

THE HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY BAND
JUSTIN R. STOLARIK, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

PROGRAM NOTES | MARCH 19, 2009

TIELMAN SUSATO | *SELECTIONS FROM "THE DANSERYE"*

Born

c. 1500

Died

c. 1561

Work Composed

1551

Duration

ca. 21:00

Little is known of Susato's early years, but in 1529 he was working as a calligrapher in Antwerp Cathedral. As a trumpeter he was listed as "a town player," and was in the music printing business beginning in 1541. He appears then to have added a musical instrument business at his home in 1551. During his publishing career, Susato was responsible for twenty-five books of chansons, three books of masses, and nineteen books of motets. He was anxious to promote Flemish composers and eventually published four books devoted to songs by national musicians. He also composed many of his own works based on popular Flemish music of the time. His compositions are particularly strong in their rhythmic characteristics – much of the music he collected and composed was in dance rhythm,

with the idea that this was music for the common people rather than for the aristocracy.

DONALD GRANTHAM | *EXHILARATION AND CRY*

Born

November 9, 1947

Work Composed

1998/2008

Duration

ca. 3:45

Exhilaration and Cry combines "Exhilaration" and "The Midnight Cry" from Grantham's larger work, *Southern Harmony*, which was composed on commission from the Southeastern Conference of Band Directors and premiered on February 27, 1999 at the National Convention of the College Band Directors National Association.

In 1835, William "Singin' Billy" Walker's songbook *Southern Harmony* was first published. This remarkable collection contains, according to its title page, "a choice collection of tunes, hymns, psalms, odes, and anthems, selected from the most eminent authors in the United States." In fact, few of the selections in the book are identified as the work of a particular composer. Many are folksongs, others are traditional sacred hymns, and some are revival songs that were widely known and sung throughout the South. The book was immensely popular, selling 600,000 copies before the Civil War, and commonly stocked "along with groceries and tobacco" in stores across the American frontier. From 1884 until World War II, an annual all-day mass performance of

selections from *Southern Harmony*, called the “Benton Big Singing,” was held on the lawn of the Benton, Kentucky courthouse. The event drew participants from Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Illinois.

In his use of several tunes from *Southern Harmony*, Mr. Grantham has attempted to preserve the flavor of the original vocal works in a setting that fully realizes the potential of the wind symphony and the individual characteristics of each song.

STEVEN BRYANT | *BLOOM*

Born
1972

Work Composed
2004

Duration
ca. 6:15

Bloom was commissioned by the Northwest North Carolina Bandmasters Association and premiered on February 7, 2004 with the composer conducting.

The composer writes:

“*Bloom* is a celebration of springtime. The bright, sunny days, with nature in bloom all around, give me a powerful sense of well-being, simultaneously tranquil and exuberant. *Bloom* is my attempt to recreate that feeling.”

JOHN MACKEY | *UNDERTOW*

Born
1973

Work Composed
2008

Duration
ca. 5:00

The New York Times has hailed John Mackey’s music as “Electrifying: A terse, powerful explosion of transformative energy,” and Newsday wrote, “A high-energy style and a sharp theatrical sense ... simply sensational.” His primary teachers were John Corigliano and Donald Erb, at The Juilliard School and The Cleveland Institute of Music, respectively.

Undertow is an exhilarating flash of musical lightning with an infectious rhythmic force. Although commissioned and premiered by the Hill Country Middle School Symphonic Band in Austin, Texas, *Undertow* is accessible to every level of musician and excites audiences of all ages.