

SPIRIT OF AMERICA WINTER PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

The liveliest and most energetic unit in the band, the Winter Percussion ensemble includes members of Spirit of America Band aged 22 and under. Every year they embark on a new adventure that takes them all the way to the WGI Finals in Dayton, where they won gold in 2012 for their show "Spirit Fusion." Winter Percussion encourages these young musicians to reach the next level of excellence in music and marching skills, develop a sense of teamwork, and experience the joy of performance.

Jeremy Haig
Laura Haig
Jonathan Hale
Sarah Hale
John Jordan
Mary Jordan
Lindsey Kanaga
Rachel Pfeiffer
Alex Pugsley
Kirsti Pugsley
Amanda Schuman
Ashley Schuman
Katherine Tingley
Sharon Tingley
Christopher Vought

MECHANICS HALL, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

"The showpiece of a city where the arts thrive." That is how this handsomely restored nineteenth-century Hall was described by *Horizon* magazine. It was built before the Civil War by a group of artisans and tradesmen—the Worcester County Mechanics Association, and was for many years the favored place where people of the city gathered to hear authors like Thoreau, Dickens, Twain; politicians like Teddy Roosevelt; and world-class musicians like Caruso, Paderewski, Dvorak, and Rubenstein. Since its restoration in 1977 by the people of the city of Worcester, it is internationally regarded as one of the world's finest concert halls for its superb acoustics and inspirational beauty.

Celebration IN BRASS

1. Prelude on Finlandia (Hal Leonard/De Haske Publications) | James Curnow | 3:52
2. Spring (Eighth Note Publications) | David Marlatt | 5:09
3. Be Thou My Vision (Curnow Music Press, Inc.) | James Curnow | 2:32
4. Ceremonial Piece on Cwm Rhondda (Southern Music Company) | William Mac Davis | 2:51
5. Declamation on a Hymn Tune (Master Music Publications, Inc.) | Jack Stamp | 4:06
6. Easter Fanfare | Seagull Seven | 1:00
7. Benedictus (Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Ltd.) | Karl Jenkins | 3:22
from *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*
8. Fire & Ice | Seagull Seven, Percussion by Ian Hale | 2:53
9. Meditation—The New Covenant (Hal Leonard/De Haske Publications) | James Curnow | 5:34
10. Blaze | Seagull Seven, Percussion by Ian Hale | 3:44
11. Fanfare Prelude on "Lobe den Herren" (Hal Leonard/De Haske Publications) | James Curnow | 2:49
12. Pentecost Fanfare | Seagull Seven | 1:23
13. Variations on Down Ampney (Steve Sherrill Music) | Steven Sherrill | 5:32
14. Benediction (Tuba – Euphonium Press) | John Stevens | 4:08

Total Time: 49:55

Producer: Blanton Alspaugh / Sound Engineer: John Newton / Mastering Engineer: Mark Donahue
Musical Consultants: David Ohanian, Brass; Ian Hale, Percussion / Recorded at Mechanics Hall, Worcester, MA,
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GABRIEL V BRASS ENSEMBLE

Gabriel V offers the best in fanfare and solo brass works, presenting distinctive programs from classics of the Venetian School to contemporary works, as well as audience favorites such as elegant jazz and holiday fare. Gabriel V collaborates frequently with Gloria Dei Cantores choir, and has toured 23 countries in the UK, Europe, and Russia, and by invitation performed works by Gabrieli for the 900th anniversary celebration of Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice, Italy. In the U.S. they have performed in 49 cities from New York to San Francisco. Gabriel V has been featured in recordings with Gloria Dei Cantores, highlighting their extensive and exciting repertoire. This is Gabriel V's third solo recording. To learn more please visit www.gdaf.org.

Trumpet

Mark Albro
Sr. Rosemary Ingwersen
Joshua Kanaga
Peter McKendree
Paul Tingley
Br. Jacob Witter

Horn

Daniel Pfeiffer
Peter Shannon
Br. Joel Sweet
Sr. Marianne Wierzbinski

Trombone/Baritone

Matt Andre
Br. Mark Bushnell
Michael Hale
David Minster
James Pfeiffer
Kathryn Shannon
Br. Benedict Young

Tuba

Br. Abraham Henderson
Stephen Minster
Br. Christopher Swidrak

Percussion

Ian Hale
Br. Philip MacNeil
Amy Mitchell
Br. Stephen Velie

CELEBRATION IN BRASS GABRIEL V BRASS ENSEMBLE

The role of brass and percussion in worship goes back to ancient times. “Praise him with the sound of the trumpet!” and “Praise him with the loud clashing cymbals!” the Psalmist proclaims. Gabriel V picks up the theme of praise with *Celebration in Brass*. These instrumentalists aspire to enhance the worship through music, but also to “pass the torch” to future generations. The percussionists who played here are largely a group of dedicated young musicians ages 12 to 20. The joy of their work together resonates through this program, comprised largely of hymns and Gregorian chants, and reflective of praise by all generations. These age-old, text-based works receive new life in arrangements by twentieth-century composers.

The themes of unity and new life resound in James Curnow’s *Prelude on Finlandia*. Inspired by the “Finlandia Hymn” portion of Sibelius’s patriotic

symphonic poem, Curnow’s arrangement uses the entire brass family to portray the richness and strength of this work. Considering the work’s origin, and the steadfastness of the Finnish people in the face of adversity, it is no surprise that it has been adapted into so many hymns and anthems by diverse groups. “Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side” is perhaps the best-known version, translated by Jane Borthwick from the original German by Katharina von Schlegel.

This hymn is followed by David Marlatt’s *Spring: A New Beginning*. Hailing from Ontario, Canada, Marlatt is familiar with the dramatic transition from the frozen hibernation of winter to bursting, vibrant spring, and depicts that process in this three-part soundscape. “The Call to Spring” opens the work, with a fanfare from the trumpets, playful running notes, and a mariachi-style melody. “A Spring Rain” features the horn in a lyric section *accompanied*

by various “storm-like” sounds by the audience. “The Celebration of Spring” is just that: a delightful dance in 6/8 evoking life-giving cascades of water.

James Curnow has given another brass band arrangement of a beloved hymn in *Be Thou My Vision*. Both the text and melody have Irish roots. For the sixth-century poet St. Dallan Forgaill, nicknamed “little blind one,” vision was more than physical sight: it was the spiritual illumination that could only be gained by the gift of the High King himself. The tune “Slane” dates back to the eighth century, inspired by a moment of defiance from Saint Patrick at a pagan festival on Slane Hill. Patrick’s fiery conviction so impressed the king that he allowed Patrick to continue his missionary work.

Like Sibelius’s “Finlandia,” the Welsh hymn tune “Cwn Rhondda” (pronounced “koom ron-tha”) and its many accompanying texts have been appropriated for diverse occasions, from weddings for heads of

state to rugby matches. William Mac Davis’s *Ceremonial Piece* is based on John Hughes’s original tune, known to many as “God of grace and God of glory.” Mac Davis opens with a rousing fanfare of trumpets and low brass. The horns answer, lay down the opening melody, and give a sense of choral call and response. A more relaxed middle section combines the rest of the tune in the low brass with rhythmic accents from the trumpets and horns, and leads to a fiery culmination with elements of fanfare and melody combined.

Dr. Jack Stamp’s *Declamation on a Hymn Tune* celebrates the Easter hymn “Lasst uns erfreuen,” which many would recognize as “All creatures of our God and King.” Dr. Stamp uses brass and percussion to full effect, taking the listener through five keys with multiple tonal and rhythmic permutations, ending in a grand maestoso “Alleluia!”

Easter Fanfare is based on the Gregorian chant sequence in Mode I

Victimæ paschali laudes. As the chant proclaims Christ’s victory over death, this fanfare provides an excellent beginning to the Easter celebration. The chant tune prevails throughout, and builds to a triumphant climax.

Welsh composer Karl Jenkins wrote *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* in response to a commission by the UK’s Royal Armouries Museum, and dedicated it to the victims of Kosovo. Each movement of this anti-war piece chronicles humankind’s descent into war and its awful result. *The Benedictus* is perhaps the best-known movement from the work: its clarion voice calls the world to the possibility of peace. Seamlessly building from the opening in the lower brass to the final addition of the upper brass, all voices unite in the ultimate declamation of “Hosanna.”

In Seagull Seven’s *Fire and Ice* Gabriel V explores an elemental contest that occurs in nature, and in the heart of man. The piece opens and closes with fire: not just actual flame,

but the burning within to do good to our fellow man. The middle section is ice: vast landscapes of frozen tundra, but also the enduring desire to be faithful to those we love.

Curnow took his inspiration for *Meditation—The New Covenant* from two sources: the hymn “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds” with text by John Newton (the author of “Amazing Grace”), and from Hebrews Chapter 10: “Under this new covenant, we have been forgiven and made clean by Christ’s dying for us once and for all.” Curnow chose three of Newton’s verses and the two traditional tunes “French Dundee” and “St. Peter.” Using fragments of each tune with solo lines and grand, full ensemble statements, Curnow builds to Newton’s closing stanza, in which the poet looks forward to his reunion with God.

Blaze takes us again to Gregorian chant, taking its theme from the Pentecost introit *Spiritus Domini replevit* (“The Spirit of the Lord filled

the whole earth”). The piece opens with a mysterious, medieval quality, evoking a procession of knights on horseback with torches, riding on a noble mission. The next section is slower, with haunting yet beautiful interplay between the trumpet and French horn. A return to the main theme set to a livelier tempo in the third section seems to symbolize victory, and makes a climactic finish.

The hymn tune “Lobe den Herren” (“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”) first appeared in print as part of the German hymn tradition in the seventeenth-century and is now used in churches all over the world. Curnow’s arrangement *Fanfare Prelude* highlights the rich tune with brilliant motives, providing a majestic flourish of praise.

Two Gregorian chants inspired *Pentecost Fanfare*: the Introit *Spiritus Domini replevit* and the Hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. The rising melody of the Introit is expressed through the fanfare trumpets and trombones,

punctuated by the accompanying timpani. Set in the middle of that is the invocation hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

Steven Sherrill has written a unique setting of Ralph Vaughan Williams’s beloved tune “Down Ampney” for brass band. Sherrill’s *Variations on Down Ampney* expounds on the original hymn, named for the village of RVW’s birth, with the unique timbre of the brass band. The opening fanfare is followed by rich harmonies between baritones and solo trumpet. A haunting E-flat trumpet solo highlights the second verse, and the final verse concludes with virtuosic flair.

The program closes with John Stevens’s *Benediction*. Stevens is renowned for his series of tuba-euphonium quartets, and this marvelous original work includes a rare opportunity for the tubas to play solo melodic lines. Gabriel V offers this *Benediction* as a prayer that the vision of praise through the voices of brass and percussion may resound.