

Program Notes for Dissertation Project 2 (TMUS 8229) – Chamber Recital
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The opening fanfare titled, *Exaltation*, is a brisk and exhilarating tune featuring bright and accented passages immediately shared between pairs of instruments throughout the opening section. The middle section, though the same tempo, is a softer, lyrical section featuring mixed meter and various solo and trio lines which are eventually thrust back into the opening fanfare finally ending in an exciting coda. The piece is written by active composer and freelance conductor/clinician **Brian Balmages**. Mr. Balmages received his education from James Madison University and the University of Miami (FL). His compositions have been performed nationwide at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, various instrumental conferences, and with top tier professional orchestras. *Exaltation* was the first piece of music that he wrote for brass quintet and was written for the Madison Brass Quintet, a group with which he was member as a trumpet player.

The second piece on the program is written by **Jan Koetsier** who was born on 14 August 1911 in Amsterdam. With the decision to study music early on in combination with his family move Berlin in 1913, he became the youngest student of his day (16 years) to pass the entrance audition in piano to the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. After his studies he worked as conductor of the newly-founded Kammeropera in The Hague, during which he travelled to numerous Dutch towns and cities (1941/42). Further into his career he then became second ever conductor of the ‘Concertgebouw Orchestra’ in Amsterdam 1942-48. Additional conducting tenures include a short period as conducting teacher at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague before being invited by Bavarian Radio to become principal conductor of its newly-founded Symphony Orchestra in

1950. Koetsier's work with instrumental soloists and ensembles led to numerous commissions most notably by the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble who premiered his Brass Symphony in 1979. In 1999 he founded the International Jan Koetsier Competition for the encouragement of young brass ensembles.

Premiered by several of his cohorts from the Concertgebouw Orchestra in 1974 in the city of Straubing, Germany, Koetsier offered many thoughts on the *Brass Quintet, opus 65*:

The rhythmical possibilities of brass instruments are extremely enticing; after a short and slow introduction these are relished to the utmost in the first movement of the quintet presented here, with its many changes of meter and shifted accents.

In the second movement a simple, melodious phrase of the trumpet is contrasted with a burlesque theme from the tuba, which, following a few variations, are brought together in a choral manner at the end.

The agility and virtuosity of the instrumentalists triumph in the last movement; in a vigorous 6/8 meter, interrupted only by a few obstinate 7/8 meters, the composition gyrates towards its finale.

During the last decade in Germany the brass chamber music achieved a recognizable upswing. Before the second world war, this style of music was rarely heard other than during formal occasions and up until then, had little difference with popular brass music. While being the conductor of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, a quartet was founded with the legendary trumpeter, Marinus Komst. In the formation: 2 trumpeters, French horn, and trombone. The piece I wrote in 1947 for this quartet titles, *Petite Suite*, was to be the first of a long list of compositions for brass ensembles. Later the *Petite Suite* was included in the repertoire of the famous Philip Jones and marked the beginning of a long artistic friendship.

In 2002 Koetsier gave up composing and moved with his wife Margarete into the Augustinum Home in Munich. He died there on 28 April 2006.

Following the Koetsier Quintet is an extremely complex piece written by Swedish composer **Anders Hillborg**. This piece took a unique path to get to the library of the Apollo Chamber Brass. One of our members of the group, Andrew Bishop, is from a small farming community named Lindsborg, Kansas. For all intents and purposes this community was simply

sliced out of the country of Sweden and plopped in the middle of our country. With this connection we were able to purchase this piece from the publisher in Sweden.

Anders Hillborg is one of Sweden's best known and widely performed composers. His ***Brass Quintet (1988)*** was commissioned by the Swedish Concert Institute for the Stockholm Chamber Brass. Much of Hillborg's compositional style consists of music that "ticks" and "pulsates," and the typical rubato of most classical music is treated as a foreign concept. This piece has two principal moods: one is a rhythmically vital structure in which brief fragments are thrown out, then echo between the instruments in fiery, pulsating motions; while the other is a calm, completely accent-less stream with no audible rhythm whatsoever. In fact, there are specific amounts of silence written in. While it may be interpreted as the end of the piece, please hold your applause – we promise that when the piece does come to an end, we will make sure you know. Apart from a number of cluster-like passages, the harmony is clearly influenced by tonality and the piece ebbs in and out of a dreamlike chorale. One of the extremely challenging aspects of this piece is two particular sections that may have never been attempted is the requirement to "perform backwards." You will hear music that Hillborg figured out to notate to give the impression of a recording being played in reverse.

Beginning the second half of the program is an intense story written by **David Maslanka**, born August 30, 1943, in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He is a U.S. composer who writes for a variety of genres, including works for choir, wind ensemble, chamber music, and symphony orchestra. Best known for his highly acclaimed wind ensemble compositions, Maslanka has published nearly 100 pieces, including nine symphonies, seven of them for concert band, nine concerti, and a full Mass. Notes from the composer state that his compositional style is

rhythmically intense and extremely complex yet possesses an underlying delicate beauty. He works from a meditative standpoint of spiritual inspiration, and this gentle, warm quality permeates his music.

“Arise!” was written for some very good friends of ours, the Aries Brass Quintet out of Denver, Colorado. They had asked for a brief, energetic concert opener, and so the feel of the piece and its title (“Arise” from “Aries”) popped into the composer’s mind at the same instant. “Arise!” mixes old and new. Maslanka notes that its harmonies and rhythms are more nearly modern, yet its propulsive nature, and its continuous working out of a small number of motives and thematic fragments is very Baroque. Although the piece is short lived, it is an intense work requiring all instruments to be rhythmically intense and efficiently remain in the upper register of their respective tessituras thus creating an overwhelming drive to move up and forward with the fusion of an intense star.

Following the intensity of *Arise!* is one of our favorite songs. Professor **James Barnes** teaches music composition, orchestration, arranging and wind band history/repertoire courses at the University of Kansas. James is a highly decorated, award winning composer and educator and he has traveled extensively as a guest composer throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, Taiwan, Japan and Singapore. This spring, he will complete his fortieth year of teaching at KU. The *Pastorale* is the second movement from his larger four movement work for brass quintet, *Divertissement*, written in 1984 for the Kansas Brass Quintet. Rather than used the suggested trumpet instrumentation for this piece we have chosen to replace the trumpets with flugel horns in order to help provide a more vocal treatment of the melodic line and also to protect the close, lush harmonies throughout the movement. It is a beautiful ballad evoking

imagery of the summer wheat fields of the Great Plains, the touch of a loved one, and most of all... warm weather!!!

It is the second largest country in the world, has more lakes than the rest of the world combined, and boasts the world's biggest meteor crater (in New Quebec). However, in addition to its countless natural wonders, Canada also has its quirks. For instance, on a Canadian two dollar bill, the flag flying over the Parliament building is actually the American flag and according to the Banff / Lake Louise tourist bureau, a somewhat frequently asked question is: "At which elevation do the elk change to moose?"

Contemporary French-Canadian musician **Morley Calvert** has managed to capture the beauty as well as the quirkiness of Canada in his piece, *Suite from the Monteregean Hills*. Known more for being an educator and bandmaster than a composer, Calvert also founded the Monteregean Music Camp, a summer music camp for high school-aged students that takes place in Ayers Cliff, Montreal, where, in 1961, he composed *Suite from the Monteregean Hills* on commission from the Montreal Brass Quintet. The piece takes its name from the Canadian mountain range that stretches from Mount Royal, Quebec to the American Border.

In four movements, *Suite from the Monteregean Hills* consists of standard musical forms and styles fused with Calvert's own Canadian idiosyncrasies. The first movement, *La Marche*, transforms our expectations of a traditional John Philip Sousa style march into its lighter, more buoyant French counterpart. The second movement, *Chanson Melancolique*, is the first and only time this lighthearted work takes a moment to become more reflective as Calvert gives us a simple melody supported by lush harmonies. A Chanson, or song, is a French term used since the middle ages to refer to both poetry and music. The inspiration for the title, *Valse Ridicule*,

translated as ridiculous waltz, will become apparent as you listen to the third movement's waltz-like melodies interrupted by a radically different march-like tune. The final movement, translated as "Dance of the Village People," combines spirited dance rhythms with the tune from the traditional French carol "He is born, the divine Christ child." We hope Morley Calvert's Suite *from the Monterey Hills* both touches your heart and tickles your funny bone, and if you listen carefully enough you might just be able to tell when the elk change to moose.

Lastly, we are excited to bring to you a piece that has rarely (if ever) been performed in the United States. **Christoph Wundrak** was born in 1958, in the Styrian state of Austria where he spent his childhood. He spent his youth and (compulsory) school days in the city of Salzburg, Austria. Although he began composing in 1975 he was not a self identified musician but identified himself as a more confident amateur who incidentally studied biology and mold making. In 1982 he became serious about music and studied trumpet at the Musikhochschule in Graz: achieving both a Classical and Jazz diploma. Christoph has formed many professional jazz ensembles while also freelancing as a theater musician and teaching as a Lecturer at the Prayner Conservatory in Vienna in 1990 and at the Municipal Music School track village in 1991. Since 1992 he began composing for various instrumental ensembles with emphasis in brass, theater troupes and larger jazz ensembles. Christoph Wundrak wrote ***Funky Brass*** in 1992 showcasing the influence of Jazz, Blues, Fusion, and Rock. *Funky Brass* is exactly how it sounds... pure FUNK!!!