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Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

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Stephen Peterson

Frank Battisti

Heidi Gilbert

Kevin Zamborsky

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*“It is
my plan
to build
a school
of music
second
to none.”*

—William
Grant Egbert
(1867–1928)
Founder,
Ithaca
Conservatory
of Music

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA



ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Stephen Peterson, conductor

Frank Battisti, guest conductor

Heidi Gilbert, graduate conductor

Kevin Zamborsky, graduate conductor

Serenade in F, Op. 102 (1910)

Wilhelm Berger
(1861–1911)

Moderato

Scherzo

Menuett

Romanze

Finale

Theme and Variations, Op. 43a (1943)

Arnold Schoenberg
(1874–1951)

INTERMISSION

Shortcut Home (1998)

Dana Wilson
(b. 1946)

Heidi Gilbert, conductor

Vientos y Tangos (2002)

Michael Gandolfi
(b. 1956)

Frank Battisti, conductor

Marches from Symphony for Band (1952)

Morton Gould
(1913–1996)

Frank Battisti, conductor

Ford Hall

Wednesday, December 10, 2003

8:15 p.m.

Program Notes

Frank Battisti began his career in 1953 in the Ithaca City Public Schools. In 1955 he became Director of Bands at Ithaca High School, where he remained until 1967. While there he inaugurated the Ithaca High School Band Commissioning Works Project, which in only nine years commissioned twenty-four new works for band, many of which have become standard repertoire.

Battisti moved on to found the New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble, which he conducted for thirty years. His commitment to new music continued throughout his career; he is responsible for commissioning and premiering over fifty works for wind ensemble by composers such as Warren Benson, Leslie Bassett, John Harbison, Witold Lutoslawski, and Michael Colgrass.

Considered one of the foremost authorities on wind music in the world, Battisti contributes articles on wind ensemble/ band literature to professional journals on a regular basis. He is the co-author of Score Study for the Wind Band Conductor (1990) and author of The Twentieth Century American Wind Band/Ensemble (1995) and The Winds of Change (2002), and serves as a consulting editor for The Instrumentalist magazine.

Battisti's professional affiliations include the American Bandmasters Association (ABA), the Standard Award Panel of American Society for Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), and the Music Panel for the Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS). A past president of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), he also founded the National Wind Ensemble Conference, the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE), the Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble (MYWE), and the New England College Band Association (NECBA). He has received many awards and honors, including most recently the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic's Medal of Honor in 2001.

Battisti continues to be active guest conducting and working with young musicians. In 2001 the Boston University Tanglewood Institute established the "Frank L. Battisti Tanglewood Institute Conducting Residency," awarded each summer to a talented young wind ensemble conductor. In June of 2001 Ithaca High School instituted the "Frank L. Battisti Instrumental Music Award," presented each year to a band member who "possesses high musicianship, a desire for excellence, creativity and enthusiasm." The story of Battisti's high school band

program is told in Brian Norcross' 1993 book One Band that Took a Chance.

Wilhelm Berger, born in Boston in 1861, moved almost immediately back to his family's homeland of Germany, where his musical talents became apparent early on. After serving on staff as a composer, pianist, and conductor since 1888, he became a Professor at the Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory in 1903. That same year he was appointed Court Kapellmeister to the Duke of Saxony-Meiningen, whose court orchestra had established a formidable reputation under Hans von Bülow and its guest conductors, including Liszt, Brahms, Wagner, and Richard Strauss. He held this position until his death in 1911; Max Reger succeeded him.

A prolific composer, Berger left few orchestral works, concentrating on chamber and piano music. He also wrote numerous choral works and orchestrally accompanied lieder that stand alongside similar pieces by Hugo Wolf and Richard Strauss. Berger's music exhibits the passion and spiritual commitment of a late romantic and foreshadows later developments in music; however, his music was not innovative enough to compete with Debussy, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. Berger was not good at promoting his music, and his untimely death at fifty combined with the upheavals of World War I nearly concealed his music from the public view.

Berger wrote his *Wind Serenade in F major, Op. 102* in 1910 following a long illness and an operation. His last work, it was not performed until after his death, but was very well received. His treatment of the instruments is skillful and imaginative. Berger uses nearly the same instrumentation as did Richard Strauss for his Serenade and Suite; Berger merely omits the contrabassoon. In five movements, the piece is in the tradition of romantic wind writing but abandons the classical formal structures in favor of new, exciting changes of mood, key, and color. As in much of Strauss, the horns play an important role in Berger's Serenade, particularly in the dark and beautiful fourth movement, "Romanze." The manuscript is held in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

Arnold Schoenberg is remembered as a composer chiefly for his departure from tonality, first explored in his Second String Quartet, and his creation of and development of the twelve-tone technique. His early works, however, are romantic and tonal; the term "Post-Wagnerian Romanticism" is used to describe his music of this period, exemplified in works such as the *Gurre-Lieder*, which he began composing in 1900. In his latest period, called the "American Phase,"

he refined his twelve-tone technique and allowed tonal elements to exist within this style, in a way bringing his compositional style full circle.

The *Theme and Variations, Op. 43a* of 1943, although written merely eight years before Schoenberg's death, is a decidedly tonal piece in G minor. The seven variations are played without a break, and exhibit a mastery of compositional technique; a fact which Schoenberg himself claimed about the piece. The work was commissioned by G. Schirmer, Schoenberg's publisher, and the following correspondence from the composer details the conception of the piece:

"My dear friend, the late Carl Engel, then president of the G. Schirmer, Inc., had asked me frequently to write a piece for wind band. He complained that the great number of such bands had an important influence on the development of love for music in America, but unfortunately there are only a small number of good original compositions available, while for most of their playing they are limited to arrangements. A considerable part of these arrangements reveals a poor or at least a low taste; and besides they are not even well orchestrated . . . It is one of those works that one writes in order to enjoy one's own virtuosity and, in addition, to give a group of amateurs — in this case, wind bands — something better to play. I can assure you —and I think I can prove it — that as far as technique is concerned it is a masterpiece; and I know it is inspired. Not only because I cannot write even ten measures without inspiration, but I really wrote the piece with great pleasure."

The listener will note that while this piece was intended to be played by school bands, the difficulty of the piece is such that it is a challenge for the most advanced players. In the interest of having more performances, Schoenberg subsequently transcribed the piece for orchestra, making Op. 43b one of the few orchestral pieces that was originally conceived for winds.

Dana Wilson currently serves on the Ithaca College faculty as the Charles A. Dana professor of composition. His wind band awards include the Sudler International Composition Competition Prize and the American Bandmasters Association/Ostwald Composition Prize, and performances of his music are increasing throughout Australia, Europe, the Far East, and the United States.

Wilson began studying music at the age of six. He received a BA from Bowdoin College (1968), an MA from the University of Connecticut (1975), and a Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music (1982). In

addition to his work at Ithaca College, he is active as a jazz pianist, conductor, clinician, and author.

Honors Wilson has received include being named fellow at the Aspen Institute, the Society for Humanities at Cornell University, and the Yaddo artists' retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York. He has received a number of commissions from professional and educational ensembles, as well as numerous grants from music and arts organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the New York State Council for the Arts, Arts Midwest, and Meet the Composer.

Dana Wilson describes his *Shortcut Home* as "a rousing and rather elaborate fanfare that features each section of the ensemble. Drawing upon various jazz styles, the music proclaims and cascades, always driving towards the "home" of the final, C major chord." This piece can be heard on the recent recording of Dana Wilson's music by the Ithaca College Wind Ensemble, and will be one of the pieces performed later this year at the American Bandmasters Association Convention in Virginia.

Rock and jazz improvisation formed the basis for **Michael Gandolfi's** earliest musical involvement at age eight when he taught himself to play guitar. As he became increasingly proficient in improvisation he developed an interest in composition, and began formal study in his early teens. He went on to receive BM and MM degrees in composition from the New England Conservatory of Music, and did additional study as a fellow at the Yale Summer School of Music and Art, the Composers Conference, and the Tanglewood Music Center.

Gandolfi's awards include grants from the Fromm Foundation, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The Boston Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra are just a few of the leading ensembles that have performed Gandolfi's music.

About *Vientos y Tangos*, Michael Gandolfi says: "*Vientos y Tangos* (Winds and Tangos) was commissioned by The Frank L. Battisti 70th Birthday Commission Project and is dedicated to Frank Battisti in recognition of his immense contributions to the advancement of concert wind literature. It was Mr. Battisti's specific request that I write a tango for wind ensemble. In preparation for this piece, I devoted several months to the study and transcription of tangos from the early

style of Juan D'arienzo and the 'Tango Nuevo' style of Astor Piazzolla to the current trend of 'Disco/Techno Tango,' among others. After immersing myself in this listening experience, I simply allowed the most salient features of these various tangos to inform the direction of my work. The dynamic contour and the various instrumental combinations that I employ in the piece are all inspired by the traditional sounds of the bandoneon, violin, piano and contrabass.

"I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Battisti for his inspirational leadership as director of the New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble for over thirty years. I first heard Mr. Battisti's work when I was a student at NEC in the late 1970's. I was instantly moved by his high artistic standards, his ability to motivate young musicians, and the respect for composers, past and present, that he always eloquently expressed to his students."

The Frank L. Battisti 70th Birthday Commission Project, of which Ithaca College is a member, was initiated and coordinated by Frederick Harris, Jr. beginning in the spring of 2001, and has produced works by Kenneth Amis, Lior Navok, and Michael Weinstein in addition to this work by Michael Gandolfi.

Morton Gould was born in Richmond Hill, New York on December 10, 1913 and began a long and fruitful musical career at the age of four when he started piano lessons. His first published composition was at the age of six (called *Just Six*), and at eight he was awarded a one year scholarship to The Institute of Musical Art, which would later combine with The Juilliard School of Music. During his teen years he studied piano, theory, composition, and harmony with various teachers, and then for financial reasons had to drop out of high school. He began playing vaudeville shows and at the age of eighteen joined the musical staff at the Radio City Music Hall.

At the age of twenty-one Gould became the conductor and arranger for his own weekly program over the WOR Mutual network, for which he wrote many works which were later performed under the batons of such greats as Toscanini, Reiner, Ormandy, Solti, and others of their stature. Gould initially was not interested in composing for winds since his childhood memories of bands were of poor and out-of-tune playing. However, he accepted a series of conducting appearances with the University of Michigan Band in the early 1940s that changed his mind. From that point on Gould expanded his compositions to include works for band, and many of his pieces have become standards of the repertoire.

Gould believed that a composer "should be able to turn out a variety of things —short entertainment pieces as well as symphonies." He certainly lived by that philosophy. Besides the sixty-three arrangements and fourteen original compositions he wrote for band, during his lifetime he wrote two musicals, film and television scores, concertos, choral works and ballets, and composed or arranged over seventy-five pieces for orchestra. In 1995 he won the Pulitzer prize for *String Music*, which was premiered by the National Symphony.

Symphony for Band – West Point Symphony was written for the Sesquicentennial celebration of West Point by the request of Francis E. Resta, who was director of the West Point Academy Band. Richard Franko Goldman described the scoring as "brilliant; it ranks with the scores of Grainger as an outstanding example of original and imaginative treatment of band sonorities." The following description of the second movement is found in Program Notes for Band: "*Marches* is a brilliant but subtle paraphrase on marches and marching. The various tunes parade past in an array of embellishments and rhythmic variations. At the beginning of the movement, and in later sections as well, the wind instruments play figures which suggest typical snare drum rhythms. At one point a simulation of a fife and drum corps recalls the instrumentation of the original West Point Band. After numerous transformations of the principle marching motif, the work ends in a virtuoso coda of martial fanfares and flourishes."

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE
Stephen Peterson, conductor

Piccolo

Elaine Olschesky

Flute

Tiffany Carson

Jen Trimble *

Melissa Wierzbowski

Oboe

Noelle Drewes

Alex Hughes *

Tracy McLaughlin

E-flat Clarinet

Alex Hanessian

B-flat Clarinet

Eric Callahan

Will Cicola

Byron Ford *

Wolcott Humphrey

Amanda Kellogg

William Stevens

Bass Clarinet

Sarah Bennett

Bassoon

Katie Barker

Amanda Ginovsky*

Nicole Kosar

Alto Saxophone

Joel Diegert*

Allison Dromgold

Tenor Saxophone

Kevin Marshall

Baritone Saxophone

Timothy Rosenberg

Trumpet

Aaron Evens

Andy Hoesl

Jesse King*

Kristen Meyers

Jeremy Schlegel

Christopher Yee

Horn

Leah Jones

Carlie Kilgore

Tyler Ogilvie*

Liz Spang

Jenna Troiano

Trombone

Jason Macy

Sarah Paradis

Ryan Zowel*

Bass Trombone

Mark D. Walsh

Euphonium

Alan Faiola

Phil Giampietro

Tuba

Christian Carichner

Bryan Lewis

Timpani

Nick Galante

Percussion

Laura Bilodeau

Ian Craft*

Taryn Lott

Josh Oxford

Lee Treat

Double Bass

Brian Krauss

