

Wind Symphony Concert

April 26, 2024

Conductors, Guest Composer, and Program Notes



Robert Pippin is the Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of Music at Southwestern Oklahoma State University where he directs the Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, “The Pride of the Great Southwest” marching band, and the “Wild Dawgs” pep band. In addition to ensemble directing, he teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting and music education courses.

Dr. Pippin was the Dennis C. Dau Professor of Instrumental Music and Assistant Professor of Low Brass and Music Education at Northwest Missouri State University and was Director of The Johns Hopkins University Wind Ensemble in Baltimore, Maryland.

Robert completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting at the Peabody Conservatory, studying with Harlan Parker. He earned a Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music in Conducting from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado where he studied conducting with J. Steven Moore, Wilfred Schwartz, Michael Schaff, David Shaner, and Lee Egbert, and studied low brass with Robert Brewer.

Before attending Peabody, Robert was a high school band director in Colorado, where he developed comprehensive curriculums in concert bands, jazz ensembles, athletic bands, and chamber music. In addition to teaching, Robert was an active performer in Colorado and Wyoming, playing trombone as a tenured member of the Fort Collins Symphony, and as a freelance artist regularly performing classical, jazz, pop, and chamber music.

Robert has been a performer, adjudicator, and clinician with bands, orchestras, and jazz ensembles in Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, Hawai’i, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Florida and Idaho, as well as presenting clinics at the College Band Directors National Association Southwest Division Conference, Hawai’i University International Conferences, NACWPI National Convention, College Music Society Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regional Conference, Missouri, Iowa, and Hawai’i Music Educators Association Inservice/Workshop Conferences, and the Colorado Bandmasters Association Convention.



Todd Estrada is a graduate student at Southwestern Oklahoma State University studying Instrumental Music Education. Todd received his Bachelors in Instrumental Music Education and Euphonium Performance from Southwestern Oklahoma State University where he was an active performer and conductor for numerous Brass Ensembles, Jazz “B”, Wind Symphony and SWOSU Pep Bands. In the summer he stays around Weatherford working for the SWOSU Music Camps as the Equipment Manager and finding ways to improve his means as an educator. Prior to returning to SWOSU, Todd taught in the Oklahoma education system, teaching k-12 music and band. His primary instructors include Dr. Robert Pippin and Mr. Manny Colburn with prior studies from Dr. Philip Martinson and Dr. Matthew Mireles.



Benjamin N. Brody is a music composition major at The University of Akron in Ohio. His music has been performed by ensembles such as the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, The Southwestern Oklahoma State University Wind Symphony, The University of Akron Wind Symphony, The Ohio State University Middle School Concert Band Academy as well various middle and high schools in Ohio. While at Akron, Brody has performed with the University of Akron Symphony Band, Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble and Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble. Brody’s senior capstone was an examination of the commissioning process, following the experience beginning to end with composer David Gillingham. Upcoming performances include performances by The University of Akron Symphony Band and various performers at the 2024 Mid West Regional Tuba Euphonium Conference at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Brody has studied composition with Robert Brownlow, James Wilding and Nicole Piunno. When not composing, Brody enjoys watching classic movies and hiking.

Program Notes

American Overture for Band

This work was composed for the United States Army Field Band while the composer was on the arranging staff for the group.

The work was dedicated to the Army Field Band’s conductor, Chester E. Whiting. It was written in a neomodern style, being flavored strongly with both Lydian and Mixolydian modes. Its musical architecture is a very free adaptation of sonata form. The musical material borders on the folk tune idiom although there are no direct quotes from any folk tunes. The work calls for near-virtuoso playing by several sections, especially the French horns, and is a favorite of advanced

high school and university bands. Although *American Overture* was Jenkins' first band piece, it remains his most successful work and, in his words, he is "hard pressed to duplicate its success."

-Program note from Program Notes for Band

National Emblem

Edwin Eugene Bagley was an American composer, most famous for composing marches, and in recent note one of the United States official marches, National Emblem. The overall American aspect can be heard in this march from the tune of the Star Spangled Banner to the trio section used by the U.S. military as ceremonial music when presenting and retiring the colors, bringing in officials, and more. The National Emblem March by Edwin Bagley is a timeless classic that has been a staple in concert band repertoire since its composition in 1902.

-Program note by Todd Estrada

An American Elegy

An American Elegy is, above all, an expression of hope. It was composed in memory of those who lost their lives at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999, and to honor the survivors. It is offered as a tribute to their great strength and courage in the face of a terrible tragedy. I hope the work can also serve as one reminder of how fragile and precious life is and how intimately connected we all are as human beings.

I was moved and honored by this commission invitation, and deeply inspired by the circumstances surrounding it. Rarely has a work revealed itself to me with such powerful speed and clarity. The first eight bars of the main melody came to me fully formed in a dream. Virtually every element of the work was discovered within the span of about two weeks. The remainder of my time was spent refining, developing, and orchestrating.

The work begins at the bottom of the ensemble's register and ascends gradually to a heartfelt cry of hope. The main theme that follows, stated by the horns, reveals a more lyrical, serene side of the piece. A second theme, based on a simple repeated harmonic pattern, suggests yet another, more poignant mood. These three moods - hope, serenity, and sadness - become intertwined throughout the work, defining its complex expressive character. A four-part canon builds to a climactic quotation of the Columbine *Alma Mater*. The music recedes, and an offstage trumpeter is heard, suggesting a celestial voice - a heavenly message. The full ensemble returns with a final, exalted statement of the main theme.

-Program note by Frank Ticheli

Perches in the Soul

Ever since I started writing, I have wanted to write a symphony. There is something about writing a long form work that I have always wanted to do. I met Robert Pippin at the 2022 Midwest Clinic in line for registration. We only talked for a short time in line at registration but we talked the entire time on the plane ride back from the conference. I had the privilege of getting to know Robert and to show him some of my works. At the end of the flight, my gut was telling me to ask him if he would be interested in a larger scale piece for him and his ensemble,

the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Wind Symphony. He agreed, and to this day I am forever grateful for this opportunity.

When I decided that I wanted to write a symphony for this work, I knew immediately what the concept would be. I always thought that my first symphony would have been a dark piece, but I had come off of multiple darker pieces and I wanted to write something brighter and more joyous. I also knew that I wanted my symphony to be a statement of some kind, as I spent so much time writing a work that would be such a significant work of my repertoire. There was only one idea that would fit this work: a piece of thanks. In the past few years, we seem to have declared a war against teachers. We seem to take our teachers for granted and villainize them, which is distressing with how important they are for the future of our society. I wanted to write a piece of appreciation and thanks to those teachers, but especially four teachers that helped me through the hard times and some of the most important people in my life. This piece is not programmatic in nature, but rather a symphony with the movements dedicated to people and the titles attempting to fit a traditional symphony structure to make the piece whole and connected. The work is titled *Perches in the Soul*, based on the Emily Dickinson poem titled "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul," for how all of these teachers have influenced me and how teachers influence their students for their entire lives.

I. Serendipity: You Turned My Wailing Into Dancing

The first teacher I wanted to thank was my economics teacher in high school. This man was the first person who figured out about some of my mental health issues. We would meet every few weeks to just talk and help deal with some of my mental issues. Since he was the first one to help me navigate my mental health struggles, it made sense that he would be whom the first movement was for. He was into dancing, so it felt right to make the first movement a tango. Thank you, Sean, and for that day in economics when we first started to talk. It was serendipity.

II. Pandemonium: As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Draw Flame

This movement is for my jazz band teacher, who was also the person that started me on tuba in sixth grade. This is not a "jazzy" movement, but rather a lively scherzo with intensity. It is titled pandemonium for the chaotic nature of the movement and all of the interjections and rhythmic intensity of the work. This movement is inspired by Kelly, as it has a hint of sass and is written to be performed in the way she told us how to swing: obnoxiously and in your face. Thank you, Kelly, for being the first to instill a love for music and for starting me on this journey.

III. Catharsis: And Twenty Caged Nightingales Do Sing

Though I did not have him as a teacher in school, Jeff has become a mentor and teacher since I graduated. The outer sections of this movement are lyrical in nature, which were Jeff's favorite pieces to program with his ensembles. The lyrical sections are complemented with a chaotic middle section, as if it is the release of tension during catharsis. Thank you, Jeff, for your guidance and encouragement for someone that was never your "student."

IV. Apotheosis: When You Wish Upon a Star

The final movement is dedicated to my high school concert band director, Rob. This movement is based on the main melody of the entire symphony (which is heard at the beginning of the first movement and in the middle section of the third). This movement is meant to be a celebration of thanks for all of these teachers, but especially Rob. This movement features a saxophone quartet (saxophone is Rob's primary instrument) while also attempting to be minimalist with material of rhythmic intensity and metallic percussion. Thank you Rob for showing me what a concert band is meant to be and being one of the people helping to push me into this field of music and composition.

-Program note by Benjamin N. Brody

In Living Color

2020 brought the world to a pause. With the global pandemic of COVID-19, so many of life's simple joys were taken, including the opportunity to perform music.

To me, music is one of the greatest means of communication. When it was taken away, the language of music became foreign- and for some, a passion for the subject disappeared. Now, as the world slowly takes its turn again, a love for music has grown- through separation, we grew stronger.

I wrote *In Living Color* as an ode for live music, especially music performed on the wind band stage. The piece offers a kaleidoscope of colors and energy from modern jazz artists such as Snarky Puppy, American Boy singer Estelle, and takes inspiration from George Gershwin.

Please help me celebrate live and all the small things that lead to big things with *In Living Color*.

-Program note by Katahj Copley