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2024-25



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Symphonic Band

“Homage”

Branden Steinmetz, conductor

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Macky Auditorium

PROGRAM

Gandalf (The Wizard) from Symphony No. 1,
“The Lord of the Rings” (6:15)

Johan de Meij (b. 1953)

Nimrod from *Enigma Variations* (3:45)

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

arr. Alfred Reed

Spiritual (4:30)

H. Owen Reed (1910-2014)

Intermission

Symphony No. 3 “for David” (33:00)

Kimberly Archer (b. 1973)

- I. Ominous, with building intensity
- II. Song for David
- III. Aggressive
- IV. Warm and Serene

PROGRAM NOTES

Gandalf (The Wizard) from Symphony No. 1, “The Lord of the Rings” (6:15)

Johan de Meij (b. 1953)

Gandalf (The Wizard) is the first movement of de Meij’s Symphony No. 1 “The Lord of the Rings,” a five-movement symphony based on the *Lord of the Rings* books by J. R. R. Tolkien. Gandalf is a musical portrait of the wizard Gandalf, one of the principal characters of the trilogy. His wise and noble personality is expressed by a stately motif which is used in a different form in movements IV and V. The sudden opening of the *Allegro vivace* is indicative of the unpredictability of the grey wizard, followed by a wild ride on his beautiful horse, Shadowfax.

—Program note by composer

Nimrod from *Enigma Variations* (3:45)

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

arr. Alfred Reed

The *Enigma Variations* were written for orchestra in 1899 and bore the dedication “To My Friends Pictured Within.” The theme and fourteen variations catapulted Elgar to international acclaim. The story is told of how Elgar, returning home after a long day of giving violin lessons, sat down to unwind at the piano and tinkered by improvising. His wife commented on one of the melodies that emerged, and out of that exchange was born the concept of fashioning the original melody ... as it might be played by some of their friends in their own style. In all, 14 people and a dog are featured in the *Variations*.

“Nimrod,” variation nine, is about a conversation Elgar had with publisher and close friend, August Jaeger. One day Elgar was very frustrated and considered giving up composing. Jaeger stepped in and compared Elgar’s struggles to those of Beethoven. He asked the composer how he thought Beethoven must have felt, having to compose while going deaf. Jaeger then told Elgar that as Beethoven’s hearing got worse, his music became

more beautiful, and encouraged Elgar to take that lesson to heart. Jaeger then sang the slow movement to Beethoven's "Pathetique" Sonata for his depressed friend. Elgar told Dora Penny that the opening of "Nimrod" suggests the "Pathetique." He said, "Can't you hear it at the beginning? Only a hint, not a quotation."

"Nimrod" is the most famous variation and is often programmed without the rest of the work.

—Program note by Nikk Pilato and the New Mexico Philharmonic.

Spiritual (4:30)

H. Owen Reed (1910-2014)

Spiritual was commissioned by Leonard Falcone and the Michigan State University Band and premiered by that ensemble on March 7, 1947. It represents H. Owen Reed's first work for band. The work is one of the earliest attempts at incorporating elements of bebop jazz into a work for concert band. The opening section is chantlike followed by a low brass motive, which grows into the second jazz-influenced section led by a solo trumpet and concluding with a declamatory full ensemble return of the opening theme.

—Program note by Ballerbach Music

Symphony No. 3 "for David" (33:00)

Kimberly Archer (b. 1973)

It all began on the couch in the summer of 2006, at what we affectionately call "Camp David," or "The Summer Retreat for Stressed Composers and Conductors." Kim had just completed her first year of teaching at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and I had finished my first year at Central High School in La Crosse, Wisconsin. We were both exhausted in every sense of the word, and looking to David [Maslanka] for guidance and rejuvenation. I drove to Missoula, Montana, and spent a week on David's couch; Kim flew in from St. Louis and took the guest room.

Our meeting was a coincidence, inasmuch as anything involving David can ever be called that. When we arrived, she had not heard of me or of the Central Wind Ensemble, and I had never programmed any of her music. But you know, when you share a bathroom with a complete stranger for a week ... well, you get to know one another.

During that week, David put us on his version of a vegetarian diet, which meant we also had no contact with wheat, and certainly not with caffeine. To this day, we both crave spelt flour and mineral water & apple juice cocktails. We each had lessons with David, and many long, mountainous hikes. Kim and I took an extended trip to Glacier National Park, and frequented the local Missoula coffee shops (we had to have a caffeine fix), where we'd spend hours composing, studying and talking. We both practiced breathing and attended a Buddhist Walking Meditation and Tea Ceremony with David and Alison. We also met the rest of the Maslanka family of "critters," one of whom—Agnes, the 21-year-old cat—was upset that I took over her home on the couch!

The three of us listened to and shared thoughts on music frequently. One evening we listened to David's *Black Dog Songs*, a song cycle for baritone and piano. It was an electric musical moment: one of those you don't EVER forget. The music affected everyone in the room, and especially Kim, who was sitting next to me on the couch. I was taken by the whole event, perhaps because at the time, I don't think I "got it." However, it was at that point I knew Kim was the composer to commission for our first consortium, in a series, from the La Crosse High Schools. She did "get it." And to this day, we still talk about that powerful night.

Since Camp David, Kim and I have shared hundreds of phone calls and emails. We speak frequently about our respective professions and views on music, composing, conducting, life, Battlestar Galactica, cooking, you name it. Our meeting and our friendship certainly don't seem coincidental anymore.

The commission for Symphony No. 3 or “the piece,” as we called it for a long time, was designed as the most open-ended commission our consortium could allow. No instrumental specifications, no time restraints, not much limit on difficulty. The commission could have easily resulted in anything from a two-minute fanfare to an hour-long concerto. We started talking about “the piece” in the fall of 2006, and Kim made a special visit to La Crosse in early 2007 to see and hear the Central Wind Ensemble, and to meet the students. It’s been fascinating to observe a composer’s process, and to watch the music gradually take shape over the course of a year.

Kim asked early on if “the piece” could be dedicated to David. For as much as David has meant to all of us involved in the genesis of Symphony No. 3—and for as deeply as Kim and I cherish his mentorship, his music, his friendship, and his freakish Scrabble-playing prowess—my answer was an immediate and resounding “absolutely!” As David later wrote to Kim (albeit not knowing yet that the work is dedicated to him), “Your symphony already has me in it in a big way.” Yes, that’s absolutely true, and we knew it before she’d put the first note on paper.

Someday soon, I will return to Missoula, have a spelt flour scone, sneak out for coffee, and crash on the couch after a long day. I do hope Kim will be there, and this time, we’ll sit on that couch and listen to Symphony No. 3 with our friend David.

—Program note by Chris Werner

PERSONNEL

Branden Steinmetz, conductor

Symphonic Band

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Tim Scott

Nat Highfield

Andrew Stein

Louise Larsen

Lily Arndt

Oboe

Riley Stone

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Emilie Feve

Bassoon

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Grace Moon

Rylan Denby

Carl Gustafson

Clarinet

Timothy Aguilar

Caden Craig

Kayla Hall

Liam Kiernan

Sophia Eyl

Seth Ferrin

Luke Kneller

Samual Weslake

Amanda Willis

Maxwell Allington

Saxophone

Elise Luzietti

Ashley Sanchez

Morgan White

Sydney Bellora

Carys Vaughan

Curtis Liu

Horn

Lilli Vincent

Joe Rupprecht

Sammy Rees

Dani Richard

Barrett Teston

Jaila Carr

Trumpet

Will Bryant

Keegan Arnsmeier

Gwen Milette

Kaden Blake

Toby Buss

Kat Votruba

Trombone

Alex Weeks

Luke Meredith

Jack Harper

Logan Hicks

Treyana Morken

Bass trombone

Melvin Cassillas Muñoz

Jace Drew

Euphonium

Elyse Cutforth

Nathan Kleve

Arie Dekkers

Tuba

Liam Ryan

Brayden Metcalf

Kiera Layne

Tenzin Dorje

String bass

Ella Bajcsi

Jacob Kaminski

Cello

Mackenzie Baca

Logan Kuhlman

Nia Lepore

Percussion

Paul Clasen

Jaxon Clough

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