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A Master's Recital in Wind Band Conducting

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A Master's Recital in Wind Band Conducting

A Recital Abstract Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Music

Stephen Seaberg

University of Northern Iowa

May 2023

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This Study by: Stephen Seaberg

Entitled: A Master's Recital in Wind Band Conducting

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirements for the

Degree of Master of Music

Date

Dr. Danny Galyen, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date

Dr. Alison Altstatt, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Justin Mertz, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Gabriela Olivares, Interim Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Stephen Seaberg

Entitled: A Master's Recital in Wind Band Conducting

Dates of Recital: 11/15/2022, 2/23/2023, 4/11/2023

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

Abstract

Stephen Seaberg conducted three performances that constituted a recital in partial fulfillment of a Master in Music in Wind Band Conducting. The performances took place on the evenings of Tuesday, November 15th, 2022; Thursday, February 23rd, 2023; and Tuesday, April 11th, 2023 in the Great Hall at the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center. The recital program included four works that relate to historical music in different ways, and three of which are part of the standard repertoire. The works included: Paul Hindemith's *Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven* (1946), Percy Grainger's *Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon* (1936), Li Chan's *Folksong of Midu* (2017), and Vincent Persichetti's *Divertimento for Band* (1950). The performing ensemble was the University of Northern Iowa Wind Ensemble.

Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven, Paul Hindemith

When Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) immigrated to the United States in 1940, he had already enjoyed over a decade of success as a violist, composer, and teacher, first in Germany and then abroad. He had composed major works including *Kammermusik* (1922-7), *Das Marienlieben* (1923), *Concerto for Orchestra* (1925), and *Mathis der Maler* (1935), and had taught composition at the Berlin Musikhochschule since 1927.¹ However, when his works were banned in Germany in 1936 after a performance of his Violin Sonata in E, he had already been preparing to emigrate from Germany due to Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels's public distaste for the composer.² After arriving in the United States, it took less than a year for Yale University to offer him a full-time

¹ Giselher Schubert, "Hindemith, Paul," *Grove Music Online*, 2001; Accessed March 31, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13053>

² Schubert, "Hindemith, Paul."

professorship which served as his primary employment until he accepted a position at the University of Zürich in 1951.³ While teaching kept him busy, Hindemith still managed to compose several major works such as *Symphony in Eb* (1940), *Ludus tonalis* (1942), *Symphonic Metamorphosis* (1943), *Symphonia Serena* (1946), and *Symphony in B-flat* (1951) in the United States.⁴

Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven is the second movement of the *Symphonia Serena*, and while the entire work is for orchestra, this movement is scored only for winds and percussion. This gives balance to the inner two movements, as the third movement is scored only for strings.⁵ The Dallas Symphony Orchestra commissioned the work in 1946 for a performance on February 1st, 1947, and Antal Dorati conducted the premiere. Hindemith declined to attend due to his perception that Dorati and the orchestra were receiving more attention than the composer and composition.⁶

The work as a whole is made up of four movements with traditional symphonic forms: the first movement is in sonata form, the second movement's *Geschwindmarsch* acts as scherzo, the third movement highlights the versatility of strings by separating them into two groups: one scored *arco* and the other *pizzicato*, and the highly contrapuntal finale introduces new themes while resembling the traditional sonata-rondo finale form.⁷ The second movement borrows melodic material from Beethoven's *Yorckscher Marsch*, written in 1809 for the Prussian Army and compiled in 1819 into a

³ Luther Noss, *Paul Hindemith in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 137.

⁴ Noss, *Paul Hindemith in the United States*, 112, 117, 119, 125, 136.

⁵ David Ewen, *The World of Twentieth-Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 370.

⁶ Noss, *Paul Hindemith in the United States*, 125.

⁷ Ewen, *The World of Twentieth-Century Music*, 370.

volume entitled *12 Geschwindmarsche*.⁸ Hindemith thus takes his title from this volume, which can simply be translated to “quick march.”

Hindemith’s setting is divided into three clear sections which have little in common except the Beethoven march melody. The two other commonalities are: the brass and woodwinds are separated throughout, and the tempo remains steady, marked from the beginning as “Rather fast” (half note = 112). Each of the three sections makes its way through the entire march melody, although Hindemith saves the final chords of the march for the final iteration. The first section moves slyly between 2/2, 3/4, and 5/4 time signatures, which are difficult for the listener to distinguish. Hindemith gives the horns and tuba the Beethoven melody in the first section as the trombones provide staccato harmonic color. Interspersed between the Beethoven melodic statements, the woodwinds exchange almost constant eighth note figures. Interestingly, the Beethoven material in this first section acts as almost comedic interruption or, viewed another way, as a background *cantus firmus*, to the nonstop woodwind passagework at the fore.

The second section features the reed instruments in a unique time signature: 2/d. . The triplet feel is a clear break from Beethoven’s march meter, although the melody remains recognizable. As in the first section, Hindemith employs different instruments in defined roles with the Beethoven material spaced out. The march melody, altered with some minor sonority, is in the oboe or English horn. The accompanying reeds move in rhythmic unison with the melody and harmonize most often in a perfect fifth below the melody, thus mimicking the sound of early organum. The celesta chimes in with echoing chords, and contrasting original material given to the flutes and piccolo fills in the rest of

⁸ Donald Chittum, “Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven by Paul Hindemith,” *Notes* 37, no. 3 (March 1981): 683.

the space. Notably, the flutes and piccolo remain in a 2/2 time signature and their quartal eighth note passages in close canon give off an impression of fluttery aggressiveness.

Hindemith employs the trumpets and percussion, invoking a traditionally triumphant sound, for the first time in the final section. The trumpets take over the Beethoven melody, this time in the key of D-flat, and the snare drum lends the truest march feel of the movement. The brass maintain a rhythmic connection to the trumpet melody throughout this section, and often land in major triads at the ends of phrases. The upper woodwinds return to constant eighth notes as in the first section, although any semblance of melodic intent previously given to them is now erased. Hindemith sets the climax of the movement at the high point of the final phrase of the Beethoven melody, including a solitary single cymbal crash for good measure; the movement concludes with woodwind voices each alternating between pairs of notes (still in eighth note rhythm) above block brass chords. Per the key change of the melody at the beginning of the final section, the movement ends with a tutti D-flat Major chord. The movement functions well as a scherzo replacement with Hindemith's contrasting counterpoint in the first section, chant-like second section, and exuberant yet harmonically dense final section.

Two Folk Song Arrangements

The next two pieces are both band arrangements of folk songs, though written over eighty years apart. They demonstrate the historical and continued tradition of utilizing folk melodies in the band medium, and the singing nature of wind instruments which lends well to such melodies. The British folk revival of the early twentieth century helped to solidify the folk song as standard source material for wind band works.⁹ A

⁹ Keith Polk et al., "Band," *Grove Music Online*, 2001; Accessed April 24, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40774>

short list of just some of the wind band pieces in the standard repertoire that use folk melodies include Holst's *Second Suite in F* (1911), Vaughn William's *English Folk Song Suite* (1923), Grainger's *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937), Milhaud's *Suite Française* (1944), Zdechlik's *Chorale and Shaker Dance* (1971), and Reed's *Armenian Dances* (1972).

Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon, Percy Grainger

Percy Grainger (1882-1961) was an Australian-American composer who is best known for his arrangements of English folk songs. Although his legacy is marked by troubling personal views surrounding race and sex, he remains one of the most important figures in the development of wind band literature. While living in England from 1901 to 1914, he collected many folk songs recreationally yet committedly, and in 1906 he became the first person to make live recordings of folk singers in the British Isles.¹⁰ As World War I broke out, Grainger moved to the United States where he found fame as a pianist and composer, and remained the rest of his life. He also served as an oboist, soprano saxophonist, and bandleader in the US Army during the war, which is where his fondness for the wind band grew.¹¹ In the preface to *Lincolnshire Posy*, he remarked that “[a]s a vehicle of *deeply emotional expression* [the wind band] seems to me unrivalled.”¹² Wind band devotees agree with this assessment, which can be seen by the frequent inclusion of Grainger's works on wind band programming into the twenty-first century.

The origin of the folk tune *Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon* is unknown, although Robert Burns knew it as “The Caledonian Hunt's Delight” from a Scottish

¹⁰ John Bird, *Percy Grainger*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121.

¹¹ Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, “Grainger (George) Percy,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001; Accessed April 1, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.11596>

¹² Percy Grainger, *Lincolnshire Posy* (London: Schott Music Corporation, 1940), Program-Note.

collection of tunes when he set his own text to it in 1792.¹³ Burns's lyrics describe the beauty of the natural environment surrounding the River Doon, but the charm is spoiled for the writer due to unrequited love. The song is pentatonic, in triple meter, and in AABA form. Each phrase is four measures in 6/8, and the first A phrase acts as an antecedent as it ends on a half cadence; the B phrase melody continually returns to the fifth scale degree, also ending on a half cadence.

Example 1. *Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon*, A and B Phrases

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'A Phrase' and the bottom staff is labeled 'B Phrase'. Both staves are in treble clef, 6/8 time, and F major. The A phrase consists of four measures: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). The B phrase consists of four measures: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter).

Grainger first arranged *Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon* for chorus, whistlers, and harmonium.¹⁴ It premiered in 1903 in the London home of Lilith Lowrey, one of Grainger's early supporters.¹⁵ Grainger's 1932 arrangement for wind band is in F Major with eighth note = 104.¹⁶ The tune is stated twice in his arrangement without transition in between the verses. In the first verse, the song's melody is consistently in the highest voice, and the harmony is made up of four voices with the highest harmony voice most active. Grainger sets each of the five parts in multiple instruments including at least one brass and one woodwind instrument per part; the goal in this case was not to separate the sections but to unite them as a whole. Only a single chromatic note in the second

¹³ William Chappell, "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight, "Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon, and Robert Burns," *Notes and Queries* 11, no. 277, (April 1867): 321.

¹⁴ Scott A. Stewart, "Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon," in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band Vol. 2*, edited by Richard Miles (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1998), 280.

¹⁵ Bird, *Percy Grainger*, 94.

¹⁶ Stewart, "Ye Banks and Braes," 280.

harmony line occurs toward the end of the B phrase in m. 13, as the first verse is otherwise diatonic.

At the beginning of the second verse, Grainger adds a descant above the melody in the high woodwinds and first cornet, thus leading the listener to question which voice to focus on throughout the rest of the work. In general, the descant includes eighth note motion while the melody sustains and vice versa. At the B phrase, Grainger introduces the first tutti scoring and the addition of E-flat to inner voices and the descant moves the harmony to F Mixolydian. As the music “slows off” and “loudens” (Grainger’s terminology) to the climax at the beginning of the final A phrase, F Major returns after a brief secondary dominant on the third count of m. 29. The final A phrase incorporates a heavy descending countermelody line in the horns and third cornet, an echo of the melodic motion of the B phrase. With the descant, melody, added countermelody, and tutti forces, the final phrase’s sound is characterized by power and breadth. As a result, Grainger demonstrates his faith in the emotional power of the wind band to be warranted.

Folksong of Midu, Li Chan

Li Chan (b. 1981) is a resident composer for the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Band. She took this post in 2006 and has since composed several works for wind chamber ensembles and for wind band.¹⁷ Some of her music is available for purchase through Hong Kong publisher JC Link,¹⁸ while *Folksong of Midu* is available for purchase through Murphy Music. *Folksong of Midu* received third prize in the Educational Category of the 2017 WASBE International Composition Competition.¹⁹ The

¹⁷ “Li Chan,” The Wind Repertoire Project, Accessed March 31, 2023, https://www.windrep.org/Li_Chan.

¹⁸ “Li Chan,” JC Link Music, Accessed March 31, 2023, <https://jclinkmusic.com/>.

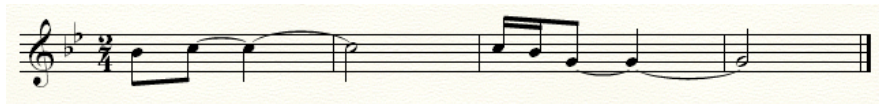
¹⁹ “Li Chan,” The Wind Repertoire Project, Accessed March 31, 2023, https://www.windrep.org/Li_Chan.

piece thus received a recorded (and published) performance by The Orchestra of the Dutch Customs, conducted by Björn Bus, on July 19th, 2017 at the 2017 WASBE Conference.²⁰ This recording is easily found on YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Music.

The tune Li based her work on has been recorded by many other contemporary artists. Midu refers to a county within the Yunnan region in southern China near the border of Myanmar, a highly mountainous and ethnically diverse region.²¹ The tune is set in a minor pentatonic scale and is in two contrasting sections.

Example 2. Li Chan, *Folksong of Midu*, Melody Phrases

Phrase *a*



Phrase *b*



Other artists have set this tune in a wide variety of ensembles ranging from traditional to contemporary pop. Artist Gen Dequan recorded it on the Hulusi, a traditional recorder-like wind instrument.²² Another video of unknown artists includes a *hulusi* player, a *duxianqin* (a one-stringed traditional instrument), and pianist performing a jazz-influenced version.²³ Vocalists Long Piao-Piao and Lei Ting have each recorded it: Long's version is older with strings, Hulusi, and acoustic percussion;²⁴ Lei's version

²⁰ "WASBE International Conference 2017," World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, Accessed March 31, 2023, https://wasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Wasbe2017_LowRes.pdf

²¹ Kit Prendergast et al., "Bee Representations in Human Art and Culture through the Ages," *Art and Perception* 10, no. 1 (December 2021): 20.

²² "Gen Dequan - A Folk Song of Midu," May 16, 2011, music video, 3:36, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSGfqSBmf-I>.

²³ "Folk music: Midu Folk Song," April 13, 2009, concert video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTFiHOiohxo>.

²⁴ Long Piao-Piao, "Song of Midu Mountain," August 19, 2015, audio-only video, 3:16 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bb7_4hDfBOg.

sounds more modern with an accompanying pop drumbeat and modernized traditional sounds.²⁵ The lyrics in each vocal version I have found are identical, although my research has yet to glean whether these lyrics are original to the tune. The text first references the mountains and cliffs of the region and follows with a short story about the commitment of the region's honeybees that travel "deep into the mountains to gather flowers" to the point that they would die if necessary. This commitment is then equated with an archetypal man's dedication for the woman he loves.²⁶

Li's treatment of the folksong heavily utilizes Phrase *b* and also includes two middle sections of original material. The work is through-composed with five sections (Introduction and Sections 1-4), although there is a hint of ABA form due to the presence of Phrase *b* in both Section 1 and 4. Sections 2 and 3, respectively, incorporate an original theme and original motive that I have titled the Grandeur Theme and Delicate Motive.

Li's Introduction section only slightly alludes to the folk tune themes. Six measures of mallet percussion patterns begin the piece and set the c minor pentatonic scale as the tonal environment. As woodwinds begin to enter, Li incorporates fragments of both Phrases *a* and *b*: the rising two-note beginning of *a*, and the eighth note to two sixteenth note rhythmic pattern of *b*. As more voices enter, an *accelerando* and *crescendo* concludes in the first *tutti* figure at m. 20.

²⁵ Lei Ting, "Folk Songs in Midu," track 4 on *Hometown Rustic Songs*, 2016, Songswave audio.

²⁶ Prendergast et al., "Bee Representations," 21. Translation by Yuxiao Sun.

Example 3. Li Chan, *Folksong of Midu*, m. 20



Through this point, every note of the composition has come from the c minor pentatonic scale, and Li rarely uses non-pentatonic pitches throughout the work. The tutti of m. 20 acts as a bridge to the first full section of the piece. Section 1's overall structure is three iterations of a Phrase *b* statement followed by a responsorial development phrase. Measure 21 begins with a slightly simplified version of Phrase *b*, first set in first flute with second flute and clarinets joining in the second half of the phrase. Beneath this phrase is the first incorporation of notes outside of the pentatonic scale, first in second flute, then in bass clarinet. After the first development phrase, the second statement of Phrase *b* at m. 37 shifts to g minor pentatonic, which only lasts through the phrase. The second development response, at m. 45, is the clearest inclusion of Phrase *a* of the piece, although six staggered entrances of Phrase *a*'s two-note beginning creates some opacity for the listener. The final development phrase shifts tonality to g minor pentatonic again, which lasts throughout the next section.

A short transition out of Section 1, with a crescendo reminiscent of the end of the introduction, leads to Section 2 at m. 77. This section centers around a 16-measure original theme, stated twice back-to-back. With thick texture, simple rhythm, and tutti *forte*, this Grandeur Theme is reminiscent of the mountain landscapes of the Yunnan Region. The first statement includes melody in the horns and alto saxophones, harmonized by the trombones and tenor saxophone. Counter-figures occur in the upper

woodwinds during pauses in the melody, and bass instruments largely sustain underneath. The second statement shifts melody to the trumpets and upper woodwinds, the counter-figures rotate to the horns and alto saxophones, and the basses switch to accented pulses.

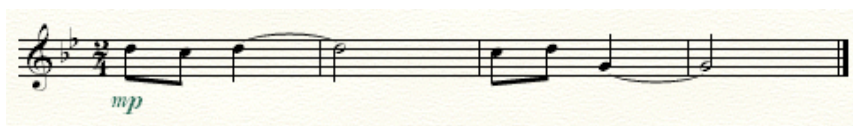
A decrescendo and ritardando culminate in a fermata on a G-C-D chord which extends into the downbeat of Section 3, another area of fully original material. Li shifts the harmony to d minor pentatonic and pulls the tempo back to quarter note = 48 for this section. This tempo, combined with light orchestration and rising melody, lead me to interpret this section as a representation of the difficulty for life to flourish in such a climate (and perhaps the bees' struggle from the lyrics). Solo clarinet on the rising Delicate Motive and bells in accompanying ostinato play alone for four measures (see Example 4), and everything from this section is derived from this material.

Example 4 – *Folksong of Midu*, Section 3 Motives, mm. 116-122

Delicate Motive



Ostinato Accompaniment



Although Section 3 uses the notes of the d minor pentatonic scale, the tonal center could be considered G throughout, but this is especially prominent by m. 149 when the bass line enters. As the transition to the final section begins at m. 161, the piece remains in g minor pentatonic through the end. This transition begins at a new tempo of quarter note = 90, and Li slowly builds energy through syncopated sixteenth note figures and crescendo. The build pushes until m. 180, where Section 4 begins with a slightly faster tempo, tutti scoring, and Phrase *b* at the fore in the upper woodwinds and trumpets. A short transition bumps the tempo up yet again via accelerando and Li sets the same exact

Phrase *b* statement at m. 202. At m. 210, after another rise in tempo, the Grandeur Theme joins as countermelody in all brass except bass line instruments. This iteration occurs twice, and the piece concludes at slowed tempo with the final four notes of Phrase β followed by three ensemble strikes of the perfect fifth G-D. This final section, due to its increasing tempo, union of two previously separate melodies, tutti scoring, and exclamatory final figure, follows common wind band compositional techniques more than the rest of the work. This conclusion thus gives Li's setting of *Folksong of Midu* a sound characteristic to the wind band.

Divertimento for Band, Vincent Persichetti

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987) joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music in 1947 after having served since 1941 as the head of the theory and composition departments at the Philadelphia Conservatory.²⁷ Among the upper echelon of American composers of the twentieth century, Persichetti composed for various mediums and was an early convert into writing serious artistic music for the wind band. He wrote (in a positive light) that “band music is virtually the only kind of music in America today ... which can be introduced, accepted, put into immediate use, and become a staple of the literature in a short time.”²⁸ This was the case for *Divertimento for Band*, a suite of six short movements, composed during 1949-50. Evidence for its quick rise to prominence is the work's inclusion in the American Concert Band Masterpieces album recorded by the Eastman Wind Ensemble under Frederick Fennell in 1953.²⁹ By 1957, in a survey of

²⁷ Frederick Fennell, *A Conductor's Interpretive Analysis of Masterworks for Band* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2008), 23.

²⁸ Andrea Olmstead, *Vincent Persichetti: Grazioso, Grit, and Gold* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 153.

²⁹ Fennell, *A Conductor's Interpretive Analysis*, 15.

College Band Directors National Association members, the piece rated fifth out of all college-level band works.³⁰ After Fennell wrote to Persichetti for further information about the composition in 1980, the composer replied in a letter that, in the midst of the first movement, he “began to realize the strings were not going to enter.”³¹ Persichetti would continue utilizing the band medium for large works, most notably with *Pageant* (1953), *Symphony for Band* (1956), *Masquerade for Band* (1965), and *A Lincoln Address* (1973).

The Italian word *divertimento* translates to “fun” in English, and the genre came to prominence as entertaining instrumental background music for social occasions in the early Classical period.³² Both Haydn and Mozart wrote multiple divertimenti for winds, and while the term fell out of favor in the nineteenth century, Beethoven’s six-movement *Serenade in D Major for Flute, Violin, and Viola* (op. 25) may have been given such a title in another era.³³ Persichetti was not alone in applying the term to lighter instrumental music in the twentieth century: Busoni, Bartók, and Stravinsky also titled works as *divertimenti*.³⁴

The first movement, titled “Prologue,” is labeled appropriately because it introduces two (out of three) major compositional elements that Persichetti incorporates throughout the rest of the work: polytonality, and the development of a single motive or theme per movement. The third unifying element will be discussed alongside its first occurrence in the second movement.

³⁰ Olmstead, *Vincent Persichetti*, 160.

³¹ Olmstead, *Vincent Persichetti*, 159.

³² Hubert Unverricht and Cliff Eisen, “Divertimento,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001; Accessed March 31, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07864>.

³³ Unverricht, “Divertimento.”

³⁴ Unverricht, “Divertimento.”

“Prologue” begins with brass and woodwinds separated rhythmically and harmonically. Arpeggiated woodwind lines in G Lydian that hint at the later-stated theme fly between pointed brass chords made up of two major triads: E Major over A Major. I have labeled this initial material as Section 1a, as it returns two more times in near-identical format later in the movement (labeled Section 1b and 1c). To round out Section 1a, the first phrase repeats but the timpani take the place of the woodwinds in between the brass chords, which does not occur in Sections 1b or 1c. In m. 17 (Section 2), the high woodwinds begin to hint at the theme of the first movement, but sustained terraced brass entrances lead into a transition back to Section 1 material. After a different, shrill unison ending to Section 1b, Persichetti finally gives room for the full theme to sound, and he utilizes the clarinets to do so in mm. 44-5.

Example 5. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 1 Theme, mm. 44-5, Clarinets (concert pitch)



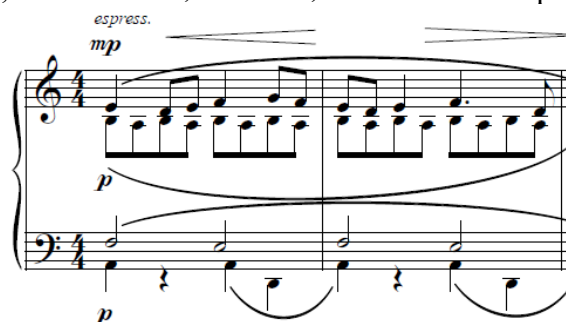
To create a contrast with the rest of the energy of this movement, Section 3 is made up of a quartet of piccolo, oboe, and two bassoons. This texture lasts for 10 measures with a touch of minor tonality before Section 1c. The same shrill finish to Section 1c (as in Section 1b) leads to a slightly displaced version of the theme in the clarinets marked *piano*, followed by an emphatic *forte* statement to end the movement. The polytonality of the opening continues through until the end, as the final chord includes eight separate pitches.

Example 6. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 1, m. 80, Final Chord



The second movement, entitled “Song,” is in ABA form in which the A section song melody is shared in octave unison between woodwind pairs. This movement introduces the third unifying element of the work: two-measure, multi-voice, accompanimental ostinati. The second movement’s ostinato is in four distinct voices and may be considered as a collection of pitches rather than as identifiable chords. Its first grouping in descending order is first horn, first clarinet, euphonium, and tuba. Its second grouping in descending order is first alto saxophone, second clarinet and second alto saxophone, first bassoon and tenor saxophone, and again tuba. The accompaniment’s wave-like rocking motion, its omnipresent ostinato, and its harmonic ambiguity, gives me the impression of a large, murky body of water.

Example 7. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 2, Ostinato Accompaniment, mm. 1-2



Above this ostinato is the song melody shared in unison in the A section between solo flute and solo English horn, and it sounds more seeking than the ostinato due to its sustained notes and meandering contour. The B section continues in harmonic ambiguity as the solo cornet is the primary voice. At the climax in m. 17, Persichetti brings together a wide-ranging, extended C Major chord, with only F absent from the C Major scale.

Example 8 – *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 2, Climax Chord, m. 17, Count 1



The movement finishes with a return to the same original ostinato and melody in m. 21, although the orchestration of the ostinato keeps steady this time: first clarinet, second clarinet, third clarinet, bass clarinet with bassoons, with the bass drum offering a pulse underneath. This time, piccolo and alto saxophone are soloists two octaves apart. The final iteration of the ostinato switches to back to horns, euphonium, and tuba as the soloists sustain an E. The final chord includes the following pitches: D, E, B, A, and the mysterious movement closes fittingly.

The third movement is titled “Dance” and is set in 2/4 at the quickest tempo thus far: quarter note = 132. Notably, all flutes are assigned to piccolo for this movement and Persichetti gives them the main theme. The combination of the tune’s dotted and syncopated rhythms with the piccolos’ natural effervescence helps give off the effect of buoyant, energetic movement that the title suggests. Like the second movement, the third movement is in ternary form with the two-measure ostinato accompaniment recurring in the A sections. This time, the repeated segment is scored for first and second clarinets, first through third horns, and baritone saxophone and tuba in unison. It is largely made up of notes from the B-flat Major triad.

Example 9. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 3, Ostinato Accompaniment, mm. 3-4

The buoyant piccolo melody is also squarely in B-flat Major for the first six measures of its phrase and is characterized by leaps. At that point (m. 9-10), the ostinato

stops after an eighth note chord made up of fifths over G in the bass. The piccolos, on the other hand, have a sixteenth note slurred figure that loosely suggests A Major in these two measures. As suddenly as this diversion enters, it disappears: mm. 11-16 are an exact repetition of mm. 3-8. Three boisterous runs between the piccolos and clarinet act as a transition to the B section, which begins on a tutti (sans piccolos) D Major chord.

The B section begins with two nearly identical six-measure phrases. Each phrase begins with five *tutti* triadic chords that follow the bass motion: D-C-Bb-G-A. The original Bb Major key is discarded, and polytonality returns in the energetic woodwind response to the *tutti* chords: the high clarinet melody is set in b minor while the accompanying clarinets and saxophones alternate between open fifths on G and B-flat. In the third phrase of the B section, Persichetti leaves the woodwinds and the responding voice becomes the first trumpet, this time set in B Major over stacked D and E triads. This trumpet response is the first step in the transition back to the second A section, as the contour of its two interjections echo the first measure of the theme. The B section closes with an almost eerie, two-octave unison, four-measure phrase in the first bassoon and xylophone, most closely related to the second and third measure of the theme.

Persichetti offers a surprising ending of the third movement as the second phrase of the second A section is cut four measures short. The transitional runs in mm. 17-8 return in m. 57-8, and the sixteenth note figure from the end of the first phrase of the A section (in mm. 9-10) undulates twice before the final chord. This chord is both sparse but also nearly as wide as a wind band can produce. The home key of B-flat Major predominates in the chord, but notably the bass note is an E-flat.

Example 10. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 3, m. 59, Final Chord



The fourth movement, “Burlesque,” is in ABAB form and has two separate two-measure ostinato accompaniments. With a title that suggests mockery and exaggeration, Persichetti gives the tubas the melody in C Lydian, a fitting mode due to its unexpected raised fourth scale degree. The first ostinato accompaniment adds to the playful mood, as it is made up of continuous offbeats in the saxophones and horns. There is also a surprising *sforzando* (with added voices) on the last note of the second measure of this ostinato, which delineates each two-measure segment. The combination of the tuba and *sforzando* chords at the end of each two-measure segment create D9 chords that help propel the music forward. This C-D alternation is a harmonic motive that appears throughout the movement. At the end of the first A section, trombones join the tuba in stacked perfect fourths for its last two measures, which gives the listener a preview of the second A section’s stacked fifths, discussed below.

The B section begins in m. 19 as the tempo marking changes to “Brightly,” most often interpreted as moving slightly faster. Right away, the second ostinato accompaniment begins underneath a harmonized clarinet melody and oboe countermelody. The remaining woodwinds, horns, and snare participate in this ostinato. The piccolo and flute material suggest C Pentatonic, while the lower voices are in d-flat minor; the oboes continue the C Lydian sound of the A section tuba melody.

Example 11. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, Mvmt. 4, B Section Ostinato Accompaniment, mm. 19-20

In contrast to the scalar tuba melody, the clarinet melody is characterized by quartal motion. The homophonic harmonization of the melody, in the second and third clarinet, often forms triads between all clarinet parts. This harmonization includes alternation between C Major and D Major triads (as in mm. 19-22 and mm. 31-34), which forms another example of the harmonic motive between these two pitch classes. As the B section reaches the climax of its second phrase in m. 40, the bass voices make a similar entrance as at the end of the A section, but this time in unison descending eighth notes (all naturals) from E down to D at the downbeat of m. 42. Persichetti sets mm. 42-5 in rare *tutti* in energetic figures in d minor leading toward the downbeat of m. 46, which features massive full ensemble C Lydian chords for four straight counts, followed by the same chords again but with only horns and trombones on offbeats.

The arrival back at C Lydian serves as a transition back to the second A section, which starts just as the beginning for four measures. At this point (m. 54), both trumpets enter with the melody at its beginning point, thus creating a four-measure offset. In m. 66, the trombones and baritone saxophone join the tuba in the aforementioned stacked perfect fifths (C-G-D) as the same phrase repeats. Likewise in fifths, the cornets and

highest woodwind voices join the trumpets in continued offset fashion. This continues until the second group finishes its phrase and the entire ensemble arrives on the downbeat of m. 83 on another massive C Lydian chord on the first eighth note. Notably, bass voices follow on the upbeat with a D chord (still stacked in fifths), recalling the propelling *sforzando* D chords in the first A section.

When mm. 82-3 are repeated verbatim in mm. 84-5, the effect is that the music seems to get briefly stuck. Rather than include any transition material, Persichetti shifts back to the B section material with just an eighth note anacrusis in the clarinets. After a brief four measure B section “reminder,” Persichetti employs a three-measure conclusion which solidifies C Major in one of the more stable finishes of the suite: the brass enter with eighth notes moving in contrary motion between low and high voices while the woodwinds move in sixteenth note triads. Each note in these final three measures is diatonic to C Major. For the final chord, the Lydian raised fourth remains absent for a C Major chord with extensions B, D, and A.

The fifth movement, “Soliloquy,” is a cornet solo with ensemble accompaniment, much like a theatrical soliloquy is an individual speech with others present on stage. While the 35 measure-movement can be considered generally in ABA form, four unique phrases make up the B section and the related first and final phrases have significant differences. Each phrase thus warrants a description to help consider the subtleties Persichetti includes in this short movement (see Table 1). Notably, this movement’s harmony includes mainly simple triads. Persichetti maintains some tonal ambiguity, however, as the *a* phrase melody is solidly in E-flat Mixolydian while the accompaniment

progression centers around A-flat Major, e-flat minor, and f minor 7. These three chords do not fit neatly into a major or minor key, although they do fit in Ab Mixolydian.

Table 1. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, “Soliloquy” Phrases

Phrase	Measures	Melodic Observations	Accompaniment/Harmony Observations
<i>a</i>	1-7	In e-flat minor; characterized by quartal leaps; first half ascends, second half descends; spans octave and a third	Scored entirely below melody; triadic; f minor predominates; unified motion; Ab-ebm-fm7-ebm opening progression
<i>b</i>	8-12	Only phrase without cornet solo; woodwind-dominant; in e-flat minor; follows similar contour as <i>a</i> ; only clarinet choir for last two measures	Opening progression utilized in mm. 8-9; bass voices play more roots than in first phrase; some unique motion in inner voices
<i>c</i>	13-16	Begins near top of phrase pitch-wise; follows underlying harmonic shifts (no longer in e-flat minor); transitional	Brass only until last measure; marked <i>pianissimo</i> ; tonally transitional; major triad planing in final measure
<i>d</i>	17-20	Alludes to <i>a</i> with first two notes; all motion quartal except last downward m3 leap; loudest note of phrase is not highest pitch	Trombones and tuba only; similar progression to first two measures except A-flat triad is minor
<i>e</i>	21-28	Rises for five measures and in high range for four consecutive measures; includes highest pitch (G#5); tonally ambiguous (follows harmony progression); includes octave leap to G5; finishes with long sustain	Clarinet choir and sparse low brass, passing to low woodwinds and horns in m. 27; Whole notes and half notes only for first six measures; four-measure crescendo to <i>mf</i> in m. 25 (underneath cornet’s highest pitch); harmonic progression contrasts to opening
<i>a'</i>	29-35	After first half of <i>a</i> phrase, melody pauses on Eb5, followed by octave leap	Passes from trombones only to clarinet choir and sparse low brass; Opening progression returns in

<i>a'</i> <i>cont.</i>	29-35 <i>cont.</i>	down and back up; Eb5 sustained for 10 counts to end piece; flute soli descant begins one measure before phrase	mm. 29-30; alternation between f minor 7 and e-flat minor in last six measures, with f minor 7 (in 1 st inversion) as final chord
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After stable Phrase *a*, the four middle phrases vary in their “distance” away from the opening. Phrases *b* and *d* are closest related to Phrase *a*, and thus act as bridges to the contrasting Phrases *c* and *e*. Phrase *e*, with its long accompaniment crescendo, the use of chords unrelated to the opening progression, and the solo cornet’s highest pitch (in m. 25), is the clear contrasting climax. The inclusion of the flute descant in the final phrase (their first notes of the movement) both give the music a paradoxically lighter (due to their high tessitura) and broader (due to the wider overall ensemble range) sound as the movement concludes.

The final movement, “March,” is in cut time at half note = 132, which is the same tempo as the third movement “Dance,” but is differentiated from the beginning due to its percussion-only opening and weightier scoring. It begins with four measures of woodblock solo, followed by four more measures with added timpani and bass drum. In relation to a traditional march form, mm. 9-32 and mm. 35-51 can be considered the first and second strain, respectively. There is, however, no trio section, and material resembling a traditional march’s “back and forth” break strain (also called the “dogfight”) is uncharacteristically placed in the final section of the piece.

Like the first movement, entire sections repeat and it develops variations of a singular musical figure. The repetitions occur in this movement via a written repeat from m. 67 back to m. 9, and mm. 64-67 is identical to mm. 5-8. On the repeat, there is a jump to the coda after m. 51; therefore, only mm. 52-63 are left out on the repeat. Within these

measures, however, is the most distilled version of the main idea of the movement (mm. 59-63), as it is set in simple quarter note rhythm and unisons across many voices. This main idea is perhaps best considered as a melodic motive rather than as a theme because it is stated in several different variations without an obvious authoritative version. The pitches rather than the rhythm are the core of the idea, and it is best captured split into an opening part (a.) and closing part (b.). In most statements, extra repeated notes are included to add rhythmic or melodic functionality.

Example 12. *Divertimento*, sixth movement, Distilled Melodic Motive, mm. 59-63

a. mm. 59-60 

b. m. 63 

This motive is only presented in the woodwinds throughout the movement except in these five measures, as the brass either join in unison or homophonic harmony beginning at m. 59. In the rest of the movement, the brass's melodic motion resembles the Lydian tuba melody from the fourth movement. In this movement, the raised fourth of the Lydian scale is replaced with the major third, perhaps to yield a more major sound common to the march idiom; the raised fourth does return in the coda, however.

Setting melodic figures aside, Persichetti largely employs the brass as harmony underneath the energetic woodwind melodies, although he once again utilizes polytonality. The upper woodwinds and the rest of the ensemble are tonally separate through much of the work. The woodwind group plays in octave unisons from m. 12 through m. 33 and then a lower harmony line is added from m. 35 forward (including the coda). D Major/minor (the third is never sounded) bookends the woodwind material (mm. 12-6 and the final four measures), and a minor (the third is sounded) is the other main

woodwind tonal center (mm. 24-27, mm. 35-51, mm. 59-64). In the brass, the cornets and trombones play in unison rhythm in mm. 29, but as the cornets ascend, the trombones descend (see Example 14). This creates some moments of relative consonance when the two sections combine in a major chord with Major 7th and Major 9th extensions, yet at other moments this motion yields the combination of unrelated triads.

Example 13. Persichetti, *Divertimento*, sixth movement, mm. 9-12, Brass Polytonality



As the coda brings the entire work to a frantic close, Persichetti leaves the listener with one last massive polytonal combination in the last four measures: the brass and low woodwinds form a C Major chord with extensions including the Major 7, 9, #11, and 13; above this chord, the upper woodwinds fly through two statements of the opening of the melodic motive in D Major. In a clever percussive addition to the last four measures, the timpani rhythm repeats the opening woodblock solo. This final detail, however small, represents the playful and inventive character of this masterwork for wind band.

Conclusion

This recital fulfilled the requirements set forth by the conducting faculty and featured four pieces of varying styles that all relate to previous historical music. Both the earliest and most recent pieces were arrangements of folk songs; one work was based on a previous wind band work; and the final work was an entry in the long tradition of lighter suites for instrumental ensemble. One could make the argument that, by utilizing previously created melodies and forms, these works are derivative or at least unoriginal.

In a purely compositional view, that argument may have some merit, but my hope is that an audience member at this recital's performances would have been drawn to experience them in a different light. Instead, it is my hope that this recital's audience came away with an appreciation for how these composers utilized the wind band medium to take historical inspirations into new, musically enriching territory.

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School of Music

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presents

Stephen Seaberg

In a Graduate Recital

assisted by:

The University of Northern Iowa Wind Ensemble

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Master of Music degree in Wind Band Conducting
From the Studio of Dr. Danny Galyen

Geschwindmarsch by Beethoven (1946)	Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)
Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon (1932)	Percy Grainger (1882-1961)
Folksong of Midu (2017)	Li Chan (b. 1981)
Divertimento for Band (1950)	Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)
I. Prologue	
II. Song	
III. Dance	
IV. Burlesque	
V. Soliloquy	
VI. March	

GBPAC Great Hall, 7:30 P.M. November 15, 2022; February 23, 2022; April 11, 2023