

A GRADUATE CONDUCTING RECITAL

By  
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A PERFORMANCE IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC

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Summary of Performance in Lieu of Thesis  
Presented to the College of Fine Arts of the University of Florida  
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Chair: David Waybright

Major: Master of Music

On December 3, 2012 at 3:45 PM I presented my graduate student recital to fulfill the requirements of my Master of Music in Instrumental Conducting degree. The recital featured the University of Florida Wind Symphony, and included three weeks of biweekly rehearsals prior to the performance recital. I led each rehearsal and conducted the recital under the guidance of Dr. David Waybright. Three iconic works in the Wind Band repertory were performed: Richard Wagner's *Trauersinfonie* (1844), Guy Woolfenden's *Illyrian Dances* (1986), and Ernst Toch's *Spiel für Blasorchester* (1926). Each piece differs greatly in regards to the date of composition as well as the forms and styles. *Trauersinfonie* and *Illyrian Dances* are written for full band while

*Spiel für Blasorchester* features a reduced Wind Ensemble, with only one instrumentalist on each part. The recital took place in the University Auditorium on the University of Florida campus, and was recorded to DVD.

A Graduate Conducting Recital  
Sameed Afghani, Conductor  
Kim Eberly, Conductor

**Program**

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Smetana Fanfare                | Karel Husa<br>(b. 1921)                             |
| Trauersinfonie*                | Richard Wagner/ Revised Erik Leidzén<br>(1813-1883) |
| Paris Sketches                 | Martin Ellerby<br>(b. 1957)                         |
| Spiel für Blasorchester*       | Ernst Toch<br>(1887-1964)                           |
| A Hymn for the Lost and Living | Eric Ewazen<br>(b. 1954)                            |
| Illyrian Dances*               | Guy Woolfenden<br>(b. 1937)                         |
| I. Rondeau                     |   |
| II. Aubade                     |   |
| III. Gigue                     |   |

\*Denotes pieces conducted by Sameed Afghani

## *Trauersinfonie*

As one of the most influential composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Richard Wagner, transformed the German opera and created an aesthetic ideal to represent his monumental works. Although primarily known for his grandiose operas, *Trauersinfonie* remains an important historical work as the only piece by the composer originally scored for the wind band.

Richard Wagner was born in Leipzig in 1813 and began his music career at a young age. His musical education started with rudimentary piano lessons and by the time he was nine years old the young Wagner had aspirations to become a playwright. In these early years Wagner was heavily influenced by the literary works of Shakespeare and Goethe, and he was exposed to the music of Beethoven, Mozart, and Carl Maria von Weber. The literary and musical works of these prominent figures made a lasting impression on Richard Wagner, and in 1831 he enrolled at the University of Leipzig to continue his studies on piano, composition, and choir.

While Richard Wagner went on to become one of the most celebrated composers of German Operas, the influence of Carl Maria von Weber on his early musical development was strong. His early compositions imitated the style of Weber, and therefore it is no surprise that on December 14, 1844 when the remains of Carl Maria von Weber were moved from English soil to the Catholic Cemetery in Friedrichstadt, Germany, Wagner composed *Trauersinfonie* for Weber's torch-light procession.

The subtitle of *Trauersinfonie* reads, "Funeral Music on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber," and in fact all sections of *Trauersinfonie* are based on harmonies and melodies from particular sections of Weber's opera, *Euryanthe*. Although *Trauersinfonie* is an original composition for wind band by Richard Wagner, some argue that it is in fact a band transcription of Weber's music due to the heavy borrowing of material.

The first section of *Trauersinfonie* (mm.1-16) is an arrangement of the overture to *Euryanthe*. In fact, the only immediate differences between this section of *Trauersinfonie* and *Euryanthe* is that Wagner transposes the music down one-half step to Bb minor, and adds a dominant-seventh chord to the closing of the musical statement. Aside from these differences, and a slight change of tempo markings, the two melodies look identical in their (4/4) meter signatures:

Weber's *Euryanthe* (mm.129-143)

Largo. ♩ = 52.

8 Violini SOLI con Sordino.

Viola

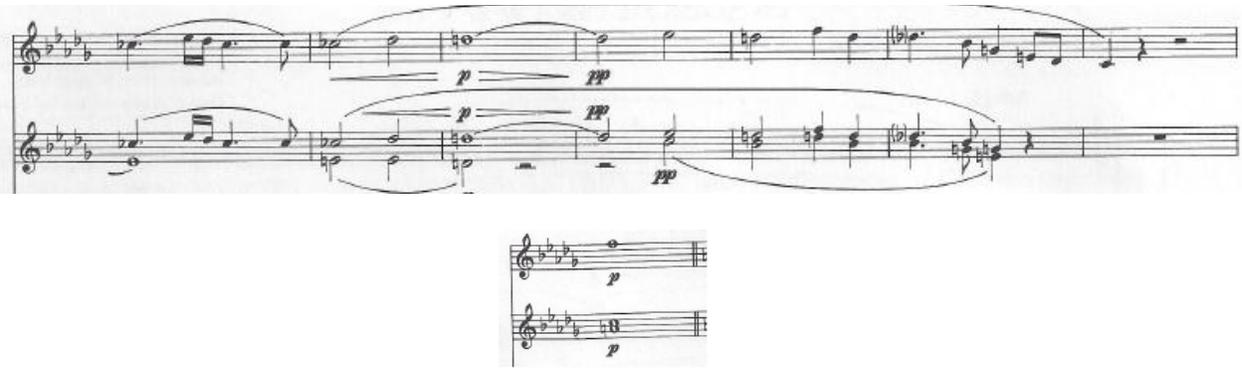
Wagner's *Trauersinfonie* (mm. 1-17)

Adagio (♩ = 52)

Contemporary edition by John Boyd

\* Flute

\* Oboe 1,2



The second section of *Trauersinfonie*, which is also the main body of the work (mm. 17-71), is based off the aria *Hier dicht am Quell* for soprano from Act III, Scene 1 of *Euryanthe*. Wagner arranges the solo melody for multiple instruments and transposes the music from G major to Bb major. Wagner also adds a repeat at the end of this section and doubles the original note values. This allowed the work to last the two and one-half mile funeral procession for Carl Maria von Weber. The original text from *Hier dicht am Quell* heavily references death, and the melancholy melodic theme supports this idea of loss. It is therefore not surprising that Wagner chose this particular aria from *Euryanthe*.

The *Coda* of *Trauersinfonie* is taken from Act II, Scene VII where Count Adolar falls on his knees before Euryanthe, then rises in euphoria at their reunion. Again Wagner transposes this section from C major to Bb major and arranges it for the wind ensemble. Similar to the previous sections the note values are all doubled, again in an effort to extend the length of the composition. Also, the final trumpet call in the last six measures of *Trauersinfonie* has been rhythmically altered from the original melody sung by Adolar in the opera.

### *Spiel für Blasorchester*

Ernst Toch was born in Leopoldstadt, Vienna in 1887 and began teaching himself piano at an early age. He went on to study piano and composition at the Hoch Conservatory from 1909

to 1913. Before reaching acclaim as a composer Toch was recognized as an exemplary pianist and, as such, most of his compositions are intended for piano. Although his compositional output was wide, including symphonies, concertos, orchestral works, choral works, and film music, *Spiel für Blasorchester* is one of only five works for wind ensemble completed by Toch.

Ernst Toch's early compositions mimicked the style of Mozart, and he was awarded the Frankfurt/Main Mozart prize in 1909 for his *Chamber Symphony in F*. With this early success, Toch's compositional outlet grew and he began gaining notoriety and expanding his repertoire. This continued until he was forced to go into exile in 1933, following Hitler's rise to power.

Toch continued composing while in exile, first in Paris and then London, but at this time he was exploring an entirely new medium of composition by writing film music. By 1933, he was invited to travel to America, and he moved to California to continue his career in film scoring. Between 1933 and 1945 he composed a total of fifteen film scores, yet he never received the same acclaim with his film scores that he did in his earlier years of composition.

In his later years as a composer, Toch returned to his early styles of writing music and composed seven symphonies. In 1957 he received a Pulitzer Prize for his third symphony and in 1958 he received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. Ernst Toch died in 1964 in Santa Monica, California.

*Spiel für Blasorchester* was written in 1926 for the Donaueschingen Music Festival. The festival was founded by a committee of distinguished composers in 1921 in order to promote composers of contemporary music. *Spiel für Blasorchester* was premiered by the Music Corps alongside Paul Hindemith's *Konzertmusik für Blasorchester* and Ernst Krenek's *Drei lustige Märsche* under the conductorship of Hermann Scherchen. These three works shared a similar goal at the time, to expand the repertoire for small wind ensembles through contemporary

composition. Of all the pieces premiered at the festival, *Spiel* received the most immediate critical acclaim by both listeners and reviewers.

The work is comprised of three movements titled: Overture, Idyll, and Buffo. The Overture is a standard three section form (A-B-A) where the A section is characterized by poignant articulations and mixed meters, while the B section contrasts with flowing lyrical melodies. Idyll, also in ternary form, features a prominent oboe solo throughout. It is the most romantic sounding of the three movements, resembling music of the prior decade. The finale, Buffo, is a fast and boisterous movement written in sonata form that has a sense of humor, akin to a circus band. The work was dedicated to the Hermann Scherchen who was a champion of modern music.

### *Illyrian Dances*

Guy Woolfenden was born in 1937 in Ipswich, England and has established himself as a conductor and composer through various musical avenues. His early music education includes Westminster Abbey Choir School, Whitgift School, and Christ's College in Cambridge. As a conductor, Woolfenden has given concerts throughout Canada, France, and Germany; conducting major symphony orchestras as well as chamber ensembles. His opera performances include the first British productions of Carl Nielsen's *Saul og David*, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans*, and Franz Liszt's *Don Sanche*.

Guy Woolfenden has been active in composing for various wind groups. His compositions for winds include works for symphonic wind orchestras, small wind ensembles, small wind ensemble and choir, and concertos. In addition, from 1963 to 1998 he was Head of Music of the Royal Shakespeare Company. During his time as Head of Music he composed over

150 scores for theatre productions that have been performed throughout the world. In addition Woolfenden has composed music for major European theatre companies including Comédie-Française, Paris, the Burgtheater, Vienna, the Teatro Stabile, Genoa and the Norwegian National Theatre. In 1977 he was awarded the Olivier Award for Best New Musical for his musical adaptation, *The Comedy of Errors*, and in 2007 he was awarded the Order of British Empire for his services to music.

*Illyrian Dances* was written in 1937 for full band and is an original composition that was influenced by Shakespeare's play, *Twelfth Night*. The play was a comedy meant to be performed at the close of the Christmas Season, and is set in the land of Illyria. It is believed that Illyria was a region of Eastern Europe that included parts of modern day Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro, yet there is no documentation as to the exact geographical location. The play revolves around a love triangle and mistaken identities between a woman shipwrecked on the shore of Illyria named Viola, the Duke of Illyria, and a female resident of Illyria named Olivia.

In Act 1, Scene II the following dialogue occurs between Viola and the Captain of the ship after being shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria:

Viola: "What country, friends, is this?"  
Captain: "This is Illyria, lady."

*Illyrian Dances* is based off of this scene and exchange between characters as Viola first gazes upon the land of Illyria. The music is meant to depict dances that would take place in Illyria—a faraway world of romance and imagination. The composition is a suite of three dances titled Rondeau, Aubade, and Gigue. The Rondeau features a seven bar refrain with an abrupt meter change. This melody is transformed throughout the movement, and can be heard passing between different sections of the band. The Aubade is a dance in ternary form. It is softer in both tempo as well as density and features several solo lines between the woodwinds, first horn, and

first trumpet. The final movement, Gigue, is a jubilant rondo in six-eight time. The initial melodic motive is varied and broken up to form many smaller themes that can be heard throughout the movement.

*Illyrian Dances* was commissioned by the British Association of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles. Funds for the commission were provided by West Midlands Arts, and the premiere took place on September 26, 1986 at Warwick University during the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual British Association of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles conference.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sameed Afghani received his bachelor's degree of music in performance and bachelor's degree of science in finance from the University of Florida in May 2011, Cum Laude. While attending University of Florida he was a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, the University of Florida Orchestra, the University of Florida Wind Symphony, and the University of Florida Concert Band. He also served as a Finance Research Assistant under the direction of Dr. Cem Demiroglu where he researched the debt positions of hundreds of U.S. corporations.

Sameed Afghani is currently the Executive Director of the Ocala Symphony Orchestra where he manages the orchestra's operations and financial position. He also serves as the Administrative Coordinator for the Florida branch of the Smith Walbridge Band Clinics.