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Ensemble Concerts: Wind Symphony, September 29, 2002

Stephen K. Steele Conductor
Illinois State University

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School of Music
Illinois State University

WIND SYMPHONY

Stephen K. Steele, *Conductor*

Michelle Vought, *Soprano Soloist*
John Koch, *Narrator*

Center for Performing Arts
Sunday Afternoon
September 29, 2002
3:00 p.m.

The tenth program of the 2002-2003 Season

Program

Celebration (1991)

Praeludium for Wind, Brass, Percussion, Harp and Piano

Edward Gregson

(born 1945)

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 (1947)

Samuel Barber

(1910 - 1981)

Transcribed by Kenneth Singleton

Michelle Vought, *soprano*

Fiesta del Pacifico (1960)

Roger Nixon

(born 1921)

Intermission

Lincoln Portrait (1942)

Aaron Copland

(1900 - 1990)

Transcribed by Walter Beeler

John Koch, *narrator*

Symphony No. 4 (West Point Symphony) (1952)

Epitaphs
Marches

Morton Gould

(1913 - 1996)

Program Notes

Edward Gregson is one of Britain's most versatile composers, whose music has been performed, broadcast, and recorded worldwide. He studied composition and piano at the Royal Academy of Music, winning five prizes for composition. Gregson achieved early success with his Brass Quintet, which was broadcast and recorded, as well as being a finalist piece in the 1968 BBC Young Composer's Competition. This was followed by many commissions from, amongst others, the English Chamber Orchestra and the York Festival. Since then he has written orchestral, wind band, chamber, instrumental and choral music, as well as music for theatre, film, and television.

A noted conductor of contemporary music, Edward Gregson has also held numerous academic posts, including Professor of Music at Goldsmith's College, University of London and visiting teacher and conductor at the Royal Academy of Music. Edward Gregson is currently Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music.

Celebration opens with a fanfare (announced by three spatially separated trumpets and chimes), essentially exuberant music which plays an important part later on. This leads into the second section, basically scherzo-like but with an expressive central passage. Instruments are introduced in the order: flutes, clarinets, oboes, bassoons. A brief tutti ushers in a simple chorale. The development follows, often highly charged rhythmically, and using material from the first two sections plus a new idea heard on trumpets. The music rises to a climax which moves directly into a reprise of the chorale in combination with the opening fanfare, bringing the work to a triumphant conclusion." (composer's notes)

Samuel Barber's music, masterfully crafted and built on romantic structures and sensibilities, is at once lyrical, rhythmically complex, and harmonically rich. Born March 9, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Barber wrote his first piece at age 7 and attempted his first opera at age 10. At the age of 14 he entered the Curtis Institute, where he studied voice, piano, and composition. Later, he studied conducting with Fritz Reiner.

Barber was the recipient of numerous awards and prizes including the American Prix de Rome, two Pulitzers, and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His intensely lyrical *Adagio for Strings* has become one of the most recognizable and beloved compositions, both in concerts and films.

Geoff Kuenning wrote the following about *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*: In 1935, the writer James Agee, having become interested in the process of jazz improvisation, decided to experiment with a similar approach to writing, in which multiple drafts and careful revisions would be abandoned in favor of a more fluid approach. "Sketching vaguely" on a possible novel, he produced a

nostalgic remembrance of his early childhood, taking only 90 minutes to complete a brief text that he later revised only slightly. "There is little if anything consciously invented in it, it is strictly autobiographical," commented the writer in 1948. The rhythmic and descriptive piece was published in *The Partisan Reader* in 1938.

Almost a decade later, Barber encountered Knoxville in an anthology, and began work on an orchestral setting. At about the same time, the singer Eleanor Steber commissioned him to write a piece for voice and orchestra, and Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony, expressed interest in a large piece for voice and orchestra. All of these factors came together to produce a highly successful premiere in Boston in 1948.

Barber chose to set only the final third of Agee's text, beginning in the middle of a sentence. At the top of the score, following a dedication to Barber's father, appear the words:

"We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville Tennessee
in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child."

Barber's music is peaceful, poetic, and evocative. With superb economy, it recalls the feeling of being five years old, lying on a lawn in the Southern summer heat and drifting off to sleep as the stars and crickets begin to come out, the adults share stories in quiet voices, and the neighborhood settles down at the end of a long languid day.

Roger Nixon attended Modesto Junior College from 1938-1940 and continued his studies at the University of California at Berkeley, majoring in composition and receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1941. His studies were interrupted for almost four years of active duty as a line officer in the Navy during World War II. Following the war Nixon returned to Berkeley, first receiving a M.A. degree and later a Ph.D. His composition teachers included Arthur Bliss, Ernest Bloch, Arnold Schoenberg and Roger Sessions.

From 1951 to 1959, Nixon was on the music faculty at Modesto Junior College. He was then appointed to the faculty at San Francisco State College in 1960 and began a long association with the Symphonic Band, which premiered many of his works. Most of Nixon's works are for band, but he has also composed a cantata, a miniature opera and several works for orchestra.

Fiesta del Pacifico, dedicated to the San Francisco State College Symphonic Band and its director Edwin Kruth, was composed for them at about the same time Roger Nixon joined that institution's faculty. The title refers to one of several festivals held annually in various communities in California which celebrate the Old Spanish Days of the state. The particular festival is held in San Diego for twelve days in the summer and features a play on the history of the

area and a cast of over a thousand, a parade, a rodeo, and street dances. "Tonal fresco" is the phrase Nixon uses to describe this brief but evocative piece, adding that the concept is "similar to that of a tone poem, or that of the music drama, in that some of the musical ideas have extra-musical connotations. It is impressionistic in that the aim is to create descriptive impressions rather than to tell a story. The work is a large dance movement which makes frequent use of Spanish-Mexican idioms, and a detailed knowledge of the musical imagery is not requisite to enjoyment."

Aaron Copland was born on November 14, 1900 in New York City. His musical works ranged from ballet and orchestral music to choral music and movie scores. For the better part of four decades Aaron Copland was considered the premier American composer.

Copland learned to play piano from an older sister and by the time he was fifteen he had decided to become a composer. His first tentative steps included a correspondence course in writing harmony. In 1921 Copland traveled to Paris to attend the newly founded music school for Americans at Fontainebleau. He was the first American student of the brilliant teacher, Nadia Boulanger. After three years in Paris he returned to New York with his first major commission, writing an organ concerto for the American appearances of Madame Boulanger. His "Symphony for Organ and Orchestra" premiered at Carnegie Hall in 1925.

Copland's growth as a composer mirrored important trends of his time. After his return from Paris he worked with jazz rhythms in his "Piano Concerto" (1926). His "Piano Variations" (1930) was strongly influenced by Igor Stravinsky's Neoclassicism. In 1936 he changed his orientation toward a simpler style. He felt this made his music more meaningful to the large music-loving audience being created by radio and the movies.

After 1970 Copland stopped composing, though he continued to lecture and conduct through the mid-1980s. He died on December 2, 1990 at the Phelps Memorial Hospital in Tarrytown, New York.

Soon after America was drawn into World War II, Andre Kostelanez approached Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Jerome Kern with the idea of a series of concerts that would prominently feature "a portrait gallery of great Americans". Thomson's subject was New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. Copland's first choice was Walt Whitman, but when Kern chose Mark Twain, Kostelanez suggested that Copland choose a statesman, rather than another literary figure. Abraham Lincoln seemed an inevitable choice. Sifting through the President's speeches and writings, Copland chose a few excerpts that were particularly relevant to America's situation in 1942. Concerning *Lincoln Portrait*, Copland said: "I worked with musical materials of my own, with the exception of two songs of the period: the famous "Camptown Races" and a bal-

lad known today as "Springfield Mountain." In neither case is the treatment a literal one. The tunes are used freely in the manner of my use of cowboy songs in *Billy the Kid*. The composition is roughly divided into three main sections. In the opening section I wanted to suggest something of a mysterious sense of fatality that surrounds Lincoln's personality. Also, near the end of that section, something of his gentleness and simplicity of spirit. The quick middle section briefly sketches in the background of the times he lived. This merges into the concluding section where my sole purpose was to draw a simple but impressive frame about the words of Lincoln himself."

"Composing is my life blood," said Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Morton Gould**. "That is basically me, and although I have done many things in my life - conducting, playing piano, and so on - what is fundamental is my being a composer."

Born in Richmond Hill, New York, on December 10, 1913, Gould was recognized early on as a child prodigy with the ability to improvise and compose. At the age of six he had his first composition published. He studied at the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School). During the Depression, Gould (still a teenager) found work in New York's vaudeville and movie theaters. When Radio City Music Hall opened, the young Gould was its staff pianist. By the age of 21 he was conducting and arranging a series of orchestral programs for WOR Mutual Radio. Gould attained national prominence through his work in radio, as he appealed to a wide-ranging audience with his combination of classical and popular programming. During the 1940s Gould appeared on the "Cresta Blanca Carnival" program and "The Chrysler Hour" (CBS), reaching an audience of millions.

As a conductor, Gould led all the major American orchestras as well as those of Canada, Mexico, Europe, Japan, and Australia. In 1966 he won a Grammy Award for his recording of Ives's First Symphony with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a recording that led the way for a new appreciation of Ives's work.

Symphony for Band (subtitled the *West Point Symphony*) was commissioned for the West Point Sesquicentennial Celebration of 1952 and was premiered under the baton of the composer. There are two movements, *Epitaphs* and *Marches*, about which Gould has commented: "The first movement is lyrical and dramatic. The work starts with a quiet and melodic statement of the main theme and motifs that are used and expanded through the entire piece. The general character is elegiac. There is contrast between sonorous brass statements and poignant and contemplative reflections in the woodwinds. This resolves into a broad and noble exposition of one of the motifs, followed by a transition to what serves as both an extended Coda of the movement and a transformation and peroration of the preceding sections. The form here is a passacaglia based on a martial theme first stated in the tuba. On this is built a series of variations that grow in intensity. They mount to a dynamic peak, and after a final climatic variation the movement recalls the previous lyricisms, but with the passacaglia motif hovering in the

background. The movement finishes quietly. The second and final movement is lusty and gay in character. The texture is a stylization of marching tunes that parades past in an array of embellishments and rhythmic variants. At one point there is a simulation of a Fife and Drum Corps which, incidentally, was the instrumentation of the original West Point Band. After a brief transformed restatement of the themes in the first movement, the work finishes in a virtuoso Coda of martial fanfares and flourishes."

Fall Band events and concerts

Sunday, October 6, **Symphonic Winds and Symphonic Band Concert**
CPA Concert Hall, 3:00 pm

Monday, October 7, **Chamber Winds Concert**
Kemp Recital Hall, 3:00 pm

Friday, October 18, **Wind Symphony**
CPA Grand Opening, 3:00 pm

Saturday, October 26, **Marching Band, Band Day**
Hancock Stadium, all day

Saturday, November 9, **Marching Band** Exhibition performance,
Bands of America, Indianapolis, IN, 10:00 pm

Sunday, November 17, **Wind Symphony** British Band Classics Concert
CPA Concert Hall, 3:00 pm

Thursday, November 21, **Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band,
and University Band Concert**,
CPA Concert Hall, 7:30 pm, featuring the music of David Maslanka

Sunday, November 24, **Wind Symphony Chamber Winds Concert**
CPA Concert Hall, 3:00 pm,
featuring faculty artists
John Koch (Baritone Voice) and Kimberly Risinger (Flute)

Wind Symphony Personnel

Flute

*Kristi Benedick, Arnold, MO
Megan Lomonof, Oak Lawn
Stacey Lusk, Flora
Christa Ruesink, Palos Heights
Leigh Ann Singer, Ottawa
Elivi Varga, Bethesda, MD

Oboe and English horn

*Heather Broyles, Bristol, TN
Patrick McGuire, Round Lake Heights
Vanessa Passini, Bloomington

E-Flat Clarinet

Ivory Sebastian, Aurora

Clarinet

Brian Beddigs, Park Forest
Jennifer Bland, Normal
Jessica Boese, Shorewood
Joseph Conway, Sterling
*Sally Friedrich, Joliet
*Nikki Schneider, Lemont
Ivory Sebastian, Aurora
Stephanie Simpson, Chicago

Low Clarinets

Christina Isaacs, Bloomington
*Paul Sprecher, Canton
Kristina Toma, Northbrook

Bassoon

Kathryn Bartel, Westmont
*Erin Click, Jackson, MO

Contra Bassoon

Amy Zordan, Odell

Alto Saxophone

Robert Rake Jr., Springfield
*Tobias Thomas, Tremont

Tenor Saxophone

Travis Thacker, Normal

Baritone Saxophone

Amanda Miceli, Sleepy Hollow

* indicates principal

Horn

David Bostik, Lockport
*Sara Giovanelli, Iowa City, IA
John Hansen, Pontiac
Christopher Render, Houston, TX

Trumpet

Kyle Berens, Crystal Lake
Elizabeth Clapper, Bellville, OH
Elisa Curren, Danbury, NH
Ryan Elliott, Saginaw, MI
Justin Stanford, Sauk Village
*Kelly Watkins, Henderson, TX

Trombone

*Michael Bingham, Chicago
Brandon Hopkins, Chicago
Kelly Wolf, Morrison

Bass Trombone

Matt Kelm, Lockport

Euphonium

*Anthony Hernandez, East Moline
Michael McDermott, East Moline

Tuba

Eric Jordan, Joliet
*Chris Vivio, Naperville

Percussion

Andrés Bautista, Skokie
*William Cuthbert, Jr., Elkhart, IN
David Dunbar, El Paso, TX
Bill Roberts, St. Charles
Scott Simon, Belvidere

Piano

Kristóf Kovács, Budapest, Hungary
Tamara Myers, Flora

Cello

Brian Bromberg, Buffalo Grove

Double Bass

Grant Souder, Normal

Harp

Joy Hoffman