and works, they know almost nothing about the composers of music for symphonic wind ensemble or their compositions. For example, how many people know that the Mogensen piece mentioned earlier was nominated for a Pulitzer prize in 2007? Roger Cichy, an outstanding composer who has written 74 pieces for band, including an



John Philip Sousa conducted the Marine Band (1880–1892) and the Sousa Band (1892–1931).

excellent commission to honor the Concord Band's 50th anniversary, is virtually unknown outside of musical circles.

Finally, we feel that the concert band suffers from its *image*. How does the public view the concert band? Most recognize that a concert band does not march. The Concord Band gives three kinds of concerts: formal concerts, pops concerts and outdoor concerts during the summer. Attendance is greatest at our summer concerts, less at our pops concerts and least at our formal concerts—where we play the best music available for concert band. At our pops and summer concerts we play a mix of marches, seasonal music, show music and novelties. Here's a photo of part of a typical Concord Band summer concert audience at Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, MA. When the weather is just right, our Fruitlands audience can reach 1,000 or more.



For many, to whom the “concert” in concert band is of little importance, what they are expecting from a band is very likely what occurs outdoors on a warm summer evening when the Concord Band is in concert at Fruitlands Museum.

When reading or hearing the name, “John Philip Sousa” (1854–1932), most people immediately think of bands, parades, and/or marches. He became popularly known as “The March King” for his having written 136 marches for band, mostly of the American military and patriotic variety. By contrast, Joseph Haydn, one of the most prolific composers of works for orchestra still played today, wrote 106 *symphonies* for that ensemble.

While the cost of building our audience has not, until now, been a major factor in the economics of Concord Band operations, it does cost more than \$40,000 a year to run the Band. To help out financially, please write a check for as much as you can afford and mail it in the enclosed envelope. If you have no return envelope, simply send your check to P. O. Box 302, Concord, MA 01742. As the Concord Band is an IRS-qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your contribution to the Band is tax exempt. ♪

The Concord Band Concerts at 51 Walden **FALL CONCERT**

Saturday, October 25th
8:00 PM

HOLIDAY POPS

Friday and Saturday
Dec. 12th & 13th, 8:00 PM
For reservations: use enclosed
reservation card, visit concordband.org
or call (978) 897-9969