

The *Marble and Brass* series celebrates
Beinecke Library's fiftieth anniversary
May 8, 2013, 5:15 pm
Beinecke Plaza

www.yale.edu/brass
brass@yale.edu

Ensemble

Brass

Drew Mazurek, trumpet
Olivia Malin, trumpet
Junius Johnson, french horn
Jennifer Griggs, trombone
Jason Arnold, tuba
John Ehrenburg, percussion



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William Tell Overture (1829)

Gioacchino Rossini, arr. Keith Snell

First Suite in E-flat for Military Band, op. 28a (1909)

Gustav Holst, arr. Geoffrey Bergler

I. CHACONNE

II. INTERMEZZO

III. MARCH

Second Suite in F for Military Band, op. 28b (1911)

Gustav Holst, arr. David Sabourin

I. MARCH

II. SONG WITHOUT WORDS

III. SONG OF THE BLACKSMITH

IV. FANTASIA ON THE DARGASON

Intermission

English Folk Song Suite (1923)

Ralph Vaughn Williams, arr. Jari Villanueva

I. MARCH: SEVENTEEN COME SUNDAY

II. INTERMEZZO: MY BONNY BOY

III. MARCH: FOLK SONGS FROM SOMERSET

"Ol' Man River" from Showboat (1927)

Jerome Kern

Stardust (1927)

Hoagy Carmichael & Mitchell Parrish, arr. Jack Gale

**Three Sketches on a Southern Hymn Tune,
second movement (1981)**

Elam Sprenkle

Copland Portrait (1985)

Aaron Copland, arr. Scott Sutherland

About Brass

Since 1999 *Brass* has brought its particular brand of creative and innovative programming to Yale and the greater New Haven area. Originally born out of love for the wide variety of performance capabilities of brass instruments, the group has always been characterized by a playful levity which dances around the serious virtuosity of their performances.

From its inaugural concert on December 2, 1999, modestly titled “*Brass: Five Guys in Concert*,” the ensemble has demonstrated a commitment to crafting performances that take audiences on a journey through the myriad tonal colors and moods possible on brass instruments. Each of *Brass*’s nearly fifty concerts has explored this vast range in its own way. It has become part of their passion in programming to utilize these different colors to tell a story through the narrative of a single performance.

Brass has partnered with many other organizations and ensembles through the years, including the Yale Concert Band, the Saybrook College Orchestra, the Opera Theatre of Yale College, the Yale Glee Club, Mighty Purple, and the Brubeck brothers. These partnerships are an expression of their firm commitment to camaraderie in the effort of making music, and to the accessibility of music for all ages and tastes. This is reflected in the great variety of music *Brass* has played through the years as well as in *Brass*’s commitment to fostering new compositions for the brass quintet repertoire, from both student and professional composers.

The heart of every *Brass* season is the *Marble and Brass* series. Now in their 13th year, these concerts are the result of a fruitful partnership with the Beinecke Library. So fundamental is this series to the identity of *Brass* that it considers the Beinecke its home performing space. The season turns around the two concerts of the *Marble and Brass* series each year, which are the focus of much of the ensemble’s creative efforts.

The highest performance standards and a simple joy in music: these are the things that, for *Brass*, make serious music serious fun.

Program Notes
Junius Johnson

Growing out of the use of wind instruments in warfare, bands date back to at least the 13th century in the Ottoman Empire. In Europe, military bands became fashionable in the 18th century, when they were often called upon not only for military purposes, but for entertainment in royal courts. Influenced by contact with Turkish troops, these bands began to include percussion instruments, which then had to be balanced by greater numbers of woodwinds.

In the 19th century, the band repertoire was still largely limited to marches and the occasional transcription of orchestral works: there was no real work being done to compose new pieces for such groups. Gustav Holst changed all that in the early years of the 20th century with his First Suite. Holst's new compositions for wind band inspired a host of other composers, largely from the English speaking world, among them Percy Grainger and Ralph Vaughn Williams.

This new composition activity freed the wind band from its necessary connection to the military. Suddenly it became possible to imagine the wind band as a symphonic ensemble in its own right. More and more civilian bands began to appear, and the movement had grown so large by the 1940s that the University and College Band Conductors Conference was founded in 1941 (to be renamed the College Band Directors' National Association in 1947).

When Frederick Fennell founded the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1952, the status of bands as their own legitimate ensembles was finally consummated. The wind ensemble, as opposed to a concert or symphonic band, had only one player per part and focused on the performance of new works written for wind band, not on orchestral transcriptions. There was therefore a greater emphasis on virtuosity and musicianship from each member of the ensemble, creating a more dynamic and collaborative venue for musical expression.

So dominant has the band become that most children who play wind instruments have played in a band and not in an orchestra. Through the years, bands have helped to popularize classical music, since they often were quicker to embrace outdoor concerts and non-traditional venues than their orchestral counterparts. They have become a deep part of the musical heritage of our country, and particularly of our region, which has been the home to many outstanding bands and band composers.

The music on this concert reflects the full versatility of the wind band, from its early military uses to its fascination with orchestral transcription, and onward to the important new pieces that helped to establish it in its own right. Our journey this afternoon is a historical one, which will serve as a sort of timeline for the progress of the ensemble through the years. As we approach the present day, we will even hear a piece not written for band at all, but composed for our type of ensemble, the brass quintet. For *Brass* is also a descendant of the band. And so, in a way, it is our own history which we tell here.

**William Tell
Overture (1829),
Gioacchino Rossini**

As a composer of operas, Rossini's industry was impressive. Between 1806 and 1829 he composed 39 operas, of which *William Tell* is the last. The piece is quite long for an overture, consisting of four parts and developing over about 12 minutes of music. We will be playing only the final and most famous of these four sections, the *March of the Swiss Soldiers*. This section foreshadows the events of the 4th act of the opera, when the Swiss soldiers are finally victorious in freeing their homeland from the Austrians.

This overture was made famous in American popular culture as the theme for both the radio and TV versions of *The Lone Ranger*. It has also been used by both Disney and Looney Tunes cartoons, and Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. David Wondrich's description of the piece as a "frequent target of plunder by brass bands in the years during which they dominated the American musical landscape" makes it a doubly fitting way for us to begin our concert, as we honor these bands and at the same time plunder their wealth for our own ensemble.

**First Suite
in E-flat for
Military Band,
op. 28a (1909),
Gustav Holst**

It is unknown why Gustav Holst, who at the time was making steady progress toward establishing himself as a serious composer and music educator, turned to writing for the band. Some have speculated that the works came out of his dissatisfaction with the music that he, as a trombonist, was often forced to play in wind band. Whatever his reasons, it was a momentous choice for the history of bands. This masterpiece is, in a real sense, the reason we have everything else. To this day, it remains one of the most performed works of the band repertoire.

The piece is divided into three movements. The first, the "Chaconne," is an example of a musical form popular in the Baroque period. The chaconne was used as a vehicle for the variation of a short theme on a repeated harmonic progression: it thus offered high recognizability and broad room for variation, even improvisation. Holst's chaconne is based on an 8-measure melody that repeats 16 times throughout the piece. The composer adds harmonic interest with minor versions of the theme and by passing the melody across

different solo instruments, even outlining the melody percussively over a bed of sweeping 16th notes. It all comes together in a booming climax.

The intermezzo, light in character, is a meditative exploration of the tonal variety possible within the wind band setting. This poses special challenges for our ensemble, considering how much more limited it is in size. Our ability to craft different tonalities with our instruments will be sorely tested.

The final movement is a march, which is, of course, the traditional idiom for wind band. It contains two separate melodies, which eventually merge in a simultaneous recapitulation before the rush to a raucous *ffff* ending.

**Second Suite in F
for Military Band,
op. 28b (1911),
Gustav Holst**

Holst's second great composition for band, written just two years after the first, is longer and perhaps more difficult than its counterpart. The piece makes extensive use of English folk material across its four movements. In this way it is the spiritual ancestor of Vaughn Williams's "English Folk Song Suite," which we will present next.

The first movement is a march. After an initial melody drawn from "Glorishears," a traditional morris-dance, the work moves into "Swansea Town," introduced in the original orchestration by the euphonium (in our version, presented by the trombone). This melody dominates until the trio, which modulates and changes meter to 6/8 for the tune "Claudy Banks." The movement ends *da capo*.

The second movement is a mournful version of "I'll Love My Love," a song about a maid driven mad by grief when her beloved is sent to sea by her parents to prevent their marriage. The mournful maiden's sighs are heard in the repeated falling figure, most prominently displayed in the horn in our arrangement.

The third movement, which introduces the tune "A Blacksmith Courted Me," is characterized by the displacement of the melodic material from the downbeat to the offbeat. In midst of the piece, the missing downbeats come to be supplied by the sound of the blacksmith's anvil, which accompany the melody to the conclusion.

The final movement plays with the folk melody “Dargason,” a lively 6/8 tune that is a form of jig. The dargason was a popular English dance tune, included in dancing books as early as the 17th century. Once the melody has been well established, Holst introduces a second popular tune, “Greensleeves.” Unfolding in a stately, almost mournful 3/4, it interweaves with the ongoing dargason theme with increasing animosity. The piece ends in the extreme of the band’s range, with the tuba and piccolo (here tuba and trumpet), punctuated by a final note from all the instruments.

**English Folk
Song Suite (1923),
Ralph Vaughn
Williams**

Ralph Vaughn Williams devoted his life to the study of English folk song material. His music self-consciously rejected the influence of romantic music in favor of Elizabethan, Jacobean, and of course, folk music. He was after a style that would reflect the character of the English people. Over his lifetime, he collected more than 800 folk songs and used them to great effect in his compositions

This suite makes use of three of those songs. The first movement, “Seventeen Come Sunday,” is actually composed of three tunes: the title tune is followed by “Pretty Caroline,” a more lyrical melody presented here by the trumpet (originally oboe). “Dives and Lazarus” is the third theme, a lively 6/8 tune that we will trade between the trumpets and the horn. “Pretty Caroline” returns immediately after, and the movement concludes with a *da capo* of the first tune.

The Intermezzo is a simple movement that begins with “My Bonny Boy” in the trumpet. The tune then moves to the horn. The words for the original folk song are the complaint of a maiden deeply in love with a boy who loves another girl. The boy sails off to sea, and our maiden lets him go: she is willing that he be another’s love, and will move on. The song “My Bonny Lies over the Ocean” could be read as the lament of the other maiden, the one the boy loves, as he sails out at sea.

The spell of this reverie of longing gives way to the English waltz “Green Bushes” in the second half of the movement, which concludes with a tense and incomplete statement of the original theme.

The final movement centers around four songs from Somerset. The first, “Blow Away the Morning Dew,” is presented in the trumpet. This tune gives way to the second, “High Germany,” played by the horn and trombone in our version. The original melody returns, leading to a climax which leads straight into the trio. In spite of the dramatic change to the trio, with its new key and time signature, the third melody, “The Trees So High,” is more subdued and reflective. This soon gives way, however, to a triumphant fourth melody, “John Barleycom.” The trio happens twice, and then the piece returns to the first two tunes in a *da capo* which brings the entire suite to a close.

**“Ol’ Man River”
from Showboat
(1927), Jerome
Kern**

One feature of band concerts is that they often stray into the musical genre known, perhaps unhelpfully, as “pops.” In the early days of the symphonic band, this usually consisted of music drawn from Broadway shows. The next phase of our concert mimics that trend.

Showboat was premiered by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II in 1927. The musical follows the lives of the performers, stagehands, and dock workers on the *Cotton Blossom*, a Mississippi River showboat, over forty years, from 1887 to 1927. This provides a backdrop to explore issues of racism and love. The show was groundbreaking, combining the type of spectacle Broadway was not yet famous for with a seriousness that was also unusual in the musical theater of the time. The music was brilliant, and the show was a big hit. There were not yet awards for Broadway shows, so *Showboat* had to wait for a later revival to receive its long overdue Tony (1995).

The most famous number from the show is “Ol’ Man River,” sung by Joe, an African-American dockworker. The song is about the powerful Mississippi, which flows along its path heedless of the struggles of those who ride it for a living, or the dangers it puts in their way. Repeated throughout the show, the song provides a running commentary on the action: whatever has just happened on stage, the river will continue to flow toward the sea, life will continue on its inexorable march.

The #1 hit version of “Ol’ Man River,” recorded by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in 1928 with Bing Crosby, was fast and upbeat, which was not the original musical intention and was also at odds with the words of the song. While we respect the Nietzschean spirit of this celebratory version, we are returning to the more somber mood intended by Kern by sticking with a slower tempo.

The role of Joe will be played by the tuba.

**Stardust (1927),
Hoagy Carmichael
& Mitchell Parrish**

Continuing the pops theme, we turn now to Hoagy Carmichael’s great “song about a song about love,” “Stardust.” The music was composed in 1927, and the words were added in 1929 by Mitchell Parrish. With more than 1500 recordings, this American standard is considered the most recorded song of the 20th century. The following are Mitchell Parrish’s lyrics:

And now the purple dusk of twilight time
Steals across the meadows of my heart
High up in the sky the little stars climb
Always reminding me that we’re apart
You wander down the lane and far away
Leaving me a song that will not die
Love is now the stardust of yesterday
The music of the years gone by.

Sometimes I wonder, how I spend
The lonely nights
Dreaming of a song
The melody
Haunts my reverie
And I am once again with you
When our love was new
And each kiss an inspiration
But that was long ago
And now my consolation is in the stardust of a song

Besides the garden wall, when stars are bright
You are in my arms
The nightingale
Tells his fairytale
Of paradise, where roses grew
Though I dream in vain
In my heart it will remain
My stardust melody
The memory of love’s refrain.

**Three Sketches
on a Southern
Hymn Tune,
second move-
ment (1981),
Elam Sprenkle**

In a way, we find it appropriate that just as the band began by borrowing music from orchestra, only later to come into its own with pieces designed especially for it, so we, as a newer kind of ensemble than the band, have begun by borrowing from our older brother before coming into our own. This piece is a bit of a departure for our program, reflecting further development of the repertoire: composed especially for brass quintet, it was never a piece for band. The piece has another purpose on the program as well, consonant with the structure of many band concerts. As the band spread and eventually became a feature of pretty much every university in the country, regional music became a part of its repertoire, often re-imagined in new pieces written especially for band. Traditional folk songs as well as hymns formed the basis for many of these new pieces, which, being short and simple, were easily added to a concert program to change the mood or to introduce an interlude between more “workhorse” pieces of the repertoire.

And so we insert here the second movement of *Three Sketches on a Southern Hymn Tune* by Elam Sprenkle, professor of musicology and music theory at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. The hymn in question is “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need,” a paraphrase of Psalm 23 by the great English hymnist Isaac Watts (most famous perhaps for “Joy to the World” and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”). Watts’s words were paired with a traditional melody from *Southern Harmony*, William Walker’s 1825 compilation of southern tunes (which was printed right here in New

Haven). It is this melody that Elam Sprenkle has chosen to interact with in his piece for brass quintet.

We will perform the contemplative second movement, which is well suited to the mix of assurance and longing present in Watts's text:

My Shepherd will supply my need:
Jehovah is His Name;
In pastures fresh He makes me feed,
Beside the living stream.
He brings my wandering spirit back
When I forsake His ways,
And leads me, for His mercy's sake,
In paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death,
Thy presence is my stay;
A word of Thy supporting breath
Drives all my fears away.
Thy hand, in sight of all my foes,
Doth still my table spread;
My cup with blessings overflows,
Thine oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God
Attend me all my days;
O may Thy house be my abode,
And all my work be praise!
There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger, nor a guest,
But like a child at home.

Copland Portrait (1985), Aaron Copland

This collage of passages from works of Aaron Copland was created in honor of the composer's 85th birthday. The work begins with the famous *Fanfare for the Common Man*, originally written in 1942 for brass and percussion to honor the role of the common man during World War II. Copland later used an altered version of this music as the introduction to the finale of his Third Symphony. Elements of both versions are found in this setting.

Next comes a passage from "Saturday Night Waltz" (from the ballet *Rodeo*). Originally entitled "The Courting at Burnt Ranch," *Rodeo* was created in collaboration with choreographer Agnes De Mille, commissioned by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for its 1942–1943 season.

Next we come to *El Salon Mexico*, subtitled "Popular Type Dance Hall in Mexico City," which is represented by two passages. This work, based on Mexican folk tunes, was written after Copland's first visit to Mexico in 1932.

This brings us to perhaps Copland's most celebrated work, *Appalachian Spring*, a ballet composed for Martha Graham and commissioned by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. *Appalachian Spring* was premiered by Graham in 1944 and received the 1945 Pulitzer Prize for Music, as well as the Music Critics Circle Award for the 1944–1945 season.

The portrait concludes with music from two well-known dance episodes from *Rodeo*: "Buckaroo Holiday" and "Hoe-Down."

Copland's music is tonally and harmonically rich, and often rhythmically surprising and energetic. To take such grand music and reduce it for performance by brass quintet is a daunting task. This piece is, in a sense, the microcosm of the entire history of band repertoire: written originally for band, now transcribed to brass quintet, but combining passages originally meant for a variety of settings. We offer it as a fitting end to our program today.

Upcoming Performances

A Festival of Brass and Ideas
A Live at 135 Series Concert
Thursday, June 20, 2013, 7:00 pm
Christ Presbyterian Church
135 Whitney Ave, New Haven, CT
Admission free, reception to follow

In this special concert we will showcase the wide range of interests and influences that make us who we are. You will hear some of your favorite music, including holiday, television, pop, and jazz, and you will also hear the stories that make *Brass Brass*. Come get to know us as never before!

Kinda Blues: W.C. Handy and Friends
A Marble and Brass Series Concert
Wednesday, August 14, 2013, 5:15 pm
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
121 Wall St., New Haven, CT
Admission free

Featuring music by W.C. Handy, Cole Porter, Scott Joplin, Fats Waller, and George Gershwin. A *Marble and Brass* series concert in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Beinecke Library.

If you enjoyed today's performance, please leave a review for us at www.gigsalad.com/brass_new_haven

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