

MUS 1000: MUSIC APPRECIATION

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The people started pouring in once it clocked half past seven. Then the instrumentalists of the Illinois Valley Wind Ensemble began tuning their instruments for their performance. Their performance featured music from composers of different times. It was as if the ensemble was about to take the crowd through time with music. Shortly after, the conductor, strode in with the swagger and bearings of someone about to stun the crowd. He addressed and thank the crowd. After a brief introduction, he turned around and waved a baton signaling start to the ensemble. The IVCC Wind Ensemble began playing, and the crowd was transported to a different time.

“The Untitled March” composed by John Philip Sousa was the first piece that the ensemble played. This piece was composed in 1930, and due to circumstances it was lost and never titled, thus the name. The melody of this march was, most of the time, played by instruments from the brass family like the tuba and the trombone. At some periods in the performance, these instruments were given a kind of solo with little support from the rest of the ensemble. On the other hand, the harmony of the march was heard from the rest of the ensemble, but mostly from percussion instruments like the snare drum. Also, woodwind instruments like the flute and clarinet were used to give accents and syncopations in periods where the whole ensemble played. Instruments like chimes also played in tune with the trombone, and gave a lustrous edge at the end of each note the trombone finished. The oboe could also be heard underlying the main melody of the march, supporting it, but not exactly playing the same melody. However, this was easily heard when the ensemble played very loud. This piece was in binary form, and also had a quadruple meter. There were gradual changes in dynamics throughout the piece, and the rhythm was held steady throughout. The main theme

of this piece was repeated throughout. The ensemble clearly conveyed a marching band with this piece.

The next piece was composed by Gustav Holst in 1911. This piece has four movements, and the first is called "March: Morris Dance, Swansea Town, Clandy Banks." This piece starts off very brightly in major key, with a fast tempo, and short notes. It is in triple meter. Trumpets are heard distinctly holding the melody, whereas the rest of the ensemble provides harmony. This piece is homophonic. The snare drum and trombone are heard mostly in the harmony. The march then switches at some point, and allows a new instrument, a clarinet, to play the melody of the march. This time it is accented with higher pitches of sound from instruments like the flute or piccolo. A second form is then heard next with a completely different melody. This melody is slow, and is played in a deeper pitch by a tuba. At first, the tuba plays this alone with little harmony, then the whole ensemble plays the piece. Then a different form is heard, putting this piece as a ternary form. This one was a winding melody carried by an oboe. It actually sounds like a tune one would hear in France. This melody is then harmonized and accented with snare drums and clarinets. Then the first form returns once again, giving the audience familiarity. After the piece ends with the melody of the second form. I enjoyed the variety this piece had. It felt like each melody took me to a different part of the town that this movement is named after.

The second movement was named "Song Without Words, I'll Love My Love." This piece was set in minor key. It had a wavy-like melody with higher pitches following lower pitches and vice versa. The melody was played by an oboe, while a reoccurring single note was played by a clarinet. It sounded like the cries of when someone loses a loved one. This piece was

homophonic, and the harmony was done by other woodwind instruments and brass instruments. The piece also had a slow tempo. No percussion instruments were featured in this piece. The third movement was "Song of the Blacksmith." This piece starts off very strong with a bass clarinet carrying the melody. This piece was homophonic, in quadruple meter, and strong syncopations especially using the triangle. During a period in the music, a rattle is used. The sound it produced was very unique. At a point, there is a gradual increase in dynamics. Here, the harmony accompanying the music sounds a bit slow. This piece is also in major key and had areas of dissonance. This movement had a fast tempo, and only one form through out, and it end with a sudden loud sound. It was a fitting end to the high-spirited piece.

The next piece was composed by Sir Malcolm Arnold. This piece has four movements in it. The first movement is called "Adantino." This piece had a light a whimsical feel to its melody which was played by flute. The melody felt ornamented at some points. There was also a constant harmony by tubas and trombones. Some areas of the piece felt like two melodies were playing simultaneously. These areas had lots of dissonance. At a point in the performance, there seem to be a gradual change in pitch from low to high. This repeats itself, then after, it is followed by the former melody. This piece had a medium paced tempo.

The next movement is called "Vivace." This had a very bright melody that was set in major key. This piece had lots of short notes, especially from the harmony section that comprised of instruments like trombones, tubas, and snare drums. The melody was mostly played by an instrument with a high pitch, like a clarinet. There sudden changes in dynamics that helped create a sense of anticipation at points in the piece. The piece also had very distinct syncopations with the use of xylophones. This piece was also in quadruple meter, and it had a

fast tempo. The piece is set in rounded binary form. The second form has a slower pitch and a less jubilant feeling. It has a slower melody, and a trumpet holds the melody mostly. The first melody then returns. Shortly after, the piece ends. This piece conveyed a sense of people in active motion.

The next movement is called "Mesto." This piece was set in minor key. It had a slow tempo. Its dynamics were kept steady most of the time. Its melody was played by a tuba, and it had harmony from higher pitched instruments. This piece was homophonic. It had a somber feel to it. There were areas of the piece that felt dissonant. After, a higher pitched instrument like a flute plays the melody. This is then coupled with lower pitched harmony. The pieces then returns to its original orientation and has a peaceful end. The last movement is titled "Allegro Risoluto." This piece had a strong heroic presence and sense of purpose. Also, the name meaning fast with resolve gives a glimpse of what the audience should expect. This piece was strong with loud short notes. The melody was chiefly played by trumpets, while the rest of the ensemble gave the harmony. There is a period when the tuba plays the melody. At this point the sharp shrill note can be heard providing accents. This piece was homophonic, and set in major key. There were points of dissonance in the piece that helped create more tension. Also xylophones and bass drums were used to provide a distinct kind of syncopation. At some point, it feels like sounds from the tuba go against sounds from a clarinet. It gives a back-and-forth vibe that is then calmed. This piece had sudden changes in dynamics that gave a kind of adventure feeling.

The next piece, "Trafalgar March," was composed by Wilhelm Zehle. This piece had a classic march feel to it. It had a constant harmony from snare drums. It also had accents from

the tuba. It had bright melody from a woodwind instrument, like a clarinet. The piece was homophonic and it had a steady tempo, and quick changes in dynamics. The piece has two forms. The second form had a melody played an instrument with a deeper pitch like a trombone. This had accents with the use of crashing cymbals. The next form higher pitched melody. It was still at a steady tempo, and it had accents with snare drums and trombones. The piece then goes back to its former melody after a transition. This entire piece was in duple meter. This felt like the classic marching song.

The next piece was “Goddess of Fire” by Steven Reinke. This piece was composed in the modern period, and it incorporates several instruments and also has several forms with a constant homophonic texture. These several forms of the piece are said to be describing the different forms of Pele, the Goddess of Hawaiian volcanoes. There is a bit of dissonance at the start of the piece. Clarinets and oboes start off playing the melody and there is a low constant tone from the drums. Then there is a change in melody, a second form. This form uses lots of xylophones, glockenspiels, and chimes. Then trombones carry the melody. There is a gradual increase in dynamics, and cymbals are used to accent. Then there is a different form. This form is more aggressive and at a faster paced tempo. It uses more syncopations especially with chimes and has a quick rhythm. The ensemble felt like one cohesive force, one instrument mostly at this point. Cymbals in this form were also used to move the melody from one instrument to another. This piece used the most percussion, and generally it gave kept a mood of turbulence. This form is then followed by a version of the first piece with a slow tempo. This piece gave the sense of the aftermath after the heightened period. Little percussion was used in this form. This is followed by a constant tone played by the clarinet, flute, and drums. This

continuously increases in dynamics until a louder version of the first form is played. This is then followed by the form that featured the strongest use of percussion. After, the form involving xylophones and glockenspiels as chime was played next with a trumpet playing the melody. The piece then ends on the first monophonic note it started with. If a volcano and an island could sing, this is exactly how it would sound during its eruption. This piece evoked an undisputed power of nature.

The next piece is titled "In the Center Ring." This was composed by Robert Sheldon. This piece sounds like the best song to go with a circus act where several things are happening, and they are happening at a fast pace. This piece has a fast tempo, and it is homophonic. Its melody is played by high pitched instruments, and this gives the piece the upbeat energetic feel.

Percussion instruments like snare drums and xylophone provide interesting areas of accents. At a point, there is a different form. This form has a reoccurring melody with short notes that is played by a clarinet. Then it is harmonized by long notes from a French horn, and accented by tambourines and trumpets. The piece then has another form that is very slow in tempo, and with soft sounding instruments. It seems to take away the former energy and replace it with more of a calm and serene atmosphere. Then the initial melody returns to wake the mood. This piece had lots of different instruments and dissonance. However, it gave a complete feeling of a day at the carnival.

The illusion of time travel was only broken in between applause. The Illinois Valley Community College Wind Ensemble gave an outstanding performance. They played pieces from different eras, and they showed versatility in their rendition of the different works from their various authors. The conductor, Gene Montgomery, lead his ensemble effortlessly through the

different music styles, and in the end gave the audience a performance that was well above great.