

BICENTENNIAL COMMISSIONS VOLUME III, PROGRAM NOTES

Celebration for a New Era

Sergeant First Class Douglas Richard's composition, *Celebration for a New Era* heralds in the new millennium with a work that captures the spirit and essence of West Point's timeless role in the history of our country. It is decidedly pictorial - the sights and sounds of life at the imposing fortress, early morning *Reveille*, the full detail of bugles and drums hammering away as the sun rises over the east edge of the Hudson River. Hundreds of cadets pour forth for the dawn of a new day - crisp uniforms, the flash of silver bugles, the swing of the drum major's mace and the precision of military drill as the "Long Gray Line" prepares to take on the challenges of leadership in a new era. This is the Soldier's life - order, structure and discipline. Sergeant First Class Richard's treatment of the traditional alma mater symbolizes the spirit of today's academy by conveying how contemporary ideas continue to grow from the foundations of tradition. The composer has taken these myriad visions and woven them into a musical tapestry that blends the sounds of ceremonial trumpets with the colors of the modern wind band.

Sergeant First Class Douglas Richard, chief arranger and composer with the U.S. Military Academy Band, has served at West Point since 1997. He attended the Peabody Conservatory of Music and graduated from Duquesne University. Prior to his current assignment, Richard served with the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, and also worked as a music copyist/arranger with the U.S. Army Band (Pershing's Own) in Washington, D.C. He has numerous original compositions to his credit and has written arrangements that span all genres.

Farewell to Gray

Donald Grantham's beautifully lyric *Farewell to Gray* is a descriptive work based on a phrase from the traditional West Point song *Army Blue*: "We'll bid farewell to Kaydet gray and don the Army blue." The title refers to that poignant moment in a cadet's life when he or she graduates, giving up the gray uniform in exchange for the dress blue of the regular Army - a moment of profound, conflicting emotions.

Donald Grantham is the recipient of numerous awards and prizes in composition, to include the Prix Lili Boulanger, Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship and first prize in the National Opera Association Competition. His wind ensemble music has been recognized by the National Band Association and the American Bandmaster's Association. In a citation given by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Mr. Grantham's music was praised for its "elegance, sensitivity, lucidity of thought, clarity of expression and fine lyricism."

In recent years, Grantham's works have been performed by such ensembles as the Cleveland Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony and the American Composer's Orchestra. Mr. Grantham is professor of composition at the University of Texas at Austin.

Three Pieces for American Band (set no. 3)

Three Pieces for American Band (set no. 3), by Timothy Broege, is a colorful, descriptive work based on three original southern shape-note songs: “Washington,” “Animation” and “Fiducia.” Each movement describes a geographic area of the United States, using the songs as compositional fabric. The first movement is in five brief sections: a sparkling introduction, a lighthearted jig, a sustained, layered transition and a calypso ending. The middle movement opens in the spirit of a Native American or African American melody. In this case, the elongated shape-note song provides the melody. The third movement is a playful look at the Great American West with wide open harmonies, and hoe down effects. Broege also pays tribute to the various wine-producing regions of the West and Northwest in this movement titled “Vineyards of the West.” A surprisingly brief but recognizable coda ends the work.

Timothy Broege received the Bachelor of Music with highest honors from Northwestern University, where he majored in composition and piano. He has taught in the Chicago and New Jersey public schools and currently serves as organist and choirmaster at First Presbyterian Church in his hometown of Belmar, New Jersey. Broege's compositions encompass works for large ensembles, songs, fantasias for solo instruments and pieces for school band. His music is published by Boosey and Hawkes, Manhattan Beach Music, Bourne, Dorn and Allaire Music.

The Contemplation of Bravery

Joseph Bertolozzi's *The Contemplation of Bravery* is a thoughtful, introspective portrait of the soldier's heart. Though not literally programmatic, the music expresses the essence of its title. The haunting voice of the French horn, with its long arching lines, evokes a slow-motion vision of the lonely soldier at a crucial moment of desperate decision while the rest of the ensemble surrounds the soloist with an atmospherically textured landscape.

At the work's premiere in March of 2001, Bertolozzi's pre-concert remarks mentioned that bravery is not only the province of soldiers, but also of police and firefighters. Who knew that six months later, on September 11, 2001, there would be a sadly practical need for music that honored such heroes.

Joseph Bertolozzi was educated at Vassar College and the Academia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. His works, which span all genres from chamber music to ballet, have been performed throughout the United States to critical acclaim.

An American Song

Alan Fletcher's *An American Song* is a collage that portrays the motto *e pluribus unum* by combining several dozen American tunes into an integrated whole. Fragments of hymns, spirituals, show tunes, jazz standards, country and western ballads, folk songs and classical compositions are set into the collage like thin translucent glazes, producing a musical surface that evokes the greatness and struggle inherent in the American identity, at times clearly and at times dimly, through a haze of memory and association. This kaleidoscopic whirl of traditional American tunes revolves around three verses of the beloved song "America the Beautiful." Countless references accompany familiar portions of the text even when the principal melody is not always heard. For instance, the oboe quotes Edward Mac Dowell's "To a Wild Rose" during the line "O beautiful, for heroes proved in liberating strife," serving as a musical garland laid on the heroes' graves. "Thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears" is accompanied by the clarinet playing "Body and Soul" "I feel so sad and lonely..." an all too familiar sentiment during recent years.

The work, which was written for conductor Frank Battisti on the occasion of his retirement from the New England Conservatory, was the winner of the United States Military Academy's bicentennial composition contest.

Alan Fletcher studied composition with Edward T. Cone and Milton Babbitt at Princeton University and with Robert Sessions at the Juilliard School of Music. He holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from Juilliard. He also attended the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University and has been a frequent fellow at the Mac Dowell Colony for artists in Michigan.

Fletcher was appointed head of the school of music at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon in June of 2001, after sixteen years on the faculty of New England Conservatory of Music, where he also served as provost and dean of the college. In 1997 he was chair of the Salzburg seminar Music for a New Millennium: The Classical Genre in Contemporary Society, which brought to Mozart's birthplace seventy distinguished musical leaders from around the world. Fletcher's music, which includes more than seventy works in all classical forms, is recorded on Albany Records.

To Keep Thine Honor Bright

To Keep Thine Honor Bright by Anne McGinty, is in four distinct parts. The first, entitled "Leadership and Teamwork," begins with trumpets and drums in a contrapuntal treatment of a fanfare that recurs throughout the entire work. This theme is eventually joined by a fragment of the West Point "Alma Mater" which then leads into the lyric middle section of the work - "The Stalwart Soldier." The third section, entitled "Practical Joker," is a cleverly written treatment of the "Alma Mater" replete with hand clapping and agitated dance rhythms. The work ends with a look back at the opening regal fanfare.

Anne McGinty is one of today's most prolific composers in the field of concert band literature. Her writing spans every skill level from elementary to college and her works have been performed by bands all over the United States. Ms. McGinty received her bachelor's and masters degrees in Music from Duquesne University, where she studied flute with Bernard Goldberg and composition with Joseph Wilcox Jenkins.

Reflections on the Hudson

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's descriptive work was conceived while the composer sat on a park bench over looking the Hudson River in Manhattan. It depicts both inner, personal reflections as well as the actual reflections in the water. It is thoughtful, poetic and colorful in its musical description of the beautiful river valley and Ms. Deussen uses all the effective tone colors of the modern wind band in this work. From its very source in northern New York State, the moving, sparkling water gently passes the great historic cities along its path - Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie - rounding that great bend in the river, West Point, before it moves on out to New York City and beyond.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen is a prominent San Francisco Bay area composer and champion of accessible contemporary music. She has received commissions from numerous ensembles and soloists, to include the Oakland Chamber Orchestra, the Baton Rouge and Augustana concert bands, the Santa Clara Chorale and the Gabrielli Brass.

West Point Bicentennial March

Larry Daehn grew up on a farm in Rosendale, Wisconsin. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh and a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin at Platteville. His teaching career, which included instrumental, vocal, and classroom music, spanned 35 years. Mr. Daehn directed the New Glarus High School band for 27 of those years. Under his direction this ensemble won several state and national honors, including special commendations from the governor of Wisconsin and the state legislature.

Mr. Daehn was selected for the prestigious Leaders of American Education in 1971, and was named Wisconsin's outstanding band director by Phi Beta Mu fraternity in 1988. Since his retirement from teaching in 1997, Mr. Daehn has been in demand as a guest conductor and clinician. He has received numerous commissions, and his compositions and arrangements number more than 100 works.

Sergeant Major Joël Evans