SAU School of Music
presents

Southern Adventist University
Wind Symphony

With Liberty and Justice for ALL

Ken Parsons, conductor

SOUTHERN
ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Sunday, April 7, 2019
7:30 pm
Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church
With Liberty and Justice for ALL

Liberty Fanfare (1986)  
John Williams  
(b. 1932)  
transcribed by Paul Lavender

New England Triptych (1956)  
I.  Be Glad Then, America  
II.  When Jesus Wept  
III.  Chester  
William Schuman  
(1910-1992)

From the Delta (1945)  
I.  Work Song  
II.  Spiritual  
III.  Dance  
William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)

A Movement for Rosa (1994)  
Mark Camphouse  
(b. 1954)

Of Our New Day Begun (2015)  
Omar Thomas  
(b. 1984)

Sweet Land of Liberty (1988)  
James Sochinski  
(b. 1947)

Please silence all electronic devices and refrain from using flash photography for the duration of this afternoon's performance. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.
With Liberty and Justice for ALL

We say these words frequently, casually, without contemplating their deeper meaning for us as individuals, and as a nation. However, in a time when the cities of Charlottesville, Charleston, Pittsburgh and Orlando have witnessed hate-inspired mass killings and violence, and a tide of suspicion toward various ethnic and religious groups continues to rise, we pause to ponder them more thoughtfully.

Liberty Fanfare (1986)  
John Williams

Commissioned for the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Statue of Liberty, John Williams' Liberty Fanfare embodies the dignity and compassion that evokes the American spirit at its best—distilled in Emma Lazarus' immortal words:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Gloows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

New England Triptych (1956)  
William Schuman

William Schuman was born in New York City one hundred years ago. After completing his studies, he became a music instructor at Sarah Lawrence College, and later president of the Juilliard School of Music. Overshadowing his contributions to academia are his great compositions, including an opera, ten symphonies, concertos, choral works, chamber music, and five works for wind band.

Schuman composed New England Triptych: Three Pieces after William Billings for orchestra in 1957, but later rescored and adapted it for band. Schuman explained his impetus for writing the Triptych thus: "William Billings is a major figure in the history of American music. The works of this dynamic composer capture the spirit of sinewy ruggedness, deep religiosity and patriotic fervor that we associate with the Revolutionary period. I am not alone among American composers who feel an identity with Billings, and it is this sense of identity which accounts for my use of his music as a point of departure."

The first movement, "Be Glad then, America," is built on these lines from Billings' text:

Yea, the Lord will answer
And say unto His people—behold
I will send you corn and wine and oil
And ye shall be satisfied therewith.

Be glad then, America,
Shout and rejoice.
Fear not O land,
Be glad and rejoice.
Halleluyah!

After a short introduction by solo timpani, the strings develop music that suggests the "Halleluyah" of the end. Trombones and trumpets start the main section in a varied setting of the words "Be Glad then, America, Shout and Rejoice." The solo timpani returns, leading to a fugal section based on the words "And Ye Shall Be Satisfied." The music gains momentum as combined themes lead to a climax, followed by a free adaptation of Billings' "Halleluyah" music and a final reference to the "Shout and Rejoice" music.
Although the biblical text “Jesus wept” (John 11:35) appears in the context of Jesus mourning the death of Lazarus, Billings used it as a metaphor for the colonists’ sorrow and all-consuming desire for freedom from British oppression. Although originally composed as a round, Schuman frames the piece with trumpet and euphonium statements of the tune. Schuman’s treatment of the round is very free and highly creative.

“Chester” was born during the American Revolution, appearing in 1778 in a book of tunes and anthems composed by the self-taught Billings called The Singing Master’s Assistant. “Chester” was popular throughout the colonies, from Vermont to South Carolina. It became the song of the American Revolution, sung around the campfires of the Continental Army and played by fifers on the march. Its music and words expressed perfectly the burning desire for freedom from British rule which sustained the colonists through the difficult years of the Revolution:

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,  
And Slav’ry clank her galling chains,  
We fear them not, We trust in God,  
New England’s God forever reigns.

From the Delta (1947)  
William Grant Still

It is a great irony that many of those who enthusiastically sang Billings’ words about throwing off “slavery’s galling chains” were themselves slave-owners. It would take another war, 75 years later, for those chains to be officially broken for black Americans. Even after emancipation, black life was largely marked by prejudice, physical, financial and civic mistreatment, resulting in poverty. For many, life continued similarly well into the 20th-century.

Known as the “Dean of Negro Composers,” William Grant Still was born in Woodville, Mississippi in 1895, and grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas. Although originally interested in medicine, Still soon turned toward the study of music. His chief composition teachers were George W. Chadwick and Edgard Varèse.

Still’s music is full of descriptive titles, such as the Afro-American Symphony (1930), In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy (1943), Pages from Negro History (1943), and From the Delta (1945). Still described the three-movement suite as “a first attempt to express in music the romance of the Delta country in my native state of Mississippi. These three short pieces are, however, all original. None of them are based on authentic folk material.”

The first movement, “Work Song,” is evocative of the kind of music that kept crews toiling under the hot sun focused and unified throughout long days in the fields. A high, piercing, bluesy call opens the piece, with the lower regions of the ensemble responding en masse. After a few of these back-and-forths, the main melody appears, accompanied by hammer-on-anvil strokes. The prevailing mood is one of unified endurance under harsh conditions.

“Spiritual,” the second and longest of the three movements, expresses sorrow in the face of difficulties, injustice, and prejudice. While it is, as Still claimed, original, it bears a striking resemblance to “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.”

The concluding “Dance” is a celebration of life’s goodness in spite of nearly-overpowering hardship. It could easily be the music for a Saturday night barn dance, with a counter-melody reminiscent of “Arkansas Traveler” hovering in the background. After maintaining a brisk but danceable pace, the music careens almost out of control, as the exuberant dancers whirl and twirl.
A Movement for Rosa (1992)  
Mark Camphouse

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated city bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Mrs. Parks earned the title “Mother to a Movement” for her act of personal courage, sparking the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. In her 1992 book Rosa Parks: My Story, she wrote:

I look back now and realize that since that evening on the bus in Montgomery, we have made a lot of progress in some ways. All those laws against segregation have been passed, and all that progress has been made. But a whole lot of white people’s hearts have not been changed. Dr. King used to talk about the fact that if a law was changed, it might not change hearts, but it would offer some protection. He was right. We now have some protection, but there is still much racism and racial violence. It seems like we still have a long way to go.

A Movement for Rosa is a quasi-tone poem containing three contrasting sections. The first evokes Rosa’s early years, from her 1914 birth in Tuskegee, Alabama to her marriage in 1932. The second portrays years of racial strife in Montgomery and the quest for social equality. The third section is one of quiet strength and serenity. The hymn “We Shall Overcome” (foreshadowed in the first two sections) is heard in its entirely near the end. The work’s final measures serve as an ominous reminder of racism’s lingering presence in American society.

Composer Mark Camphouse is Professor of Conducting and Composition at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. His many works for winds, typified by an unquenchable Romantic spirit, have received widespread critical acclaim, and are performed worldwide.

Of Our New Day Begun (2015)  
Omar Thomas

Born to Guyanese parents, Omar Thomas  earned a Bachelor of Music degree from James Madison University, and a Master of Music in Jazz Composition from New England Conservatory of Music. While still completing his degree at NEC, Thomas was appointed as Assistant Professor (he is now Associate Professor) of Harmony at Berklee College of Music. During this current academic year, Thomas is a visiting faculty at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. His instrumental and choral works have been performed across the country and internationally.

Of tonight’s work, Thomas has written:

Of Our New Day Begun was written to honor nine beautiful souls who lost their lives to a callous act of hatred and domestic terrorism on the evening of June 17, 2015 while worshipping in their beloved sanctuary, the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately referred to as “Mother Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina. My greatest challenge in creating this work was walking the line between reverence for the victims and their families, and honoring my strong, bitter feelings towards both the perpetrator and the segments of our society that continue to create people like him. I realized that the most powerful musical expression I could offer incorporated elements from both sides of that line—embracing my pain and anger while being moved by the displays of grace and forgiveness demonstrated by the victims’ families.
Historically, black Americans have, in great number, turned to the church to find refuge and grounding in the most trying of times. Thus, the musical themes and ideas for Of Our New Day Begun are rooted in the Black American church tradition. The piece is anchored by James and John Johnson’s time-honored song “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (known endearingly as the “Negro National Anthem”), and peppered with blues harmonies and melodies. Singing, stomping, and clapping are also prominent features of this work, as they have always been mainstays of black music traditions, and the inclusion of the tambourine in these sections is a direct nod to black worship services.

Of Our New Day Begun begins with a unison statement of a melodic cell from “Lift Every Voice…” before giving way to ghostly, bluesy chords in the horns and bassoons. This section moves to a dolorous and bitter presentation of the anthem in irregularly shifting 12/8 and 6/8 meter, which grows in intensity as it offers fleeting glimmers of hope and relief answered by cries of blues-inspired licks. A maddening ostinato-driven section representing a frustration and weariness that words cannot, grows into a group singing of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” fueled by the stomping and clapping reminiscent of the black church.

In the latter half of the piece, the music turns hopeful, settling into 9/8 time and modulating up a step during its ascent to a glorious statement of the final lines of “Lift Every Voice…” in 4/4, honoring the powerful display of humanity set forth by the families of the victims. There is a long, emotional descrescendo that lands on a pensive and cathartic gospel-inspired hymn song. Returning to 9/8 time, the piece comes to rest on a unison F that grows from a very distant hum to a thunderous roar, driven forward by march-like stomping to represent the ceaseless marching of black Americans towards equality.

The work’s title comes from the last part of the song’s first stanza:

...sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.

James Sochinski

_Sweet Land of Liberty_ (1988)

So questions remain: what kind of nation do we want to be? How does our commitment to the Statue’s ideals—the “Mother of exiles” offering “world-wide welcome” to “huddled masses” and “wretched refuse”—manifest itself in today’s society? Is it still possible? Are we assuring liberty and justice to all of our citizens, regardless of race, religion, orientation? James Sochinski’s _Sweet Land of Liberty—a dazzling setting of America_—provides an opportunity to think about how each of us can truly “let freedom ring!”

James Sochinski is Professor of Music at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In his 41 years of service there, he has taught music theory, music history, and served for 38 years as arranger for the Virginia Tech 330-member “Marching Virginians.” His published and commissioned works have been performed throughout the world at new music festivals, concerts and conferences.
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Ken Parsons is Associate Professor of Music at Southern Adventist University. In addition to the Wind Symphony, Mr. Parsons directs the Jazz Ensemble, the Brass Choir, and serves as Assistant to the Dean of the School of Music. He also teaches various music education courses as well as applied trumpet.

Before coming to Southern in 2000, Mr. Parsons taught at Forest Lake Academy in Apopka, Florida from 1986-2000. He has also taught at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and Redlands Junior Academy in Redlands, California.

Mr. Parsons holds bachelor’s degrees in music education and theology from Walla Walla College, and a M.Mus. degree in Brass Performance from the University of Oregon. He has performed extensively on trumpet in various orchestral, wind and jazz ensembles and as a soloist in the Northwest, Southern California, Florida, and Tennessee.

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<td>April 14</td>
<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>Senior Recital: Crystal Min, piano</td>
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<td>Jazz Ensemble Concert</td>
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