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Boston University Wind Ensemble, December 7, 2006

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
College of Fine Arts School of Music

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
WIND ENSEMBLE
DAVID MARTINS conductor

Thursday, December 7, 2006 at 8pm
Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue

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Thursday, December 7, 2006 at 8pm
Tsai Performance Center

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY
WIND ENSEMBLE**

DAVID MARTINS conductor

GRAINGER
Revised Frank Erickson

Children's March:
"Over the Hills and Far Away"

SCHULLER

Symphony for Brass and Percussion

Andante
Vivace
Lento Desolato
Introduction (Quasi Cadenza)-Allegro

Intermission

WILSON

SHAKATA: Singing the World into Existence

REED

Russian Christmas Music

PROGRAM NOTES

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882–1961)

Children's March "Over the Hills and Far Away" (1918)

Percy Grainger was born in Brighton, Australia and spent the first thirteen years of his life in Melbourne, where he was educated and taught piano by his mother Rose. After his debut in 1894 (at the age of 12), money was raised to send him to Frankfurt where he studied piano and composition at the Hoch Conservatory. In 1901, he moved to London and began to establish a reputation as both a concert pianist and private teacher. However, despite composing a number of large works, Grainger did not actively promote himself as a composer until his reputation as a pianist was secure. In 1914, with the onset of World War I, he moved to the United States, joining the US Army in 1917. It was during this time that composition of the *Children's March* was begun. As an instrumentalist and band director in the army, Grainger naturally began to write music for military band. *Children's March*, one of his first compositions for this medium, was first published in 1919. Though Grainger is perhaps most famous for his settings of folk melodies, this piece consists entirely of original material, though one might say its simplicity and directness are folk-inspired. *Children's March* is also one of the first compositions for band to use the piano as an important component.

Gunther Schuller (b. 1925)

Symphony for Brass and Percussion, op. 16 (1951)

Gunther Schuller was born in New York to a musical family; his father was a violinist in the New York Philharmonic for forty-two years. By the time he graduated from high school, he was already an accomplished horn player, even playing under renowned conductor Arturo Toscanini in the American broadcast premiere of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony at the age of 16. He joined the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in 1945 and played horn under many prominent conductors until 1959. It was at this time that he retired from the orchestra to focus on composing. It was at this time that he also began to gain recognition as a jazz scholar (publishing a landmark book in 1968) and an educator. In addition to teaching at Yale University and the Manhattan School of Music, Schuller was president of the New England Conservatory for ten years, from 1967 to 1977.

On February 2, 1950, the first three movements of the Symphony for Brass and Percussion were given their premiere by the Group A Brass Ensemble. It was not until April 1, 1951 that the complete work would be premiered at the International Society for Contemporary Music Forum, held that year at Columbia University. Soon thereafter it was performed by the New York and conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos and served to cement for this piece a permanent place in the brass ensemble repertory. Schuller, as a brass player, wanted to write a piece that

transcended the traditional stereotypes of brass instruments. He sought in this symphony to demonstrate the range of expression possible with brass. When it was first published in 1959, a reviewer referred to the piece as a "textbook" on the subject of writing for brass, a place it continues to hold to this day.

Dana Wilson

SHAKATA: Singing the World into Existence (1989)

Dana Wilson holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music and is currently a professor of theory and composition at Ithaca College. His works have been commissioned and performed by leading ensembles all over the world. Through his compositions, Wilson strives to introduce audiences to new ways of thinking about music and performance. *Shakata: Singing the World into Existence* was inspired by the Australian Aboriginal myth that the singing of the ancestors created the world. The primal quality of this work, demonstrated through its use of rhythmic vocalization and percussive ensemble writing, recalls this myth in vivid and expressive terms. The Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, a national music fraternity of which Alfred Reed, another composer on this program, was a member, commissioned this piece.

Alfred Reed (1921–2005)

Russian Christmas Music (1944, rev. 1968)

Born in New York, Mr. Reed was playing trumpet professionally while still in high school. After a brief period of conducting the 529th US Air Force Band, he moved on to the Julliard School, where he stayed until 1948. His interest in music education led him to a position as editor at Hansen Publishing, and in 1966 he joined the theory and composition faculty of the University of Miami, where he stayed until his retirement in 1993. Alfred Reed was one of the most prolific and frequently performed American composers, having written over 200 works. His compositions for wind ensemble are some of the best original works for this medium ever written.

In 1944, Roy Harris, an American teacher and composer, set about organizing a concert to strengthen Russian and American relations. The concert, to take place in Denver, Colorado, was to premiere a new American work alongside a new Russian work. However, Harris found himself in trouble when he was notified that Prokofiev's *March, op. 99*, the chosen Russian work, had already been performed by the 529th US Air Force Band, Alfred Reed's organization. Harris contacted Reed and commissioned him to write a new "Russian" work for the occasion. With only two weeks remaining until the concert, Reed began composing *Russian Christmas Music*. He finished it in eleven days, leaving just enough time for it to be copied and rehearsed. It was premiered on December 12, 1944

and broadcast nationally on NBC radio.

The piece is divided into four sections: Carol of the Little Russian Children, Antiphonal Chant, Village Song and Cathedral Chorus. It takes advantage of the unique tone colors possible with a wind ensemble, seeking to capture the unique sound of Russian Orthodox music, which is strictly vocal. This piece is one of the most popular and frequently performed classics in the wind band literature.

Program notes compiled by Evan Cortens.

DAVID MARTINS conductor

David Martins is Adjunct Professor of Music at Boston University. He has degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the University of Lowell College of Music and was a recipient of a Berkshire Music Festival Tanglewood Fellowship. He is also Professor of Music at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Professor Martins balances orchestral and chamber venues with an active teaching and conducting schedule. He is the Music Director of the Boston University Wind Ensemble, University of Massachusetts Lowell Wind Ensemble, Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Wind Ensemble and the Lowell Summer Concert Band.

Professor Martins is Music Director Emeritus of the Metropolitan Wind Symphony, which during his tenure of ten years performed at the National Conference of the Association of Concert Bands and commissioned numerous new compositions. Since the summer of 1999, he has served on the faculty of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute as Director of Wind Activities for the Young Artists Orchestra.

He is a member of the clarinet section of the Rhode Island Philharmonic and Boston Classical Orchestras and appears frequently with the New Hampshire Symphony Orchestra, ProArte Chamber Orchestra, Boston Ballet Orchestra and Alea III. He has also performed with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, Monadnock Music Festival and Springfield Symphony. In past years he has toured with the Philharmonia Hungarica Orchestra of Germany on their U. S. tours, the Puccini Festival Orchestra throughout Italy, and has performed six tours throughout Greece and Russia as soloist and member of the contemporary chamber ensemble Alea III. He can be heard on orchestral and chamber recordings on the CRI, Koch, Titanic, Gasparo and Albany labels. Professor Martins is a Boosey & Hawkes/Buffet artist-clinician.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY WIND ENSEMBLE

DAVID MARTINS conductor

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Oboe/English Horn

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Brandon Finley *
Cheng Ma #
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Pei-Yeh Tsai

* Principal on Grainger

Principal on Wilson

@ Principal on Reed

+ Principal on Schuller

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Wednesday, December 6, 8pm

ALEA III
THEODORE ANTONIOU conductor
Works by Hartmann, Gyftakis,
W. Antoniou, and Ligeti
Tsai Performance Center

Thursday, December 7, 8pm

Boston University Wind Ensemble
DAVID MARTINS conductor
Grainger Children's March
Erickson Over the Hills and Far Away
Schuller Symphony for Brass and Percussion
Wilson SHAKATA: *Singing the World into Existence*
Reed Russian Christmas Music
Tsai Performance Center

Friday, December 8, 8pm

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Muir String Quartet
In residence at Boston University
CFA Concert Hall

Wednesday, December 13, 8pm

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CFA Concert Hall

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