WIND SYMPHONY

featuring members of the
Texas State Choirs

Caroline Beatty, conductor
Chase Failing, graduate student conductor

Evans Auditorium | Presented Online
Monday November 23, 2020 | 7:30pm
PROGRAM

VARIATIONS ON "AMERICA" Charles Ives
OF OUR NEW DAY BEGUN Omar Thomas
LINCOLNSHIRE POSY Percy Grainger
NOTES

As we may be affected in numerous ways by the world-wide pandemic and local mitigations, we are more potently mindful of the privilege of performing music together and of the community created in joining with others in that endeavor. We are destined to listen, provide support, sing out, allow, take turns, and so much more - all while knowing we are singular parts to something bigger and more meaningful. We reflect upon those valuable features of ensemble music-making in the repertoire of this concert. It is through listening and hearing people’s stories we gain empathy and understanding and can further meaningful conversation to foster the beauty of compassion and gratitude. And through the sharing of song, stories, and anthems we give of ourselves and celebrate community.

Variations on ‘America’ (1981) by Charles Ives began as this quintessentially quirky American composer’s contribution to pipe organ repertoire when a prodigious seventeen-year-old. The tune Ives manipulates in his variations is widely known in the United States as “America” or “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” and functions as an unofficial anthem. However, it has an even broader history of being used as catalyst for community as it is used for Britain’s “God Save The Queen” as well as for anthems in Norway, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein. The lyrics for “America” were penned by seminary student Samuel Francis Smith with full intent on providing an American, patriotic song. Interestingly, and alluding to the point of this concert, there is also a version of the lyrics written eleven years after Smith’s by A. G. Duncan that provides an Abolitionists insight on “America” the song and America the country.

While Ives ventured into his organ composition eyeing to showcase the facility of the organ and performer, the end result is a mix of character and compositional technique that can today appear to reflect the quirky, serious, sometimes beautiful, sometimes conflicted diversity we recognize in society. The variations provide straightforward, song-like moments, hard-edged polytonality, jaunty playfulness, boldness, and delicacy. The original version was transcribed for orchestra by William Schuman in 1962 then for wind band by William Rhoads in 1968 and has since gained popularity in both realms.

Of Our New Day Begun (2016) by Omar Thomas is quickly gaining popularity with wind bands across the country for its compelling meaning, drama, and beauty. The following note is from the composer:

“Of Our New Day Begun” was written to honor nine beautiful souls who lost their lives to a callous act of hatred and domestic terrorism on the evening of June 17, 2015 while worshipping in their beloved sanctuary, the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately referred to as “Mother Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina. My greatest challenge in creating this work was walking the line between reverence for the victims and their families, and honoring my strong, bitter feelings towards both the perpetrator and the segments of our society that continue to create people like him. I realized that the most powerful musical expression I could offer incorporated elements from both sides of that line - embracing my pain and anger while being moved by the displays of grace and forgiveness demonstrated by the victims’ families.

Historically, black Americans have, in great number, turned to the church to find refuge and grounding in the most trying of times. Thus, the musical themes and ideas for “Of Our New Day Begun” are rooted in the Black American church tradition. The piece is anchored by James and John Johnson’s time-honored song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (known endearingly as the “Negro National Anthem”), and peppered with blues harmonies and melodies. Singing, stomping, and clapping are also prominent features of this work, as they have always been a mainstay of black music traditions, and the inclusion of the tambourine in these sections is a direct nod to black worship services.

“Of Our New Day Begun” begins with a unison statement of a melodic cell from “Lift Every Voice....” before suddenly giving way to ghostly, bluesy chords in the horns and bassoons. This section moves to a dolorous and bitter dirge presentation of the anthem in irregularly shifting 12/8 and 6/8 meter, which grows in intensity as it offers fleeting glimmers of hope and relief answered by cries of blues-inspired licks. A maddening, ostinato-driven section representing a frustration and weariness that words cannot, grows into a group singing of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” fueled by the stomping and clapping reminiscent of the Black church.

In the latter half of the piece the music turns hopeful, settling into 9/8 time and modulating up a step during its ascent to a glorious statement of the final lines of “Lift Every Voice....” in 4/4, honoring the powerful display of humanity set forth by the families of the victims. There is a long and emotional decrescendo that lands on a pensive and cathartic gospel-inspired hymn song. Returning to 9/8 time, the piece comes to rest on a unison F that grows from a very distant hum to a thunderous roar, driven forward by march-like stomping to represent the ceaseless marching of black Americans towards equality.
The composition requires the ensemble to sing. However, with COVID protocols, the band is seated appropriately for wind playing, but too close for singing. So we invited members of our Texas State Choirs to join us in their distanced fashion out in the audience area to provide that moving moment. This collaboration is a beautiful, positive outcome of these strange times!

Music connects and stories connect. That combination is highlighted in numerous compositions for a variety of ensemble types through the use of folksong. Folksongs tell local stories and in passing them from generation to generation bind communities together. Just after the turn of the 20th century, Australian Percy Grainger, in conjunction with Lucy Broadwood, set out to the British countryside with a wax-cylinder device and recorded a variety of people singing songs of their community. Upon a commission by the American Bandmasters Association, Grainger took six of those songs and created his landmark *Lincolnshire Posy* in 1937. Grainger says:

This bunch of 'musical wildflowers' (hence the title) is based on folksongs collected in Lincolnshire, England ... and is dedicated to the old folksingers who sang so sweetly to me. Indeed, each number is intended to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody – a musical portrait of the singer’s personality no less than of his habits of song – his regular or irregular wonts of rhythm, his preference for gaunt or ornately arabesque delivery, his contrasts of legato and staccato, his tendency towards breadth or delicacy of tone.

Not only does folksong bind communities, Lincolnshire Posy, itself, binds the community that is 'band' as an early cornerstone of the repertoire. In performing it now, in this time of necessary 'distancing', we celebrate our connection as musicians and, as with all of the repertoire, our connections with our audiences.

**Band Faculty**
Dr. Caroline Beatty  
Dr. Kyle Glaser  
Mr. Matthew Holzner

**Graduate Assistants**
Ms. Tess Jones  
Mr. Chase Failing

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**Special Thanks to**

Members of the Texas State Choirs

**Choral Faculty**
Dr. Jonathan Babcock  
Dr. Lynn Brinckmeyer  
Mr. Craig Aamot
WIND SYMPHONY
Caroline Beatty, conductor
Chase Failing, graduate student conductor

FLUTE
Marissya Chartier
Tess Jones
Caroline Reedy

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN
Robert Harris
Korrigan Korthauer

BASSOON
Nick Fitch
Lilian Vo

CLARINET
Amy Gravell
Taylor Hussey
Zachary MacDonald
Noah Ornelas
Hugh Pauwels
Christopher Vazquez
Austin Vogelman

SAXOPHONE
Edgar Blandon
Julio Gonzalez
Brian Holtshouser
Matthew Mormile

TRUMPET
Kelly Cohorst
Brandon Colmark
Scott MacDonald
Jenny Mountz
London Rodriguez
Jose Vela

HORN
Taylor Lovato-Cruz
Samantha Hernandez
Jackeline Martinez
Alex Miranda
Bethany Smith

TENOR TROMBONE
Scott Duncan
Eli Meece
Fabian Reyes
Zach Shoepe

BASS TROMBONE
Daniel Rodriguez

EUPHONIUM
Joe Gonzalez
Jacob Herrnandez

TUBA
Jorge Madariaga-Santos
Curtis McHenry

PERCUSSION
Trystyn Cook
Jordan Davis
Kyle Huddleston
Matthew Petit
Alex Ramirez
Oscar Rodriguez
Matthew Zintgraff

Due to the rotation of parts, members are listed alphabetically
TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL

James Adamson  Sam Lewis
Benjamin Apgar  Gavin Magee
Evan Barnes  Andrea Martinez
Evan Blache  Maddox McCarty
William Bohuslav  Joshua Moore
Victor Briseño  Zachary Nelson
Katie Bulen  Rhiannon O'Brien
Travis Butts  Savannah Pack
Nathalie Calvo  Jacob Padron
Shelby Carney  Esther Park
Emily Chandler  Tremain Perkin
Katherine Christie  Lucas Phillips
Candace Cline  Jenna Quiroz
Ayden Crocker  Jeff Rico
Crysty Cruzz  Ivan Rodriguez
Christian Cruz  Josh Rodriguez
Nicholas Dettmer  Kianna Rodriguez
Gianna Eason  Brianna Rosales
Sarah Ellis  Sophia Salazar
Jayda Ennis  Paiton Seals
Cassidy Ford  Austin Shortes
Denae Fox  Nathan Thompson
Victoria Furlan  Gustavo Vazquez
Dylan Gillespie  Alicia Villareal
Matthew Goodrum  Cara Weiss
Charlie Grisson  Gentry Wessman
Sarah Hernandez  Curtis White
Valeria Hernandez-Cardona  Lyndsea Woodall
Madiosn Jackson  Audra Wright
Gustavo Leal
Chloe Lewis
The rising STAR of Texas