

University of St. Thomas Department of Music presents

# **UST BANDS IN CONCERT**

**UST Symphonic Band**  
Dr. Douglas Orzolek, conductor

**Symphonic Wind Ensemble**  
Dr. Matthew George, conductor

Featuring the world premier performance of  
**Concertino**  
by Ralph Hultgren

Also featuring music of Barber, Dello Joio, Gorb, and Grainger

**Friday, May 6**  
**8 p.m.**

O'Shaughnessy Auditorium  
St. Catherine University



UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS  
MINNESOTA

College of Arts and Sciences

Barber wrote his *Commando March* shortly after being enlisted in the United States Army during the Second World War. The work was completed in February 1943 and was premiered on May 23 of that year by the Army Air Force Tactical Training Command Band in Convention Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey, most likely with the composer conducting. The critic Fredric V. Grunfeld writing in *High Fidelity* magazine described the march as "an old-fashioned quickstep sporting a crew cut," and the work received many performances in the final years of the war. Barber made a transcription of the march for full orchestra, which was premiered by Serge Koussevitzky leading the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall in Boston on October 29, 1943.

## Short Pause

## SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

*Colonial Song*

Percy Aldridge Grainger

Percy Grainger initially wrote *Colonial Song* in 1911 as a piano piece as a gift to his mother, Rose. Of his piece, Grainger wrote that it was "an attempt to write a melody as typical of the Australian countryside as Stephen Foster's exquisite songs are typical of rural America." Although the piece seems to have been intended as part of a series of "Sentimentals," Grainger never wrote any other pieces in this series. Unlike many of Grainger's other compositions, the melodies of *Colonial Song* are not based on folk song, but are original melodies. Early reception of *Colonial Song* was not positive. Fellow composer Henry Balfour Gardiner disliked the piece, as did critics. Upon hearing the piece in 1914, Sir Thomas Beecham wrote: "My dear Grainger, you have achieved the almost impossible! You have written the worst piece of modern times." However, *Colonial Song* was received more positively in America. During his service in the United States Army, Grainger re-worked the piece for military band. Since that time, *Colonial Song* has worked its way into the wind band repertoire as a staple composition and is played and recorded regularly throughout the world.

*Concertino for Wind Orchestra*

Ralph Hultgren

1. Con Forzo
2. Semplice
3. Con Brio

\*\*\*World Premierie\*\*\*

Ralph Hultgren, guest conductor

My endeavor with *Concertino* was to write a work that had a feature for each section of the wind orchestra only with a finale embracing them all. What developed was a work that featured brass and percussion, in the main, to begin, woodwind next and then everyone in a flurry at the end. What I have written is less programmatic than my usual output and that was part of my aim. I also wanted to write a work that gave time for the players to focus on making music and not scramble to acquit all the notes. My success in all these areas is best decided by you, the listener, and my dear friend Matthew George and his fine young musicians.

The first movement, *Con Forza*, is about power. It is not about aggression but about potency. The drums are foreboding, like parade ground drums, and not marching band drums. The brass themes resonate with power - loudness is not the demand but power is. The woodwinds spurt out flourishes, outline the brass force, giving energy to the lines of power presented.

*Semplice*, movement two, is about simplicity in melody; the melodic material is never fast; it simply floats and glides around gently. Flute in its lowest register is a delight to me. It has a quality very close to the voice, I think. This movement is like chamber music and the brass and percussion just add occasional depth and fullness. Mainly it is about woodwind with a dash of piano and percussion -- just a hint though.

Finally, movement three, *Con Brio* – with vigor indeed! Here the ensemble join forces to present ideas, dispute outcomes, decide direction and mull over previous thoughts. The melodic material is connected solidly to the music of the previous two movements. The melody that is present in oboe midway through the movement is a variation of the melody in the opening flute line of the second movement, but dressed more vibrantly and singing with more joy – less pensive, in fact. The melody at the end that starts in the horns is from movement one – power and potency returns to dominate but not to crush. This is energy – vigor – and flashes of color interspersed with jabs of light and dark.

It is a great privilege to write for the musicians of St Thomas, and a great joy! I hope you enjoy the work for it is a privilege also to write for you! – Ralph Hultgren, May, 2011

Ralph Hultgren resides in Newmarket, Queensland, with his wife Julie and two of his five children. His professional music career has spanned a number of decades and includes work as a trumpet player, composer, conductor and teacher.

Mr Hultgren is currently Head of Open Conservatorium at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University where he provides academic and artistic leadership to the Young Conservatorium, conducts the Queensland Conservatorium Wind Orchestra, and lectures in conducting and instrumental music education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Mr Hultgren's conducting credits include the direction of musicals, operettas, studio recordings for radio, television and disc, and the concert stage. He has premiered a number of his own works in Australian and internationally and conducted widely across Australia, the Asia Pacific region and the United States of America.

Mr Hultgren is a founding member of the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors' Association, and a member of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles. He has lead ABODA as national president and twice as state president and was awarded life membership of ABODA in 1998. In 2000 he became the recipient of the *Citation of Excellence*, the Australian Band & Orchestra Directors' Association's highest honour. He is also the recipient of the 2005 *Midwest Clinic International Award* presented by the Board of Directors of the Midwest Clinic in recognition of his international contributions to music education. In 2009 Mr Hultgren was honoured by being made 'Patron of the Maryborough Music Conference', Australia's largest music education event. That honour is the most prestigious accolade given by Education Queensland for significant contributions to music education in the state.

Since commencing his composition life he has written works that span the broad spectrum of performance, from educational and amateur performing groups to the professional studio and stage. Outside of his musical endeavours, Mr Hultgren is an avid reader and the leader of his church Men's Fellowship.

