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Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Matthew M. Marsit

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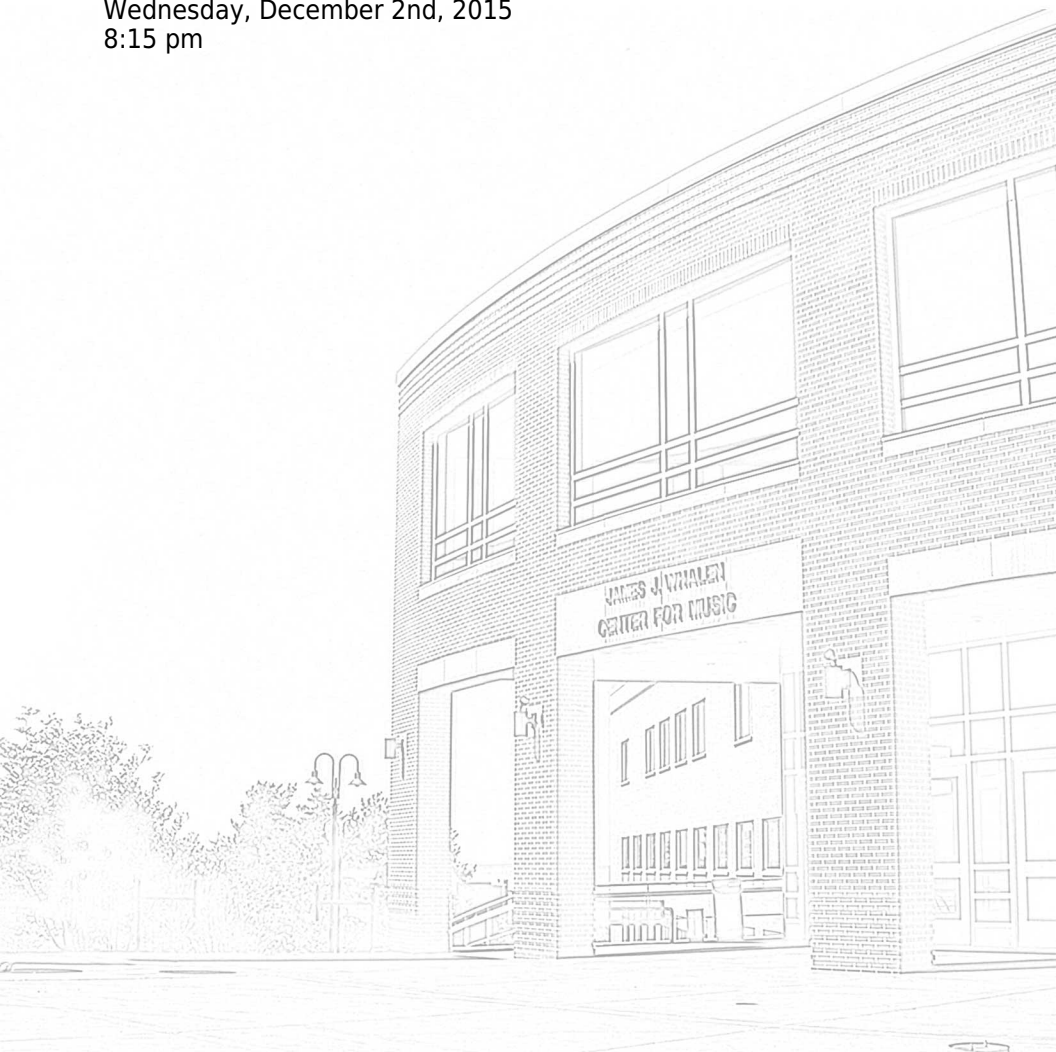
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Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Matthew M. Marsit, conductor

Ford Hall
Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Myths and Legends

Rites, Op. 79 (1952)

- I. Pour saluer l'aurore
- II. Pour conjurer les Esprits
- III. Pour fêter le Soleil

Jean Absil
(1893-1974)

Axis Mundi (2009)

- I. Apatheia
- II. Hêdonê

Steven Bryant
(b. 1972)

Intermission

Symphony No. 4, "El Coloso" (2011)

- I. Oscuridad (Darkness)
- II. Duerme (Asleep)
- III. La Huida (The Flight)
- IV. El Gigante (The Giant)

Ferrer Ferran
(b. 1966)

...yet the sun rises (2011)

Yasuhide Ito
(b. 1960)

Biographies

Matthew M. Marsit

An active conductor and clarinetist, Matthew M. Marsit has led ensembles and performed as a solo, chamber, and orchestral musician throughout the United States. Currently on the artistic staff of the Hopkins Center for the Performing Arts at Dartmouth College as Director of Bands and as the Artist-in-Residence in Winds at Williams College, Matthew has previously held conducting positions with Boston's Charles River Wind Ensemble, Cornell University, Drexel University, the Chestnut Hill Orchestra, the Bucks County Youth Ensembles, the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary and the Eastern US Music Camp. Serving at Ithaca College for the Fall 2015 academic term, Matthew is conducting the Wind Ensemble, plus teaching graduate courses in wind literature and heading the graduate wind conducting program.

A champion for new music and advancing the repertoire of original works for wind ensemble, Matthew has commissioned and led premiere performances from dozens of the world's leading living composers, including Christopher Marshall, Daniel Basford, Christopher Theofanidis and Louis Andriessen. Also an advocate for the use of music as a vehicle for service, Matthew has led ensembles on service missions, collecting instruments for donation to schools, performing charity benefit concerts and offering workshops to benefit struggling arts programs.

A native of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Matthew moved first to Philadelphia to complete his studies in music at Temple University, where he studied clarinet with Anthony Gigliotti and Ronald Reuben and conducting with Luis Biava and Arthur Chodoroff. Additionally, Matthew has studied conducting with some of the world's most prominent instructors including Mark Davis Scatterday of the Eastman School of the Music, Timothy Reynish of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK and Gianluigi Gelmeetti at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. Matthew also holds a graduate degree in Orchestral Conducting from The Boston Conservatory.

Program Notes

Rites, Jean Absil

Fusing post-Romantic and 20th century techniques, Jean Absil was an award winning Belgian composer of orchestral, wind band, chamber, vocal, dramatic, and other instrumental music. He believed "the distinction between consonance and dissonance is meaningless and that polytonality has existed since the Middle Ages." Similar to Hindemith, Bartok, and Milhaud, Absil was able to create tonal ambiguity in his compositions without using atonal or serial techniques.

When describing Absil's music, Joseph Dopp comments "that the ear never suffers from an impression of tonal insecurity when listening to Absil's music: while it is no longer possible to find a reference to the classical major or minor tonalities, the composer invents new modes, which he replaces for each piece. From these modes emerge chords which, even if they are different from the classical ones, also have an expressive sense (tension or resolution)."

Influenced by more than just the title of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and encouraged by fellow composer Florent Schmitt, Absil's *Rites, Op. 79*, is consistent with Dopp's remarks. Absil composed this piece in 1952 for the Musique Royal de Guides in Belgium with the intentions of conveying an "Orphic ritual in honor of ancient Greece in the 6th century BC." The first movement, *Pour Saluer l'aurore* (To Greet the Dawn) depicts nature awakening. *Pour conjurer les esprits* (To Conjure the Spirits) is the preparation for the ritual, which leads into the actual ritual in the third movement, *Pour feter le soleil* (Celebration of the Sun). Although all motives have tonal centers, Absil diminishes the sense of tonality by creating unique modes and using patterns such as the octatonic scale. Other trademarks of Absil's compositions are present including extended woodwind flourishes, textural layering, and rhythmic displacement.

Axis Mundi, Steven Bryant

Claiming to "strive to write music that leaps off the stage to grab you by the collar and pull you in," Steven Bryant is a winner of the ABA Ostwald award and three-time winner of the NBA Revelli Award. His teacher at the Julliard School, John Corigliano, said that Bryant's "compositional virtuosity is evident in every bar" and his over twenty compositions for wind band are performed regularly throughout the world and have been credited with reshaping the genre.

Commissioned by a consortium of Japanese bands through the Japanese Wind Ensemble Conductors Conference, Bryant provides these notes on *Axis Mundi*:

"Axis Mundi is Latin for "center of the world." More specifically, it connotes the connecting axis between the two opposite sides, or facets, of a world. It appears as a cultural symbol in every region of the planet, often as a natural object, such as the Yggdrasil Tree in Norse mythology, or Mount Fuji in Japan. It signifies the connection of opposites, the intertwined nature of opposing forces and elements: quiet and loud, dark and light, aggressive and passive, masculine and feminine, etc. Of particular interest to me is this concept's embodiment in the symbol of yin and yang. The two movements represent these opposites in their surface characteristics: whereas Mvt. I, Apatheia, is music of the introverted, interior mind, Mvt. II, Hêdonê, is its extroverted, hedonistic counterpart, yet both are inextricably intertwined, springing from a singular musical source, and require each other for balance.

Apatheia is from the philosophy of Stoicism, and describes a mental state free of emotional volatility and disturbance. My musical setting of this idea evokes a calm, rational mind, without excessive emotion or passion. The music is clear, orderly, and never ventures above piano in volume or character. Hêdonê, on the other hand, is from Epicurean philosophy, and describes the quest for pleasure (more specifically, pleasure with only good consequences, not the wider, wanton disregard that is inherent in the word's English descendant, hedonism). The music is passionate, hyperactive, chaotic, sometimes angry, and often humorous. It is relentlessly loud and aggressive."

Axis Mundi resonates well with the composer's statement, "whether through a relentless eruption of energy, or the intensity of quiet contemplation, I want my music to give you no choice, and no other desire, but to listen."

Symphony No. 4, "El Coloso", Ferrer Ferran

Ferrer Ferran was born in 1966 in Valencia, Spain and graduated at 15 years old with degrees in piano and percussion. Throughout his life, he has traveled all over the world as a performer and conductor and is currently a composer, pianist, conductor, and teacher at the Conservatorio Superior de Musica de Valencia in Spain. He has written hundreds of compositions for choir, chamber orchestra, and symphonic wind orchestra.

Ferran includes these program notes, translated into English from his original Spanish words, in his score:

With the turn of the century, [Francisco de] Goya began depicting things in his paintings that were described as grotesque and violent, and, ultimately, the horrible reality around him. Goya describes these paintings as his "Black Paintings". The first of this series of paintings is called "The Colossus" which was made around 1810-1812 and is

currently kept in the Museo del Prado. This enigmatic painting shows the nightmares of war through the technique and environment that the painter used in the last years of his life when he was at his point of maximum expression. The true meaning and intent of his painting are still vague, but it is clear that something huge and terrifying stands over humanity which is helpless and forced to flee. Only a donkey, the picture of ignorance, remains still and unmoved. There have been multiple interpretations of the giant; some people see an allusion to Napoleon, others see a symbol of war, famine, cruelty, or simply the fear of the unknown. The Symphony No. 4 "The Colossus" is a work [which is] impetuous, violent, huge, and extremely difficult, to demonstrate virtuosity in all elements of the orchestra. The Symphony describes, from the viewpoint of the composer, the message the painting conveys: "Darkness", because the oil painting adopts the style of the Black Paintings dominated by the color black; "Sleep", inspired by Goya's sketch of "Great Colossus Asleep;" "The Flight", depicting the bottom of the painting with people and animals fleeing in various directions giving the impression of the chaos of such a terrifying situation; and "The Giant", after the giant walking in the mountains through the smoke of torment with fists [bared] and his eyes closed, representing the idea of blind violence.

...yet the sun rises, Yasuhide Ito

Born in Hamamatsu, Japan in 1960, Yasuhide Ito's musical talent has been recognized with prizes from various piano and composition competitions including the Shizuoka Music Competition, the Japan Music Competition, the Competition for Saxophone Music, and the Bandmasters Academic Society of Japan Prize. Of his more than 1000 works, 90 of them are written for wind band, making his contribution to the wind repertoire significant. Ito's *...yet the sun rises* was premiered in 2011 by the Senzoku Gakuen College of Music Green-Tie Wind Ensemble under the direction of Douglas Bostock.

In March, 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake caused a massive tsunami killing more than 15,000 people. In trying to cope with such a devastating event, the composer came across poetry being Tweeted by Ryoichi Wago that inspired him to begin writing songs, including *...yet the sun rises*, which served as the basis of this piece. About his work, Ito writes:

I constantly listen to music—analyzing it and appreciating the different colors of melodic lines. But in this work, I was skeptical of what it would be like to not do any of that and just experience the music. Thus, there is no real melody in this piece. It is simply an arrangement based exclusively on the harmony and timbre of his song which is meant to be understood as it was composed: through passive immersion in the sound and timbres of the music.

Personnel

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Piccolo

Marissa Mediatì

Flute

Kaitlyn Laprise
Thomas Barkal
Carmen Vieytez

Oboe

Jake Walsh
Phoebe Ritnovato
Melissa DeMarinis

E♭ Clarinet

Miranda Schultz

B♭ Clarinet

Brooke Miller
Anna Goebel
Nicholas Alexander
Erin Dowler
Alice Hinshaw
Cara Kinney

Bass Clarinet

Vivian Becker

Contrabass

Olivia Ford

Bassoon

Sonja Larson

Cynthia Becker

Contrabassoon

James Smith

Alto Saxophone

Gregory Sisco
Deniz Arkali
Matthew Kiel+

Tenor Saxophone

Matthew Stookey
Jocelyn Armes*+

Baritone

Saxophone
Richard Laprise

Horn

Jacob Factor
Jeremy Strauss
Lizzie DeGröff
Shannon O'Leary

Trumpet

Matthew Brockman
Joseph Brozek
Matt Venora
Alex Miller
Stephen Gomez
Michael Stern
Armida Rivera
Reyes *

Trombone

Benjamin Albee
Dante Marrocco
Ben Sherman

Nick Jones

Euphonium

James Yoon
Matthew Della
Camera

Tuba

Luke Davey
Andrew Scatterburg

String Bass

Alex Toth
Abrey Feliccia*

Cello

Emily Doveala*
Theresa Landez*
Kelton Burnside*
Bryce Tempest*

Timpani

Tom Smith

Percussion

Corey Hilton
Derek Wohl
Benjamin Grant
Grace Asuncion
Daniel Syvret
Ken O'Rourke*+
Lillian Fu*+
Taylor Katanick*+
Jamie Kelly+

Piano

Mengdi Guo*+

Assistant

Conductors

Justin Cusick
Aaron Burgess

* denotes performer
in Ferran only
+ denotes
performer in Ito only