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Ensemble Concerts: Wind Symphony, November 19, 2009

Stephen K. Steele Conductor
Illinois State University

Paul Nolen Guest Soloist

David Maslanka Guest Composer

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*Illinois State University
College of Fine Arts
School of Music*

WIND SYMPHONY

Stephen K. Steele, *Conductor*

Paul Nolen, *Guest Soloist*

David Maslanka, *Guest Composer*

This is the eighty-ninth program of the 2009-2010 Season

**Center for the Performing Arts
Sunday Afternoon
November 19, 2009
8:00 p.m.**

Program

Vincent Persichetti **DIVERTIMENTO FOR BAND (1950)**
(1915-1987)

Prologue
Song
Dance
Burlesque
Soliloquy
March

Vincent Persichetti **PAGEANT (1953)**

Vincent Persichetti **PSALM FOR BAND (1952)**

Intermission

David Maslanka **CONCERTO FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE (1999)**
(born 1944)

Song: "Fire in the Earth"
Interlude: "Bright Window, Your Night is Full of stars"
Song: "Dear Jesus, what have you ...DONE?"
Interlude: "Starry Night"
Song: "Mortal, have you seen this?"

Paul Nolen, *Alto Saxophone*

Program Notes

Vincent Persichetti, born in Philadelphia, was one of the most universally admired of twentieth-century American composers. Persichetti began his musical life at the age of five, first studying piano, then organ, double bass, tuba, theory and composition. By the age of eleven, he was paying for his own musical education, supporting himself by performing professionally as an accompanist and church organist. His earliest works were written at age fourteen and exhibit true mastery of form and style. By age twenty, Persichetti was simultaneously head of the theory and composition departments at the Combs College, a conducting major with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute, and a piano major studying with Olga Samaroff at the Philadelphia Conservatory. He received a Diploma in Conducting from the Curtis Institute and advanced degrees from the Philadelphia Conservatory. In 1941, Persichetti was appointed head of the theory and composition departments at the Philadelphia Conservatory. In 1947, he joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music where he taught for the next forty years, assuming chairmanship of the composition department in 1963. Persichetti composed for nearly every musical medium, publishing over 120 works. He devoted a significant portion of his creative output to repertoire for winds. From the *Serenade for Ten Wind Instruments*, Op. 1 to the *Chorale Prelude: O God Unseen*, Op. 160, Vincent Persichetti provided a wealth of literature of unparalleled excellence.

Divertimento for Band is Persichetti's second work for winds. The piece was completed in 1950, and the first performance took place on June 16, 1950 in New York City. *Divertimento for Band* was commissioned and premiered by the Goldman Band. The piece received such great acclaim that in the 1955 season, it was played in every state in this country. Divertimenti were popular during the Classical period, particularly during the time of Haydn and Mozart. A divertimento was a collection of several movements of varying styles. *Divertimento for Band* contains six short, diverse movements: "Prologue", "Song", "Dance", "Burlesque", "Soliloquy", and "March" which demonstrate rhythmic and contrapuntal craft as well as a good deal of tongue-in-cheek humor and lyrical nostalgia.

Pageant, commissioned by the American Bandmasters Association, is Persichetti's fourth work for winds. The piece was completed in January of 1953, and the first performance took place on March 7, 1953 at the American Bandmasters Association Convention in Miami, Florida. It

was performed by the University of Miami Band with the composer conducting. The New York première took place on June 19, 1953, performed by the Goldman band with the composer conducting.

The piece, in two major sections, opens with a pensive French horn solo that establishes the pitch and interval content for the entire work, even to the last chord. The opening slow section develops the initial theme by juxtaposing simple, open instrumentations using small forces, with lush, full chordal sounds involving the entire ensemble. A percussion break bridges the slow section to a fast Allegro section which continues to develop the themes heard previously. This section features a number of contrasts in articulation, instrumentation and style. Themes are heard first one at a time and then on top of one another, and in the final portion of the work, the two principal subjects are developed simultaneously to a lively climax.

Psalm for Band was commissioned by Pi Kappa Omicron National Band Fraternity at the University of Louisville and had its first performance on May 2, 1952 with Persichetti conducting the University of Louisville Band. The composer supplied the following note on the score: *Psalm for Band* is a piece constructed from a single germinating harmonic idea. There are three distinct sections -- a sustained chordal mood, a forward-moving chorale, followed by a Paean culmination of the materials. Extensive use is made of separate choirs of instruments supported by thematic rhythms in the tenor and bass drums." The Persichetti *Psalm* begins as a sober procession and ends as a triumphant proclamation.

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1943. He attended the Oberlin College Conservatory where he studied composition with Joseph Wood. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, and did graduate work in composition at Michigan State University with H. Owen Reed.

Maslanka's works for winds and percussion have become especially well known. They include among others, *A Child's Garden of Dreams* for Symphonic Wind Ensemble, concerti for flute, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, solo percussion, two concerti for piano, winds and percussion, eight symphonies, *Mass* for soloists, chorus, boys chorus, wind orchestra and organ, and three wind quintets. Percussion works include, *Variations of 'Lost Love'* and *My Lady White*: for solo marimba, and three ensemble works: *Arcadia II: Concerto for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble*, *Crown of Thorns*, and *Montana Music: Three Dances for Percussion*. In

addition, he has written a wide variety of chamber, orchestral, and choral pieces.

David Maslanka's compositions are published by Carl Fischer, Inc., Kjos Music Company, Marimba Productions, Inc., the North American Saxophone Alliance, and OU Percussion Press, and have been recorded on Albany, Cambria, CRI, Mark, Novisse, and Klavier labels. He has served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough College of the City University of New York. He now lives in Missoula, Montana. David Maslanka is a member of ASCAP.

This *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble* turned out to be a good deal larger than I would reasonably want. As I got into the composing, the ideas became insistent: none of them would be left out! The format of Songs and Interludes arises from my other recent works for saxophones (*Mountain Roads* for saxophone quartet and *Song Book* for alto saxophone and marimba) and suggests a music that is more intimate than symphonic. There is a strong spiritual overtone with quotes from Bach Chorales, and from my own works *Hell's Gate* and *Mass*. A story is hinted at which has the Crucifixion right smack in the middle – the climax of the third movement quotes the “Crucifixus” from the *Mass*. I don't know what the story is, only that it wants to be music, and not words.

I. Song: “Fire in the Earth”

Walking through a Montana field on a brilliant late fall day, three images came in rapid succession: a distant row of red plant stems caught by the morning sun, snow on the surrounding high mountains, green grass at my feet. The following poetic image came:

Fire in the earth

Snow in the heavens

New green grass in the middle of November

This is a quiet, emotional music – sometimes not so quiet – contained by a very simple song form.

II. Interlude: “Bright Window, Your Night is Full of Stars”

“Bright Window” is the soprano song right before the Credo in my *Mass*. I have transcribed it whole as a beautiful song for the solo saxophone. The words of the original song reach out in prayer to the Holy Mother and ask for a personal connection with all that is. This music is dedicated

to the memory of Joseph Christensen, Director of Bands at Iowa State University, whose untimely death was a shock to his many friends.

III. Song: “Dear Jesus, what have you DONE?!”

This music grows out of the chorale “Herzliebste Jesu, was hast du verbrocken” (“Dearest Jesus, what law did you break”). The chorale is the starting point for a huge upsurge of powerful emotion, cresting with the climax of the “Crucifixus” from the *Mass*. Dear Jesus, what have you done to get yourself crucified?...And then you drag the rest of us up there with you!!

IV. Interlude: “Starry Night”

“Starry Night” is not a quiet night! There is both mystery and playfulness in this music, and playfulness finally wins out, erupting into an extended dance episode with a very Baroque feel. Of all the movements, this one is most nearly a scherzo.

V. Song: “Mortal, have you seen this?”

In the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet has a vision of a man “whose appearance shone like bronze.” The “Bronze Man” shows him the Holy City. He then leads him into a deep and very wide river that cannot be crossed, and says “Mortal, have you seen this?” Where the river enters the sea the water becomes fresh; everything will live where the river goes; trees along the river will not wither, their fruit will be for food, their leaves for healing.

This movement is an echo of the third. It opens and closes with what has been called the “coronation” music from my composition *Hell’s Gate* – in this case played very softly and inwardly.

- David Maslanka

Paul Nolen has appeared as soloist, chamber musician, and jazz artist throughout the United States, Canada, and the UK. Moving fluidly between genres, he has appeared with a diverse array of groups, including the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Mexico City’s ONIX Ensemble, The Sonic Exploration Society, and the ISU Faculty Jazz Quartet. During the spring of 2010, Dr. Nolen will give recitals at Louisiana State University and the University of New Mexico, and premiere a new saxophone quartet at the North American Saxophone Alliance National Conference in Athens, Georgia.

Dr. Nolen currently serves as Assistant Professor of Saxophone at Illinois State University in Normal, IL. In 2008 and 2009, Dr. Nolen appeared as artist-in-residence and faculty at the Aberystwyth International Music Festival in Wales, UK, teaching saxophone and jazz. In 2008, he served as saxophone artist during the Music For All National Honor's Band Festival in Indianapolis, and has presented recent classes at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, the University of New Mexico, and Brevard Music Festival in North Carolina.

He received both the DMA and MM degrees in performance from the College of Music at Michigan State University, and the BM from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. His teachers and mentors have included Joseph Lulloff, Tim Timmons, Gary Foster, Hal Melia, Jackie Lamar, and Ron Blake.

Upcoming Illinois State University Band Events

North Central College Band Directors Convention

All concerts are free and open to the public in the Center for the Performing Arts

Thursday, February 25

4:15 p.m. Grand Valley State University

8:00 p.m. Illinois State University Wind Symphony
Song Book - David Maslanka, Kim Risinger, *flute*

Friday, February 26

11:00 p.m. Illinois State University Symphonic Winds (Gems session)

4:15 p.m. North Dakota State University

8:00 p.m. Central Michigan University

Saturday, February 27

11:00 p.m. University of North Dakota Chamber Winds

1:45 p.m. Ball State

4:15 p.m. Intercollegiate Concert Band

8:00 p.m. Indiana University

Wind Symphony Personnel

Piccolo and Flute

Stephanie Abderhalden, *Naperville*
Nayoon Choi, *Republic of Korea*
Raylene Lowe, *Normal*
Stephanie Melinyshyn, *Wheeling*

Oboe and English Horn

Lindsey Merz, *Columbus, OH*
Christina Elder, *McHenry*

Clarinet and E-flat Clarinet

Andrea Steele, *Roselle*
Mark Donahue, *Morton*
Brittany DelSignore, *Naperville*
Lauren Themanson, *Aurora*
Kara Hale, *Joliet*
Lauren Willis, *Powder Springs, GA*

Bass Clarinet

Hannah Edlen, *Rockford*

Contrabass Clarinet

Lauren Themanson, *Aurora*

Bassoon and Contrabassoon

*Kay Schutte, *Bloomington*
Justin Dahlem, *Cincinnati, OH*

Alto Saxophone

*Heather Hojnacki, *Tinley Park*
Alex Teater, *Byron*

Tenor Saxophone

Jodi Slagel, *Washington*

Baritone Saxophone

Matthew Muneses, *Decatur*

Horn

Libby Jones, *Marshfield, MA*
Christine Hansen, *Monroe, WI*
Nancy O'Neill, *Algonquin*
Josh Wagner, *Chicago Heights*
Jaclyn Wessol, *Carlyle*
Megan Starrett, *Inwood, IA*

Cornet and Trumpet

Andrew Gerbitz, *Batavia*
Kait Fieldman, *Tinley Park*
Greg Hensel, *West Aurora*
Erik Noska, *Lemont*
Aaron Von Qualen, *Champaign*

Trombone

Michael Klos, *Naperville*
Jennifer Moder, *Peoria*

Bass Trombone

Chris Darwell, *Lemont*

Euphonium

Patrick Geren, *Rocky Face, GA*
Beth Rocke, *Morton*

Tuba

Jason Lindsey, *Bloomington*
Katie Zdanowski, *Morton*

String Bass

Mallory Alekna, *Rockford*

Piano

Lu Liu, *Harbin, China*

Percussion

Derek Boughy, *Longmont, CO*
Matt Boze, *El Paso*
Dan Bretz, *Crystal Lake*
Timothy Daniels, *Joliet*
Zach Oostema, *Oak Forest*
Adrian Voelzke, *Bloomington*