

Program Notes

THE GOVERNOR'S OWN – Alton Adams

Chief Musician Alton Augustus Adams Sr. was the first African American bandmaster of the United States Navy. A pioneer in his own right, he directed an all-African American Navy Band during a period of racial segregation. Adams believed that music in service to our nation could be a catalyst for social change. He stated, “Above all, the tour had a profound and lasting impact upon the minds and attitudes of African Americans, who saw our accomplishments not only as a vindication of the race, but also an opportunity for better treatment and greater equality.”

Growing up, Adams imagined himself conducting Sousa’s band while listening to phonograph records outside a neighbor’s home. He studied composition and orchestration by copying individual parts to Sousa’s marches into full score. Originally known as *Governor Oman*, the march was renamed *The Governor’s Own* in 1922. In 1963, Adams rededicated the march to the people of the Virgin Islands. Since that time, it has become the official march of the islands’ governors.

Based on the bugle call to attention, the trumpets’ opening motif announces the beginning of *The Governor’s Own* march and serves to call listeners in preparation for the arrival of the governor. The principal theme of the march was inspired by its original dedicatee, Admiral Joseph Wallace Oman, naval governor of the Virgin Islands from 1919 to 1921.

SHENANDOAH – Omar Thomas

Omar Thomas currently serves as Assistant Professor of Composition and Jazz Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. *Shenandoah* is one of the most well-known and beloved Americana folk songs, the lyrics depict the lives of fur traders canoeing down the Missouri River.

“Back in May of 2018, after hearing a lovely duo arrangement of *Shenandoah* while adjudicating a music competition in Minneapolis, I asked myself, after hearing so many versions of this iconic and historic song, how would I set it differently? I thought about it and, and before I realized it, I had composed and assembled just about all this arrangement in my head by assigning bass notes to the melody and filling in the harmony in my head afterwards. I would intermittently check myself on the piano to make sure what I was imagining worked and ended up changing almost nothing at all from what I’d heard in my mind’s ear. This arrangement recalls the beauty of the Shenandoah Valley, not bathed in golden sunlight, but blanketed by low-hanging clouds and experiencing intermittent periods of heavy rainfall. There are a few musical moments where the sun attempts to pierce through the clouds, but ultimately the rains win out. This arrangement of *Shenandoah* is at times mysterious, somewhat ominous, constantly introspective, and deeply soulful.”

— Omar Thomas

JOURNEY THROUGH ORION – Julie Giroux

Julie Giroux is an accomplished composer for both modern Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band music. Prior to her work in the band genre, she wrote extensively for television, film and video games. Born in Fairhaven, Massachusetts on December 12, 1961, she began playing the piano at age three and started composing at age eight. She graduated from Louisiana State University in 1984 with a bachelor’s in music performance. *Journey Through Orion* was commissioned by the Association of Concert Bands (ACB) and premiered at their national conference in 2006 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The piece was inspired by images from the Hubble Space Telescope.

“Photographs from the Orion Molecular Cloud Complex, simply put, are out of this world. Pictures of the Great Orion Nebula, Barnard’s Loop, M78, M43, the Molecular Clouds 1 & 2, and The Horsehead Nebula never cease to capture my imagination. I have journeyed there many

times in my mind, so I decided to sketch that journey with notes. Travel with the music 1,500 light years away into the constellation Orion the Hunter, into the Molecular Cloud Complex and through the Great Orion Nebula where Stars and Ideas are born.” — Julie Giroux

DIAMOND TIDE – Viet Cuong

Viet Cuong is a Vietnamese American composer. Born in California, he grew up in Marietta, Georgia learning to play piano, percussion, and clarinet. Cuong currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music Composition and Theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he teaches composition, orchestration, and music theory. He holds degrees in music composition from Princeton University, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Peabody Conservatory. Written in 2015, *Diamond Tide* depicts an experiment in which scientists discovered how to melt a diamond, and for the first time, measure the temperature and pressure necessary to do so. These theories are obviously all conjecture, but Cuong’s alluring imagery provided heaps of inspiration for *Diamond Tide*, which utilizes the “melting” sounds of metallic water percussion and trombone glissandi.

“When diamonds are heated to very high temperatures, they don’t melt; they simply turn into graphite, which then melts (and the thought of liquid graphite isn’t nearly as appealing or beautiful as liquid diamond.) Therefore, the addition of extremely high pressure -- 40 million times the pressure we feel on earth at sea level -- is crucial to melt a diamond.

The extreme temperature and pressure used in this experiment are found on Neptune and Uranus, and scientists therefore believe that seas of liquid diamond are possible on these two planets. Oceans of diamond may also account for these planets’ peculiar magnetic and geographic poles, which do not line up like they do here on earth. Lastly, as the scientists were melting the diamonds, they saw floating shards of solid diamond forming in the pools -- just like icebergs in our oceans. Imagine: distant planets with oceans of liquid diamond filled with bergs of sparkling solid diamonds drifting in the tide.” — Viet Cuong

OLYMPIC FIREWORKS – David Stanhope

Olympic Fireworks was given its premiere by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, with the composer conducting, at the closing ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. *Olympic Fireworks* was performed during the opening ceremony and the final fireworks. The wind band version was written at the same time.

Much of the work is based on the composer’s *Ceremonial Fanfare No. 1* for brass quintet. Olympic Fireworks is made up of four main sections. The first begins with sparkling sixteenth-note patterns, followed by a rising theme in triplets. The second (announced by the horns) introduces a new triplet theme with rising and falling duplets answering; these themes are developed to some extent before the fourth section repeats much of the opening part, adding a majestic coda. Commissioned by Dale Lonis for the University of Missouri-Columbia Wind Ensemble, USA.

CANZON PRIMI TONI from SACRAE SYMPHONIE — Giovanni Gabrieli

Canzon Primi Toni dates from 1597 and was written for St. Mark’s Cathedral in Venice. The *canzon* was scored for two brass choirs, each comprised of two trumpets and two trombones. The choirs were stationed in opposite balconies of the church according to the antiphonal principal of *cori spezzati* (broken choirs), which forms the basis of much of Gabrieli’s compositions.

CATHEDRALS — Kathryn Salfelder

Cathedrals is an adventure in ‘neo-renaissance music,’ in its seating arrangement, antiphonal qualities, 16th century counterpoint, and canonic texture. The work is a synthesis of the old and the new, evoking the mystery and allure of Gabrielli’s spatial music, intertwined with a rich color palette, modal harmonies, and textures of woodwinds and percussion.

THE SEEKER – David Maslanka

An intriguing juxtaposition of traditions is the catalyst for this musical work by David Maslanka. In the Buddhist tradition, bodhisattvas are seekers of enlightenment on the path of self-understanding, of the heart of compassion, of caring for the world. It is believed that Avalokiteshvara models the way of listening to relieve suffering in the world; Manjushri, the way of being still and looking deeply into the heart of things and people; Samantabhadra, the way of acting with the eyes and heart of compassion; Ksitigarbha, the way of being present where there is darkness, suffering, oppression, and despair; and Sadāparibhūta, the way of never disparaging or underestimating any living being.

The Seeker, subtitled “a symphonic movement,” opens with a slow melody that sounds like an Appalachian folk song. It transitions suddenly and sharply into the main body of the work, an energetic and exuberant romp at a very fast tempo. The opening melody then returns in the context of a chorale, a recomposition of *Christe, der du bist der Tag und Licht* (Christ, you who are day and light) from the 371 four-part chorales of Bach. The movement concludes with a partial recap of the fast portion followed by a brief coda.

SPANISH DANCE from Gadfly – Dmitri Shostakovich, arranged by James Curnow

Shostakovich, in essence, was the Russian John Williams of his day. Between 1929 and 1970, he wrote more than 30 movie soundtracks. But it is his score for the 1955 film *The Gadfly* that remains the big hit in this country. The film is a proudly boisterous affair – a swashbuckling costume drama depicting the life of a Russian hero in 1830s Italy. The setting of the film gave Shostakovich the excuse to borrow musical ideas from Italian Romantic composers such as Verdi and Bellini. Among the popular tunes from the score is *Spanish Dance*, a brilliant dance number that Shostakovich later used again in his *Suite for Variety Orchestra No. 2*. James Curnow’s 2014 arrangement of *Spanish Dance* is dedicated to Drs. William F. Malambri and Stanley F. Michalski and the Carolinas Wind Orchestra.