

PROGRAM NOTES – December 2016 – This Land is Our Land

Emblem of Unity

This brilliant march, J. J. Richards' most popular, was written while he was living in Sterling, Illinois, conducting both the high school and the community bands. A classic and exciting composition, this work is played by hundreds of school and professional bands each year. In conducting an elite band composed of outstanding Dutch musicians in 1981, Colonel Arnald Gabriel, then conductor of the U. S. Air Force Band, selected "Emblem of Unity" as one of only six American works for a jubilee concert which was broadcast in Kerkrade, Holland. Some of the composition's unique features include the chord changes which precede the snare drum forzando in the introduction, the lower brass breaks, and the final strain which sounds correct at either a constant, slower, or accelerating tempo.

The Greatest Generation

Program Notes by Dr. Daniel P. Bolin, who commissioned this work in memory of his father, Gillespie G. Bolin)

In December 2000, my father, Gillespie Bolin, passed away suddenly. He was born in 1921 and was part of what is now known as the greatest generation. Following his funeral I traveled to Chicago for the annual Midwest Clinic. There I knew I would find comfort among friends and colleagues. It was also there that I first spoke with Emmy Award-winning composer Julie Giroux about the idea of writing a composition for band in memory of dad and all of those members of his generation who are responsible for the America we know and love.

Dad grew up during the Great Depression and served in the Navy during World War II. While in the Navy he was stationed in New York City where he would entertain our troops on weekends at the Navy Pier. Following the war he returned to Indianapolis where he and my mother, Genell, raised my brother Steve (now a rocket scientist for NASA at the Jet Propulsion Labs in Pasadena, CA) and me (professor of music and former chairman of the music department at Butler University in Indianapolis).

My early interest in music was inspired by listening to dad play on our old Story and Clark piano in the music room of our house each day when he came home from work. I vividly remember his piano and organ playing at our church and watching him in local talent shows on television, which were a part of the regular fare during the infancy of that media.

In discussing the composition with Julie, I asked her to write a work that would reflect the time period in which dad lived. Her work begins with a dramatic fanfare that includes fragments of some melodies of the period. Following the introduction there is a theme that is introduced that ties the work together. We hear a Gershinesque rhythm that seems to symbolize the growth of our nation following the depression. The work pays homage to those who did not return from WWII with a slow expressive section, which features the piano (most fitting for dad). It concludes with a vibrant finale that once again features lively jazz rhythms and seems to indicate the work and prosperity that this generation gave to our nation.

America the Beautiful

Carmen Dragon was a conductor, composer, arranger, music educator, and a radio and television personality. As music director-conductor of the Glendale Symphony Orchestra, he brought

new excitement and personality to the Los Angeles concert scene. He composed and conducted scores to 30 motion pictures and released 57 best-selling record albums.

Rhapsodic Essay

“Rhapsodic Essay” was commissioned by the ACC-Heritage of American Band, Langley Air Force Base, VA, Captain Larry Lang, conductor, to aid in the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the United States Air Force (1947-1997).

Professor James Barnes, a member of both the History and Theory-Composition faculties at the University of Kansas, teaches orchestration, arranging and composition courses, and wind band history and repertoire courses. At KU, he served as an Assistant, and later, as Associate Director of Bands for 27 years.

His numerous publications for concert band and orchestra are extensively performed in the United States, Europe and the Pacific Basin. His works have been performed at Tanglewood, Boston Symphony Hall, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

Suite from “The Nutcracker”

The dainty and bewitching *Nutcracker Suite* was written for the Russian Imperial Opera, and first performed in 1892. It is based on the Hoffman fairy tale of the little girl, who, having indulged herself with Christmas goodies, dreams on Christmas night that she again sees the tree lighted in all its splendor, while all the toys and dolls are in revelry, led by "NutCracker, the Prince of Fairyland." The ballet met with such success that Tchaikovsky decided to use the most popular numbers and arrange a suite.

A Christmas Festival

John Williams described Leroy Anderson as “one of the great American masters of light orchestral music.” Many of Anderson’s compositions were introduced by the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of Arthur Fiedler. Among these were “Jazz Pizzicato”, “The Syncopated Clock”, “The Typewriter”, “Bugler’s Holiday”, “Blue Tango”, and “A Trumpeter’s Lullaby”. One of his most familiar tunes, “Sleigh Ride”, was written during an August heat wave, not as a Christmas piece but rather a work describing a winter event.

In “A Christmas Festival”, Anderson applied his masterful scoring to a number of familiar Christmas melodies: “Joy to the World”, “Deck the Halls”, “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”, “Good King Wenceslas”, “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”, “Silent Night”, “Jingle Bells”, and “O Come All Ye Faithful”.