The Luther College Music Department

Presents

CONCERT BAND

Cory Near, conductor
Sunday, November 7, 2021; 4:00 p.m.

“In Memorium”

Variations on “America” Charles Ives /orch. Schuman/trans. Rhoads
Bach’s Fugue à la Gigue
Colonial Song

Percy Aldridge Grainger
In Memory of Dr. Joan deAlbuquerque

~intermission~

Symphony No. 2
I. Shooting Stars
II. Dreams Under a New Moon
III. Apollo Unleashed

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)
Program Notes

Composition: Variations on “America”

Composer: Charles Ives

Born: 1874

Died: 1954

Arrangers: Orchestrated by Schuman & Transcribed by Rhoads

Duration: 7 minutes

This remarkable set, composed when he was about 18, Ives later described as “but a boy’s work, partly serious and partly in fun.” These variations serve, however, as perhaps the most comprehensive illustration of Ives’s youthful sweep of style.

After a snappy figural variation, we hear a sinuous barbershop setting, a jaunty European cavalry march, a “midway” polonaise, and a scherzo. As importantly, the set shows his already prodigious ability as a soloist. For instance, the pedal passages in the requisitely virtuosic finale, which is the heart to the telltale cross-rhythm of the new ragtime.

Program Note by Jonathan Elkus

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Composition: Fugue à la Gigue

Composer: J.S. Bach

Born: 1685

Died: 1750

Arrangers: Transcribed by Holst, Edited by Mitchell

Duration: 4 minutes

...For centuries [Fugue à la Gigue] was thought to have been an early work dating from Bach’s Mühlhausen years, but today it is considered to be spurious. Holst himself gave the title “Bach’s Fugue à la Gigue” to the work.

Holst completed his military band version in May of 1928 and on July 22 of that same year he conducted it on a special B.B.C. Wireless Military Band broadcast featuring his own works. An immediate hit, “Bach’s Fugue à la Gigue” received a “record post” from listeners. Both the orchestra and military band versions were published in 1929.

Program note by Jon Ceander Mitchell
Composition: Colonial Song

Composer: Percy Aldridge Grainger

Born: 1882

Died: 1961

Duration: 6 minutes

In a letter to Frederick Fennell, Grainger explains that his “Colonial Song” was “an attempt to write a melody as typical of the Australian countryside as Stephen Foster’s exquisite songs are typical of rural America.” The main tune of the work, which is presented by solo saxophone shortly into the piece, makes appearances in two other Grainger compositions (“Australian Up-Country Tune” and “Gumsuckers March”) but it makes its biggest splash here, as it grows from a wistful tune into a fully romanticized tumbling of low reeds and brasses before returning to the material and texture that began the work.

Program note by Jacob Wallace

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Composition: Symphony No. 2

Composer: Frank Ticheli

Born: 1958

Duration: 22 minutes

Composer Frank Ticheli wrote the following about his Symphony No. 2:

The symphony’s three movements refer to celestial light -- Shooting Stars, the Moon, and the Sun.

Although the title for the first movement, Shooting Stars, came after its completion, I was imagining such quick flashes of color throughout the creative process. White-note clusters are sprinkled everywhere, like streaks of bright light. High above, the E-flat clarinet shouts out the main theme, while underneath, the low brass punch out staccatissimo chords that intensify the dance-like energy. Fleeting events of many kinds are cut and pasted at unexpected moments, keeping the ear on its toes. The movement burns quickly, and ends explosively, scarcely leaving a trail.

The second movement, Dreams Under a New Moon, depicts a kind of journey of the soul as represented by a series of dreams. A bluesy clarinet melody is answered by a chant-like theme in muted trumpet and piccolo. Many dream episodes follow, ranging from the mysterious to the dark, to the peaceful and healing. A sense of hope begins to assert itself as rising lines are passed from one instrument to another. Modulation after modulation occurs as the music lifts and searches for resolution. Near the end, the main theme returns in counterpoint with the chant,
building to a majestic climax, then falling to a peaceful coda. The final B-flat major chord is colored by a questioning G-flat.

The finale, Apollo Unleashed, is perhaps the most wide-ranging movement of the symphony, and certainly the most difficult to convey in words. On the one hand, the image of Apollo, the powerful ancient god of the sun, inspired not only the movement’s title but also its blazing energy. Bring sonorities, fast tempos, and galloping rhythms combine to give a sense of urgency that one often expects from a symphonic finale. On the other hand, its boisterous nature is also tempered and enriched by another, more subtle force, Bach’s Chorale BWV 433 (Wer Gott vertraut, hat wohl gebaut). This chorale -- a favorite of the dedicatee, and one he himself arranged for chorus and band -- serves as a kind of spiritual anchor, giving a soul to the gregarious foreground events. The chorale is in ternary form (ABA’). In the first half of the movement, the chorale’s A and B sections are stated nobly underneath faster paced music, while the final A section is saved for the climatic ending, sounding against a flurry of 16th-notes.

My second symphony is dedicated to James E. Croft upon his retirement as Director of Bands at Florida State University in 2003. It was commissioned by a consortium of Dr. Croft’s doctoral students, conducting students and friends as a gesture of thanks for all he has given to the profession.

Program note by Frank Ticheli, composer