

EISEMANN PROGRAM

American Salute

Morton Gould (transcribed by Philip J. Lang)
Joe Frank, Jr., Artistic Director & Principal Conductor

New York composer Morton Gould began studying the piano at age 4, had his first composition published at age 6, and was hired to play piano at New York radio station WOR when he was 7. He was 18 when he joined the Radio City Music Hall staff and 21 when he became conductor and arranger for his own large orchestra on WOR. Gould had a long and fruitful career writing and arranging for both the large and small screen, and in 1984 he was recognized as one of the "Kennedy Center Honors" recipients. Written at the height of World War II (in less than 24 hours and for orchestra), "American Salute" was based on the popular Civil War song "When Johnny Comes Marching Home". Sung by soldiers from the both the North and South in the 1860's, the lyrics spoke to Americans again in the 1940's as they, too, were waiting for Johnny to come marching home.

Ave Maria

Franz Biebl (transcribed for band by Robert Cameron)

In 1963 Composer Franz Biebl, a church choirmaster near Munich, Germany, was approached by one of his choir members, a local firefighter. In Europe it is common for companies, factories, and police and fire departments to sponsor employee choirs and bands that participate in festivals and competitions. As a member of his fire department's choir, Biebl's choir member was interested in having a piece written for his male chorus. Biebl set the text of "Ave Maria" as a double male choir. "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women..." is a combination of the words that the angel Gabriel and Elizabeth spoke to Mary. Opening with a baritone solo in imitation of a Gregorian Chant, today's performance is considered a transcription of the choral work rather than an arrangement because every possible detail has been transcribed to the instrumental work.

Songs of Old Kentucky

Brant Karrick

Kentucky has a rich and unique history that dates from the 1670s when the English settlers sent explorers from Virginia to survey the frontier. The Kentucky mountaineer helped to propagate a proud heritage of traditional ballads and old Scottish and English folk songs that had been brought to America by their ancestors. During the early part of the 20th century, Josephine McGill and Loraine Wyman each traveled through the Cumberland Mountains and transcribed words and melodies for over 200 songs. It is in their collection that the five tunes used in "Songs of Old Kentucky" – "John Riley," "The Lonesome Scenes of Winter," "Sourwood Mountain," "Frog Went-a-Courting," and "Loving Hannah," — are found. Brant Karrick joined the faculty of Northern Kentucky University in the fall of 2003 as Director of Bands. In addition to his responsibilities at NKU, Dr. Karrick is active as a guest conductor, adjudicator, clinician, composer, and music arranger. His band compositions have been performed around the country, in Europe, and in Australia.

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Swirling Prisms

Brian Balmages, ASCAP

Jim Carter, Associate Conductor

The inspiration for "Swirling Prisms" came from the abstract concept of optical prisms spinning freely in space while reflecting light in numerous directions. The music depicts the bending, reflecting and dispersing of light into its component colors (the colors of the rainbow). The challenge was to create a sense of each prism affecting light in countless ways, yet also implying a certain "harmony" between the light and the prisms. To help tie everything together, further inspiration was taken from the Impressionism movement in art, which among other things, places emphasis on the changing characteristics of light. This directly led into the overall Impressionistic quality of the music in that there is a strong focus on harmony, texture, and orchestration. A variety of techniques are used throughout the piece, including crotales dipped in water and water-tuned crystal glasses. "Swirling Prisms" was commissioned by the Artie Henry Middle School Honors Band (Cedar Park, Texas) and conductor Robert Herrings, and was premiered at the 2016 Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.

Arabian Dances

Brian Balmages, ASCAP

"Arabian Dances" was composed to portray an eastern celebration. The beginning flute solo with low reed accompaniment sets the story with a haunting melody. The addition of clarinets, saxophones, and trumpets make the solo flute seem a part of a tribe, announcing the day's end, with the additional winds the answer to the announcement. The low reed feature gives the piece a seeming wind down, as though the day has ended, and it is time for night to begin. The percussion then enter, as though festivities are about to begin. The light melody introduced by the high winds is the setting up of the campfire and food to celebrate the hard day's work. A percussion feature with vocalization seems to make the atmosphere of the piece more dance like, as though the celebration has finally begun. When the winds return, they are broken into 3 groups, as though they are dancers around the camp. As more and more instruments join, the melodies attempt to outdo each other, until the entire ensemble joins in, as though the entire tribe has finally joined the party. This continues until the campfire fades and the rays of morning begin to shine, and the tribe dances until they no longer can. This entire scheme is displayed through Balmages' strategic use of instrumental entrances, layering of textures, ostinato within the final third of the piece, instrumental features, and his use of the authentic melodies "Ala Dal'ona" and "Tafta Hindi".

Armenian Dances

Alfred Reed

Joe Frank, Jr., Artistic Director & Principal Conductor

Dr. Alfred Reed developed his interest in the concert band while serving with an Army Air Force Band during World War II. He studied at Juilliard, worked as a composer and arranger during the early years of NBC and ABC, taught at Baylor University and the University of Miami, and served as senior editor for a major New York music publishing firm. He was a frequent guest conductor all over the world and was one of our nation's most prolific and frequently performed composers. "Armenian Dances" incorporates five distinctive dances: The Apricot Tree, The Partridge Song (a children's dance imitating the bird's tiny steps), Hoy My Nazah (a love song), Alagyaz (named after a mountain in Armenia)...concluding with Gno Gno (Go! Go!), a laughing song.