MIT Concert Band

Director:
Thomas Reynolds

Assistant Conductor:
Stephen Babineau

Winter Concert
Saturday, December 15, 2007 8:00 PM
Kresge Auditorium
Program

Overture for Band ............................................. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

Chester ................................................................. William Schuman

Prayer of St. Gregory ............................................ Alan Hovhaness
Trumpet Soloist: Matthew Putnam ’09

Festive Overture ....................................................... Dmitri Shostakovich

Intermission

Lincolnshire Posy ..................................................... Percy Aldridge Grainger
  1. Dublin Bay
  2. Harkstow Grange
  6. The Lost Lady Found

The Wrong Note Rag ............................................... Leonard Bernstein

Symphony in B♭ ....................................................... Paul Hindemith
  I. Moderately fast, with vigor—Molto agitato
Program Notes

Overture for Band (1824)  
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

Felix Mendelssohn composed his Overture für Harmoniemusik, Opus 24, in the summer of 1824 for the wind band in residence at the fashionable resort, Doberan, on the coast of the Baltic Sea at which he was staying with his family. Although he was only fifteen years old when it was composed, the work demonstrates many characteristics of his mature style: the classicist strain, grace, and beauty, wit, skill and craftsmanship. It is one of the few concert works for band written by a major nineteenth century romanticist.

The work starts with a lyrical introductory Andante con moto, which is followed by an Allegro vivace in sonata allegro form which bears the composer’s original metronome mark, quarter note = 152. This would lend credence to historians’ assertions as to Mendelssohn’s alleged preference for very fast tempi.

In adapting the work to the instrumentation of the contemporary concert band, Dr. Herbert W. Fred has made every effort to reproduce the texture and the balance between parts of the original scoring. The work has been transposed from C to B♭, thus enabling the clarinet parts, originally written for instruments in C, to be played on modern B♭ instruments with the same fingering and range as the original. Likewise, the original parts for trumpets in C, when played in the new key on the B♭ trumpets and cornets of the modern band, retain their characteristic open tone sonority.

Chester (1957)  
William Schuman

William Schuman was born in the Bronx on August 4, 1910. As a child, he played banjo and violin, but was more passionate about baseball. In 1930, Schuman went to a Carnegie Hall concert of the New York Philharmonic conducted by Arturo Toscanini, where he was inspired to become a musician. Said Schuman, “I was astounded at seeing the sea of stringed instrument, 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 indeed dropped out of business school to study music. While studying under Roy Harris, another renowned American composer, he was introduced to Serge Koussevitzky, longtime conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Koussevitzky would champion many of Schuman’s works, and commissioned and debuted Schuman’s Symphony for Strings in 1943. Schuman went on to hold positions as president of the Juilliard School of Music from 1945 to 1961 and first president of Lincoln Center from 1961 to 1969.

Chester is based on the third movement of Schuman’s New England Triptych, one of
his most famous works. The tune is based on a patriotic anthem written in 1778 by William Billings. This tune was one of the most popular of the American Revolutionary War, and was often sung around campfires or played by fifers on the march. The song’s original lyrics speak to the desire for freedom shared by the soldiers in the Revolution:

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And Slav’ry clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England’s God forever reigns.

Prayer of St. Gregory (1952)  
Alan Hovhaness

Alan Hovhaness was born Alan Vaness Chakmakjian in Somerville, Massachusetts on March 8, 1911, the son of an Armenian chemistry professor at Tufts College. When his mother passed away in 1930, he began to embrace his Armenian heritage (something she had always discouraged), and in 1944 officially changed his surname to “Hovhaness” in honor of his paternal grandfather. Hovhaness began writing music at an early age; his first composition was written when he was four years old after he was inspired by a song by Franz Schubert. In 1940, Hovhaness began working as the organist for the St. James Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown, MA, a position he held for approximately ten years. This position greatly increased his interest in Armenian culture and music. Richard Buell of the Boston Globe wrote of Hovhaness:

Although he has been stereotyped as a self-consciously Armenian composer...his output assimilates the music of many cultures. What may be most American about all of it is the way it turns its materials into a kind of exoticism. The atmosphere is hushed, reverential, mystical, nostalgic.

Prayer of St. Gregory, Op. 62b, is an aria-like trumpet concerto which was originally an interlude from Hovhaness’s religious opera, Etchmiadzin. The original scoring for the 1946 opera called for trumpet and strings. Tonight the band performs the 1952 re-scoring for trumpet and wind band, featuring trumpet soloist Matthew Putnam ’09.
Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich (1906-1975) was born on September 25, 1906 in St. Petersburg and trained from 1919-1925 at the city’s conservatory. His music is distinguished principally by its rhythmic vitality and its rich melodies, which are frequently reminiscent of the Gypsy tunes popular in Eastern Europe. Most of his large works are composed in traditional forms, and his mature harmonic style is usually simple and direct.

He began his music studies at the Leningrad Conservatory at age thirteen. At age nineteen, he composed his first symphony for his graduation piece. The immediate success of that work established Shostakovich’s place among contemporary Soviet composers. He is recognized as the leading symphonist of the mid-20th century. His works include fifteen symphonies; works for band; chamber works; ballet, film, and theater scores; vocal music; and music for piano.

*Festive Overture* was composed to commemorate the 37th anniversary of the 1917 Soviet Revolution. It received its world premiere in 1954 with Alexander Melik-Pashayev and the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra and its American premiere in 1955 with the Utah Symphony Orchestra. It begins with a fanfare (Allegretto), which gives way to a main presto section that is direct and thrilling, with enough color and splendor to justify its festive origins. The fanfare returns towards the end of the piece.

Lev Lebedinsky writes of the inception of the work:

The speed with which he wrote was truly astounding. Moreover, when he wrote light music, he was able to make jokes, and compose simultaneously, like the legendary Mozart...He sat there scribbling away and the couriers came in to take away the pages while the ink was still wet...first one, then a second, a third, and so on....Two days later the dress rehearsal took place.

**Lincolnshire Posy** (1937)  
Percy Aldridge Grainger

Percy Grainger was an unusual and multi-talented man: a virtuoso pianist, composer, author, inventor, philologist, ethnomusicologist, and athlete. He was born in Brighton, Australia on July 8, 1882, went to Europe for schooling, and emigrated to the United States in 1914. Over a period of fifty years he wrote more than fifteen works for band, including his masterpiece, *Lincolnshire Posy*. Grainger died in White Plains, New York on February 20, 1961.

*Lincolnshire Posy* epitomizes Grainger’s ideas about setting “genuine folksong.” He collected five of the six folk songs in Lincolnshire during 1905-06, one of the first people
to do so with the aid of the recently invented phonograph recorder. The sixth song, *The Lost Lady Found*, was collected by Lucy E. Broadwood. Each movement repeats the underlying folk song several times with little change in the actual tune but with considerable variation in the accompaniment. Grainger intended each movement “to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody—a musical portrait of the singer’s personality no less than of his habits of song.” The third and fifth movements feature an irregularity of rhythm simulating the absence of a fixed pulse, one of the ideas behind Grainger’s “Free Music” and an accurate portrayal of the rhythmic freedom of the singers.

Grainger completed “this bunch of ‘musical wildflowers’ (hence the title ‘Lincolnshire Posy’)” in 1937. The first performance was on March 7, 1937, with Grainger conducting the Milwaukee Symphonic Band. Several recordings of *Lincolnshire Posy* are available, including two directed by Frederick Fennell: one with the Eastman Wind Ensemble on the Mercury label, and one with the Cleveland Symphonic Winds available on compact disc on the Telarc label. John Bird’s biography *Percy Grainger* was published in 1976 by Paul Elek of London and by Faber Paperbacks in 1982.

### The Wrong Note Rag (1953)

Leonard Bernstein

Leonard Bernstein is probably one of America’s foremost musical geniuses. Equally adept in the various activities of musical performance, composition, and analysis, he has done more than anyone else to make the listening of music exciting and knowledgeable to the layman. Bernstein was born in nearby Lawrence, Massachusetts and attended the Boston Latin School and Harvard University. William Schuman said of Bernstein, “He is an authentic American hero, an arts hero, showing that America does honor her artists.”

*The Wrong Note Rag* is a number from the musical *Wonderful Town*, with a book by Joseph A. Fields and Jerome Chodorov and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. The musical debuted on Broadway on February 25, 1953, and ran for 559 performances. It won five Tony Awards in 1953, including Best Musical. The story follows the sisters Ruth and Eileen Sherwood who have just moved from Columbus, Ohio, to New York City in search of success: Ruth as a writer, and Eileen as an actress. The two sisters sing the *Wrong Note Rag* together on stage at the Village Vortex, a local nightclub, near the end of Act II.
Paul Hindemith’s *Symphony in B♭* was the first twentieth-century symphony for band written by a composer of the first rank. Born in Hanau, Germany, on November 16, 1895, Hindemith emigrated to America and served on the Yale music faculty from 1940 to 1953, when he moved to Switzerland. He died in Frankfurt on December 28, 1963.

The *Symphony in B♭* was commissioned by Lt. Col. Hugh Curry, director of the United States Army Band and was premiered on April 5, 1951, in Washington, D.C., by the U.S. Army Band under Hindemith’s direction. It was given its Boston premiere by John Corley and the MIT Concert Band on May 13, 1955. Several recordings of the symphony are available, including Hindemith’s own recording with the Philharmonia Orchestra on Seraphim and Fennell’s recording with the Eastman Wind Ensemble on Mercury.

In each of the symphony’s three movements, Hindemith presents two separate thematic groups in the course of the movement, which are then combined at the end of the movement with great contrapuntal effect. In the first movement, a sonata allegro form, this has the effect of recapitulating both themes simultaneously. The fugue-dominated development section is drawn primarily from the closing theme of the exposition. The second movement combines the two traditional middle movements of a symphony, a slow movement and a scherzo. A duet between cornet and alto saxophone open the slow section, with the slow theme joining the scherzo at the end of the movement. The third movement is a double fugue. The principal theme from the first movement joins and dominates the two fugue subjects at the end of the work. Tonight, the Concert Band presents the first movement.
Thomas E. Reynolds, Director of the MIT Concert Band, is also the Music Director at The Bromfield School in Harvard, Massachusetts, where he is responsible for instrumental, choral, and composition music experiences for students in grades 7-12. He is also a member of the Executive Board of the New England Philharmonic and a Tour Administrator/Assistant Conductor of the United States Collegiate Wind Bands European Tours. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and Ithaca College, Mr. Reynolds has taught music in high schools located in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York over the past twenty years. He has been very active as an adjudicator, clinician, manager, and host of several all-state and regional music festivals. He was the manager and trumpet section leader of the nationally-acclaimed Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble in the early days of its existence. Mr. Reynolds plays trumpet professionally and has played euphonium in the MIT Concert Band. He is a member of the New England Music Festival Association, the National Association for Music Education and the Massachusetts Music Educators’ Association, and has recently been selected to the National Board of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. Additionally, Mr. Reynolds is a lifetime member of Pi Kappa Lambda, and honorary music society.
MIT Concert Band - Assistant Conductor

Stephen Babineau is a retired music educator from Phillipston, MA, where he taught in the Narragansett Regional School District for 34 years. A native of Gardner, MA, he has music degrees from Boston University, and a C.A.G.S. from Worcester State College, in which he wrote a study called “School Sponsorship of Community Bands: Pro and Con.” Having studied cornet with Marine Band soloist Adolph Suichkonen, Steve gained a deep appreciation for the musicianship and dedication of the community bands that were prevalent before the institution of school instrumental music programs. At B.U., he studied trumpet with Roger Voisin, strings and pedagogy with George Bornoff, and composition with Hugo Norden. He is founder and director of the Narragansett Community Band, which has played nearly 200 concerts since 1985, and has played in and conducted several area community bands. For the last 12 years, he has conducted “Tuba Christmas” in Shelburne Falls, MA. Steve has also been President, Music Director, and conductor for the Patrick S. Gilmore Society.
MIT Concert Band - History

On Sunday, May 8, 1949, the MIT Concert Band gave its first public performance at the Hatch Memorial Shell on Boston’s Esplanade. Founded by students in the fall of 1948, the MIT Concert Band had been directed since its inception by John Corley. Mr. Corley had made the band widely known for its performance and commissioning of original compositions for winds. In December 1953, the MIT Concert Band became one of the first ensembles to devote itself entirely to original works for band in the belief that the wind band is an important and unique means of musical expression and that its repertoire is deserving of performance.

In addition to performing works of well-known twentieth-century composers such as Hindemith, Copland, and Schoenberg, the band has commissioned many new pieces. Recent commissions include works by Jeff Morrow, Adrian Childs, Thomas Duffy, and Stephen Melillo. In 1986, the Oxford University Press began a project to publish many of the band’s commissioned works. The MIT Concert Band has given the first Boston area performances of many major compositions for band, including Hindemith’s Symphony in B♭, Schoenberg’s Theme and Variations, Holst’s Hammersmith, Giannini’s Symphony No. 3, Hanson’s Chorale and Alleluia, and Reed’s Second Symphony.

Each year the band presents four formal concerts at MIT, a Halloween concert, and two to three concerts on tour. Previous tours have seen the band perform at Niagara Falls State Park; in St. Paul’s Chapel at Columbia University; in front of the Lincoln Memorial; in the Walt Disney World International Festival; in the Festival of Contemporary Music in New York City; in the Quebec Winter Carnival; in New York’s Town Hall; and at many colleges and high schools throughout the eastern United States and Canada. In January 1993, the band spent a week touring Iceland to commemorate the 50th year of John Corley’s conducting career.

The musicians in the MIT Concert Band are students, alumni, and staff of MIT and Wellesley College, most of whom are science or engineering majors. Students play an active role in running the group; a thirteen-member board of student officers, elected each year by the band membership, is responsible for the band’s administrative activities.
MIT Concert Band Members

**Piccolo**
Rachel Meyer

**Alto Clarinet**
Karen Walrath

**Trumpet**
Cedric Chandler
Jonathan Morse
Matthew Putnam
Jeff Simpson
Wei Sun
Berakah Yankama

**Band Officers**
President:
Emily Kramer
VP/Tour Manager:
Thomas Walker
Treasurer:
Jackie Rogoff
Personnel Manager:
Kenneth Marr
Social Chair:
Andrea Hartlerode
Librarian:
Kurt Frey
Archivist:
Jacob Strauss
Webmaster:
Jeff Simpson
Members-at-Large:
Joanna Ain
Lisa Danz
Kim Jackson
Matt Putnam
Mathew Willmott

**Flute**
Maggie Delano
Rachel Meyer
Nicole Teague

**Bass Clarinet**
Yank Sheiretov

**Trombone**
Kurt Frey
Daniel Livengood
Dana Tandy

**Piccolo Alto Clarinet**
Karen Walrath

**Bass Clarinet**
Yank Sheiretov

**Trombone**
Kurt Frey
Daniel Livengood
Dana Tandy

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Lisa Danz
Kim Jackson
Matt Putnam
Mathew Willmott

**B♭ Clarinet**
Lisa Danz

**Alto Saxophone**
Seth Federspiel
Kim Jackson

**Tuba**
Lisa Danz
Kosuke Kuwabara

**Oboe**
Frank Kreimendahl
Toby Kreimendahl

**Tenor Saxophone**
John Ethier
Andrew Greenhut

**Percussion**
Gisela Chen
Kristen Dorsey
Kenneth Marr
Jacob Strauss

**E♭ Clarinet**
Lisa Danz

**Baritone Saxophone**
Mathew Willmott

**French Horn**
Emily Kramer
Yingdee Unhavaithaya

For more information on the Concert Band, please visit our webpage: [http://web.mit.edu/band/](http://web.mit.edu/band/)