Cal Poly's Wind Ensemble and Wind Orchestra

Andrew McMahan and Christopher Woodruff, conductors

June 6, 2014
Friday at 8 p.m.
Performing Arts Center

Featuring:

John Astaire, percussion

Alessandra Shanus, piano

Ryan Waczeck, composer

Sponsored by Cal Poly's Music Department, College of Liberal Arts and IRA program.

Cathedral photo courtesy of Craig H. Russell
Salvation Is Created

The musical tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church is rich with choral works. The Russian liturgical tradition began with a melding of Byzantine and Slavic musical traditions, but over the centuries was influenced by Italian and German styles of melody, harmony and form. Tschesnokov’s setting of this line from the 74th Psalm uses a chant melody from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Salvation is made in the midst of the earth, O God.
Alleluia.

Incantation and Dance

The “Incantation” of Chance’s work serves formally as an introduction. It is full of mystery and expectation, wandering without tonality. The “Dance” begins quietly with percussion adding one by one, building a rhythmic pattern of increasing complexity and drive. Other voices are added and the dance grows more wild and frenzied. The brasses present fierce snarls while the winds fly in swirling scales. No pretty tune is offered, but rather a counterpoint of syncopated outbursts lurching from one voice to another.

Suite of Old American Dances

The Suite of Old American Dances, composed in 1950, is an original composition for band in which the composer seeks to set the mood of a Saturday (or Friday!) night barn dance with all the gaiety which festivity demands. He recalls several dances from his childhood, each of which he describes as original “American dance forms…treated in a ‘riot’ of instrumentation colors.”

Czárdás

Vittorio Monti produced music at a time when other continental composers such as Grieg, Mahler and Debussy were flourishing. His own output was very much fueled by Italian unification, recalling the distinctive compositional voices of Ponchielli and Mascagni. Czárdás began as a virtuosic piece for violin with orchestra based on a Hungarian dance melody. Its popularity was instantaneous and continues to find new life today in samples by Lady Gaga as well as tonight’s arrangement.

Selections from “The Sound of Music”

The last of the Rodgers and Hammerstein collaborations is based on the true story of the Trapp family. The result is a musical play on uncommon distinction and charm, a production framed with taste and affection around a narrative that is at once warmly amusing and full of meaning. The listener is sure to recognize these tunes in tonight’s medley: “How Can Love Survive,” “My Favorite Things,” “So Long, Farewell,” Do, Re, Mi,” and “Climb Every Mountain.”

Overture to “Candide”

Candide was Leonard Bernstein’s third Broadway musical, following On the Town and Wonderful Town. It opened in New York in 1956; however, unlike its predecessors, it was not a commercial success. Adapted by Lillian Hellman from Voltaire’s 18th-century satire on blind optimism, the story concerns a young man, Candide, who has been led by his tutor, Dr. Pangloss, to believe that everything is for the best “in this best of all possible worlds.” Along with Pangloss and his sweetheart, Cunegonde, Candide journeys to Lisbon, Paris, Buenos Aires, and the legendary El Dorado. But, in each of these cities, he is disappointed to discover reality in the forms of crime, atrocity, and suffering. He then returns to Venice with Cunegonde, stripped of his idealism. His ultimate emotional maturation concludes in the finale with “And let us try before we die/To
make some sense of life. We're neither pure nor wise nor good; we'll do the best we know." The sparkling overture captures the frenetic activity of the operetta, with its twists and turns, along with Candide's simple honesty.

**Piano Concerto No. 2**
Gaining success as a composer in the late-1920s, Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) was to become stifled by the rising Soviet regime. Although his early works (beginning with the first symphony written in 1926) were well received and heralded him into the array of social realism, his creativity was quickly muffled by Stalin's command. In 1936, an article titled "Chaos instead of Music" was published in the Pravda newspaper denouncing the recent successes of his opera Lady Macbeth. After the publication of this article, Shostakovich was forced to alter his musical style to avoid censurable scrutiny all the while maintaining his artistic integrity, though often disguised with subtle satire. His attempts worked mostly well, with one notable run-in with the Soviets in 1948; he and fellow composer Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) were condemned for promoting "formalist" ideals. The condemnation culminated in a three-day discussion where the "elitist" composers defended themselves against a panel of unrestrained Soviet aristocrats.

Only after Stalin's death in 1953 did Shostakovich gain the musical freedom he undoubtedly desired. His compositions after Stalin's death became more experimental, possessing humanist qualities and full of renewed enthusiasm — he became a "revolutionary romanticist." It was during this post-Stalin period that Shostakovich wrote the Piano Concerto No. 2, Opus 102. Created as a birthday present for his son Maxim in 1957 (who was nineteen years of age at the time of the premiere), it is a very lighthearted and comical work.

After a brief introduction by the double reeds and clarinets, the entry of the piano signals the start of the exposition. Soon after, the strings join to support the "drunken sailor" theme continued by the piano. This "drunken sailor" theme travels over some jarringly unexpected key areas before reaching a cadence in D-minor as the second and more serious theme begins. A brief transition leads us unexpectedly to the raucous development which begins with sudden fortissimo orchestral hits interspersed with arpeggiated octaves in the piano. Constantly moving to foreign key areas, ideas from the opening exposition are revisited. The development reaches its climax as the entire orchestra blasts its way toward the recapitulation with extra enforcement provided by the timpani. An extended piano cadenza leads to the return of the opening theme heard again in the woodwinds. Winding back to the home key of F-major, the first movement comes to a classical-like close with the common V-to-I authentic cadence.

**Raise the Roof**
*Michael Daugherty writes:*
Raise the Roof (2007) for timpani and symphonic band was commissioned and premiered by the University of Michigan Symphony Band. The world premiere was performed by the University of Michigan Symphony Band, conducted by Michael Haithcock, at the National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association, at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Mich., on March 30, 2007.

Raise the Roof is inspired by the construction of grand architectural wonders such as the Notre Dame Cathedral (1345) in Paris and the Empire State Building (1931) in New York City. I create a grand acoustic construction by bringing the timpani into the foreground and giving the timpanist the rare opportunity to play long expressive melodies, and a tour de force cadenza. I incorporate a wide variety of timpani performance techniques: extensive use of foot pedals for melodic tuning of the drums, placement of a cymbal upside down on the head of the lowest drum to play glissandi rolls, and striking the drums with regular mallets, wire brushes, maraca sticks, and even bare hands. Raise the Roof is in the form of a double variation. The first theme of the double variation, played initially by the tuba, is presented in various timbral and rhythmic guises such as "guaguancó." The second theme of the double variation, first heard in the flutes and then the timpani, is reminiscent of a medieval plain chant. The two themes are passed around in canons and fugues and other permutations throughout the ensemble to create elaborate patterns, as in a gothic cathedral. Raise the Roof rises toward a crescendo of urban polyrhythms and dynamic contrasts, allowing the timpani and the symphonic band to create a grand acoustic construction.

**Sprint**
*Ryan Waczek writes:*
Sprint consists of a single movement in ternary form. The piece opens with a triumphant statement of the main theme by the brass, drizzled with a fleeting woodwind ostinato. This theme returns at the end of the piece but is separated by a slower, more melodious secondary melody played by the bass clarinet and saxophones. This piece was written specifically for the Cal Poly Wind Ensemble to evoke grand feelings of a cinematic motion picture score; so, as the title suggests, let the chase begin.

**Bugler’s Holiday**
*Bugler’s Holiday* is one of the best-known pieces of band literature written by the band master Leroy Anderson (1908-1975). Anderson was born in Cambridge, Mass., and began studying piano and music at the New England Conservatory of Music when he was 11 years of age. In 1931, Anderson became director of the Harvard Band. During his four-year tenure with this group, he composed several pieces, one of which was accepted to be played by the Boston Pops. This piece, titled *Harvard Fantasy*, was a success and resulted in Anderson becoming a regular composer for the ensemble. In 1945, the Pops’ lead trumpet player, Roger Voisin, requested Anderson to compose an original piece for trumpet. The result was *Trumpeter’s Lullaby*.

It was not until 1954 that Anderson again composed a piece featuring the trumpet. He wrote *Bugler’s Holiday* as a solo piece for three trumpets accompanied by a band. At that time, Anderson had his own ensemble that was recording for Decca Records. He hoped *Bugler’s Holiday* would become a hit, possibly helping the group surpass the success of their previous gold-record album released in 1951.

The solo trumpet parts in *Bugler’s Holiday* are written to imitate the sound of a bugle, a brass instrument without valves that is commonly used for military calls and fanfares. Anderson intended for the soloists to stand in front of the ensemble instead of sitting in seats among the band. Since the premiere of *Bugler’s Holiday* 60 years ago, the piece has remained a favorite among crowds and trumpet enthusiasts.

— “Bugler’s Holiday” notes by Travis Bender
**John Astaire**

John Astaire earned his Doctor of Music degree from Indiana University, where he studied timpani with Gerald Carlyss. Under Carlyss’ guidance, he developed his own sound and approach as a timpanist. He earned a bachelor’s degree in music from Cal Poly.

Astaire specializes in performing virtuoso contemporary solo percussion works and has thrilled audiences, critics, composers and fellow musicians with his athleticism, agility, and musicality he brings to his performances.

He has performed with various orchestras, contemporary music ensembles, and wind bands across the country, including the Aguava New Music Ensemble, Kylix New Music Ensemble, Bloomington and Terre Haute Symphony Orchestras, and Keith Brion’s New Sousa Band, among others.

In the pop music world he has appeared on albums by Vienna Teng and Alex Wong (also a Cal Poly music graduate), and has performed in Japan with the avant-garde music ensemble Sound Gate, directed by Mutsuhito Ogino.

In addition to percussion, he also performs on the cimbalom, a hammered dulcimer unique to the Hungarian gypsy tradition taught to him by Ken Watson. He plays it in multiple music genres and performed at the World Cimbalom Congress held in Appenzell, Switzerland, in 2003.

As an instructor, Astaire teaches percussion at Cal Poly, and is the director of PolyRhythms, Cal Poly’s Percussion Ensemble, a performing ensemble that specializes in contemporary works for percussion. He has also taught children of all ages how to play the drums, and is a coach with the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony.

**Alessandra Shanus**

Alessandra Shanus is a graduating senior music major studying piano under Dr. W. Terrence Spiller and Susan Azaret Davies. Born in San Francisco and raised in Burlingame, Calif., she began her piano studies at the age of 5 with Marilyn Raubitschek, a former concert pianist.

In January of 2014, Shanus completed her senior recital, which consisted of an hour-long program of classical repertoire.

In 2012, she was a winner of the Cal Poly Symphony Solo competition and performed the first movement of Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Minor* with the symphony. In addition to solo piano, Shanus also enjoys accompanying vocalists and instrumentalists and playing in pit orchestras, including playing celesta in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* in 2013.

A versatile musician, Shanus also played the oboe and English horn in Cal Poly’s Symphony and Wind Ensemble, and the piccolo in the Mustang Marching Band. After graduation, Shanus will attend California State University, Northridge, to pursue a Masters of Arts in Music Industry Administration.

**Ryan Waczek**

Ryan Waczek is a senior music major studying percussion under Dr. John Astaire. Raised in San Diego, Calif., Waczek’s musical career began when he started playing tenor saxophone under the direction of Steve Steinberg, and guitar in various rock and roll groups.

Ryan began his formal percussion training at Cal Poly under Ross Sears and during that time showed an interest in music composition. Ryan has composed music for Cal Poly including the Mustang Athletics Football Kickoff music, as well as various Cal Poly videos including the Mustang Mascot Teaser, and the Cal Poly Proud Ad campaign. He also scored the groundbreaking film *A Life Facing Bars, A Gang Prevention Documentary* which was premiered in theaters and schools around the Central Coast. Waczek continues to study composition under Dr. Meredith Brammeier and plans on continuing his music education in Los Angeles while pursuing a career in film scoring.
Christopher J. Woodruff  
Associate Director of Bands  
Christopher Woodruff joined the faculty at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, as associate director of bands in the fall of 2006. In addition to his responsibilities with the Wind Orchestra and Mustang Band, he teaches courses in music theory and music appreciation. As instructor of trumpet he also coaches the Cal Poly Brass Choir and teaches methods courses in brass pedagogy.

Woodruff earned a bachelor’s degree in music education at Louisiana State University and taught high school band for several years in Florida. He continued studies in conducting at Northwestern University, where he received the Eckstein Band Conducting Grant and completed a master’s degree in music. While in Chicago, he served as music director of the Spring Valley Concert Band and was a guest conductor for the Northshore Concert Band and the Northshore Chamber Orchestra.

Prior to his arrival on the Central Coast, he served as director of symphonic and marching bands at University of Northern Iowa and director of bands at Lycoming College in Pennsylvania. His guest conducting appearances have included concerts with the Penn Central Wind Band, Williamsport Symphony chamber players as well as the Northshore Concert Band and Northshore Chamber Orchestra.

As a trumpet player, he has played with the Baton Rouge Symphony, Billtown Brass Band and Williamsport Symphony Orchestra. He maintains a full schedule of guest conducting and coaching, working with school bands and honor bands in Iowa, Pennsylvania, and California. He has presented courses on conducting, rehearsal methods and brass pedagogy. His most recent appearances include serving as guest conductor for the Merced Mariposa Counties Honor Band Association and for the Western Band Association near Palo Alto, Calif. As a performer, he regularly guest conducts the San Luis Obispo Wind Orchestra and is a founding member of the Pacific Coast Brass Ensemble. He has performed solo works for trumpet with the Symphony of the Vines, San Luis Obispo Wind Orchestra and the San Luis Obispo Chamber Orchestra.

Woodruff holds professional memberships with the Music Educators National Conference, California Band Directors Association, College Music Educators Association, World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, and the International Trumpet Guild. He is also a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and Pi Kappa Lambda and is chapter co-sponsor of the Iota Pi chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi.
Piccolo
Nicole Slagle, Poway, ME
Michelle Johnson, Palo Cedro, FDSC

Flute
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Piano
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ENVE Environmental Engineering
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