



UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Sunday, February 26, 2017 at 2:00 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus
Gerard Schwarz, guest conductor

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

Cornerstones

Bright Sheng (b. 1955)
transcribed by the composer

Shanghai Overture for Symphonic Band (2007)

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
edited by Frederick Fennell

Suite No. 1 in E-flat, Opus 28, No. 1

Chaconne
Intermezzo
March

Gerard Schwarz (b. 1947)

Above and Beyond (2012)

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Symphony in B-flat for Band

Moderately fast, with vigor
Andantino grazioso
Fugue: Rather broad

INTERMISSION

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)
transcribed by the composer

Fanfare Ritmico (2002)

Vincent Persichetti (1915–87)

Masquerade, Opus 102

William Schuman (1910–92)

New England Triptych (after the music of William Billings)

“Be Glad Then, America”
“When Jesus Wept”
“Chester”

The Marine Jazz Orchestra will perform Sunday, March 5 at 2:00 P.M. in the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus. The concert will feature works by Bernstein, Corea, Ellington, and Nestico.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Gerard Schwarz, guest conductor

Internationally recognized for his moving performances, innovative programming, and extensive catalog of recordings, American conductor Gerard Schwarz serves as music director of the All Star Orchestra and the Eastern Music Festival in addition to conductor laureate of the Seattle Symphony. Schwarz's latest project, The All-Star Orchestra, features a handpicked ensemble of star players from America's leading orchestras coming together for an eight episode American Public Television series designed to encourage a greater understanding and enjoyment of classical music.

His considerable discography of nearly 350 recordings showcases his collaborations with some of the world's greatest orchestras including Philadelphia Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, London Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Tokyo Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Symphony and Seattle Symphony, among others.

Schwarz began his professional career as co-principal trumpet of the New York Philharmonic and has held leadership positions with Mostly Mozart Festival, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and New York Chamber Symphony. As a guest conductor in both opera and symphonic repertoire, he has worked with many of the world's finest orchestras and opera companies.

Schwarz, a renowned interpreter of nineteenth century German, Austrian, and Russian repertoire, in addition to his noted work with contemporary American composers, recently completed his final season as music director of the Seattle Symphony in 2011 after an acclaimed twenty-six years, a period of dramatic artistic growth for the ensemble.

In his nearly five decades as a respected classical musician and conductor, Schwarz has received hundreds of honors and accolades including Emmy Awards, GRAMMY nominations, ASCAP Awards, and the Ditson Conductor's Award. He was the first American named conductor of the year by Musical America and has received numerous honorary doctorates. Most recently, the city of Seattle named the street alongside the Benaroya Hall "Gerard Schwarz Place."

Shanghai Overture for Symphonic Band (2007)

Bright Sheng (b. 1955)

transcribed by the composer

Bright Sheng is widely regarded as one of the foremost composers of our time, with his stage, orchestral, chamber, and vocal works performed regularly throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Called "a fresh voice in cross-cultural music," his compositions draw from late twentieth-century contemporary classical movements as well as the folk music of his native China and the surrounding Silk Road region. Named a MacArthur Fellow in 2001, Sheng began piano studies with his mother at age four. He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music before moving to New York City in 1982. It was as a student at Tanglewood that he first met Leonard Bernstein, who became his mentor.

Among Sheng's recent honors was a special commission from the White House to create a new work honoring the visiting Chinese premier. He was among the composers chosen by the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Committee to write music for the opening ceremony. Sheng was also appointed the first composer-in-residence for New York City Ballet and is currently the Leonard Bernstein distinguished university professor of composition at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. The composer offers the following regarding his work, Shanghai Overture:

Shanghai Overture was originally written for orchestra, a commission by my alma mater, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, in celebration of its eightieth anniversary. It was premiered on November 27, 2007, by the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, conducted by Muhai Tang.

In Western music, the term neo-Classical primarily refers to a movement in music composition prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s. While the main aesthetics of the style emphasizes textural clarity, light orchestration, and formal balance, some of the compositions were directly linked to specific composers from earlier periods. The most well-known composer of the movement was Igor Stravinsky, in a number of works, including a neo-Bachian piano concerto, a neo-Pergolesian suite (*Pulcinella*), and a neo-Mozartian opera (*The Rake's Progress*).

I always wondered what the result would be if I would adopt a similar concept and some of the techniques of the neo-Classical style and apply them to traditional Chinese classical or folk music. Although my approach is somewhat different from Stravinsky, I took the opportunity to explore the idea when I was asked to write a short composition for the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Shanghai Overture is inspired by two well-known traditional Chinese works: *General's Degree* and *Purple Bamboo*. Whereas both came from the same region near Shanghai, they differ vastly in character and color, one is grand and powerful while the other is light and elegant.

Shanghai Overture for Symphonic Band is dedicated to the Symphony Band at University of Michigan, Michael Haithcock, conductor, where I have been teaching since 1995. This version was commissioned by the Linda and Maurice Binkow Philanthropic Fund.

Suite No. 1 in E-flat, Opus 28, No. 1

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

edited by Frederick Fennell

Gustav Holst was one of England's most prominent twentieth-century composers. Shortly after beginning advanced piano studies at the Royal College of Music in London, Holst developed neuritis so severe that he was no longer able to play. In an effort to stay involved as a performer and also to provide an income, he learned to play trombone and performed with several orchestras. Holst composed hundreds of works in all musical genres, the most famous of which is his orchestral suite *The Planets* (1922). Although his compositional style was rooted in England's folk song heritage and utilized traditional contrapuntal techniques, his harmonies and concepts of musical form were wholly original among his contemporaries.

Prior to the monumental success of *The Planets*, Holst composed many other notable works, and several important pieces for winds and percussion. For a work that is such an important staple of the concert band repertoire, there is surprisingly little information about the origins of Holst's First Suite in E-flat. In the notebook in which he kept a record of his compositions from 1895 until his death, Holst entered the "1st Suite for Military Band Op. 28A" on the page for 1909. Not until 1920 do we find any record of a performance, nor is there any mention of the ensemble for which the work was composed. Although its beginnings may have been somewhat inauspicious, the work is a masterpiece of wind writing, sounding as fresh and original today as the day it was written.

The three-movement work begins with the Chaconne in which a melody that serves as the basis for all three movements is introduced by the low brass. The variations build slowly to a majestic finale before giving way to the sprightly Intermezzo. The central movement transforms the Chaconne melody into a light scherzo that highlights Holst's skillful writing for woodwinds. The movement ends quietly with a wink before the final movement enters with a flourish. The March cleverly weaves together a new tune with a reinvented version of the main melody and culminates with an appropriately grand and powerful coda.

***Above and Beyond* (2012)**

Gerard Schwarz (b. 1947)

One of the most striking characteristics of music for the concert band is that much of the core repertoire was composed over the last century. While the band doesn't enjoy the same historic breadth of repertoire as does the symphony orchestra, it has staked a large claim in the ever-evolving world of contemporary music. What has resulted is a canon of works that are often realized with the composer's direct participation, a process that is defined by a vibrancy and authenticity that is much more difficult to achieve with the score alone. That collaboration between ensemble and composer reaches its zenith when the composer takes the podium to bring his own work to life. Maestro Schwarz offers the following thoughts about his *Above and Beyond*:

I have always been a lover of music for winds. In my youth, I was a trumpet player and firmly believed in the wonderful expressive possibilities of my chosen instrument along with all of the wind instruments. Although these feelings have lasted throughout my career, my life has been as an orchestral conductor and I have rarely conducted a band or wind ensemble.

When Colonel Colburn asked me to guest conduct a concert with the remarkable Marine Band [in 2011], I enthusiastically accepted. I have always been a champion of our American composers and most of the original music for band is by Americans. I am constantly amazed to hear and see the programs of our university bands because of the predominance of American twentieth and twenty-first century music. When the Assistant Director of the Marine Band, Major Fettig, and I were putting together the program for the concert, I became acquainted with so much superb music for band, including Paul Hindemith's *Symphony for Band*, which he wrote for a concert he guest conducted with the U.S. Army Band in the 1950s. That gave me the idea of writing a little work that we could premiere on this concert (not that I am on the level of Hindemith!). In recent years, I have been devoting more and more time to composition and I remember so well my lessons with Paul Creston at a time when he was writing some of his wonderful works for band.

My original idea was to write something that was generally slow and expressive, as I felt that the Marine Band is so accomplished that they could sustain a real *adagio* just as a string section can. My piece certainly started that way, with the upper woodwinds and vibraphone overlapping a series of chords that outline the first theme. This material was then answered by a complimentary theme played as a chorale by the lower brass. I varied these two melodies and overlapped them, eventually adding some fast material in the woodwinds leading to a wild middle

section. As the work evolved, I couldn't resist taking advantage of the band's remarkable capabilities. I realized that I needed to have an introduction that could be brought back at this point in the piece, so I wrote an opening for solo trumpet and revisited this theme in the horns at the height of the work's development, culminating with a noble statement of the theme for the full brass section. The coda of the piece brings back the more contemplative material from the opening overlapping wind music to bring the work to a funereal close.

Symphony in B-flat for Band

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Paul Hindemith found equal success during his career as a composer, conductor, violinist, violist, teacher, and theorist. As a student at Dr. Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany, from 1908 to 1917, he supported himself by performing with dance bands and musical comedy orchestras. By 1915 Hindemith was principal violin of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra, but interrupted his tenure to serve in the German Army as a bass drummer and sentry. During that time he also formed his own string quartet and managed to continue composing. From 1923 to 1930 he was a member of the selection committee and later the leader of the Donaueschingen Music Festival which featured new music for unlikely genres, to include several important compositions for military bands debuted during the 1926 festival.

His long career as a teacher also began during this time with his appointment to the faculty at the Academy of Music in Berlin in 1927, and throughout his life Hindemith remained active as a performer, often premiering his own works. For eight years, from 1921 to 1929, he was a member of the Amar Quartet, a group dedicated to performing new music. His early chamber music and operas earned him a reputation as an expressionist, and it was in the 1930s, when his compositions focused on the larger scale mediums of opera and orchestra, that he came under the scrutiny of the Nazi Party. Even though the prominent German conductors Wilhelm Furtwängler and Otto Klemperer championed his works, the Nazis officially disapproved of his music, and Hindemith decided to emigrate to the United States. He was offered a faculty position at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1940, where he remained for fifteen years while also teaching composition during summers at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts. He later accepted a position at Zürich University and moved to Switzerland in 1953.

While in the United States, Hindemith was approached by the U.S. Army Band Commander Captain Hugh Curry to guest conduct the band. Hindemith not only accepted the invitation but also agreed to write something for the occasion. That "something" would turn out to be one of the most important works written for concert band in the twentieth century. From the very opening moments of the Symphony in B-flat, which features a pervasive five-note motive first intoned by the bass instruments, the visceral shrill of twittering woodwinds, and a brash and intense fanfare in the trumpets and cornets, it is clear that this work had no precedent in band music. While there are brief moments of respite in the first movement, there is a relentless sense of momentum and agitation that constantly pushes this music forward. The second movement provides a stark contrast to the first with a lyrical duet between cornet and alto saxophone plainly evocative of a 1920s cabaret in Berlin. The relative tranquility of this theme is disrupted by a frantic and, at times, humorous scherzo that is subsequently woven together with the opening cabaret melody in a brilliant illustration of the composer's skill and affinity for counterpoint. It is Hindemith the academic who is firmly in control at the beginning of the third movement's formal fugue, but Hindemith the dramatist who takes the reins to end the symphony in one of the most hair-raising conclusions in all band music. The Symphony in B-flat was completed in 1951 and premiered by the U.S. Army Band on April 5, 1951, with the composer conducting.

Fanfare Ritmico (2002)

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

transcribed by the composer

Pulitzer-Prize winning composer Jennifer Higdon started late in music, teaching herself to play flute at age fifteen and only beginning formal musical studies at eighteen. Although she did not start writing her own music until age twenty-one, Higdon has since achieved unparalleled success as one of the most performed composers of her generation and has been hailed as "a savvy, sensitive composer with a keen ear, an innate sense of form, and a generous dash of pure esprit" (*The Washington Post*). Her extensive list of commissioners and performing organizations is anchored by many of the most significant ensembles throughout the world, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Luzern Sinfonieorchester, Hague Philharmonic, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo String Quartet, and "The President's Own" United States Marine Band.

Higdon received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto and has also received awards from the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters (two awards), the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, Meet-the-Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, and ASCAP. She has been a featured

composer at festivals including Tanglewood, Vail, Cabrillo, Grand Teton, Norfolk, and Winnipeg and has served as composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Fort Worth Symphony. Her first opera, based on Charles Frazier's 1997 novel *Cold Mountain* and a libretto by Gene Sheer, was written for the Santa Fe Opera and Opera Philadelphia and premièred in 2015. She currently holds the Milton L. Rock chair in composition studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Higdon enjoys several hundred performances each year of her works, and her music has been recorded on more than four dozen CDs. She offers the following regarding *Fanfare Ritmico*, which she transcribed for band in 2002:

Fanfare Ritmico celebrates the rhythm and speed (tempo) of life. Writing this work on the eve of the move into the new Millennium, I found myself reflecting on how all things have quickened as time has progressed. Our lives now move at speeds much greater than what I believe anyone would have ever imagined in years past. Everyone follows the beat of their own drummer, and those drummers are beating faster and faster on many different levels. As we move along day to day, rhythm plays an integral part of our lives, from the individual heartbeat to the lightning speed of our computers. This fanfare celebrates that rhythmic motion, of man and machine, and the energy which permeates every moment of our being in the new century. This work was commissioned by The Women's Philharmonic as *part of The Fanfares Project*. It was premièred in 2000 by the Women's Philharmonic, Apo Hsu, conducting.

Masquerade, Opus 102 Vincent Persichetti (1915–87)

Vincent Persichetti was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1915, the city in which he lived most of his life and where he died in 1987. He began studying music at age five, and by age eleven he was paying for his own musical education through his work as an organist and accompanist. He served on the faculties of Combs College of Music in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Conservatory, and The Juilliard School of Music in New York City, where he was also appointed chairman of the composition department in 1963. Like his contemporary Ingolf Dahl, Vincent Persichetti was as well known for his pedagogy as for his composing. Persichetti wrote several textbooks and reference works, including his 1961 *Twentieth-Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practices*. For this book, Persichetti composed short illustrative examples of twentieth century compositional techniques. Although none of these examples is more than a few measures in length, Persichetti found himself increasingly "haunted" by these musical orphans. They were ideas and motives that yearned to be fully explored and developed. In the words of the composer, "I realized that certain examples had a thematic kernel in common. These examples from the harmony book evolved into a set of variations for fifty wind and percussion instruments. The work is a masquerade of my book: I called it *Masquerade for Band*."

While the composer labeled the work a "Theme and Variations," it does not strictly adhere to the traditional conventions of the style (of which Persichetti was not a fan). According to the composer, "A set of variations must have an overall line. There must be a dramatic shape...variations with red lights and green lights are silly to me." Knowing this, it comes as no surprise that the theme of *Masquerade*, or more precisely, the "thematic kernel," is freely developed and manipulated in a widely ranging and fascinating set of variations, the lines between which are quite indistinct at times. *Masquerade* is both Persichetti at his most musically clever and most skillful in composing for the band medium, to which he would make an unprecedented contribution over the span of his remarkable career.

New England Triptych (after the music of William Billings) William Schuman (1910–92)

Although their lives were separated by nearly two centuries, a pair of influential American composers both named William were brought together in the creation of *New England Triptych*. William Billings was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1746. He was trained as a tanner and left school at age fourteen to support his family upon the death of his father. Billings was described in a contemporary account by William Bentley as "a singular man, of moderate size, short of one leg, with one eye, without any address & with an uncommon negligence of person." An apt description of a tradesman from the latter half of the eighteenth century perhaps, but Bentley then continues to note that Billings "spake & sung & thought as a man above the common abilities...[he was] the father of our New England music. Many who have imitated him have excelled him, but none of them had better original power." Although Billings was likely self-taught as a composer, he spent considerable time around the choirs of local congregations, including the new South Church in Boston. He composed works that spoke directly to the masses during the turbulent times and were known throughout the colonies, from Vermont to South Carolina. Nearly all of his music was written for four-part *a capella* chorus and his works were largely distributed in volumes published between 1770 and 1794. Although Billings proved to be one of the most important composers of the Revolutionary period, there was no regulated

avenue to financial gain writing music at the time and Billings died in poverty on September 26, 1800, leaving behind his widow and six children.

Like Billings, William Schuman was drawn to music but began his training in another field. Born in Manhattan, Schuman played violin and banjo as a child and even formed his own salon orchestra during high school. Despite these early experiences, Schuman entered New York University's School of Commerce in 1928 to pursue a business degree while working for a local advertising agency. It wasn't until 1930, when he attended a concert by the New York Philharmonic in Carnegie Hall conducted by Arturo Toscanini, that his true passion was irrevocably brought to the surface. He would later recall, "I was astounded at seeing the sea of stringed instruments, and everybody bowing together. The visual thing alone was astonishing. But the sound! I was overwhelmed. I had never heard anything like it. The very next day, I decided to become a composer."

Schuman dropped out of school and began part-time study at the Malkin Conservatory. He also sought private lessons with the preeminent composer Roy Harris and eventually earned a degree in music education from the Teacher's College at Columbia University in New York City. He soon embarked on a multifaceted career as composer, teacher, and administrator. He taught composition at Sarah Lawrence College in Yonkers, New York, and was later the President of both The Juilliard School and Lincoln Center. Among the many honors he achieved throughout his long and distinguished career, Schuman was awarded the inaugural Pulitzer Prize in music in 1944 for his Cantata No. 2, *A Free Song* based on the texts of Walt Whitman.

New England Triptych remains one of Schuman's most popular works. Originally written for orchestra, the piece was born in 1943 as "William Billings Overture," but the composer soon withdrew the work and reconstituted the material into the present three-movement suite in 1956. Upon a commission from the music fraternity Pi Kappa Omicron, Schuman himself arranged and expanded the last movement for concert band and later transcribed the other two movements to complete the *Triptych* in its version for winds. In a preface to the score of *New England Triptych*, Schuman writes:

William Billings (1746–1800) is a major figure in the history of American music. His works capture the spirit of sinewy ruggedness, deep religiosity, and patriotic fervor that we associate with the Revolutionary period in American history. I am not alone among American composers who feel a sense of identity with Billings, which accounts for my use of his music as a departure point. These three pieces are not a "fantasy" nor "variations" on themes of Billings, but rather a fusion of styles and musical language.

The first movement, "Be Glad then, America," is built on these lines from Billings' text:

Yea, the Lord will answer
And say unto his people—behold
I will send you corn and wine and oil
And ye shall be satisfied therewith.
Be glad then, America,
Shout and rejoice.
Fear not O land,
Be glad and rejoice.
Halleluyah!

The solo timpani intone the outlines of Billings' melody, which is then taken over by the low woodwinds and soon developed in a brilliant and aggressive wash of brass. After the main section of the hymn is cast in varied settings of the words "Be Glad then, America, Shout and Rejoice" the timpani return, leading to a fugal section of the melody that accompanies the words "And Ye Shall Be Satisfied." The heroic climax of the movement freely adapts Billings' music to "Halleluyah!" Billings' original music to "When Jesus Wept" is set in a round. Schuman faithfully preserves the essence of the elder composer's moving setting of the text while employing the full array of textures available from within the band.

When Jesus wept, the falling tear
in mercy flowed beyond all bound;
when Jesus mourned, a trembling fear
seized all the guilty world around.

"Chester" is Billings' best known tune. Although it was originally composed as a church hymn, it was quickly adopted by the Continental Army as a popular marching song and has since taken on a patriotic character as strong as any such song of the period. Schuman's reimagining of Billings' sturdy tune honors the spirit of the original hymn as well as its transformation into an American military anthem.

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And slavery clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.
The foe comes on with haughty stride,
Our troops advance with martial noise,
Their vet'rans flee before our youth,
And gen'ral's yield to beardless boys.