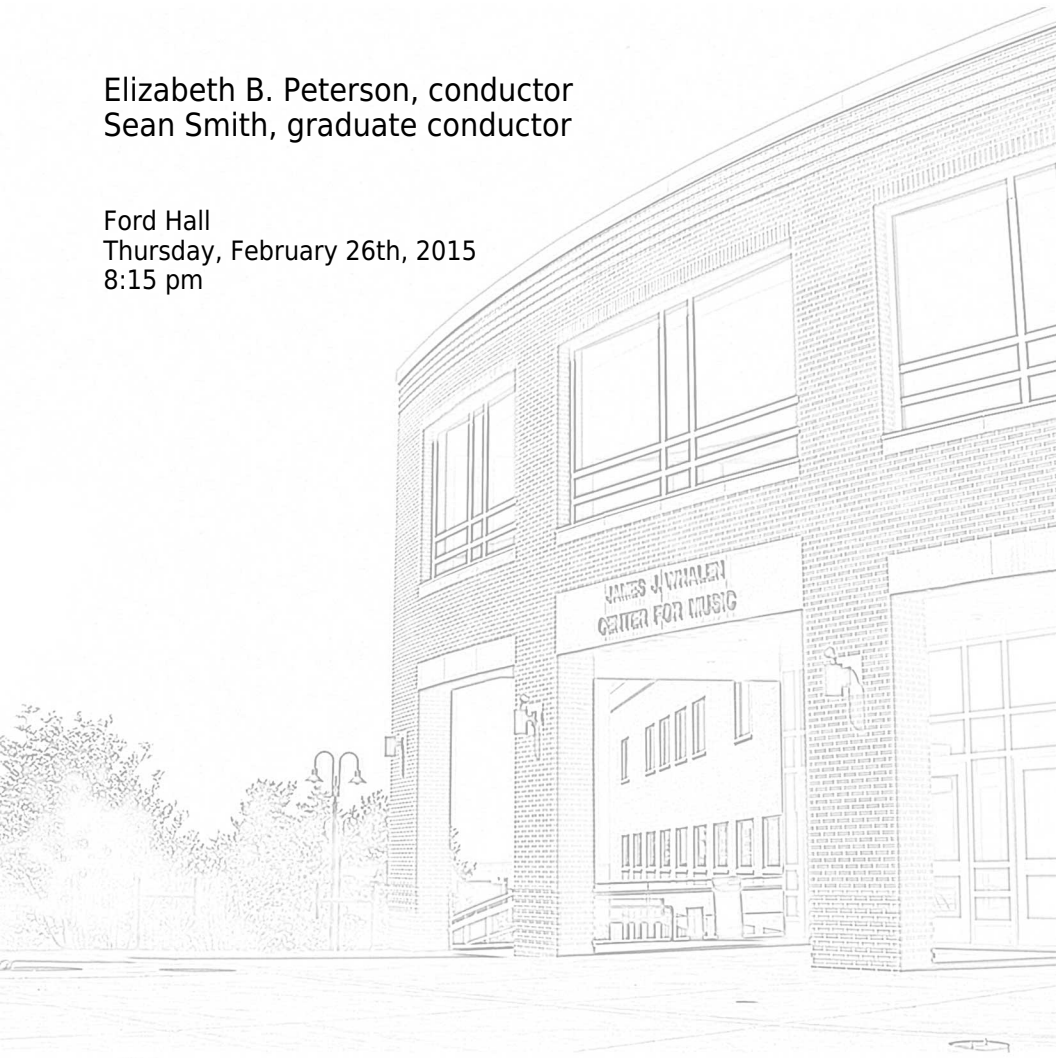


Ithaca College Symphonic Band

"Nature or Nurture"

Elizabeth B. Peterson, conductor
Sean Smith, graduate conductor

Ford Hall
Thursday, February 26th, 2015
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Requiem for a Hummingbird (2012)

Marc Mellits
(b. 1966)
4'

all stars are love (2014)

Steven Bryant
(b. 1972)
7'

Sun Paints Rainbows On the Vast Waves (1984)

David Bedford
(1937-2011)
14'

Pause

Firefly (2008)

Ryan George
(b. 1978)
6'30"

No Shadow of Turning (2005)

David Gillingham
(b. 1947)
9'

Sean Smith, conductor

Aurora Awakes (2009)

John Mackey
(b. 1973)
10'

Program Notes

During the months of January and February, Ithaca can be a dark and gloomy place. As I was perusing scores and trying to create a cohesive concert program, the theme of 'darkness to light' kept emerging in each of these pieces. Each composer, in his unique way uses a variety of textures, instrumentation, and dynamics to create various sounds that seemingly call the listener to hear brightness, light and beauty.

During our preparation of this concert music, students were asked to take a photograph (cell phone use was encouraged) of a 'light source'. It was interesting for me to see how they look at their world and reminded me (us) that even on the snowiest of Ithaca days, light is all around us.

Commissioned by Cynthia Johnston Turner and the Cornell University Wind Ensemble in support of the Syracuse Society for New Music, *Requiem for a Hummingbird* is a minimalistic opener for wind ensemble. Mellits's music has been described as containing ***"varied repetitive musical figurations buoyed by viscerally propulsive rhythms. Pieces charge along breathlessly... His music is eclectic, all-encompassing, colorful and always has a sense of forward motion."***

Steven Bryant writes, *all stars are love* began as a simple song written as a surprise gift for my wife, Verena, for our wedding in 2010. I set the e. e. cummings poem "all stars are (and not one star only) love", and our dear friend and extraordinary soprano, Hila Plitmann, performed it at the ceremony in Austria. Fellow composer (and Hila's husband!) Eric Whitacre suggested at the time that it would work well as an instrumental work, and that thought stuck with me, until the right opportunity to adapt the work arose. This commission from the Colorado Wind Ensemble and CWE Commissioning Project Consortium gave me that opportunity.

*all stars are (and not one star only) love
-but if a day climbs from the mountain of
myself, each bird alive will sing for joy
in some no longer darkness who am I
e. e. cummings*

English composer, Bedford writes, “The title, *Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves*, comes from a jotting in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s (1772-1834) notebook during the period when he was working on *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and is a reference to a passage which the poet had read, ‘I shall add on Observation more concerning Marine Rainbows, which I observed after a great Tempest off the Cape of Good Hope. The Sea was then very much tossed, and the Wind carrying off the Tops of the Waves made a kind of Rain, in which the Rays of the *Sun painted the Colours of a Rainbow.*’ It is this evocative description which provided the stimulus for this composition and influences the feeling and atmosphere of its sound world”.

Composer, Ryan George, says about his piece, *Firefly*: I’m amazed at how children use their imaginations to transform the ordinary and normal into the extraordinary and fantastic. Just about anything they come across can be used to spark their fantasies and usher their minds into unseen worlds. A stick on the ground becomes a wand with magical powers or a sword to fight off badguys. A collection of rocks turns into buried treasure and a blanket stretched over two chairs becomes a cave to hide in. Just about anything found in nature; birds, waterfalls, flowers, and even insects take on mythic identities when viewed through the eyes of a child. The idea for *Firefly* was born one night as I watched my 4-year old become mesmerized by a firefly that had wandered into our front yard. When I asked her what she thought of the “firefly” she looked at me with a puzzled look and said with a corrective tone “Dad, that’s not a firefly... it’s Tinkerbell, and she’s come to take me on an adventure!” *Firefly* is dedicated to my daughters Sophia and Nyla, who ignite my imagination and bring awe and wonder into my life every day.

No Shadow of Turning was commissioned by a consortium of organizations at The Ohio State University in memory of Lois Brock, beloved secretary of The Ohio State University Bands. The work is based on the hymn tune *Great is Thy Faithfulness*, by Thomas O. Chisholm (words) and William M. Runyan (music) and whose refrain is below:

Refrain:

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed thy hand hath provided;
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto thee.
Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

The title of the work is taken from the second line of the first verse which perhaps sums up the meaning of the hymn and the faith held by Lois Brock. The work also features optional hand bells, as Lois Brock was an avid hand bell player in her local church.

Mackey's *Aurora Awakes* contains several literary and musical references:

*Aurora now had left her saffron bed, And beams of early light
the heav'ns o'erspread,
When, from a tow'r, the queen, with wakeful eyes,
Saw day point upward from the rosy skies.*
- Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book IV, Lines 584-587

Aurora - the Roman goddess of the dawn - is a mythological figure frequently associated with beauty and light. Also known as Eos (her Greek analogue), Aurora would rise each morning and stream across the sky, heralding the coming of her brother Sol, the sun. Though she is herself among the lesser deities of Roman and Greek mythologies, her cultural influence has persevered, most notably in the naming of the vibrant flashes of light that occur in Arctic and Antarctic regions - the Aurora Borealis and Aurora Australis.

John Mackey's *Aurora Awakes* is, thus, a piece about the heralding of the coming of light. Built in two substantial sections, the piece moves over the course of eleven minutes from a place of remarkable stillness to an unbridled explosion of energy - from darkness to light, placid grey to startling rainbows of color. The work is almost entirely in the key of E-flat major (a choice made to create a unique effect at the work's conclusion, as mentioned below), although it journeys through G-flat and F as the work progresses. Despite the harmonic shifts, however, the piece always maintains a - pun

intended – bright optimism.

Though Mackey is known to use stylistic imitation, it is less common for him to utilize outright quotation. As such, the presence of two more-or-less direct quotations of other musical compositions is particularly noteworthy in *Aurora Awakes*. The first, which appears at the beginning of the second section, is an ostinato based on the familiar guitar introduction to U2's "Where The Streets Have No Name." Though the strains of The Edge's guitar have been metamorphosed into the insistent repetitions of keyboard percussion, the aesthetic is similar – a distant proclamation that grows steadily in fervor. The difference between U2's presentation and Mackey's, however, is that the guitar riff disappears for the majority of the song, while in *Aurora Awakes*, the motive persists for nearly the entirety of the remainder of the piece.

The other quotation is a sly reference to Gustav Holst's First Suite in E-flat for Military Band. The brilliant E-flat chord that closes the Chaconne of that work is orchestrated (nearly) identically as the final sonority of *Aurora Awakes* – producing an unmistakably vibrant timbre that won't be missed by aficionados of the repertoire. Mackey adds an even brighter element, however, by including instruments not in Holst's original and says:

"That has always been one of my favorite chords because it's just so damn bright. In a piece that's about the awaking of the goddess of dawn, you need a damn bright ending — and there was no topping Holst. Well... except to add crotales."
(this program note is by Jake Wallace)

Personnel

Piccolo

Hannah Morris

Flute

Ashley Watson
Jillian Francis
Carmen Vиейtez
Robyn Leary
Alison Miller
Diana Ladolcetta
Lisa Close
Caitlin Miret
Courtney Iava-Savage

Oboe

Tim Nolan
Katelyn Swaenepoel
Colleen Maher

English Horn

Katelyn Swaenepoel

Bassoon

Emma Whitestone
Liam Cunningham

Contra Bassoon

Andrew Meys

E♭ Clarinet

Justine Call

Clarinet

Nathan Balester
Nikhil Bartolomeo
Vivian Becker
Nick Alexander
Jenna DiMento
Madeline Davey
Barbara Chelchowski

Bass Clarinet

Brianna Ornstein

Alto Saxophone

Matthew Kiel
Deniz Arkali
Matthew Snyder
Ashley Dookie
Kerri Barnett

Tenor Saxophone

Alex Clift
Rachel Moody

Baritone Saxophone

Frank Iovine
James Parker

Trumpet

Jon Tompkins
Alec Fiorentino
Chris Walsh
Matthew Brockman
Michael Salamone
Tyler Campolongo
Ray Fuller

Horn

Patrick Holcomb
Niki Friske
Jacob Morton-Black
Diana McLaughlin
Matt Ficarra

Trombone

Steve Meyerhofer
Daniel Wenger
Skyler Roswell
Kristin Jannotti
Hunter Burnett
Samantha Considine
Louis Jannone
Josh Poffenberger-Twomey
Nicholas Jones (bass)
Christian Kmetz (bass)

Euphonium

Matthew Della Camera
Danielle Wheeler

Tuba

Jeffrey Stewart
Cristina Saltos
Ian Wiese

Percussion

Jamie Kelly
Shannon Frier
Gabe Millman
Derek Wohl
Daniel Monte
Kenneth O'Rourke

Timpani

Cory Hilton

Bass

Harrison Dilthey

Piano

Tasha George-Hinnant

Bell Ringers

Anna Goebel
Lindsey Lack
Johannah Litwin
Cristina Porto
Samantha Rhodes
Kelly Sadwin
Gregory Sisco
Ian Wiese