University of Kansas Wind Ensemble

Kneller’s Legacy (2020) ................................................................. Tom Davoren (b. 1986)
Lt. Col. David Barringer MBE, conductor

2020 represented the end of an era for the Royal Corps of Army Music, and indeed for all those involved with wind music the world over. Kneller Hall has operated as the Royal Military School of Music since 1857, when commissioned to train the musicians of the British Military by Queen Victoria and the Duke of Cambridge. In 2020 the Royal Corps of Army Music and the Royal Marines Band Service embarked on an exciting bi-service musical training program, resulting in the decommissioning of Kneller Hall for use in military music.

The brief of Kneller’s Legacy, commissioned by the Royal Corps of Army Music, was to celebrate the storied history of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, represent the progressive spirit of Royal Corps of Army Music, while serving as an appropriate commemoration for the end of an era in British military music.

The work paints a nostalgic picture over eight minutes in duration. The opening is a hazy and romantic trip backwards in time. A veiled voicing of ‘God Save the Queen’ is ever present as we recall students and performances of the past though the interweaving of signature marches of the bands of the household division: the Grenadier, Coldstream, Welsh, Scotts, and Irish Guards. This is followed by a grand pageant, reminiscent of Trooping the Colour or Beating Retreat. A noble march style melody is punctuated by fanfares and flourishes, reminiscent of the pomp of British classical music in the early 20th century. Still coloured by quotes from military marches, the main body of material for this section is drawn from the folk song ‘Blow Away the Morning Dew’, the signature march of the Royal Military School of Music and inspiration behind the third movement of Ralph Vaughan-Williams’ seminal English Folk Song Suite, which was premiered at Kneller Hall almost a century ago in 1923.

- Program note by composer

Huntingtower Ballad (1931) ............................................................. Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)
Melissa Sawyer, conductor

In April 1932, the national convention of the prestigious American Bandmasters Association (ABA) was held in Washington, D.C. The three major service bands of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps took part in the gala event designed to celebrate the ongoing legacy and development of the concert band. The festivities took on new meaning, however, when John Philip Sousa died unexpectedly the month prior, and the ABA dedicated the entire convention to its Honorary Life President. One of the founding principles of the ABA was the continued development of new repertoire for bands, and the 1932 convention featured several significant premières. The Marine Band gave the first performances of two works by major composers that eventually became cornerstones of the repertoire: Gustav Holst’s Prelude and Scherzo, Hammersmith, and Ottorino Respighi’s Huntingtower Ballad. Both Holst and Respighi were in the twilight of their impressive careers at the time of these two commissions, and each had contributed major works to the orchestral canon. Holst had also written previous works for military band with his celebrated suites, but Respighi had never composed for the medium, and Huntingtower would be his only original contribution to the band repertoire. Although Respighi took an active interest in transcriptions for band, and it is known that band versions of his music were performed within his lifetime
(including those by the Sousa Band), Respighi himself unfortunately never made a band setting of his own orchestral music.

It would be difficult to find a twentieth century composer with a greater command of the many sounds and colors of the orchestra than Respighi. This talent is perhaps best illustrated in the three large-scale works that made him a household name, the so-called Roman Trilogy: Fontane di Roma (Fountains of Rome), Pini di Roma (Pines of Rome), and his monumental showpiece, Feste Romane (Roman Festivals). He had recently completed this final, dazzling installment when ABA President Edwin Franko Goldman approached the composer about writing an original band work. Respighi gladly accepted and took as his inspiration a special place that he had visited on holiday, the Huntingtower Castle in Perth, Scotland. His musical portrait of the majestic fifteenth century structure begins with a mysterious and hazy utterance from the lowest instruments of the ensemble that leads to a rich, Scottish-inspired melody. This section seamlessly gives way to a spirited episode of hunting music with overlaid interjections of the motives from the opening of the work. The hunt subsides and moves into a long, lyrical theme for the woodwinds in E-flat before a searing climax shifts the key back to minor. The opening motive returns for a dramatic conclusion that evokes the massive scale of the castle.

Respighi dedicated the work to Goldman and to the memory of John Philip Sousa. The Marine Band premièred Huntingtower Ballad on April 17, 1932, conducted by then-director Captain Taylor Branson. Following the convention, Respighi was made an honorary member of the American Bandmasters Association.

-Program note by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band

**Masks and Machines** (2015)

Lucas Petersen, conductor

*Masks and Machines* was commissioned by a consortium of wind bands organized by Timothy Shade in honor of Gary Green's retirement from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. *Masks and Machines* is inspired by the early twentieth century works of Bauhaus artist Oskar Schlemmer, and the Neoclassical music of Igor Stravinsky. I admire the simplicity of shapes and color in Schlemmer's works such as the *Bauhaus Stairway* and *Triadic Ballet* as well as the renaissance and baroque musical influences in Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*.

*Masks and Machines* contains three contrasting character pieces featuring renaissance brass music, Baroque fortspinnung in virtuosic mallet percussion, lush oboe, clarinet and bassoon solos, and machine-like flute rips.

- Program note by composer

**Pictures at an Exhibition** (1874)

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

Maurice Ravel, orch. (1922)

Paul Lavender, trans. (2011)

1. The Gnome
2. The Old Castle
3. Tuileries (Children Quarreling After Play)
4. Bydlo (Cattle)
5. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
6. Samuel Goldberg and Schmuyle
7. Limoges. The Market Place (Important News)
8. Catacombs (A Roman Sepulchre)
9. The Hut on Hen’s Legs (Baba-Yaga)
10. The Great Gate of Kiev
Modest Mussorgsky composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* in 1874. The work is a tribute to his friend and colleague Viktor Hartmann, an artist who died one year earlier. Vladimir Stasov, an art critic who was a mutual friend and enthusiastic supporter of both the artist and composer, assembled a commemorative exhibit in St. Petersburg, and Mussorgsky’s frequent visits to the gallery were inspirational.

Mussorgsky and Hartmann were kindred spirits who shared a desire to turn away from the European training and influence that had held sway over Russian music, art, and literature. Both were intrigued by folk and popular elements of Russian history and culture, and they were determined to use them in their efforts to develop a nationalistic identity in the arts. Judging from Mussorgsky’s tribute to Hartmann, music that possesses a dramatic and sweeping quality on a scale far greater than the artwork itself, the relationship between Mussorgsky and Hartmann must have been deep and powerful. The music begins with a *Promenade*, a noble theme that represents the composer moving through the gallery, and that returns as transition material between several of the movements. According to Stasov, Mussorgsky depicted himself “roving through the exhibition, now leisurely, now briskly in order to come close to a picture that had attracted his attention, and at times sadly, thinking of his departed friend.” As the *Promenade* theme returns at various points during the work, it takes on different emotional qualities, reflecting the evolving feelings of the composer as he makes his way through the exhibit. The artworks Mussorgsky portrays musically are described below:

1. *The Gnome* - This movement was inspired by a work that Stasov describes as a “sketch depicting a little gnome, clumsily running with crooked legs,” a drawing that has unfortunately not survived. He also mentions that the gnome in the sketch is carved from wood, “a kind of nutcracker,” and that the “gnome accompanies his bizarre movements with savage shrieks,” movements that are vividly depicted in the music.

2. *The Old Castle* - Hartmann’s lost watercolor portrayed an ancient Italian castle before which a troubadour stands, playing his lute. Although the scene is thoroughly Italian, and the underlying rhythm of the music is that of the Siciliano, the melody is unmistakably Russian, heavily influenced by the folk music of Mussorgsky’s native land.

3. *Tuileries (Children Quarreling After Play)* - The artwork that inspired this movement has disappeared, although the catalogue of the original exhibit lists a work titled *Tuileries Gardens*, crayons, which was undoubtedly the inspiration. Throughout his life Mussorgsky, like Ravel, maintained a special connection with the world of children. He never lost his ability to see the world through the eyes of a child, a rare talent that reveals itself in this charming movement.

4. *Bydlo (Cattle)* - Like *Tuileries*, this movement was inspired by an illustration that has also been lost. But the mystery of *Bydlo* is increased by the fact that there is no record of any artwork depicting cattle or an oxcart in the exhibition catalogue. In a note to Stasov, Mussorgsky wrote, "Right between the eyes - the ox-cart," a reference to his intent that this movement should take listeners by surprise: a sudden fortissimo without the benefit of an introductory promenade. When Rimsky-Korsakov edited the work for publication, he was either unaware or unconvinced by Mussorgsky’s intent and changed the opening dynamic of *Bydlo* to pianissimo to create the illusion of the oxcart approaching from the distance.

5. *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks* - According to Stasov, “In 1870 Hartmann designed the costumes for the staging of the ballet *Trilbi* at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. In the cast were several boy and girl pupils from the theatre school arrayed as canaries. Others were dressed up as eggs.” Once again, Mussorgsky’s affinity for children shines through this bright and energetic depiction.

6. *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle* - Much confusion and controversy has surrounded the name of this movement, due in large part to the subtitle Stasov added for the first published edition, *Two Jews, Rich and Poor*. An examination of the manuscript reveals that Mussorgsky did not use Stasov’s subtitle but did indeed use the personal names of the two subjects. These names do not appear in the catalogue of Hartmann’s exhibit, however, and were likely created by the composer. Regardless of the title, the artwork and music both vividly portray members of two very different elements of society.

7. *Limoges. The Market Place (Important News)* - The artwork that inspired this movement is lost, although it was probably one or more of the seventy-five images of Limoges that were included in the exhibit. According to Stasov, “Hartmann spent a long time in the French town in 1866, executing many architectural sketches and genre pictures.
The musical version of this sketch [illustrates] the crowd shrieking, disputing, chattering, and quarreling in the marketplace.

8. **Catacombs (A Roman Sepulchre)** - Hartmann’s portrayal of the Parisian catacombs, one of the collection’s most evocative and personal images, has survived. It depicts the artist himself, along with a friend and their guide, as they are about to tour the catacombs by lamplight. To the right of the entrance is a large case of skulls glowing in the darkness, a detail that attracted Mussorgsky’s attention. In the margins of the manuscript, he penciled the subtitle of this movement in Latin, commenting that “Latin text would be fine: the creative genius of the late Hartmann leads me to the skulls and invokes them; the skulls begin to glow.” As the Promenade theme emerges from these haunting chords, it suggests that in his imagination the composer has joined the artist in his nocturnal tour through the catacombs.

9. **The Hut on Hen’s Legs (Baba-Yaga)** - According to Stasov, “This piece is based on Hartmann’s design for a clock in the form of Baba-Yaga’s hut on hen’s legs, to which Mussorgsky added the ride of the witch in her mortar.” Mussorgsky scholar Michael Russ amplifies Stasov’s description: “Baba-Yaga appears in Russian fairy tales. She lives deep in the woods in a hut whose hen’s legs allow it to rotate to face each unfortunate newcomer. There she lures lost children to eat them, crushing their bones in the giant mortar in which she rides through the woods, propelling herself with the pestle and covering her tracks with a broomstick.”

10. **The Great Gate of Kiev** - Stasov informs us that the gate that inspired this movement, designed by Hartmann for a competition at Kiev, was done in the “massive old Russian style, with a cupola in the form of a Slavonic helmet.” Although the goal of the competition was to identify a design for a new gate to be constructed in commemoration of Tsar Alexander I’s escape from an assassination attempt in 1866, the construction of the gate was cancelled. Regardless, Hartmann’s design attracted considerable attention, and he regarded it as one of his greatest accomplishments. Much like Mussorgsky’s music, it is thoroughly nationalistic in design, incorporating Russian elements such as the eagle, cupola, ancient Russian figures, and the old Slavonic inscription: “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The composer mirrors the intent of the artist through the use of a Russian Orthodox chant as well as recurring bell motives that evoke the pealing of multiple carillons for a climax that is one of the most memorable in all classical music.

- Program Note by Colonel Michael Colburn, “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band

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Standard of St. George (1930) ........................................... Kenneth Alford (1881-1945)  
Lt. Col. David Barringer MBE, conductor

Kenneth Alford (1881-1945) was an English composer and bandmaster who is known for his prolific composition of marches. Before studying at Kneller Hall from 1904-1908, he served under the Royal Irish Regiment in India where he played cornet. Following his studies, Alford was appointed to the second Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders as a bandmaster - under this position he began to write and publish many of his most well-known marches. In 1927 Alford was appointed director of music for the Royal Marines where he continued to compose works like *Standard of St. George*, which was published in 1930. Alford continued his work with the Royal Marines and as a composer for several decades until his death in 1945.

*Standard of St. George* is one of Alford’s lesser-known marches possibly due to its unusual form with a repeated trio section, which is quite unusual for quick marches. Moreover, Alford is known for cleverly weaving familiar popular songs into his marches - in *Standard of St. George* Alford skillfully imposes the melody of “Home, Sweet Home” at the end of the first strain in the euphonium and saxophone parts. This work is an interesting representation of a British march, but its common fanfare style creates an exciting and unforgettable listening experience.

Imperial Echoes (1913) ............................................................................................. Arnold Safroni (1873-1950)  
Lt. Col. David Barringer MBE, conductor

Arnold Safroni-Middleton (1873-1950), also known as Arnold Safroni and W.H. Myddleton, was a musician and author from England. Safroni spent much of his life traveling and performing violin across the world, and was considered a prolific composer, particularly of waltzes and marches. One of his best-known works is *Imperial Echoes*, which was originally composed as a solo piano work in 1913. The piece was later adapted as a military march by James Ord Hume and was recorded by the Band of the Royal Air Force, which was used on the BBC Radio Newsreel for several decades beginning in 1940. *Imperial Echoes* is a quick march that uses lively fanfares and techniques typical of British marches during the early twentieth century. Safroni uses melodies and harmonies reminiscent of other popular British marches of the time to create this stately and memorable march that has been loved by thousands over the past century.

La Fiesta Mexicana (1949) ........................................................................................... Herbert Owen Reed (1910-2014)  
I. Prelude and Aztec Dance  
II. Mass  
III. Carnival

Herbert Owen Reed (1910-2014) was one of the most prolific American wind band composers of the twentieth century. After studying at the Eastman School of Music, he taught at Michigan State University and was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship to study music in Mexico. This six-month fellowship in 1948-49 served as a direct inspiration for his composition *La Fiesta Mexicana* - he used inspiration from the folk tunes from the Chapala, Jalisco, and Guadalajara areas of Mexico that he traveled and studied in. It wasn’t until several years after his fellowship that Reed composed and premiered *La Fiesta Mexicana* in 1954 - the work was dedicated to Lieutenant Colonel William F. Santelmann for his help getting the piece published.

Movement I, *Prelude and Aztec Dance*, begins with lively ringing bells to represent the tolling of cathedral bells that signify the beginning of the festival. Further along in the “El Toro” and “Aztec Dance” sections there are references to the folk tunes that Reed observed during his time in Mexico. Reed himself describes the imagery of the first movement stating that “groups of Mexicans from near and far slowly descend upon the huge court surrounding the old cathedral - some on foot, some by burro, and still others on bleeding knees, suffering out of homage to a past miracle.” Reed additionally explains that the ending of the movement is meant to represent the energetic dancing of Aztec Native Americans, which can be heard in the frenzy of woodwind technique and brass melody.
Movement II, *Mass*, is a stark contrast to the prior movement - the chant-like main theme is contrasted with sections representing the ringing of church bells to serve as a reminder that the Fiesta is a religious celebration. The main theme is followed by a traditional Alleluia chant from the Liber Usualis, which serves to further reinforce the religious references and undertones of the movement and work as a whole.

Movement III, *Carnival*, is the elaborate and celebratory ending to the festival celebrations. The movement is filled with fanfares that are passed around sections of the ensemble. Additionally, this movement contains elements of the Jalisco folk song "El Son de la Negra" (The Sound of the Dark One) in a mariachi style that Reed observed in his travels. In the final section of the movement, both secular and sacred themes from the first two movements return to create a climactic ending to this elaborate work.

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