

# Williams Symphonic Winds

20 November 2004

## PARAPHRASES OF THE PAST

*The use of models is very hip and post-modern since Rauschenberg, and others [perhaps most famously, Picasso], painted their own Velasquez's, but it has been happening for centuries. For me models are not only important beacons in composition; music that I find good always refers to other music.... The more you steal, the better. It makes your life easier. Composing is already difficult enough.*

Louis Andriessen, from a lecture in 2000

### Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

#### Selections from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786), arranged by Johann Nepomuk Wendt (1791)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is regarded as one of the greatest, most influential, most significant composers in the history of Western music. His writing is distinguished by melodic beauty, formal elegance, and a richness of harmony and texture. Unlike Haydn, his senior by 24 years, and Beethoven, his junior by 15, Mozart excelled in every medium current in his time. While Mozart's genius may be most significantly demonstrated in his operas, symphonies and string chamber pieces, his serenades and divertimenti—his *Harmonie*—are no less striking or innovative; in fact, his three wind serenades are arguably the finest works of the genre.

The term *Harmoniemusik* refers to a musical genre written for pairs of woodwind instruments within the period 1750-1835. A typical *Harmoniemusik* ensemble would consist of 3-4 pairs of wind instruments: bassoons and horns, with either oboes or clarinets, or both. In a sense, these were the popular music ensembles of the time, playing a significant part in the social lives of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Each of the royal courts throughout Europe employed a personal *Harmonie* to provide entertainment for themselves and for their distinguished guests, not only during dinner, but also in private and public concerts. In 1782 Emperor Joseph II appointed a *Harmonie* of the finest available players, including the Stadler brothers on clarinet and Johann Nepomuk Wendt on oboe. Although many composers contributed original works for the medium, the repertoire consisted mainly of full-length transcriptions of operas and ballets. Since it was rare for a composer himself to make such arrangements, it was usually the work of the director of the *Harmonie*; thus Wendt arranged many operas, including Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Recognizing both the craze that transcribing operas for winds had become in Vienna and their financially lucrative nature, Mozart himself began arranging selections of his *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, writing to his father on 20 July 1782: "I am up to my eyes in work, for by Sunday week I have to arrange my opera for Harmonie. If I don't, someone will anticipate me and secure the profits.... You have no idea how difficult it is to arrange a work of this kind for Harmonie, so that it suits these instruments and yet loses none of its effect." Mozart even included *Harmonie* in two of his operas: first, a *Harmonie* ensemble offers a serenade during a garden scene in *Così fan tutte*; and second, the dinner music in *Don Giovanni* (Finale, Act I) contains a transcription of his "Non più andrai" from *Le nozze di Figaro*, to Leporello's comment "Questa poi la conosco pur troppo" ("I know this all too well").

*Le nozze di Figaro* (1786) was Mozart's first mature *opera buffa* and the first of three collaborations with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte (the other two being *Don Giovanni* in 1787 and *Così fan tutte* in 1790). It is based on the play *La folle journée ou Le mariage de Figaro* (1781) of the French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais; the play was banned in Vienna in early 1785 due to politically controversial incidents and speeches (all removed by da Ponte in the libretto). Mozart must have been thrilled to work with such a collaborative artist as da Ponte, who himself wrote: "in comic operas, the words are generally reckoned only as the frame of a beautiful picture which supports the canvas."

*Figaro* seems to have been a success immediately. As Michael Kelly (Irish tenor, and the original Don Basilio) wrote in his memoirs: "I thought the audience would never have done applauding and calling for Mozart; almost every piece was encoed, which prolonged it nearly to the length of two operas." In fact, a few days after the premiere, Emperor Joseph II banned the repetition of ensembles as encores in all Viennese theaters. As passionate as the love seemed to have been for the opera, it was short-lived and ended abruptly—there were only nine productions of *Figaro* in Vienna that season. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, *Figaro* was not the most popular of Mozart's operas; as Tim Carter writes: "the diabolic overtones of *Don Giovanni* held far more attraction for the Romantics." It was only with the dissolution of

Romanticism that this situation changed; since the beginning of the twentieth century, *Figaro* has been Mozart's most-performed opera.

While the plot of *Le nozze di Figaro* is full of intrigues and interesting twists, it can be outlined (somewhat) succinctly: The Count's and Countess's servants, Figaro and Susanna, are to be married. However, the Count is in love with Susanna, and thus does not want the marriage to occur. The Countess, although she knows the Count is in love with Susanna, wants to win back his love. Figaro is furious that the Count has propositioned Susanna. In the end, after an elaborate trap is set and the Count is "found out," the Countess forgives the Count, and all ends happily. The arias/duets performed this evening delineate key moments in the opera, providing crucial plot and character developments.

After a bustling, restless **Overture** that establishes the atmosphere for the entire opera, two duets for the servants Figaro and Susanna follow. The curtain rises in Figaro and Susanna's half-furnished bedchamber, Figaro measuring their new bedroom to make sure that their bed will fit, Susanna innocently (vainly?) is trying on her bridal hat. When Susanna protests that she does not want to live in that room, which is conveniently adjacent to the Count and Countess's chambers, Figaro begins their second duet, **Se a caso madama**. Naively extolling the advantages of being so close to his master and her mistress, he thinks the room is ideal—they can easily answer the calls of the Count and Countess, as evidenced by his mimicking of the sound of the servant bells. Susanna, singing ominously in the relative minor, reveals that the Count's intentions toward her are less than honorable—now the Count will have easier access to finding her alone. Although he may have been slow-witted in catching on to the Count's designs, Figaro is now flamed with jealousy.

In the aria **Non più andrai farfallone amoroso**, Figaro paints a vivid picture of army life for the page Cherubino, whom the Count has dispatched to serve in one of his regiments. Affectionately referring to the adolescent as "little Narcissus, little Adonis of love," Figaro sings for Cherubino an aria which contains consolation, paternal advice, and encouragement, interlaid with affectionate jibes at the boy's youth and cynical comments on the nature of the glorious endeavor, war. Since Figaro is always an actor and illusionist, Cherubino can't simply walk off to war; he must march off triumphantly, accompanied by an entire military band which Figaro has summoned up from nowhere for the occasion. "Non più andrai" has remained one of the most popular numbers in the opera.

The third act begins with what Kelly described as "a more delicious morceau never [before] penned by man," **Crudel! perchè finora**. After a brief, but portentous, introduction (one that conventionally would have been associated with a tragic aria in an *opera seria*), we see the Count, for the first and only time in the opera, in a pitiable, sympathetic light; in a passionate daze, trembling from the impact of Susanna's youthful charms, he seems to truly be in love—and with a woman who is about to deceive him. Susanna, having been ordered by the Countess to meet with him, tells the Count "Is it not her duty to obey her master in everything?" The Count wonders why she has not said so sooner, why she has made him suffer; she coyly responds that a woman always takes time to say yes. They agree to meet in the garden (the trap is set!), singing a radiant duet—the Count rejoicing, Susanna asking all who understand love to forgive her lie. The duet ends with the two singing in parallel thirds—an ironic love duet in which only one partner is truly participating.

The Countess's aria **Dove sono**, a soliloquy of unrequited love for the Count, may be the turning point of the entire opera. Although in the noble key of C-major, she begins by lamenting the passing of happier days, wondering if she and the Count will ever experience warmth and love again. However, the aria concludes with a faster coda that marks a crucial change in her character. The silent pause just before the coda is pregnant with significance; from here on, the Countess decides to take control in the hope that her constancy, whatever it may lead her to do, will bring the restoration of the Count's love. This coda is a remarkable musical representation of renewed optimism, leading to the garden scene denouement.

## **Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)**

### ***Figures in the Garden* (1991)**

Dove writes music that is tuneful, tonal and tangy. And it is sensationally orchestrated. In short, it's instantly beguiling.

Richard Morrison, *The Times*, 16 August 1999

One of the most versatile and prolific composers of his generation, the British composer Jonathan Dove is best known for his operas. His airport-comedy *Flight* ("one of the few successful comic operas of recent musical history," *The Sunday Times*) was premiered at Glyndebourne in 1998. The Glyndebourne production of *Flight* has been broadcast on UK television and toured Europe, while new productions have followed in the USA and Germany—all meeting with enthusiastic responses from audiences and music critics. Television critic Victor Lewis-Smith describes *Flight* as "a piece

that made opera look like a thriving art form and not an elegant fossil. It's never easy to create accessible art without compromising integrity, but Dove and [his librettist] De Angelis have succeeded gloriously."

*Flight* was the climax of an association with Glyndebourne which began in 1987 when he worked there as Assistant Chorus Master. He subsequently wrote three large-scale community operas for the company (in performances of one of these works, *In Search of Angels*, 600 amateur performers led an audience around Peterborough Cathedral and then out into a shopping center where angels came down the escalators) and the wind serenade, *Figures in the Garden*, for its Mozart bicentenary. In all, Dove has now written over a dozen operas, including *The Hackney Chronicles*, an opera for primary school children, and *When She Died*, a television opera about the death of Princess Diana, first broadcast in 2002 to an audience of nearly a million viewers in the UK alone. Dove has also helped to bring opera to audiences it doesn't normally reach by arranging great works for small orchestra; his numerous arrangements for City of Birmingham Touring Opera, most notably his two-evening adaptation of Wagner's *Ring*, have been critically acclaimed and universally well-received. Dove's extensive oeuvre also includes choral and instrumental music; over thirty scores for the Royal National Theatre, for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and for New York's Shakespeare Festival; and a dozen works for the company DanceArt and its choreographer Clare Whistler. In 1998 Dove was joint winner of the Christopher Whelen Award for his work in the fields of theater music and opera. Since 1990, Dove has served as Music Adviser to the Almeida Theatre and he will serve as Artistic Director of the 2005 Spitalfields Festival.

Dove's wind serenade *Figures in the Garden*, which uses themes from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, was commissioned by Glyndebourne to celebrate Mozart's bicentenary. (Interestingly, this was not to be his last commissioned work to recast another composer's music; for the BBC's British Music Year festivities and Purcell tercentenary concert, he provided fanfares playfully combining Purcell themes.) Given Glyndebourne's tradition of combining fine music with *al fresco* feasting, it fittingly chose to celebrate the bicentenary not just by presenting an all-Mozart season for 1991, but by commissioning five wind serenades for open-air performance in and around the gardens as curtain-raisers to the evening's operatic entertainment.

Dove offers the following thoughts about this work:

Although Mozart's comic masterpiece needs no introduction, musically or otherwise, I was attracted by the aptness of playing a serenade in the garden before performances of an opera whose last act is set in a garden, and which itself includes a number of serenades...

What can a piece of mine usefully do for an audience that has really come to enjoy one of the great operatic masterpieces of all time? What, I asked myself, would I like to hear wafting across the gardens while I was strolling round the lake with a glass of wine in my hand?

...I kept imagining that over the years there must have been so many performances of *Figaro* at Glyndebourne that sounds from the past had in some way impregnated the garden: snatches of recitative, musical figures, instrumental colours; as if, when evening falls, the flowers themselves might give off the scent of Mozart... I didn't want to overwork Mozart's tunes—it would be disastrous if the audience were tired of them before the opera had even begun—but each movement of *Figures in the Garden* is developed from a musical idea in the opera. Here and there an alternative scenario emerges: Susanna sings her aria in the rain (because it is an English garden), and Figaro and Susanna finally enjoy a moment of shared tranquility that is denied them in the opera.

Yet, although Dove began with this idea of "echoes from a previous age," several of his motivic ideas are directly derived from the opera. For example, the repeated duple notes that characterize the "Overture" are transformed into a repeated triple note pattern in "Dancing in the Dark," and the soaring "Dove sono" melody is reworked and recast in "The Countess Interrupts a Quarrel." He neither quotes extensively nor exactly from Mozart's opera; as he writes: "I'm not interested in playing spot-the-tune with my audience."

## **Louis Andriessen (b. 1939)**

### **Instrumental Interludes from *M is for Man, Music, Mozart* (1991)**

Minimalism is often viewed as a phenomenon born, nurtured, and developed in the United States. But it quickly became an international movement, one whose exhilarating pulse, unrepentant tonality, and clarity of structure offered a way out of the dead-end of serialism. East Europeans such as Arvo Pärt, Henryk Górecki, and Giya Kancheli combined minimalism with local folk and religious styles, while the English composer Michael Nyman turned minimalism to service of an array of historical manners. It was Louis Andriessen, however, who achieved the most startling synthesis of all, forging a unique language informed as much by European modernism as American minimalism... [His works'] strident timbre is much more uncompromising than the softer touch of American minimalism. "It has not the cosmic sound of those pieces which Reich

and Glass wrote at the same time," [Andriessen] says. "What is different from my music is that in America there is not enough angst! I'm much more aggressive, I would say."... Andriessen remains very much a European modernist, and so [his] scores possess a gritty dissonance and a spiky chromaticism that speaks as much of Stravinsky, Messiaen, and Ligeti as of Reich. "I am a European composer, and so even now I deal much more than the Americans with chromaticism. That's why Stravinsky is my guru, how he is able to combine diatonic and chromatic material." And Andriessen must also have realized that he could synthesize Stravinsky's rhythmic and harmonic techniques with the tools of minimalism.

K. Robert Schwarz, author of *Minimalists* (1996)

When asked how he became a composer, Louis Andriessen (born in Utrecht, Holland) will usually answer: "I merely joined my father's business." The Andriessen family boasts generations of musicians, beginning with Louis's great-grandfather Cornelis (1816-1893), a choir conductor and music teacher, and his grandfather Nicolaas (1845-1913), a prominent Dutch organist. Louis grew up hearing the music that was admired by his father Hendrik (1892-1981) and brother Juriaan (1925-1996), both composers and his first two teachers. As Louis recalled, his father "favored a French classicist approach to music. Music was extremely important as an objective beauty, and we should therefore realize that we are not important, it is the music that is important. That means that almost any French composer was better than any German Romantic composer. He also liked Stravinsky a lot...." Juriaan was influential in introducing Louis to American jazz of the 1940s and 50s, especially the music of Count Basie and Stan Kenton. As Andriessen readily admits: "I must say that what was the most influential on my music, when I look back now, was the big-band culture: the writing, settings, arrangements, the harmonies of large groups of brass instruments. It all came from Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie, and others." Additional influences on the development of his unique compositional style were Kees van Baaren (the first Dutch serialist and his first non-familial teacher) at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, and Luciano Berio, with whom he studied for two years. Andriessen also states an admiration of Maurice Ravel, whom he believes to be the first truly avant-garde composer, and for Olivier Messiaen, with whom he "shares a fascination of harmony." Beginning in the 1970s, Andriessen also began to accept minimalism as an important influence, incorporating aspects into his style for both political and aesthetic reasons. Andriessen describes his musical style as "from Stravinsky to Steve Reich, from the gamelan to Miles Davis and Stan Kenton, this is all part of my musical language. But one thing is clear: I almost completely shied away from the nineteenth century [Romanticism]." He takes as the ultimate compliment the indictment made by Dutch playwright Karst Woudstra, "That Andriessen is a bloody classicist!" As the epitome of The Hague School (which is characterized as writing loud, aggressive, rhythmically energetic music devoid of all neo-Romantic sentiment), he is regarded as the most influential Dutch composer—and one of the most important international composers—of his generation. He believes that his music has "something to do with a combination of aggression and coolness, the passion of severity."

A self-professed Marxist and Catholic, Andriessen was very involved in socio-political movements in the 1960s and 70s in the Netherlands. He played an active role in the increasing politicization of the arts, put into practice during the Holland Festival in 1969 with the collective work *Reconstructie*, a music-theater morality based on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the life of Che Guevara, composed jointly with four other former students of van Baaren. Later the same year Andriessen was involved in the *Notenkrakersactie*—the disruption of a concert by the Concertgebouw Orchestra—whose artistic policy the protesters regarded as reactionary. This controversial act has since come to be seen as a turning-point in postwar Dutch musical life, after which the "ensemble culture" of Holland emerged.

For Andriessen it led to a permanent abandonment of the medium of the symphony orchestra and the creation in 1972 of the first of two new ensembles, Orkest de Volharding (Orchestra of Perseverance), to not only perform his music, but to redefine the role of musical performance in socio-cultural terms. A democratic ensemble, the members of Volharding select the music to be performed, often work without a conductor, and produce a sound characterized by extreme individualism and a lack of homogeneous blending. Established, in the words of Tira Gijs, to remove the "ludicrous discrepancy between the two forms of music, jazz and classical," or, in the words of Andriessen, to be "an orchestra that vigorously and vociferously breaks with the division between 'high' and 'low' art," Volharding is, essentially, an "enhanced" big-band—three saxophones, three trumpets, three trombones, flute, horn, bass, and piano (Andriessen was the group's original pianist). Speaking of this instrumentation, Andriessen comments: "I have always used instruments in my work which, from their birth, have been regarded as not good enough for 'real' music: saxophone, guitar, keyboards, bass guitar, whatever you like, as long as it is *dirty stuff*."

To celebrate the Mozart Bicentennial in 1991, the BBC produced an irreverent alternative to the cloyingly respectful homages being paid to Mozart by commissioning six composers to write film scores for a television movie (and now DVD) entitled *Not Mozart*. When Andriessen was asked, he immediately suggested that his filmmaker-collaborator be Peter Greenaway, known for such avant-garde and controversial films as *Prospero's Books* and *The Cook, The Thief,*

*His Wife, Her Lover* (and with whom Andriessen has since collaborated on two operas: *Rosa* [1994] and *Writing for Vermeer* [1999]). As Andriessen said: “I like his films very much, and I recognize in his work what I like in music: this combination of aggression, and strangeness and extreme formalism...I think that, in Greenaway’s films, I recognize something of my own work, namely the combination of intellectual material and vulgar directness.” To commemorate, as well, the twentieth anniversary of Volharding, Andriessen scored the work for that ensemble. Andriessen and Greenaway agreed on a symmetrical form of an alternation of four songs (sung by the jazz singer Astrid Seriese) with three instrumental interludes for their film, entitled *M is for Man, Music, Mozart* (1991). The elegant logic that underlies this provocative, thirty-minute film is, simply:

Having created Man, it was necessary to give him Movement.

Having given him Movement it follows that he should have Music.

And having invented Music, it was necessary to invent Mozart in order to have Perfect Music.

The three interludes (performed this evening), then, are linked with various aspects of this “Man-Movement-Music-Mozart” narrative: the first with the creation of Man and his first attempts at Movement, the second with the invention of Music, and the third with the invention of Mozart, the creator of Perfect Music. Schwarz describes this music as follows:

*M is for Man, Music, Mozart* might seem simple [in fact, Andriessen himself described it as “very simple”], but it is really a remarkable stylistic synthesis that Andriessen is uniquely capable of achieving...The hauntingly tender saxophone melodies in “Instrumental II” explicitly recall Milhaud’s *Création du Monde*, a fitting reference for a film about creation. More literal musical quotations appear in “Instrumental I,” where two Mozart piano sonatas (K. 310 and K. 545) are transformed by their dry, biting, Stravinskian context. Indeed, it is always Stravinsky who tempers the stylistic brew and makes it cohere—even when *Mozart* comes very close to pop music, as in the boogie-woogie ostinato of “Instrumental III,” or the wailing saxes and brass that remind us of Andriessen’s love for big-band swing.

## **William Billings (1746-1800)**

### **Selections from *The New England Psalm Singer* (1770) and *The Continental Harmony* (1794)**

Billings was somewhat deformed in person, blind with one eye, one leg shorter than the other, one arm somewhat withered, with a mind as eccentric as his person was deformed. To say nothing of the deformity of his habits, suffice it to say, he had a propensity for taking snuff that may seem almost incredible, when in these days those that use it are not very much inclined to expose the article. He used to carry it in his coat-pocket, which was made of leather; and every few minutes, instead of taking it in the usual manner, with thumb and finger, would take out a handful and snuff it from between his thumb and clenched hand. We might infer, from this circumstance, that his voice could not have been very pleasant and delicate.”

Nathaniel Gould, *Church Music in America* (1853)

William Billings was one of the best-known American musicians of the eighteenth century. He was born in Boston, 7 October 1746, and he died there 26 September 1800 (making him an almost exact contemporary of Mozart). He was apprenticed to a tanner following elementary schooling and worked in the leather trade on and off for much of his life; in 1787 he was elected to the prestigious position of Sealer of Leather. Although his handicaps prevented him from serving in the Continental Army (he supported the patriot cause musically and was friends with such leaders as Samuel Adams and Paul Revere), they did not prevent him from achieving great success as a singing master. Billings began teaching singing-schools in the Boston area as early as 1769 and quickly gained a high reputation that led him, by 1778, to musical leadership in many of Boston’s most fashionable churches. As the Reverend William Bentley of Salem prophetically wrote in 1800 upon the news of Billings’s death: “He may justly be considered as the father of our New England music. Many who have imitated have excelled him, but none of them had better original powers.... He spake and sung and thought as a man above the common abilities.”

Billings composed over 340 works, almost exclusively sacred choral pieces for four-part unaccompanied chorus, intended for use in singing-schools and churches. Most of his works are hymn tunes, but he also composed 51 fugal tunes, 4 canons and 52 anthems; he composed no instrumental music or solo songs. Billings published six tunebook-collections of his music between 1770 and 1794, the introductions of which contained detailed pedagogical material and more fanciful, literary sections. Perhaps as much as for his music, Billings is known by this assertion from his prefatory remarks to *The New England Psalm-Singer*:

*Nature is the best Dictator*, for all the hard studied Rules that ever were prescribed, will not enable any Person to form an Air any more than the bare Knowledge of the four and twenty Letters, and strict Grammatical Rules will qualify a Scholar for composing a Piece of Poetry, or properly adjusting a Tragedy, without a Genius.... For my own Part, as I don’t think myself confin’d to any Rules for Composition laid down by any that went before me, neither should I think (were I to pretend to lay

down Rules) that any who came after me were any ways obligated to adhere to them, any further than they should think proper: So in fact, I think it is best for every *Composer* to be his own *Carver*.

Although this provocative statement seems to be Billings's declaration of musical independence, a study of his works contradicts this statement. While he was largely self-taught in composition, he learned his craft by studying the tunebooks of English psalmists; in his works, he seems to be following the compositional precepts of William Tans'ur and other English composers. Billings composed in an additive style that was common in small parish churches in England and which was akin to techniques found in Medieval and Renaissance music: first the principal melody, assigned to the tenor voice was composed; then the bass was added, following the rules of consonant counterpoint; the treble (soprano) was then composed to fit consonantly with the tenor and bass; and finally the counter (alto) was written to fill in any missing pitches in the harmony. While the harmonies formed by the conjunction of the voices usually make primary triads in root position, the connection of these triads into harmonic progressions rarely follows the principles of common-practice tonal harmony observed in eighteenth-century art music.

Even those writers who recognized his innate genius and admired some of his melodies were quick to point out his frequent transgressions against the harmonic principles of European art music. In later generations, Billings was accused of being "an awkward harmonist and a worse contrapuntist;" another writer characterized him as "a great music lover and enthusiast, honest in his convictions, but uncouth in expression and utterly untrained in the school of music with which he undertook to compose." These writers were either unaware or chose not to recognize that Billings composed according to a different set of musical procedures, not current in European art music since the Renaissance; in fact, Billings had a better grasp of his compositional technique than he is generally given credit for. As Karl Kroeger, editor of the Collected Edition of Billings's music, has written:

Billings now holds a pre-eminent position in the history of eighteenth-century American music, a reputation that seems fully justified. Today he appears to be the epitome of the eighteenth-century Yankee, ebullient, self-confident, and self-reliant. His music is held in high esteem as a prime species of American folk-art.

The three works sung on this concert, and that Schuman paraphrased in his *New England Triptych*, come from the first and last of Billings's published tunebooks. For Billings, the 1780s were a time of declining fortune; by and large, the public taste was changing, turning towards the (perceived) sophistication of European art music. *The Continental Harmony*, Billings's last tunebook, was published as an act of charity by Thomas and Andrews in 1794; seemingly a commercial failure, it was distinctly an artistic success—it is his longest tunebook (200 pages) and the one most wholly devoted to large-scale works. As Kroeger writes: "In *The Continental Harmony*, Billings's imagination seems more disciplined and his compositional technique more refined.... [He] is able to achieve dramatic effects with a precision and conciseness not seen in his earlier works.... *The Continental Harmony* may be considered his most technically secure and musically mature work." The anthem "Mourn, mourn" displays many of the features of Billings's mature style, such as: flexible prose declamation, an elaborate form, madrigal-esque fugal sections displaying intricate interactions between the various melodic lines, and a more advanced harmonic language.

While the significance of *The Continental Harmony* was only realized in retrospect, Billings's first tunebook, *The New England Psalm-Singer*, was widely and immediately popular, gaining considerable fame for Billings when it was published in 1770. As biographers McKay and Crawford have written:

It would be difficult to find another single publication in the history of American music—in the history of western music, for that matter—whose priority in its tradition is more conspicuous than that of Billings's [*New England Psalm-Singer*].... It appears that roughly a dozen American-composed psalm tunes were published before 1770. Billings's *New England Psalm-Singer*, with its one hundred twenty-odd original compositions increased that figure tenfold. It was the first published compilation of entirely American music; moreover, it was the first tunebook produced by a single American composer.

*The New England Psalm-Singer's* 127 musical pieces (118 psalm-tunes, 5 anthems, and 4 canons) show a great variety in style and competence on Billings's part. This early collection is quite revealing of Billings's character, showing a young man, self-reliant, determined, perceptive, eclectic, uncritical, and with an enthusiasm for and joy in music-making that seems missing in the tunebooks of his English contemporaries.

The canon, in the form of a catch, was a popular type of recreational music in eighteenth-century England. While canons may also have had value as didactic devices in singing-schools to help students develop polyphonic independence, they almost certainly found no place in the musical part of church services. Billings even wrote: "I think the contrivance of Canons is more curious than useful." The four canons found in *New England Psalm-Singer*, with the exception of the engraved frontispiece canon, all seem to have been included merely to fill up empty space on the printing plate at the

end of a piece. In spite of their casual nature, the canons—especially one of considerable musical merit, set to Perez Morton's intensely brooding words, "When Jesus Wept"—are interesting studies in melody and counterpoint.

On the other hand, "Chester" is undoubtedly Billings's most famous, most enduring tune. Unmistakably revolutionary, "Chester" soon became popular with the Continental Army; it was used as a marching song during the Revolutionary War, remaining popular both as a hymn and as a patriotic song well into the nineteenth century—it was "frequently heard from every file in the New England ranks." Nathaniel Gould in his *Church Music in America* of 1853 wrote that "Chester" was "learned by every choir, and in every family, and by every child, and sung in the house and by the way, like popular songs of the present day, and perhaps did more to inspire a spirit of freedom than any one thing that occurred at this critical moment." As an interesting note, the version of "Chester" published in *The New England Psalm-Singer* contains just one stanza of text, providing only veiled hints at Billings's passionate patriotism, written in general terms. However, when he republished "Chester" in his 1778 tunebook *Singing Master's Assistant*, he included four more, highly specific stanzas. Two years after the Declaration of Independence, Billings's political allusions were considerably bolder and his patriotism more confidently displayed.

### Williams Chamber Choir

Bradley Wells, director

Brittany Duncan '05, student conductor

#### Soprano

Aleha Aziz '07  
Alanna Dowman '07  
Brittany Duncan '05  
Meghan Giuliano '05  
Catherine Kelly '07  
Liz Spragins '07

#### Alto

Anna Edmonds '07  
Alyssa Fluty '05  
Melody Marchman '06  
Christine Rabe '06  
Ruth Steinhardt '07  
Lucy Thiboutot '05

#### Tenor

Blake Emerson '07  
Micah Halsey '05  
Ian Jessen '07  
Johannes Pulst-Korenberg  
'06  
Rich Rodriguez '05  
Daniel Rosensweig '08

#### Bass/Baritone

Tom Anderson '06  
Creston Herold '06  
Joe McDonough '06  
Don Mitchell '06  
Matt Steding '07  
Hallock Svensk '07

### William Schuman (1910-1992)

#### *New England Triptych* (1956)

Bill Schuman and I have been close friends through four decades, and I have come to know this man and his music in a way that can be described only as loving. I have rarely met a composer who is so faithfully mirrored in his music; the man is the music. We are all familiar with the attributes generally ascribed to his compositions: vitality, optimism, enthusiasm, long lyrical lines, rhythmic impetuosity, bristling counterpoint, brilliant textures, dynamic tension. But what is not so often remarked is what I treasure most: the human qualities that flow directly from the man into the works—compassion, fidelity, insight, and total honesty. Compassion is the keynote; it is the mark of a man, and, for me, the mark of this man's music.

Leonard Bernstein (1979)

In the history of American classical music, there can be no doubt that William Schuman was one of the most significant composers, most influential teachers, and most important administrators. Until 1934, though, Schuman was more interested in popular music and athletics. (Later, Schuman recollected, "It was not a matter of my being interested in baseball as a youth. It was my youth.") As a teen, he wrote popular tunes to the lyrics of his friend Edward Marks, Jr. (son of the music publisher) and formed a jazz band called "Billy Schuman and his Alamo Society Orchestra." After graduation, he met and began collaborating with Frank Loesser (who wrote, among other successful musicals, *Guys and Dolls*), composing approximately forty songs together. Schuman's ambitions changed after he unwillingly attended a New York Philharmonic concert in 1930. (He reluctantly accompanied his sister to the concert.) Captivated by what he saw and heard, he impetuously decided that he *had* to be a "serious composer," immediately enrolling at the Malkin Conservatory in New York City. In addition to studies there and at the Salzburg Mozarteum, he also studied with composers such as Roy Harris at Juilliard. After winning a composition contest sponsored by the Musicians' Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy (Aaron Copland, a member of the jury, remarked, "Schuman is, so far as I am concerned, the musical find of the year...a composer who is going places.") with his *Symphony No. 2*, Schuman won both the first New York Music Critics' Circle Award in 1941 (for *Symphony No. 3*) and the first Pulitzer Prize in music in 1943 (for *A Free Song*). He remains among the most honored figures in American music, having received 28 honorary degrees, two Guggenheim fellowships (1939 and 1940), membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1946) and later the

American Academy of Arts and Letters (1973), the first Brandeis University Creative Arts Award in music (1957), the Horblit Award from the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Harvard University (1980), the gold medal from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1982), and a second, special Pulitzer Prize (1985).

His personal use of rhythm may be the most striking quality of his music. Copland described it, saying, "There is nothing quite like these rhythms in American music, or any music for that matter...those curiously Schumanesque rhythms, so skittish and personal, so utterly free and inventive." Schuman, however, believed himself to be first and foremost a melodist; as he wrote, "It is all melody. If you can't sing my music it is because you can't sing." As Persichetti, with his keen synthetic ear, observed, perhaps all aspects of Schuman's compositional style descend from his melodies: "The rhythmic structure is implied in the thematic outlines and the harmonies are suggested by the characteristic melodic skips and general textural feeling. Even form ideas are generated by the physical needs and implications of the primary melody." While his music is implicitly tonal, his harmonies are not bass-regulated, nor are they always functional; in fact, many of his pieces demonstrate both chord planing and polytonality.

Equally important were William Schuman's contributions to music education; in fact, he revolutionized the way that education in music was conceived. After teaching at Sarah Lawrence College (1935-1945) and serving a three-year term as director of publications at G. Schirmer, he became president of the Juilliard School, a position he would hold for seventeen years. Not only did he invite a number of distinguished composers to join the faculty (including Peter Mennin and Vincent Persichetti), he began an extensive reorganization of the School—he even formed the Juilliard School of Music by merging the Institute of Musical Art with the Juilliard Graduate School. During his tenure, the Juilliard String Quartet (which became the model for many quartets-in-residence at American colleges) was founded and, perhaps most importantly, the "Literature and Materials of Music" curricular program, which fused theory and history into a single coherent four-year course, was instituted.

The *New England Triptych* (1956) has endured as one of Schuman's most popular scores. The original version of the piece was commissioned and premiered by the University of Miami Orchestra (Andre Kostelantetz, conductor). Schuman wrote that "these pieces do not constitute a 'fantasy' on themes of Billings, nor 'variations' on his themes, but rather a fusion of styles and musical language." Every aspect of the *New England Triptych* is derived from the raw material found in Billings's music; the melodies, harmonies, and sonorities are drawn from the intervallic content, rhythm, motives, range, and tone of Billings's works, while the driving rhythms, harmonic language, and energy show Schuman's style. A champion of the wind-band medium (other works for winds include *Newsreel* [1941], *George Washington Bridge* [1950], and *American Hymn* [1981]), Schuman almost immediately began constructing a version of the *Triptych* for winds alone; Schuman re-composed each movement one at a time, beginning with "Chester" in 1957, followed by "When Jesus Wept" in 1959 and "Be Glad Then, America" in 1975.

In "Be Glad Then, America," Schuman utilizes extracts from Billings's anthem "Mourn, mourn," although reworking these originally major mode materials into the minor mode. The closing "Hallelujah" section from the anthem generates both the opening timpani melody (which transforms into a mysterious, yearning chorale) and the triplet imitation section that drives to the work's coda; the center *allegro* section utilizes themes from two other parts of the anthem: the end of the first polyphonic, imitation section (text: "and ye shall be satisfied") and the fugal section (text: "Be glad then America, shout and rejoice.") This movement is almost an exact transcription of the orchestral version, the only difference being that Schuman removed a brief contrapuntal section near the piece's center. The wind version of "When Jesus Wept" is even more similar to its "parent" version—the only difference is in the orchestration of the musical materials. While the orchestral version is written for strings and field drum with solo oboe and bassoon, the wind version features trumpet and euphonium solos, with the full band in a supportive role. Schuman incorporates the Billings's simple four-part round at the heart of the movement, but, as he wrote, he also created "new settings with contrapuntal embellishments and melodic extensions." The work opens with a solo field drum establishing a mood of emptiness and profound sadness. The duet that follows, which resumes after the central round, is a dialogue between Billings's original melody and Schuman's counterpoint; the work ends with a powerful augmentation of the Billings tune accompanied by block harmonies. While the first two movements are only slight re-workings of the orchestral originals, "Chester" is a vastly different piece, longer and much more involved. Schuman evokes the dualistic and historic use of the tune, both as a hymn and as a marching song. Schuman also rearranged the disposition of the voices in the chorale setting—Billings's melody (tenor) is now put in the soprano, while the treble is moved to the tenor voice. Despite what Schuman said, "Chester" is, in fact, a theme and variations; after individual statements of the chorale by the woodwinds and brass (the orchestral version only has one such statement), five fast, rhythmically complex variations follow, leading to an apotheosized conclusion.

**Steven Bryant (b. 1972)**  
***Chester Leaps In* (1997)**

I strive to write music that leaps off the stage (or reaches out of the speakers) to grab you by the collar and pull you in. Whether through a relentless eruption of energy, or the intensity of quiet contemplation, I want my music to give you no choice, and no other desire, but to listen.

Steven Bryant

Steven Bryant is quickly becoming recognized as a talented and unconventional young composer. He studied composition with John Corigliano at The Juilliard School, Cindy McTee at the University of North Texas, and Francis McBeth at Ouachita University. His compositional interests span a variety of styles and reflect an "ongoing fascination with visceral experience in music." His catalog includes works for orchestra and chamber ensembles, as well as electronic and electro-acoustic pieces. He has also created a recomposition of the Iggy Pop and The Stooges song, "Real Cool Time," for the independent Italian record label *Snowdonia*, as well as music for portions of the Virtual Space Tour at space.com. He believes the strongest characteristic of his music is "its large-scale formal progression: the temporal and perceptual balance of unity and variety the listener experiences. My music always 'goes somewhere,' and usually attempts to drag the audience along whether they want to go or not." Bryant's music has been performed by numerous ensembles across the United States, as well as in England, Japan, Australia, and Germany. He currently works at The Juilliard School, where he provides assistance and instruction in computers and music technology.

Bryant's recent recognition, however, is largely based on his works for wind ensemble; in the last eight years, he has written twelve works for winds. He writes, "I enjoy writing for band, and I enjoy listening to the power and energy a band can create." *Chester Leaps In* was originally composed in 1995 for a trio of piano and two marimbas. At the suggestion of his friend and fellow-composer Eric Whitacre, Bryant transcribed the work for wind band in 1997. As Bryant writes, "In retrospect, this seems an obvious evolution of the piece, given the familiarity of the original tune in the band community." Bryant offers these additional comments on the work:

*Chester Leaps In* is intended as a humorous, cartoonish piece, constructed from the juxtaposition of two divergent musical ideas: a chromatic, angular melodic motive, repeatedly interrupted by the harmonic simplicity of William Billings' well-known hymn tune, "Chester."

I remember walking around the campus [of the University of North Texas] with the first fragment of "Chester" incessantly repeating in my head. At first it was just below the level of consciousness, but eventually I could no longer ignore it, and knew I had to exorcise it in some fashion. At the same time, I was playing with a silly-sounding motive (which is now the opening of the piece) - one of those many fragments of music that I toy with, never intending to let anyone else hear it. These ideas are the equivalent of doodling with pencil and paper while talking on the phone - not intended as Anything of Significance. Sometimes, however, that's the best way to let the subconscious do its work without impedance from the internal critic of the trained, conscious mind. In this case, I was stuck on another piece and needed something fun as a diversion. Over the course of five consecutive afternoons, *Chester Leaps In* was born in its entirety, almost completely by accident. It wasn't until the fourth day or so that I admitted to myself this was actually going to be a complete piece of music, and that I would let others hear it.

The sudden, angular interruptions of the tune "Chester" have no premeditated significance... [It] served as perfect material for an experiment in creating a piece based on the juxtaposition of two radically different musical contexts. The solemn simplicity of "Chester" seemed perfect comic relief for the frenetic, twisting chromaticism of the original motive, and thus it "leapt in." The pun of the title (there's a jazz standard called *Lester Leaps In*) occurred to me nearly a year after its composition—the piece was untitled for its first performance. Thankfully, it no longer suffers from this identity crisis. In the final analysis, *Chester Leaps In* seems to fall in the category of music-for-the-sheer-hedonistic-impulsive-fun-of-it. Please enjoy.

**Robert G. Patterson (b. 1957)**  
***Stomp Igor* (1998)**

Robert Patterson, whose music is described as "witty and irresistible" by *Fanfare* magazine, is a horn player and composer from Memphis, Tennessee. He is a member of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and the founder/director of the Riverside Wind Consort, a small group dedicated to the performance of wind chamber music. Patterson holds degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Memphis, and Oberlin College; his primary composition teachers include George Crumb, Richard Wernick, and Don Freund. His compositions have been performed throughout the United States and internationally, including in Canada, Spain, Norway, and South Africa. He has received numerous commissions and awards, including the 1999 University of Michigan Bands Commission, the 1994 International Composition Prize from the City of Tarragona in Spain, and the 1990 Distinguished Composer of the Year award from

the Music Teachers National Association. In addition to his musical activities, Patterson is also a software developer; his plug-ins for Finale software are used by musicians throughout the world.

Patterson has written the following about *Stomp Igor*:

*Stomp Igor* is an attempt to expunge Igor Stravinsky's style from my music, paradoxically by deliberately stealing from him. Snatches of *Rite of Spring* and *Petroushka* provided an opportunity to seek imaginative counterparts for Stravinsky's orchestrations within the palette of a wind band. Hopefully the wind palette and the somewhat irreverent settings cause the excerpts to be heard in a fresh way. This seems only fair, given Stravinsky's penchant for tinkering with his own forebears.

The conflict between my style and Stravinsky's is most overt in the bars preceding rehearsal 17 [near the work's end]. Two different direct quotations from the *Rite of Spring* engulf and overwhelm a gradually building texture with a quasi-salsa beat. I imagine the quotes as a sudden movie shot of Godzilla's jaws snapping menacingly while the world falls apart at his feet. A few bars later the brass (led by the trombones) arrive like St. George and banish Stravinsky forever to his own music—or at least out of my music. Of course, the hero's music suspiciously resembles Shostakovich, but we'll slay that dragon another day.