

Marshall University
Symphonic Band & Wind Symphony
The Art of Dance – October 6th, 2022

Symphonic Band

- Seis Manuel* from *Islas y Montañas* (2003).....Shelly Hanson
(b.1951)
- Night Dances* for Wind Ensemble (1994).....Bruce Yurko
(b.1951)
- Melodious Thunk* (2012).....David Biedenbender
(b.1984)
- Infernal Dance and Finale*
From the Ballet *The Firebird* (2008).....Stravinsky
(1882-1971)
Arr. By Andrew Balent
(b.1934)

INTERMISSION

Wind Symphony

- Vientos y Tangos* (2004).....Michael Gandolfi
(b.1956)
- Ballad for Band* (1947).....Morton Gould
(1913-1996)
- Suite of Old American Dances* (1952).....Robert Russel Bennett
(1894-1981)
- I. Cakewalk
II. Schottische
III. Western One Step
IV. Wallflower Waltz
V. Rag

Marshall University Ensemble Personnel

Symphonic Band

Wind Symphony

Flutes

Shelby Ard
Sarah Gillenwater
Airianna Nettles

Clarinets

Garret Cummings
Gigi Ortiz
Josh Lynch
Maddie Rood
Lori Kessler

Bass Clarinet

Madalyn Hale

Bassoon

Dr. Ed Bingham

Saxes

Byron Raider (Alto/Sop.)
Mackenzie Wise (Alto)
Caleb Adams (Tenor)
Celeste Ray (Bari)

Trumpets

Ian O'Connell
Aiden Facemire
Sarah Petrea
Julia Birney
Isabella Boehm
Griffin Aliff

Horns

Alex Hummel
Mason Parkes

Trombones

Jayce Townsend
Isaac Mahurin
Sid Tweel (Bass)

Euphoniums

Nate Hunting
John Cowger

Tubas

Ben Chapman
Marcus Maynard

Percussion

Jackson Hall
Jack Turner
Sam Abbott
Dani Richardson
Alijah Price
Jaedon Walker

Program Notes

Seis Manuel from Islas y Montañas (2003)

Shelly Hanson (b.1951)

The *seis* is the traditional song and dance form of the Jibaro people, the peasant farmers of the mountains of Puerto Rico. At least 50 distinctive types of *seis* have been identified, "Seis" means "six" in Spanish; the term originally meant a dance for six men or six couples. The movement ***Seis Manuel*** is based on a traditional recurring harmonic pattern called the *seis mapeye* over which a singer improvises a melody.

Because of the very long history of military bands in Puerto Rico, with a particular importance placed on low brass and clarinets, those instruments are given solos. In keeping with the Puerto Rican tradition of naming a *seis* after someone important to its creation, this *seis* was re-named in honor of conductor Manny Laureano, who commissioned and premiered the piece.

This work is part three of the four-movement suite *Islas y Montañas* (Islands and Mountains).

Night Dances for Wind Ensemble (1994)

Bruce Yurko (b.1951)

Night Dances was composed for and dedicated to Mr. Allen Muccilli and the Dover County Concert Band. The piece was commissioned through a grant provided by the Dover Board of Education of Dover, New Jersey. The premiere performance was on May 2, 1994, with the composer conducting.

Melodious Thunk (2012)

David Biedenbender (b.1984)

Melodious Thunk was inspired by the famous jazz pianist Thelonious Monk. Monk's wife, Nellie Smith, nicknamed him "Melodious Thunk" because of his clunky, awkward, and brilliant(!) piano playing, and his somewhat scatterbrained and disoriented nature. There are no direct quotes from the music of Monk, although a short fragment from Dizzy Gillespie's tune *Salt Peanuts* is used. The composer, David Biedenbender, writes:

"I really liked the idea of playing around with Monk's name, first, because I personally really enjoy goofing around with "spoonerisms" (silly, ridiculous, mix-and-match letter games, which often happen by accident: for example, slip of the tongue becomes tip of the slung), and, second, because this nickname actually provided great musical inspiration. Melodious: well, that's fairly obvious; and thunk (which is a great onomatopoeia!) became the starting points for the piece. Big, fat thunks are interspersed with pointy, clunky, bluesy blips, which are then transformed into a long,

smooth, laid-back melody accompanied by a funky bass line ... I hope you'll hear some similarities between this piece and Monk's iconic musical style and quirky attitude."

Melodious Thunk was commissioned by a consortium of bands organized by Ryan Shaw and the Cedar Springs High School Symphonic Band.

Infernal Dance and Finale

From the Ballet *The Firebird* (2008)

Stravinsky (1882-1971), Arr. By Andrew Balent (b.1934)

Igor Stravinsky's first ballet The Firebird was premiered in Paris in 1910. It brought overnight success to the young, unknown composer, who would subsequently produce further ballet productions, including the acclaimed *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913).

Andrew Balent's arrangement for wind band maintains the full, powerful sound and beauty of Stravinsky's original work, and features a reduced version of the Infernal Dance, followed by the lush, soaring finale.

Vientos y Tangos (2004)

Michael Gandolfi (b.1956)

Vientos y Tangos (Winds and Tangos) was commissioned by The Frank L. Battisti 70th Birthday Commission Project and is dedicated to Frank Battisti in recognition of his immense contributions to the advancement of concert wind literature. It was Mr. Battisti's specific request that I write a tango for wind ensemble. In preparation for this piece, I devoted several months to the study and transcription of tangos from the early style of Juan D'arienzo and the 'Tango Nuevo' style of Astor Piazzolla to the current trend of 'Disco/Techno Tango,' among others. After immersing myself in this listening experience, I simply allowed the most salient features of these various tangos to inform the direction of my work. The dynamic contour and the various instrumental combinations that I employ in the piece are all inspired by the traditional sounds of the bandoneon, violin, piano, and contrabass.

Michael Gandolfi was born in 1956 in Melrose, Massachusetts. His earliest involvement in music was in rock and jazz improvisation beginning at age eight as a self-taught guitarist. He received the B.M and M.M degrees in composition from the New England Conservatory of Music, as well as fellowships for study at the Yale Summer School of Music and Art, the Composers Conference, and Tanglewood Music Center. ***Vientos y Tangos*** is Gandolfi's first composition for wind band.

Ballad for Band (1947)

Morton Gould (1913-1996)

In 1946 Morton Gould somehow found a few minutes to satisfy a request from conductor Edwin Franko Goldman to write a piece for his renowned Goldman Band. The result was the reflective and sensitively scored ***Ballad for Band***, a work inspired by African-American spirituals. In an interview with Dr. Thomas Stone, Gould offered insight on how the spiritual influenced this music:

"I have always been sensitive to, and stimulated by, the sounds that I would call our 'American vernacular' -- jazz, ragtime, gospel, spirituals, hillbilly. The spirituals have always been the essence, in many ways, of our musical art, our musical spirit. The spiritual is an emotional, rhythmic expression. The spiritual has a universal feeling; it comes from the soul, from the gut. People all over the world react to them ... I am not aware of the first time I heard them. It was undoubtedly a sound I heard as a child; maybe at a revival."

Morton Gould offers the following additional commentary: "***Ballad for Band*** is basically an introverted piece that starts slowly, is linear, and has a quiet lyricism; it is not big band in the sense that there is little razzle-dazzle. A discerning listener who is programmed to appreciate the nuances and subtlety of a contemporary piece would respond favorably to this, but others merely find it from relatively pleasant to slightly boring. Only certain listeners respond to what this piece represents musically."

It also captures the spirit of popular music and dance forms. The beauty of the melody can hide the complexities of theme exchanges within the sections of the band. Antecedent-consequent phrases play off each other and build tension. Accents, syncopation, and lively rhythmic patterns complement the lush harmonies of the chord structures.

- *Program Note by composer and the United States Marine Band*

Suite of Old American Dances (1952)

Robert Russel Bennett (1894-1981)

Many quality composers began to take an interest in the wind band after World War II, and Bennett was no exception. After attending a concert by the Goldman Band celebrating the 70th birthday of Goldman himself, Bennett remarked:

"When Edwin Franko Goldman arrived at his 70th birthday it was celebrated by a concert sponsored by the League of Composers. For the concert (January 4th, 1948) they engaged the Goldman Band of New York and asked Dr. Goldman to conduct his own band in honor of his own anniversary. Louise and I went to that concert and I suddenly thought of all the beautiful sound the American concert band could make that it hadn't yet made. That doesn't mean that the unmade sounds passed in review in my mind at all, but the sounds they made were so new to me after all my year with orchestra, dance

bands, and tiny “combos,” that my pen was practically jumping out of my pocket begging me to give this great big instrument some more music to play.”

The result of this inspiration was his *Suite of Old American Dances* in five movements, each featuring a specific dance, and was originally titled *Electric Park*. This referred to an amusement park in Kansas City that Bennett recalled from his childhood and included big electric signs, big band concerts, and a big dance hall.

Movement I – Cakewalk

Originating on the southern plantations, this dance or “strut” was danced to a jig-like banjo/fiddle music, usually by couples who strutted in a medium high step or a low kicking fashion.

Movement II – Schottische

Though the title suggests its roots lie in Scotland, this dance is a German variant of several Bohemian dances that later developed into the polka. The schottische features quick foot to foot shifts and a striking of the heel. These movement resemble the Scottish reel and may have inspired the name. Because the polka was at one time called the “Scottish Waltz,” it is also possible that this earlier dance inspired its namesake.

Movement III – Western One Step

Frederick Fennell once pointed out that “the composer informed me that this is also a dance known as the ‘Texas Tommy,’ an obviously bright-eyed tune with an equally bright-eyed tempo. This dance from the early 20th century, is believed to have originated in brothels and saloons, where ladies of the evening were known as “tommies.”

Movement IV – Wallflower Waltz

Although the beginning of the 20th century represents a new cultural era, replete with new dance steps, the time-honored waltz still reigned as king of the ballroom dance scene.

Movement V – Rag

It seems fitting that Bennett chose to end his suite with a rag. Although there is no one specific dance that can be associated with the rag style, Bennett’s choice of music is representative of the era as a whole. The ragtime era coincided with the beginning of the century, and with a new generation which was harshly criticized by its elders for embracing novel ideas.