

Symphony Band Program Notes

***Fanfare Politeia* (2021)**

Kimberly Archer
(b. 1973)

Fanfare Politeia is an homage to the origins of our democracy, and to the ancient sources that Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Adams drew from in their conceiving and writing of our constitution. “Politeia” is a Greek word derived from “polis” (city). Aristotle used the term to represent concepts such as citizens’ rights and constitutional government, while Plato’s examination of justice – a book which we now call *The Republic*, in English – was actually entitled *Politeia* in the original Greek.

Commissioned by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band for the 59th Presidential Inauguration, *Fanfare Politeia* celebrates our traditions of a free and fair election, and of a peaceful transfer of power.

Program Note by Kimberly Archer

***American Hymnsong Suite* (2007)**

Dwayne S. Milburn
(b. 1963)

- I. Prelude on Wondrous Love**
- II. Ballad on Balm in Gilead**
- III. Nettleton (Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing)**
- IV. March on Wilson (When We All Get to Heaven)**

American Hymnsong Suite is firmly rooted in my family history as church musicians. I grew up singing and playing many different hymns, including the four tunes featured in this work. The final impetus to compose this particular treatment came during the course of an organ concert in Atlanta, Georgia. One section of the program featured innovative settings of three hymns. With the gracious consent of composers Joe Utterback and Brooks Kukendall, I adapted their settings to act as the inner movements of the suite, bracketed with my own original treatments of favorite hymns. The Prelude on Wondrous Love (“What Wondrous Love is This”) opens with a chant-like statement of this Southern tune before proceeding to a more kinetic retelling. The ballad, “Balm in Gilead” features a rich jazz harmonization of this familiar spiritual. The Scherzo on “Nettleton” (“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”) contains all the rhythmic playfulness inherent in the best orchestral third movements, and the “March on Wilson” (“When We All Get to Heaven”) calls to mind the wildest marching band ever heard. While audience members will certainly make various connections to this piece, the ongoing goal is to introduce all listeners to the richness of our American musical heritage.

Program Note by Dwayne S. Milburn

***City Trees* (2012)**

Michael Markowski
(b. 1986)

I had just moved from Arizona to New York City when I began sketching the first fragments of *City Trees*. After being born, growing up, and living in the desert for 25 years of my life, moving to New York so suddenly was and continues to be one of the most challenging things I've ever done. I think it has also been one of the bravest. I left my friends, my family, and my ridiculously cheap rent all without much planning.

Every time I walk down a street in New York, I notice the trees shackled by the sidewalk. Some have little fences around them, many have trash nestled up next to their exposed roots, and others have grown so big and become so strong that they have broken right through the concrete pavement. As I pass beneath them,

they all seem to wave their leafy pom-poms in the wind, a thousand leaves applauding, cheering me on as if I had just returned from the moon.

These trees have learned how to brave the concrete jungle, and it gave me solace knowing that they had flourished in such a challenging environment. Over time, the impossibilities of the city have become familiar, and although I continue to learn new lessons every day, I've slowly begun to assimilate, finding my way around, discovering new places, and making friends while still keeping close with those who aren't close by. The music in *City Trees* began to take on a growing sense of perseverance, embodied by the expansive melodies that sweep over the pensive, rhythmic undercurrent.

For me, *City Trees* is a reflection of the bravery that it often takes to venture into new worlds, embrace other cultures, and lovingly encourage new ideas. I am deeply honored to dedicate this piece to the Lesbian and Gay Band Association. Although I may never completely understand the unique challenges my friends have faced and had to overcome, I am inspired by the overwhelming courage that has been so firmly planted for 30 years and that continues to grow, perhaps slowly, but always stronger.

Program Note by Michael Markowski

Four Scottish Dances (1957/1978)

- I. Pesante**
- II. Vivace**
- III. Allegretto**
- IV. Con brio**

**Malcolm Arnold
(1938-2006)
arr. John P. Paynter**

These dances were composed early in 1957, and are dedicated to the BBC Light Music Festival. They are all based on original melodies but one, the melody of which is composed by Robert Burns. The first dance is in the style of a slow strathspey -- a slow Scottish dance in 4/4 meter -- with many dotted notes, frequently in the inverted arrangement of the "Scottish snap." The name was derived from the strath valley of Spey. The second, a lively reel, begins in the key of E-flat and rises a semitone each time it is played until the bassoon plays it, at a greatly reduced speed, in the key of G. The final statement of the dance is at the original speed in the home key of E-flat. The third dance is in the style of a Hebridean song and attempts to give an impression of the sea and mountain scenery on a calm summer's day in the Hebrides. The last dance is a lively fling, which makes a great deal of use of the open string pitches of the violin (saxophones in the band edition).

Program Note by Malcolm Arnold

Wind Ensemble Program Notes

Children's March (1919)

**Percy Grainger
(1882-1961)
arr. R. Mark Rogers**

Children's March was scored for band by Grainger in 1919 from a piano solo which he had composed between 1916 and 1918. The band arrangement was begun in 1918 while the composer was a member of the U.S. Coast Artillery Band and was written to take advantage of that band's instrumentation. Generally accepted as the first band composition utilizing the piano, the march features the woodwinds -- especially the low reeds -- during most of its seven-minute duration. From the introduction to the end, the folk-like melodies make it difficult for the listener to realize that the work was original with Grainger. It was first performed by the Goldman Band on June 6, 1919, with the composer conducting and Ralph Leopold at the piano. Like many of Grainger's works, the march demonstrates both the fierceness and the tenderness of the composer's personality. It was dedicated to "my playmate beyond the hills," believed to be Karen Holton, a Scandinavian beauty with whom the composer corresponded for eight years but did not marry because of his mother's jealousy. In 1953, 48 years after they first met, they saw each other for the last time in Denmark where Grainger had gone for a cancer operation to be performed by Dr. Fai Holton, Karen's brother.

Program Note from "Program Notes for Band"

Trauersinfonie (1844)

**Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)
arr. Erik Leidzén**

On December 14, 1844, the remains of Carl Maria von Weber were moved from London, where he had died, to Germany. Wagner composed *Trauersinfonie* for the torchlight procession to Weber's final resting place, the Catholic Cemetery in Friedrichstadt. As part of his musical remembrance, Wagner arranged several portions of Weber's opera *Euryanthe* for a large wind band. This wind band was accompanied during the funeral procession by 20 drums. The first part of *Trauersinfonie* is an arrangement of music from the overture to *Euryanthe* which represents the vision of Emma's spirit in the opera. The main section of the work is taken from the cavatina "Hier dicht am Quell," the text of which contains numerous references to death. The coda comes from a passage in Act II that recalls the opening "spirit music." Wagner amassed all of the military bands around Dresden for the occasion, and was gratified by the effect. He remained fond of the work throughout his life and in *Mein Leben*, he wrote, "I had never before achieved anything that corresponded so perfectly to its purpose."

Program Note compiled from "Wind Band Literature"

Ghost of the Old Year (2016)

**James M. David
(b. 1978)**

As a native Southerner, I have often struggled with my identity as a member of the exalted worlds of both academia and classical music. The past decade has seen some of the greatest conflict in the South since the civil rights era. From Hurricane Katrina to Virginia Tech to Charleston, the Southeast has seen more than its fair share of troubles. Yet many with roots to the region have chosen to remain silent and aloof. Breaking this silence and attempting to express the anger and frustration I have felt serves as the inspiration for my new work for wind ensemble. The title *Ghosts of the Old Year* is taken from a poem by the African-

American writer and educator James Weldon Johnson. I hope to draw on the many great musical traditions of the South including jazz, blues, and shape-note hymns. Particularly, the tune Beach Spring, attributed to B. F. White, is set in multiple guises throughout. While much of the work deals with conflict, the conclusion is optimistic for the future but tinged with a sense of unease.

Program Note by James M. David

Program Notes compiled and edited by T.j. Anderson