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## Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Stephen G. Peterson

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*“It is  
r 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 G. Peterson, conductor  
Michael Galván and Richard Faria, clarinet soloists

Festive Overture, Op. 96 (1954)

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)  
transcribed by Donald Hunsberger

The Passing Bell

Warren Benson  
(b. 1924)

Polka Nation (1996)

Evan Chambers  
(b. 1963)

INTERMISSION

Serenade No. 12 KV 388 (1782)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

*Allegro*

Il Convegno (1857)

Amilcare Ponchielli  
(1834-1886)  
transcribed by Matthew Ludwig

Michael Galván and Richard Faria, clarinet soloists

Dance Movements (1997)

Philip Sparke  
(b. 1951)

*Ritmico*

*Molto vivo (for the Woodwinds)*

*Lento (for the Brass)*

*Molto Ritmico*

Ford Hall Auditorium  
Sunday, April 25, 1999  
8:15 p.m.



## PROGRAM NOTES

The Soviet culture of Shostakovich's time placed him under constant pressure to compose music representing governmental ideals regarding moral and social issues rather than the purely aesthetic aspects of music. With the end of World War II, the USSR tightened controls on ideology and artistic expression. In February, 1948, a number of prominent composers, including Shostakovich, were accused of representing "the formalist perversions and anti-democratic tendencies in music; namely the cult of atonality, dissonance, and disorder...infatuation with confused neurotic combinations which transform music into a cacophony!" Shostakovich admitted he tried to eradicate the pernicious elements in his music, but the reconstruction was not complete.

The decree of 1948 dealt a stunning blow to the creative life of Soviet music. For the next five years composers worked cautiously, avoiding offense to the party hierarchy. As a result, Shostakovich began to use two musical idioms: one more simplified and accessible to comply with the guidelines of the decree, the other more complex, and abstract to satisfy his own artistic standards.

*The Festive Overture* was written to commemorate the 37th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia and was first performed on November 6, 1954, at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. In it Shostakovich demonstrates one of his distinctive compositional talents—the ability to combine long, sustained, melodic lines with a pulsating rhythmic drive. Throughout the work, staccato rhythmic sections are set off by flowing lines and contrasting fanfares.

Mortality and human transience have inspired many musical works. *The Passing Bell* was commissioned by the Luther College Concert Band in memory of a former clarinetist who contracted Hodgkin's Disease which caused his death in 1968. Benson conducted the premier of the work in October, 1974.

The thematic material of *The Passing Bell* is taken from two hymns. The first, *Jesu Meine Zuversicht*, is a Lutheran chorale first published in 1653. The chorale is used in the Lutheran service of burial and at Easter. The second hymn is a Welsh hymn of faith entitled, *Merthyr Tydvil*, written by Joseph Perry (1841-1903). The work is conceived in three large sections and coda. The opening section unfolds slowly, beginning with staggered fortissimo entrances of the winds highlighted by an accented sixteenth dotted eighth note pattern supported by the

percussion. The introduction gradually increases in intensity before it dies away. The second section employs the Lutheran hymn tune first introduced by the flutes. The third section, using the Welsh hymn subtitled *Dies Irae*, is introduced by the clarinets, overlapping the ending of the first major section. The end of the third section employs both hymn tunes simultaneously. The piece ends with a powerful return to the introductory material.

Warren Benson received his bachelors and masters degrees in music from the University of Michigan. His previous teaching positions include instructor of percussion and composition at Ithaca College and director of bands and orchestras at Mars Hill College. As a Fulbright teacher, Benson taught general music in Greece. Since 1967, he has served on the faculty at the Eastman School of Music where he has been distinguished as a Kilbourne Professor, and as a University Mentor. Benson has distinguished himself as a composer of works for bands. Among his other compositions are *The Leaves are Falling*, *Shadow Wood*, *Symphony II (Lost Songs)*, *Wings*, and *The Solitary Dancer*.

In March of 1844, the polka craze hit Paris. There were reports of uncontrollable crowds dancing wildly in the streets across the city and throughout the night. 100 years later, in the United States, polka became our national obsession, a post-war emblem of pan-European ethnic identity and a sign of the immigrant's new place in American society. Polka kings were pop stars of stage and screen.

After that heyday, however, polka took on a pariah status, associated with ethnic slurs and provincial hokeyness, but the music went on, supported by dedicated fans in pockets across the country. Today Polka is one our most diverse regional inter-ethnic musics, from the Virgin Islands to Milwaukee, whether you're twirling in Texas, stepping in Chicago, bobbing in Buffalo, hopping in Hamtrammck, or reeling in Cleveland, whether you're Polish, Slovenian, German, Italian, Irish, Czech, Tex-Mex, or anything else, there is a polka style for you.

*Polka Nation* is a celebration of the centrifugal force that powers the polka, the explosive balance of tension and abandon that makes it ignite, burn and cook: that literally entrancing counterpoint of bouncing, whirling, and spinning that lives in the charged space surrounding the music and the dance. The composition was most directly inspired by the music of Brave Combo, a Denton Texas band who have, for years, lovingly captured and laid bare the raw nerve behind polka music's energy. This piece aspires to do the same thing, it's not so much a polka itself, but rather an attempt to evoke the essential wildness of being *inside* one. Sometimes crazed and maniacal, sometimes dark and edgy,



sometimes bursting with slapstick silliness, this piece, like the crowd at a polka party, often gets carried away. It sometimes spins out of control, becomes rowdy or sad, or collapses in exhaustion. But then, there's always another band after the break, ready to make their stab at sending the room hurtling towards a point somewhere between ecstatic lift-off and total chaos. This piece was written for H. Robert Reynolds and the Michigan Bands in celebration of their 100th anniversary year.

Evan Chambers (b. 1963, Alexandria, Louisiana) is Assistant Professor of Composition and Director of Electronic Music Studios at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. A traditional Irish fiddler as well as a composer, he appears frequently as a performer of his own works. He was twice awarded first prize in the Cincinnati Symphony National Composers' Competition, and his work has been recognized by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the International Luigi Russolo Competition, the Vienna Modern Masters Orchestral Competition, NACUSA, the American Composers Forum, and the Tampa Bay Composers Forum. Chambers graduated with highest honors from the University of Michigan, where he received a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music in Composition. He also holds a Bachelor of Music in Viola Performance from Bowling Green State University. His composition teachers include William Albright, Leslie Bassett, Nicholas Thorne, and Marilyn Shrude, with studies in electronic music with George Wilson and Burton Berman.

*Serenade No. 12 in C minor* K. 388 is one of two serenades for wind octet by Mozart which were written during his early years in Vienna. The earlier work, K. 375 in E-flat major, is crafted in a style more typical of conventional "Night Music" of the period. The Serenade in C Minor on the other hand seeks not to emulate the light-hearted and well defined functional restrictions of traditional serenade music. The rare choice of the dark, dramatic key of C minor would be enough to set it apart, however, Mozart's use of chromatic writing, pulsating inner parts, vigorous sforzandos and unorthodox phrase structure lift the work to a level out of accord with its social purpose, thereby existing as a means of expressing a more personal message. Mozart would later transcribe the work for string quartet (K. 406) in 1788, showing the esteem he himself held for this innovative composition.

Amilcare Ponchielli was born in Cremona, Italy, (120 miles southeast of Milan) in 1834. At the age of nine, he began musical studies at the Milan Conservatory of Music. Following his graduation from the Conservatory in 1854, he returned to Cremona to serve as a church organist and later became the conductor of the Cremona Municipal

Band. Ponchielli first began to compose at the age of seventeen, but did not achieve wide acclaim as a composer until the age of 42 when his opera *La Gioconda* was successfully produced in Milan in 1876.

Originally scored for two clarinets with band accompaniment, *Il Convegno* ("The Meeting") was written in 1868 during Ponchielli's tenure with the Cremona Municipal Band. The score indicates that the piece was specially written for his friends A. Peri and M. Sacchi, whom we assume were members of his band. Judging from the technical demands of the music, Messrs. Peri and Sacchi must have been accomplished virtuosos—especially considering the potential limitations of their instruments which were probably the six-keyed variety played by Cavallini during that period.

In the hands of capable clarinetists, *Il Convegno* is a delight to the audience and great fun for the players. The playful dovetailing between the two clarinet lines keeps the listener guessing which player is which . . . a real "spaghetti" piece!

Philip Sparke was born in London, England and studied composition, trumpet, and piano at the Royal College of Music. While he was at the college, he developed a growing interest in bands, and began writing for them at the urging of his composition professor, Philip Cannon. The year 1975 marked the composition of his first published work, *Concert Prelude*, and since then Sparke has been writing music for wind bands in Europe, America and the Pacific Rim.

*Dance Movements* was premiered at the Florida Music Educator's Association convention in January 1996 by the United States Air Force Band which commissioned the work. The composer writes: "The four movements are all dance-inspired, although no specific rhythms are used. The first has a Latin American feel and uses xylophone, cabasa, tambourine, and wood block to give local colour. The second Woodwind movement uses a tune that had been plaguing me for some time and is, I suppose, in the style of an English country dance. The Brass movement was composed without specific dance analogy, but I think it can be seen as a love duet in classical ballet. The fourth and longest movement has, I hope, cured me of a ten-year fascination, almost obsession, with the music of Leonard Bernstein and I will readily admit that it owes its existence to the fantastic dance music of West Side Story." All four movements of Sparke's tour de force for wind band are performed without pause, which increasingly draws the listener into the "world" of this work, and heightens the growing sense of anticipation as the piece builds to its dramatic and virtuosic finale.

# ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Stephen G. Peterson, conductor

## **Piccolo**

Joel M. Nolan\*

## **Flute**

Serena Cameron\*

Lisa Horton

Dara Kahkonen

## **Oboe**

Colin Bauer

Kristina L. Czerwiak\*

Stacy Reckert

## **Soprano Clarinet**

Jeffrey Bittner

## **Clarinet**

Lucas Christensen

Todd A. Hearn

Peter Norman

Natalie Noyes

Joleen Walas

John Waytena\*

## **Bass Clarinet**

Mickey Ireland

## **Bassoon**

Kristijan Bogdanovski

Eleanor Conley

Edward Montoya\*

## **Alto Saxophone**

Michelle Free

Todd Pray\*

## **Tenor Saxophone**

Joseph Tubiolo

## **Baritone Saxophone**

Therese Yagy

## **Trumpet**

William Bertram

Todd E. Jenkins\*

Chad Louden

John Lufburrow

Russell Posegate

Amanda Whitten

## **Horn**

Lindsey MacNab\*

Michael A. Mogensen

Alysia Nemeth

Deana Saada

## **Trombone**

David McCormick

Brian Zimmer\*

Phil Obado

## **Bass Trombone**

Jim Peer

## **Euphonium**

Katie Sims

Michael Stephenson\*

## **Tuba**

Mason Daffinee

Matt Wilson\*

## **Percussion**

David Boisvert

Tim Collins\*

David Mayotte

Sloane Treat

Tori Lillie

## **Timpani**

Anthony Calabrese

## **String Bass**

Michael Ward

## **Piano**

Russell Posegate

\*Denotes Principal