The Universal Judgement

The Universal Judgement is the work of a young De Nardis who was only 21 years old when he completed this symphonic poem which was awarded a first prize in a national band contest in Naples. The composition is an epitome of Italian Romanticism; The Universal Judgment — an original symphonic poem for military band — embodies the Romantic focus upon emotion and oneself. This highly affective depiction of the end times and God's final judgment upon all of humanity.

- Program Note by Lawrence Stoffel

Steampunk Suite

Steampunk Suite attempts to depict various scenes that take place in a fictional alternate history that features notable people alive in the Victorian era, including Charles Ives, Marie Curie, H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, P.T. Barnum, and Nikola Tesla. It borrows from popular music of the era, including the march, waltz, and the song “Daisy Bell.“ These are combined with sounds of clockwork and imagined steam technology. It also borrows various musical elements from numerous composers of the time, including Ives, Sousa, Satie, Karl King, Stravinsky, and Weill, with some Khachaturian and Danny Elfman thrown in for good measure. This piece has been transcribed for wind ensemble from the original chamber work Steampunk Scenes by the composer.

- Program Note by the composer

Variations on a Korean Folk Song

As a member of, and musical arranger for the Eighth U.S. Army Band, John Barnes Chance served in Seoul, South Korea, during the Korean War. It was during this time that he became familiar with a traditional Korean folk song called Arirang. Chance explains, “The tune is not as simple as it sounds, and my fascination with it during the intervening years led to its eventual use as the theme for this set of variations”.

Arirang is a tune based on the pentatonic scale, and it can be dated back to the 18th century as a song of love and heartbreak. It was utilized in the 20th century as a resistance anthem during the Japanese occupation of Korea, when the singing of patriotic songs, including the national anthem, was criminalized. Chance’s set of variations, written for concert band in 1965, begins by presenting the Arirang theme, and proceeds to develop it through five variations. The piece alternates between fast and slow variations, with the final variation being marked “Con Islancio“ (“with impetuousness”), and it uses a variety of time signatures and rhythmic motives to alter the theme. The piece was awarded the Ostwald Award in 1966 by the American Bandmasters Association.

- Program Note adapted from Baylor University Symphonic Band concert program, 15 September 2022
**SYMPHONIC BAND**

**PROGRAM NOTES**

**DECEMBER 6, 2022 7:30PM**

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**Sheltering Sky**

John Mackey

The wind band medium has, in the twenty-first century, a host of disparate styles that dominate its texture. At the core of its contemporary development exist a group of composers who dazzle with scintillating and frightening virtuosity. As such, at first listening one might experience John Mackey's *Sheltering Sky* as a striking departure. Its serene and simple presentation is a throwback of sorts – a nostalgic portrait of time suspended.

The work itself has a folksong-like quality – intended by the composer – and through this an immediate sense of familiarity emerges. Certainly, the repertoire has a long and proud tradition of weaving folk songs into its identity, from the days of Holst and Vaughan Williams to modern treatments by such figures as Donald Grantham and Frank Ticheli. Whereas these composers incorporated extant melodies into their works, however, Mackey takes a play from Percy Grainger. Grainger's *Colonial Song* seemingly sets a beautiful folksong melody in an enchanting way (so enchanting, in fact, that he reworked the tune into two other pieces: *Australian Up-Country Tune* and *The Gum-Suckers March*). In reality, however, Grainger's melody was entirely original – his own concoction to express how he felt about his native Australia. Likewise, although the melodies of *Sheltering Sky* have a recognizable quality (hints of the contours and colors of *Danny Boy* and *Shenandoah* are perceptible), the tunes themselves are original to the work, imparting a sense of hazy distance as though they were from a half-remembered dream.

The work unfolds in a sweeping arch structure, with cascading phrases that elide effortlessly. The introduction presents softly articulated harmonies stacking through a surrounding placidity. From there emerge statements of each of the two folksong-like melodies – the call as a sighing descent in solo oboe, and its answer as a hopeful rising line in trumpet. Though the composer's trademark virtuosity is absent, his harmonic language remains. Mackey avoids traditional triadic sonorities almost exclusively, instead choosing more indistinct chords with diatonic extensions (particularly seventh and ninth chords) that facilitate the hazy sonic world that the piece inhabits. Near cadences, chromatic dissonances fill the narrow spaces in these harmonies, creating an even greater pull toward wistful nostalgia. Each new phrase begins over the resolution of the previous one, creating a sense of motion that never completely stops. The melodies themselves unfold and eventually dissipate until at last the serene introductory material returns – the opening chords finally coming to rest.

- Program note by Jake Wallace

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**Armenian Dances, part I**

Alfred Reed

Armenian Dances, Parts I and II, constitute a four-movement suite for concert band or wind ensemble based on authentic Armenian folk songs from the collected works of Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935) [commonly known as Komitas], the founder of Armenian classical music.

Part I, containing the first movement of this suite (the remaining three movements constituting Part II), is an extended symphonic rhapsody built upon five different songs, freely treated and developed in terms of the modern integrated concert band or wind ensemble. While the composer has kept his treatment of the melodies within the general limits imposed on the music by its very nature, he has not hesitated to expand the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic possibilities in keeping with the demands of a symphonic-instrumental, as opposed to an individual vocal or choral approach to its performance. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the overall effect of the music will be found to remain true in spirit to the work of this brilliant composer-musicologist, who almost single-handedly preserved and gave to the world a treasure trove of beautiful folk music that to this day has not yet become as widely known in the Western world.
as it so richly deserves. It is hoped that this new instrumental setting will prove to be at least a small step in this direction.

Part I of Armenian Dances was completed in the summer of 1972 and first performed by Dr. Harry Begian (to whom the work is dedicated) and the University of Illinois Symphonic Band on January 10, 1973, at the CBDNA Convention in Urbana, Illinois.