

PROGRAM NOTES – SYMPHONIC BAND AND HONORS WIND ENSEMBLE

JOY – FRANK TICHELI

Above all, *Joy* is an expression of its namesake: simple, unabashed joy. A boisterous, uninhibited quality is implied in the music, not only at climactic moments, but also by the frequent presence of sudden and dramatic stylistic contrasts.

The main melody and overall mood of the work (and its companion piece, *Joy Revisited*) were inspired by a signal event: the birth of our first child. The intense feelings that most any father would feel on such a day were, in my case, accompanied by a simple little tune which grabbed hold of me in the hours preceding her birth, and refused to let go throughout the day and many days thereafter. Indeed, until I jotted it down in my sketchbook, it did not release its grip. Seven years and two children later, I stumbled upon that old sketch and discovered (or rediscovered) that it would serve perfectly as the foundation for a joy-filled concert band overture.

- *Program Note by Frank Ticheli*

BENEATH THE CANOPY – CAIT NISHIMURA

I've always cherished any time spent in the forest. While the mighty and majestic treetops are what I'm drawn to first, I've come to enjoy observing and investigating the environment that exists beneath the canopy. It is here where many birds, animals, and insects make their homes; where mushrooms and mosses magically appear; and where visitors to the forest leave footprints on trails.

Beneath the Canopy is a hopeful, uplifting, and energetic piece for concert band that is meant to evoke a walk through the woods. The layers of melodies and harmonies throughout the piece represent the various levels of the forest, from the ground to the understory and up to the canopy. The colours and textures within the ensemble depict the flora, fauna, and funga of the forest.

- *Program Note by Cait Nishimura*

TRANSIENT LUMINOUS EVENTS – JENNIFER ROSE

Sometimes called upper atmospheric lightning or ionospheric lightning, transient luminous events (TLEs) are short-lived electrical-breakdown phenomena/electrically induced forms of luminous plasma, that occur well above the altitudes of normal lightning and Cumulonimbus clouds. Different types of TLEs include Sprites, Halos, Blue Jets, Gigantic Jets, and ELVES.

In the 1920s, the Scottish physicist C.T.R. Wilson predicted that electrical breakdown should occur in the atmosphere high above large thunderstorms. In ensuing decades, high-altitude electrical discharges were reported by aircraft pilots, but there was not visual evidence of these

events until scientists at the University of Minnesota were able to photograph a sprite on July 6, 1989.

- *Program Note by Jennifer Rose*

ON THIS BRIGHT MORNING – DAVID MASLANKA

About this piece:

On this Bright Morning was written for a consortium of Montana high school bands. The focus group was the second band at Missoula's Hellgate High School, the thinking being that this second band in a good music program would represent the technical development of the average high school band around the state.

The music is bright and engaging, and at the same time quite soulful. It asks players and conductors to commit fully to a very direct and powerful personal feeling. As a motivation for approaching the piece I have attached the following quote, taken from an interview with the poet, Jane Kenyon:

“Yes, there are things in this life that we must endure that are all but unendurable, and yet I feel that there is a great goodness. Why, when there could have been nothing, is there something? How, when there could have been nothing, does it happen that there is love, kindness, beauty?”

- Retrieved from <https://davidmaslanka.com/works/on-this-bright-morning-2013-9-5/>

There are times of stability in life, and times of significant transition. Transitions can be upsetting, often provoked or accompanied by physical or emotional troubles. They are times of uncertainty and unknowing, but also the times of greatest creative change.

“On This Bright Morning” acknowledges the struggle, and the feelings of pain and loss in times of transition, but embodies the pure joy of realizing the bigger life. On this bright morning, life is new, life is possible.

The following is from a Bill Moyers interview with the poet, Jane Kenyon, who suffered chronic depression, and who died of leukemia at age 48:

“Yes, there are things in life that we must endure that are all but unendurable, and yet I feel that there is a great goodness. Why, when there could have been nothing, is there something? How, when there could have been nothing, does it happen that there is love, kindness, beauty?”

- *Program Note by David Maslanka*

EINSTEIN ON 6TH STREET – DANIEL MONTOYA, JR.

Originally for saxophone ensemble, *Einstein on 6th Street* evokes a cultural collision between the highbrow opera hall and the popular entertainment venue. At the outset of this piece, sustained notes in the baritone saxophone recall the opening progression from the iconic American opera *Einstein on the Beach*, written by Philip Glass and premiered nearly forty years ago on July 25, 1976. Although Glass's opera is in four acts, its five intermezzos, also known as "Knee Plays," are arguably the most captivating. Known for his use of repetitive motivic ideas and harmonic materials, Glass includes the counting of numbers, singing of solfeggio syllables, and speaking of prose as the lyrics in Knee Play 1.

Glass incorporates these materials throughout the entire work but definitively returns to the opening mood in the opera's final section Knee Play 5. For Montoya, these two Knee Plays supply the foundation of his sax piece, as he quotes Glass directly. Not one to merely borrow someone else's idea, however, Montoya fuses Glass's iconic progression together with the soundscape of his hometown, Austin, Texas, specifically the downtown area known as 6th Street. Boldly nicknamed "The Live Music Capital of the World," Austin's 6th Street offers the music lover live performances of varying genres such as country, metal, jazz, rap, and indie rock. On any night of the week, music fans saunter the streets, ducking in and out of bars and restaurants, going from concert to concert. Montoya mixes elements of these popular music idioms into his work, bringing Einstein into the musical mélange of the 21st century.

Montoya's piece has an ABCADAC form, and he utilizes aspects of "six" throughout, including harmonizing at the interval of a sixth below, emphasizing scale degree six, and using groupings of six notes. A master of blending materials, Montoya melds a driving eighth-note rhythm with a dotted-note syncopated groove, all while allowing melodic aspects from Glass's *Einstein* to shine through, in essence offering Montoya's own version of a Knee Play—which would appropriately be called Knee Play 6.

- *Program Note by Daniel Montoya, Jr.*

THREE REVELATIONS FROM THE LOTUS SUTRA – ALFRED REED

Three Revelations from the Lotus Sutra is an attempt to realize in music three different states of man's soul in his quest for ultimate perfection. The Lotus Sutra is the teaching of human respect, self-perfection, and world peace – in a word, humanism, leading mankind from division to unity, from discord to harmony, from conflict to peace.

I. The first movement, *Awakening, (To Awaken to the Light of the Universe)* portrays the vastness and richness of the experience of the human mind on expanding its field of view from the narrow confines of daily life to the contemplation of, and merging with, the entire universe.

This suite was commissioned by, and is reverently dedicated to, Rissho Kosei-kai, on the occasion of the 77th birthday of its founder and president, the Reverent Nikkyo Niwano. Rissho Kosei-kai, sponsor of the world-famous Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, is an organization of Buddhist laymen devoted to the effort of perfecting man's personality on the basis of the true

meaning of Buddhism. *Rissho*, originally Chinese characters, indicated the ideal of "Establishment of the True Law, or the teaching of the Lotus Sutra in this world." *Ko* means the mutual exchange of thought and the spiritual unity among different human beings. *Kai* means "society," and when used following a name, the preceding characters give the purpose of the society. Therefore, *Rissho Koseu-kai* means "a society of people of faith organized to realize a peaceful world by perfecting mankind and personality through the principle of spiritual unity among different peoples and based on the true meaning of Buddhism."

Central to the purpose of this movement is the body of doctrine assembled from the teachings of the Buddha called the *Lotus Sutra*, the Absolute Truth, termed the "Wonderful Law."

The first performance of the complete work took place in November 1984 by the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, under the direction of Frederick Fennell.

- *Program Note by Alfred Reed*