



Concert Program Notes
December 10, 2022, 7:30 p.m.
Phoebus High School Auditorium

Alleluia! Laudamus te - Alfred Reed

Alfred Reed was one of the twentieth century's most prolific composers of music for concert band, orchestra, chamber ensemble, and chorus. During the Second World War, he conducted the 529th Army Air Corps Band, then went on to study at the Juilliard School of Music. He worked as a staff composer and arranger for NBC and ABC where he created music for drama shows for both radio and television. His career as an educator began at the University of Miami in 1966 and spanned almost three decades until his retirement in 1993.

Alleluia! Laudamus te is a hymn of praise without words where the band serves as a massive choir. Each section can also be heard as a smaller and more intimate ensemble. Alfred Reed's setting is based on three themes starting with a lush brass chorale that flows into a long and lyrical line in the horns and woodwinds. The final motif is first announced as a fanfare by the trumpets, then developed by the other sections into a sweeping and majestic climax.

The work was composed in 1973 on a commission from the concert band at Malone College in Canton, Ohio. It was written for the Third Annual Band Festival where it was first conducted by the composer.

Christmas Charleston - James Stephenson

James Stephenson began his musical career as a trumpeter with the Naples Philharmonic in Florida before turning to composition full time in 2007. He has since written commissions for the Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Ballet, St. Louis Symphony, Boston Pops, The "President's Own" US Marine Band and many others. His catalog is well rounded with music for every ensemble both large and small as well as concerti for nearly every symphonic instrument.

The Christmas Charleston is best described in modern terms as a mashup. There's no better way to say it than in the words of the composer, "All your favorite Christmas tunes, mashed up into one Charleston."

Ave Maria - J.S. Bach/Charles Gounod, arr. Mel Lauf ---

The text of Ave Maria, or Hail Mary, has been set to countless melodies over the past several centuries. One of the best-known treatments is Charles Gounod's arrangement that uses Johann Sebastian Bach's Prelude and Fugue in C Major from The Well-Tempered Clavier, written in 1722. It was first published in 1853 for violin and piano. Since then, it has been arranged for every conceivable combination of instruments from chamber ensembles to full wind bands and orchestra.

For tonight's performance, we'll be featuring a soprano solo by Andrea Boothe accompanied by the full ensemble. Andrea Boothe has called the beautiful state of Virginia home since 2002. She landed in Hampton Roads with her husband, Daniel W. Boothe, in 2017. Since then she has been active as a vocalist, choral adjudicator, music educator, and an avid volunteer in the arts throughout the region. Her featured work as soprano soloist with Symphonicity has been heard on WHRO radio broadcasts. In March 2023 she will give the Hampton Roads premiere of "Stopping by the Woods" by Katherine Fields. Previously she has sung with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra chorus and Roanoke Opera, the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra Chorus, the Dayton Opera, Dayton's chamber choir "Musical!", the United States Air Force Band of Flight, and has been active as a church musician. Mrs. Boothe has performed across the country and internationally in Canada and Russia. She has been sought after as a consultant and advocate for musical arts integration in the community, and has taught music education across the state of Virginia and Ohio since 2008. She completed studies in vocal performance, music therapy, dance and psychology at Radford University, and Immaculata University, and studied privately with regionally acclaimed soprano Elizabeth Curtis, as well as renowned New York and Philadelphia-based vocal coach Diana Borgia-Petro. Mrs. Boothe lives in Chesapeake with her husband and their 5 children. She loves to garden and take family walks in their quiet neighborhood.

Sleigh Ride - Leroy Anderson ---

During a heat wave in the summer of 1946, legendary creator of light classics Leroy Anderson conceived the idea for Sleigh Ride and completed the work in February of 1948. It was first recorded by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops in 1949 with lyrics added by Mitchell Parish in 1950. It became a hit record from RCA Victor Red Seal and has become a signature holiday song for both bands and orchestras. In various arrangements, it has been performed and recorded by the likes of Herb Alpert, The Andrews Sisters, The Carpenters, Bing Crosby, The Boston Pops Orchestra, Ella Fitzgerald, Debbie Gibson,

The Muppets, and Andy Williams. Be sure to listen for the famous whip crack from the percussion section and the legendary horse whinny that closes this iconic work.

Sussex Mummers Christmas Carol - Percy Grainger —————

The Sussex Mummers Christmas Carol, like nearly all Percy Grainger's works, is based on a traditional folk song. This one was first noted by Miss Lucy E. Broadwood in 1880 from the singing of Christmas Mummers or Tipteers during their play of St. George, the Turk, and the Seven Champions of Christendom. First set for voice and piano, it was expanded for wind ensemble by Richard Franko Goldman, son of Edwin Franko Goldman who founded and conducted the famous Goldman Band in New York City from 1918 to 1956. Richard first suggested to Grainger that he arrange this carol for band and wound up doing the job himself after Grainger passed away in 1961. Goldman conducted the first performance of the work in 1963 at the State College of Iowa.

To Celebrate a Miracle, A Chanukah Suite for Concert Band - Samuel Adler —————

In creating To Celebrate a Miracle, Samuel Adler incorporated the melodies from nine popular Hannukah songs and developed their core motifs into an exploration of the textures and timbres heard from different instruments in the ensemble. The nine songs represent the nine candles of the Menorah. The final melody, Y'mei ha'hanukka, comes from a 19th century eastern European Yiddish folk tune. It is popular in cultural circles and has been translated into English to be sung in America, most often by children.

————— INTERMISSION —————

Jubilee Overture - Phillip Sparke —————

Phillip Sparke's Jubilee Overture was originally commissioned for the 50th anniversary of the British-based GUS Brass Band and first performed by them in 1983 with Keith Wilkinson conducting. It was transcribed for full wind band in 1984. The work opens with a brass fanfare followed by a reflective chorale heard in the woodwinds. Horns and saxophones take up a lively allegro rife with meter changes. A cantabile emerges which is developed for the full ensemble before the allegro returns, transitioning into a repeat of the opening fanfare as a presto coda.

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas - Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane —————

Introduced by Judy Garland in 1944, Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas has gone on to become one of today's most famous and recognizable Christmas songs. It was originally written by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blaine for the movie Meet Me in St. Louis. It has been recorded by many famous singers to include Frank Sinatra, Mel Tormé, Tori Amos, Garth

Brooks, Robert Goulet, Lady Antebellum, James Taylor, Bob Dylan, and Twisted Sister, to name just a few.

In a 1989 interview, Hugh Martin talked about his work on the original melody and how he had actually given up on it after a few days and threw it in the trash. His collaborator Ralph Blaine decided he liked what he had heard and dug it out of the trash, much to everyone's relief. The lyrics were modified by Judy Garland from the original text which she found too sad. After refusing to sing the original for the movie, it was revised into a more upbeat form.

Bach's Fugue a la Gigue - J. S. Bach/Gustav Holst ---

Gustav Holst's treatment of Bach's Fugue a la Gigue began as a compositional exercise he undertook when preparing to write his famous Hammersmith on commission from the BBC in 1928. The original music is from G Major Fugue, BWV 577, for organ. Fugue a la Gigue is Holst's title for the work. His mastery of counterpoint and transitional flow is on full display here with an orchestral sound that comes from clarinets playing in unison. Published in 1928, it was first performed by the BBC Wireless Military Band that summer with Holst conducting.

Russian Christmas Music - Alfred Reed ---

Alfred Reed's Russian Christmas Music owes its origin to a select group of musicians from five major military bands in Denver, Colorado who first performed the work in 1944 for a live NBC broadcast. Reed completed the work just 14 days after its commission. After revisions by the composer, it was entered in a 1947 composition contest at Columbia University where it became one of three prize-winning works as new serious music for concert band. Early performances took place at the Juilliard School and at Syracuse University where it gained its dedication to director Harwood Simmons. To this day, it remains a staple of American wind band literature and it was responsible for establishing Alfred Reed as one of the world's leading concert band composers.

Its melody comes from an ancient Russian Christmas carol called Carol of the Little Russian Children. With elements from Eastern Orthodox liturgical music, it is written as a single continuous movement with four distinct sections which were originally titled, Children's Carol, Antiphonal Chant, Village Song and Cathedral Chorus.

Sing Along ---

Now, we invite you to turn to your printed program where you'll find the lyrics to our Christmas Singalong. Please join us in song as we close our concert celebration with a few familiar tunes. Thanks so much for joining us tonight and have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year!