“Old Wine in New Bottles”

University of Wyoming
Wind Symphony

Robert Belser, conductor

Thursday
March 11, 2021

BCPA Concert Hall
7:30 p.m.
Musically and educationally, we have been cramming a lot of “old wine” into “new bottles” this academic year. Previous methods of teaching music have had to be adapted, reconfigured, and invented to offer the best to our students under COVID protocols. Programming for our ensembles has had to be accommodated or chosen to match the limits of personnel allowed on stage as well as our diminished rehearsal times, yet we have been determined to provide a usual eclectic mix of music for the enjoyment of you, our audiences. Tonight features such a mix ranging from English folk songs set for modern instruments, to marches with bare-minimum players, to classics arranged for a different ensemble. We hope you will enjoy our “usual, old tunes” in “new concoctions”, and we really look forward to the near future of getting back to offering “old wine” in their original wind band “bottles”.

We will miss your applause and visiting with you in the lobby post-concert as has been our rich tradition, and hope to return to live audience concerts in the near future. Additionally, we would enjoy receiving your reactions for this virtual concert broadcast. We hope you enjoy tonight’s concert!

Program

Set 1 (live performance)

**Entry March of the Boyars** (1895)  
Johan Halvorsen  
(1864-1935)  
arranged by Frederick Fennell

Set 2 (recorded Tuesday March 9, 2021)

**Old Wind in New Bottles** (1960)  
Gordon Jacob  
(1895-1984)

1. The Wraggle Taggle Gipsies  
2. The Three Ravens  
3. Begone, Dull Care  
4. Early One Morning

Set 3 (live performance)

**The Duke of Marlborough Fanfare** (1939)  
Percy Grainger  
(1882-1961)

**Three Pieces from the Water Music** (1717, brass choir version 1955)  
Georg Frederick Handel  
(1685-1759)  
transcribed by Robert King

Set 4 (recorded Tuesday March 9, 2021)

**Scherzo all Marcia, from Symphony No. 8** (1956)  
Ralph Vaughn Williams  
(1872-1958)

**Clair de Lune, from Suite Bergamasque** (1905, band version 1995)  
Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)  
arranged by Tom Wallace

**The Marriage of Figaro Overture** (1904, woodwind choir version 2021)  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)  
arranged by Robert Belser
Program Notes:

**Entry March of the Boyars**, by Johan Halvorsen, edited by Frederick Fennell

The Norwegian composer Johan Halvorsen studied as a violinist and composer at conservatories in Stockholm, Leipzig, and Berlin and served most of his life as opera and concert conductor in Germany. He was offered a position in Bucharest, but even though he turned that down, he became deeply interested in that region of Romania and of the arrogant history of the boyars, the highest ranking aristocrats second only to the ruling princes of the region. This march, his most popular work, exhibits a nationalistic romantic tradition (not unlike Grieg) with hints toward Norwegian influences, German march style, and Slavic folk traditions.

**Old Wine in New Bottles**, by Gordon Jacob

Jacob wrote this lighthearted four-movement suite for the St. Bees Festival of Music. Composed at the request of a friend – who was also the conductor at the premiere – Jacob used folk tunes of the area (St. Bees is coastal town near the border of England and Scotland) yet putting them into “new bottles” of harmony and twists of style and genre. It is noted as one of the composer’s greatest examples of his craftsmanship and was an immediate success at the premiere and then shortly throughout Europe and the US. Themes ranged from the Morris dance-like *Wraggle Taggle Gipsies* through the sentimentality and wit in *Early One Morning*. It remains today as one of the great works for chamber wind ensembles.

**Three Pieces from Water Music**, by Georg Frederick Handel, arranged by Robert King

Today we have Sirius XM, in the early 18th Century, Britain’s King George I had Handel and barge full of 60 musicians to accompany his travels on the Thames! The *Water Music* is a collection of twenty tunes divided into three suites and was written originally for oboes, bassoons, horns and strings. Robert King has extracted three movements from the Suite in F: an allegro, the Air, and the Hornpipe, for this scoring for brass ensemble. *Water Music* was premiered on July 17, 1717 as a “concert on the Thames” for King George’s excursion with several of his aristocrat friends from Whitehall upriver to Chelsea and many Londoners packed the shores and listened on accompanying barges to both view the King and to relish in Handel’s music. King George, by the way, was so pleased with the music that he asked for it to be repeated at least three times, so the musicians were playing from about 8pm until midnight!

**Scherzo all Marcia, from Symphony No. 8**, by Ralph Vaughan Williams

The shortest of Ralph (pronounced “Rafé”) Vaughan Williams’ nine symphonies, the eighth was one of the few works not written on commission but had begun as a few earlier sketches by the composer as intellectual exercise for himself but also in formulating ideas influenced in seeing Puccini’s *Turandot* with its expansive percussion scoring, and in particular for the multiple tuned gongs. Approached by conductor Sir John Barbirolli for a new work, Vaughan Williams completed the symphony in early 1956. It is scored for pairs of woodwinds and brass, a large percussion section, strings, and two harps. The middle movements were unusually scored with the second, Scherzo alla Marcia, for winds alone, and the third, Cavatina, for strings alone, then the large percussion array scored as “the stars” of the last movement. The Scherzo displays wit and cynicism in three separate themes, using one in a fugato that evolves into a typical Vaughan Williams pastorale, punctuated by a quick coda returning to the original tune which then melts away in a wisp of sound.

**Clair de Lune**, by Claude Debussy, arranged by Tom Wallace

Tom Wallace has taken Debussy’s popular work for piano and transformed it into a dreamy ethereal piece for band with his tasteful added large percussion section. From the composer’s famous *Suite bergamasque* for solo piano, the third movement, Clair de lune, has become one of Debussy’s most popular tunes, scored for many differing ensembles throughout the decades and a work which almost made it into the movies in Disney’s first Fantasia, unfortunately cut, but is in modern times perhaps best recalled as the music concluding the remake of Ocean’s Eleven.

**The Marriage of Figaro Overture**, by W.A. Mozart, scored for woodwinds by Robert Belser

Mozart’s overture to one of his most popular operas does not contain any tunes from the opera itself, as was the tradition in many of his other opera overtures. It does however set up the audience in the ambiance of the production that follows: an “air” of fast-paced action and surprises after whispering dialog, and humorous wit and cynicism. A popular concert work for now two centuries since its premiere, I wanted to feature our woodwind section – as we did earlier for the brass in the Grainger and Handel, and the percussion in the Debussy – in this most famous overture by Mozart.
This is the 28th concert in the 2020 - 2021 UW Music Department Season.
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