



## PROGRAM NOTES

### Canon in D Major

Pachelbel's "Canon in D Major" has been performed at countless celebrations – mostly weddings – and is a timeless example of the beauty that is possible with music that is at once intricate and simple. Introduced by an unrelenting bass line, the melodic line joins in four measures later. The first canonic part mimics that melodic line exactly throughout the rest of the piece, and the second canonic part does the same four bars later. The seemingly simple structure provides gorgeous harmonic tonalities throughout, with a subtly shifting texture as the melodic elements weave their way through the piece.

Tonight, Solano Winds uses this new selection in our library to highlight the musicians that comprise our ensemble. They will enter the stage throughout the piece according to the year when they first performed with our group.

### Flourish for Wind Band

Originally titled simply "Flourish" and later published as "Flourish for Wind Band" was originally composed as an overture to the pageant "Music and the People". It was scored directly for band and first performed in the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1939. It joins Vaughn Williams' "English Folk Song Suite" and "Toccata Marziale" as staples of the wind band literature. The "Flourish for Wind Band", as its title implies, is a relatively short concert opener, relying in large part on brass fanfares and lyrical melodic elements in the woodwinds. It receives its first Solano Winds performance as a part of this concert.

### First Suite in Eb for Military Band

The "First Suite in E-flat major for Military Band" (Op. 28, No. 1) is a cornerstone in the concert band repertoire. This piece, along with its sister piece, "Second Suite in F for Military Band", was written by the prominent British composer Gustav Holst. Aside from these two suites, *Hammersmith* and *A Moorside Suite* were his only band works. The *First Suite*, as it is informally called, was written for a full military band in 1909. During this time of band music, the repertoire was almost exclusively transcriptions from orchestral works. Holst's First and Second Suites are two of the very few works for concert bands that have been transcribed for orchestra.

First performed by Solano Winds in the second performance of our first season, the First Suite has three movements, each with its own character and form. The complete composition is based upon a 8-measure melody reminiscent of English folk song; however, the tune is original to Holst.

Most notably, the theme statement that initiates the first movement is developed throughout each movement. Its variations range in style from lyrical to playfully rhythmic to ornamentally embellished.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## How Suite It Is – October 2019

### Suite of Old American Dances

Many quality composers began to take an interest in the wind band after World War II, and Robert Russell Bennett was no exception. After attending a concert by the Goldman Band celebrating the 70th birthday of Goldman himself, Bennett remarked:

When Edwin Franko Goldman arrived at his 70th birthday it was celebrated by a concert sponsored by the League of Composers. For the concert (January 3, 1948) they engaged the Goldman Band of New York and asked Dr. Goldman to conduct his own band in honor of his own anniversary. Louise and I went to that concert and I suddenly thought of all the beautiful sounds the American concert band could make that it hadn't yet made. That doesn't mean that the unmade sounds passed n review in my mind at all, but the sounds they made were so new to me after all my ears with orchestra, dance bands and tiny "combos", that my pen was practically jumping out of my pocket begging me to give this great big instrument some more music to play.

Bennett's inspiration resulted in his "Suite of Old American Dances". Despite his excitement, Bennett was only able to work intermittently on the Suite because of other assignments. The parts were written in between the scoring of Kiss Me Kate, South Pacific and other shows. He wrote out the parts one at a time from sketches or a short score. Months would often elapse between the writing of each part, as he would have to leave New York to score a show, then write a few more parts upon his return. It took a year and a half from the time the work was first sketched until it was completed. Of this practice Bennett once wrote, "To satisfy all this urging, I found time to put a good-sized piece on paper. There was really no such thing as spare time for me at that time, but somehow I got a part done here and there".

The "Suite of Old American Dances" has been a band and audience favorite since Solano Winds first performed the suite in our third season.

### In Town To-Night (Knightsbridge March), from Suite "London"

Eric Coates was a composer of classic light music, a professional violist, and a persuasive and capable conductor. He was elected president of the British Light Music Association in 1957, the last year of his life – a fitting tribute to a composer whose works typify the light classic music of Great Britain, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

"London Suite", subtitled "London Every Day", describe three areas of the city which Coates knew very well. The first, "Covent Garden", is represented by a fast 6/8 tarantella. The second, "Westminster (Meditation)", is depicted by a slow andante movement. The final section is titled "In Town To-Night" and subtitled "Knightsbridge March." The latter title is derived from the elegant Knightsbridge section in London, where the Royal Guards' barracks and stables are situated. In this movement the listener is allowed an intimate glimpse of the pomp, pageantry, and color associated with the scarlet-coated guardsmen of Buckingham Palace.

*~ from "Program Notes for Band" by Norman E. Smith*

Tonight's performance highlights the most familiar movement of the suite, the "Knightsbridge March", first performed by Solano Winds in our fifth season. We performed the entire suite when we performed for the Association of Concert Bands' Annual Convention in 2013.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## How Suite It Is – October 2019

### Third Suite

Robert E. Jager was born in Binghamton, New York in 1939, He attended Wheaton College in Illinois, and then the University of Michigan. For two years, following this, he taught wind instruments privately in Knoxville, Tennessee. In 1962 he enlisted in the U. S. Navy and served for four years as a Theory Instructor, and then Staff Arranger for the U. S. Naval School of Music. In 1964 he entered the Ostwald Band Music Competition, sponsored by the American Bandmasters Association, and won the Award with his "Symphony for Band". That same year, he also won the Roth Award for the National School Orchestra Association.

The "Third Suite" was written for Mr. Lo Imperial, director of the Granby High School Band of Norfolk, Virginia, and is dedicated to him and his very fine organization. The Suite received its first performance by them in December 1965 from manuscript.

The Suite is a tuneful work for band, yet it has built into it certain elements which provide a challenge for the players and conductor, as well as added interest for the listener. In the first movement, for example, the steady feel and rhythm of a march are somewhat distorted by measures of unequal time values. One interesting aspect of this "March" is the percussion solo near the middle of the movement.

In the "Waltz", the same kind of distortion of time occurs as in the previous movement, but now it is the familiar 3/4 which receives the treatment. Color and contrast are an added important feature in this movement. Near the end of the waltz, the opening flute theme is repeated and cut short, before the movement closes with a spirited "coda".

The form of the "Rondo" is ABACABA. The movement opens with a five chord introduction in the full band. This introduction serves as an important connecting idea throughout the movement. A solo cornet states the "A" theme, which is repeated by the woodwinds. Then the mood shifts to minor for the "B" theme in the full band. After a repeat of "A", the piccolo introduces the "C" theme. This too is repeated, and again the five big chords are heard, followed by the third "A" statement. Suddenly, the tonal level shifts and the last "B" section is heard. This actually is a developmental section incorporating all three themes of the movement. After a loud timpani crash, the final "A" is heard "Presto". This builds to a climactic finale based on the five notes of the introduction.

"How Suite It Is" is Solano Winds' first ever performance of the "Third Suite".

## PROGRAM NOTES

How Suite It Is – October 2019

### Carmen – Suite from the Opera

Georges Bizet was blessed with great talent. His opera “Carmen” is still considered by many to be the greatest French opera of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, the realism of his early operas and a negative press caused the public to disapprove his early works. Not until he wrote the incidental music to “L’Arlésienne” did he gain visible approval.

“Carmen” became Bizet’s most celebrated work. In 1904 the 1,000<sup>th</sup> performance was presented at the Paris Opera. The opera was premiered at the Opéra Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875. Although reaction to the first act was excellent, the rest of the opera was criticized by both critics and the public. By featuring smugglers, Gypsies, factory girls, corporals, and cigarette smokers, “Carmen” violated the chastity and lightweight fare of the typical Opéra Comique productions. During the remaining three months of his life, Bizet was extremely disheartened by the apparent failure of his new work.

“Carmen” has since become one of the most popular and frequently performed operas in the world repertoire. Although Bizet had never been to Spain, and the music is more French than Spanish, the quality of the music and the international “soap opera” excitement among the beautiful sexy Carmen, the army corporal Don José, and the famous matador Escamillo have continued to promote the work. Among the major composers of Bizet’s era who praised “Carmen” were Johannes Brahms, Peter Tchaikovsky, Richard Wagner, and Maurice Ravel.

*~ from “Program Notes for Band” by Norman E. Smith*