



SOLANO WINDS
OCTOBER 7, 2022
PROGRAM NOTES

Light Cavalry Overture

In addition to his scholarship on the works of Sousa, Loras Schissel has composed and orchestrated over 400 works for large ensembles. He has studied with Frederick Fennell and John Paynter. He used the first edition score to write this arrangement of the famous von Suppé overture. Like Schissel, von Suppé himself (his given name was Francesco Ekechiele Ermenigildo Cavaliere Suppé-Demelli) was a prolific composer, with over 250 works to his credit.

Light Cavalry Overture was originally written as a stage play with music, but the play has long since vanished from the repertoire. It is no surprise that the Overture remains as a staple of the light-popular repertoire; during von Suppé's lifetime, 42 different adaptations for band were available. The entrance of the cavalry midway through the piece is quite familiar to viewers of Saturday morning cartoons.

English Folk Song Suite

The English Folk Song Suite, composed by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1923, consists of three movements: March, Intermezzo and another march. These movements are subtitled with English folk song names. The first march is based upon "Seventeen Come Sunday", the Intermezzo upon "My Bonny Boy" and the final movement on "Folk Songs from Somerset." The sub-text for "Seventeen Come Sunday" includes the tunes "Pretty Caroline" as a quiet melody for solo clarinet, and "Dives and Lazarus", played by the upper woodwinds in a grueling 6/8 rhythm against the straight 2/4 rhythm of the saxophones and brasses. Ralph Vaughan Williams devoted most of his creative musicianship to capturing the elusive but historic tunes of the English countryside and subtly introducing these traditional airs in longer works.

O Magnum Mysterium

Morten Lauridsen's choral setting of "O Magnum Mysterium" ("O Great Mystery") has become one of the world's most performed and recorded compositions since its 1994 premiere by the Los Angeles Master Chorale conducted by Paul Salamunovich. About his setting, Morten Lauridsen writes, "For centuries, composers have been inspired by the beautiful O Magnum Mysterium text with its depiction of the birth of the new-born King amongst the lowly animals and shepherds. This affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin are celebrated in my setting through a quiet song of profound inner joy." H. Robert Reynolds has arranged the symphonic wind version of this popular work with the approval and appreciation of the composer.



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On the Mall

In New York City, the Mould Bandstand was built in 1862. Free Saturday afternoon concerts would draw as many as 45,000 people to the pagoda in Central Park. Needing a larger venue, the Elkan Naumberg Bandshell was dedicated in 1923. On August 2, the Bandshell hosted its most recent free performance, this one by the East Coast Chamber Orchestra.

“On the Mall” was written for the dedication of the Elkan Naumberg Bandshell in 1923. The sing-along/whistle-along march was written in 1923 in collaboration with Mayhew Lake, whose arrangement we perform tonight. Edwin Franko Goldman’s son, Richard Franko Goldman – a composer in his own right – said that his father “did not think much of the march at that time and was astonished that it became the most popular of all his compositions.” Edwin Franko Goldman conducted the march as an encore in January 1956. It was the last piece he would ever conduct.

Cute

Neil Hefti was born in Hastings, Nebraska, on October 29, 1922. He would be 100 years old later this month. He received a trumpet for Christmas when he was in 4th grade. Watching all of the great big bands of the time come through Omaha, Hefti dabbled in composing and arranging, but mostly focused on playing the trumpet. He joined Woody Herman’s “First Herd” in 1944, where he expanded his interest in arranging, including the “standard” arrangement of “Woodchopper’s Ball.”

In the late 1940’s, Hefti left the Herman band and focused more on arranging, notably for the Buddy Rich and Harry James bands. In 1950, he began to arrange for Count Basie’s band, creating a tight, well-crafted ensemble sound that the band maintained for more than twenty years. During the 1950’s, he also started his own band, which in 1962 received Grammy nominations for its album “Jazz Pops,” which included recordings of “Li’l Darlin’” and “Cute.”

Hefti had great success as a composer for film and television in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Among his credits are “The Odd Couple” (television and film), “Batman,” “How to Murder Your Wife,” “Sex and the Single Girl,” and “Barefoot in the Park.” He died in California on October 11, 2008.



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I'm the Big Band Singer

Merv Griffin was a 1942 graduate of San Mateo High School, later attending San Mateo Junior College and the University of San Francisco. As an Irish Catholic, he was a church organist in high school, leading him to use his piano skills to launch a career in show business. He sang with big bands, and eventually had a late night television program on CBS opposite "The Tonight Show." He turned that into a syndicated variety show where he once estimated that he had interviewed 40,000 guests. He exchanged annual birthday greetings with Nancy Reagan, with whom he shared a common birthday of July 6. He was an honorary pallbearer for President Ronald Reagan, and a longtime companion of actress Eva Gabor.

Griffin played Hangman with his sister as a child, and had his greatest commercial success as the creator of two iconic television game shows: "Jeopardy" and "Wheel of Fortune." Host Pat Sajak said at the time of Griffin's death, "He meant so much to my life, and it's hard to imagine it without him."

No Moon At All

"No Moon At All" was composed in 1947 by David Mann and Redd Evans and was originally performed by Doris Day. Since then, it has been recorded by many notable artists, including the King Cole Trio, The Ames Brothers, Julie London, Count Basie, George Shearing, Patti Page, Mel Tormé, Ella Fitzgerald, Robert Goulet, and Diana Krall.

Blue Moon

The earliest recorded English use of the term "blue moon" was from a 1528 pamphlet attacking the English clergy, entitled "Rede Me and Be Not Wrothe" ("Read me and be not angry"): "Yf they say the mone is belewe / We must believe that it is true". More contemporary uses refer to the second full moon in a month as a blue moon.

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart presumably referred to the expression "once in a blue moon", which means very rarely. The narrator in the song is relating a stroke of luck so unlikely that it must have taken place under a blue moon. It has been recorded by countless vocalists: Mel Torme's version in 1949 hit number 20 on the Billboard charts, where it lasted for five weeks.



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Rhapsody in Blue

On January 4, 1924, Ira Gershwin brought a brief item in the *New York Tribune* to the attention of his younger brother George. Its heading read, “Whiteman Judges Named. Committee Will Decide ‘What Is American Music.’” According to the advertisement (purely a media ploy), Paul Whiteman had assembled an impressive group of musicians including Sergei Rachmaninoff and Jascha Heifetz to witness a concert of new American music. This concert was to be presented on the afternoon of February 12, just five weeks away. Included would be a “jazz concerto” on which George Gershwin was currently “at work”. Busy with his show “Sweet Little Devil,” Gershwin had not begun to compose such a concerto, though he and Whiteman had casually talked about his writing a special piece for the band. Gershwin began work on “Rhapsody in Blue” on Monday, January 7. Though a gifted melodist, he was ill-equipped to score the accompaniment. To assist him, Whiteman offered the services of his chief arranger, Ferde Grofé, who completed the score on February 4. The first of five rehearsals was held immediately, during which several modifications were made both to Gershwin’s music and Grofé’s arrangement. Most notable among these is the change in the opening clarinet solo. Gershwin had originally written a seventeen-note slur; however, Ross Gorman (Whiteman’s lead reed player) improvised the signature clarinet “wail.” According to contemporary reviews, the concert was rather dull, but “Rhapsody in Blue” was received enthusiastically by the audience, which included Jascha Heifetz, Victor Herbert, Fritz Kreisler, Sergei Rachmaninoff, John Philip Sousa, Leopold Stokowski and Igor Stravinsky. There were subsequent performances on March 7 and April 21, and a recording was made for Victor Records on June 10. A second recording was scheduled in 1927 during which Gershwin and Whiteman had strong disagreements. During those three years, Whiteman had made changes in the work with which Gershwin was dissatisfied. Their argument at the session resulted in Whiteman walking off the podium. The recording did take place with Gershwin performing the solo and the Whiteman Band playing the accompaniment, but Nathaniel Shilkret, Victor’s director of light music, served as conductor.

In ensuing years, there were a number of versions of “Rhapsody in Blue” produced to satisfy public demand for as many accessible renditions as possible. As the work’s popularity increased, the desire for a published large ensemble version led to Grofé’s 1926 setting for theater orchestra. This was followed subsequently by an expansion of the theater orchestra for full symphony orchestra and a version for concert band (1938) both by Grofé as well.



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Not until 1987 was Grofé's 1924 arrangement for the Whiteman Band published (in facsimile). Since its availability, this first scoring has been performed regularly. However, in the sixty-three years between its premiere and publication, this version was all but abandoned. Whiteman himself did not adhere to this arrangement. As early as 1926, he began distorting the piece, which had become his signature tune. He kept adding instrumental parts to the first version as the instrumentation of his orchestra changed. More than ninety parts exist for the various instrumental combinations Whiteman had at any given time. While the first score is novel, it cannot be considered the definitive version of the work, anymore than Gershwin's two-piano manuscript. This manuscript was altered, presumably with the approval of the composer, by Grofé both melodically and harmonically. In fact, Grofé's 1924 score was never performed as written, even at the premiere. Gershwin most assuredly improvised sections of the piano cadenza, and the written ensemble accompaniment evolved through the five days of rehearsals. Grofé was a gifted arranger (later teaching orchestration at Juilliard) who commonly reduced existing orchestral scores for Whiteman's unique instrumentation. (In 1927 he adapted Gershwin's own scoring of "Concerto in F" for a Whiteman Band recording.)

As noted above, Grofé scored "Rhapsody in Blue" for concert band in 1928; however, this setting was flawed and somewhat unusable without considerable alteration. The primary problem lay in the absence of the solo piano! Eventually, an erratum was created and made available with the score indicating cuts and deletions in the band version to adapt for the addition of the original solo piano part. Also, unlike the scoring the symphony orchestra version in which chord tones were characteristically assigned to specific players or sections, these chord tones were voiced within individual sections, and thus no distinct timbre was afforded each.

The shortcomings of this extant concert band version have led to the creation of the current modern band edition, which may be performed by either concert band or wind ensemble (most effectively by the latter). The present edition preserves characteristic timbres and transparent qualities of the orchestral setting while texturally capturing – despite the absence of strings – its innate vertical densities. Gershwin's personal copy of Grofé's band setting have also been incorporated along with scoring options from the manuscripts of his theater orchestra and Whiteman Band versions (both also in the Library of Congress).

ROBERT BARNES – “Rhapsody in Blue”



Staff Sergeant Robert Barnes is a pianist/keyboardist with the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West, Travis Air Force Base, CA. He has performed with Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Rock Bands while at Travis.

Originally from Atlanta, GA, his Air Force career began in 2006 with the United States Band of the Air Force Reserve based at Robins AFB, Warner Robins, GA.

Staff Sergeant Robert Barnes is a 1999 graduate of Winthrop University Conservatory of Music in Rock Hill, SC, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Piano. His teachers include Dr. Eugene Barben and Dr. Carolyn Quinn. Prior to enlisting in the Air Force, Staff Sergeant Barnes served as Artist in Residence at Radisson Grand Resort in Charlotte, N.C. for five years, accompanist for the Inspirational Television Network for three years, and Music Director for multiple churches in and around the city of Charlotte. He has also served the community as professor of private piano instruction with Trinity Christian Academy as well as his home studio. In his spare time, Sgt. Barnes has completed 12 solo piano recordings. He also served as pianist for Nordstrom in both Charlotte and Atlanta stores. Sgt. Barnes has also performed at the White House for private events for two consecutive holiday seasons.

During his Air Force career, he has performed with The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Sandi Patti, Take Six, Amy Grant, Wynonna Judd, Gene Simmons, and Aaron Neville to name just a few. Sgt. Barnes has deployed twice in support of operations IRAQI FREEDOM and INHERENT RESOLVE, entertaining troops at numerous forward operating bases throughout Iraq and Afghanistan and supporting embassy and community relations performances in Bahrain, Tajikistan, UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, and Kyrgyzstan.

JANESE POWELL – “I’m the Big Band Singer,” “No Moon At All,” “Blue Moon”



Janese Powell currently sings with Dave’s Swingtime big band in Alameda. She joined the Sacramento-based classic rock band On Air in 2021 onairband.com and is having a blast singing with this 13 piece group. She also sings regularly with the Cal Alumni Big Band and smaller combos. Janese's early career in music was on the stage as a "triple threat" (acting, singing & dancing). At the same time as her stage career she was also the lead vocalist in the very prominent Walt Tolleson Musical Organization in San Francisco. Janese's pure alto tone and song styling remind us of Judy Garland, Rosemary Clooney, Patsy Cline, Anita O'Day, Jo Stafford, Shania Twain and Sade rolled into one!

DR. CHRISTOPHER HULETT – “O Magnum Mysterium”



Dr. Hulett began his career as the director of bands at Ironwood High School in Glendale, Arizona. He built a large and dynamic band program which included a Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Percussion Ensemble, String Orchestra, two Jazz Bands and the 130-member Eagle Marching Band. The Ironwood Bands consistently received ratings of Excellent and Superior at festivals and competitions.

While in Phoenix, Chris performed with the Salt River Brass Band and as principal tuba for 17 years with the Sudler Scroll Award-winning Tempe Symphonic Wind Ensemble. In 2007 he joined the Scottsdale Concert Band and, in 2008, took over as only the second Director in the 30-year history of the band. Chris led the band for three years bringing a new enthusiasm and improved musicianship to the ensemble. He has served as clinician, judge, or guest conductor at numerous festivals and honor bands across Arizona. He has held many administration jobs in K-12 Education and most recently was the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources at the Vacaville Unified School District.

Dr. Hulett is a proud graduate of the University of California, Berkeley where he marched in the Cal Band under the direction of Robert O. Briggs, the founder of the Solano Winds. He holds a Master's Degree in Music Education from the University of Illinois and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Arizona State University. Dr. Hulett was honored to be one of a small group of directors invited to conduct at the Robert O. Briggs Memorial Concert in 2009.