

New Works for School Band

Compiled by Timothy Reynish

Timothy Reynish discusses the need for imaginative works for school band at grade 3 level. Seven new grade 3 compositions will be premièred at the 2001 BASBWE/RNCM International Wind Festival. In this article three of the featured composers write about the composition process, giving fascinating insights into their approaches.

Writing at Grade 3

I think that the biggest challenge for all of us is to find music at Grade 2/3/4 which challenges our students musically and intellectually, and yet is enjoyable for them and their audiences. Two works have been written recently by young American composers who are on record about what they have tried to do, and these will be played and discussed at the BASBWE/RNCM International Wind Festival April, 2001, at Manchester, together with new works by Edwin Roxburgh, Roxanna Panufnik, Adam Gorb and Martin Ellerby, and my own latest commission from the New Zealand composer, Christopher Marshall.

Aue! Christopher Marshall

The composer writes: For three years we lived inland at Vaia'ata in Savai'i. Often in the evenings, we heard sounds from the villages carried on the sea breeze - hymns, chanting, drums, dance music - all filtered and transformed by the mists of the rain forest. The word *Aue!* is a Samoan exclamation of ecstasy or longing, a Samoan exclamation expressing strong emotion. I feel sure that with a bit of work any reasonably competent community or school group could. It's at least a couple of steps down from HS in difficulty. There are cross rhythms but I've put a great deal of thought into how to present these in a way to minimise difficulty. Maybe there are some parts that will challenge the group but I'm hopeful they will really like the music and think it worthwhile extending themselves slightly to make it work. The last 10 or so pages are the most straightforward and the most immediately exciting - maybe a conductor could start there and work back? The score is 38 pages of music, and the

running time of the work 6 minutes 20 seconds. I have calculated the forces according to wind ensemble standards ie, 1 E flat clarinet, 1 1st Bflat clarinet, 1 2nd Bflat clarinet etc, not several instruments per part. If there are multiple clarinets I guess they could make a roster? I've found that the second oboe and 2nd bassoon have fairly full parts so I will make an optional 4th Bflat clarinet part to allow for an absent 2nd oboist. What would I use for the 2nd bassoon? A baritone? If so should I write it band style (in B₃) or in the bass clef like the bassoon? By the way, I am writing for the euphonium in the bass clef and non-transposing. I haven't used tenor clef at all for the trombones or bassoons - apart from one loud B₃ in the 1st trombone there's no need. The 1st percussionist needs a standard vibraphone, a glockenspiel, and tubular bells. But if the very worst came to the worst these could be simulated on two electronic keyboards.

I am a freelance composer based in the city of Auckland in the North Island of New Zealand. While I was born in Paris and spent a few of my early years in Australia, I am a fourth generation Kiwi who identifies strongly with this country. I hold a Masters Degree in Music with Honours (Auckland University, 1988) but am largely self taught as a composer. This has allowed me to develop a consistent personal style. While my music has evolved greatly, especially over the last ten years, this has been a broadening and deepening process rather than any substantial change of direction. The foundation of my style is a strong belief that music is primarily a means of expressive communication with an audience. Singable, memorable melody coupled with a subtle use of the tonal harmonic system has a valuable role to this end. If music is to communicate on more than an ephemeral level, especially after repeated hearings, the melodic and harmonic elements must be integrated into a convincing structure: orchestration must also be part of this structure, not an afterthought.

One qualification that is especially important to me is my Fellowship of Trinity College London, gained in 1986. In the assessment of the College my music 'exhibits a considerable gift in utilising traditional materials of musical expression in fresh and inventive ways'. I certainly view this as a compliment. Sometimes the single-minded pursuit of originality severs too many links with the past. Without existing music as a reference point, communication may be lost. By the same token, a composer who restricts

himself to the techniques and aesthetics of the past is irrelevant. The challenge is always to produce music that is recognisably of our time, yet also timeless. Two of the most rewarding experiences of my career were my 16 months (from August 1996) on a Fulbright Scholarship as composer in residence at the Eastman School of Music in New York, and two years (1994-5) as the University of Otago's 'Mozart Fellow' in the picturesque South Island city of Dunedin. Both were wonderful opportunities that saw many performances of my music and contributed significantly to my growth as a composer. As a freelance composer I welcome commissions from conductors, performers and lovers of fine music. Professional music typesetting and publishing is the job of Vaia'ata Print.

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NEWS UPDATE In 2000 Chris Marshall was awarded the composition prize of the Royal School of Church Music (Australia) for the year 2000. The winning work was the anthem 'Blessed'. It received its premiere in Canberra on January 14, 2001, at the RSCM summer school, under the baton of Philip Matthias. On Wednesday, September 13 at the presentation ceremony for the Music 2000 Prize offered by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and Concert FM Radio, his overture 'Hikurangi Sunrise' received the 'Audience Award', having been voted the best of the five finalists by radio listeners and concert audiences throughout New Zealand.

Overturus Interruptus Steve Bryant

Bryant works at the electronics lab of the Juilliard School and writes: The piece is titled *Overturus Interruptus*, and it's the conceptual inverse of *Chester Leaps In*. A straightforward theme is interrupted by various aleatoric and/or dissonant bursts. It's about 5 and a half minutes in duration.

Predictability: I built *Overturus Interruptus* out of the idea of interrupting the familiar (a catchy tune often in B₃ major) with bursts of aleatoric and/or dissonant chords, in order to give it some dramatic and humorous substance, yet still be singable and catchy in the minds of the students.

Speeds: This directly relates to my

experience. I ended up taking out the biggest passage of 16ths (an ostinato in the clarinets) and replacing with 8ths. The tempo is $\text{♩}=120$, but I think I was being overly cautious, though.

Keys: If I wander around key-wise or even keyless (something I always do) can I, as long as it is not too hard, use accidentals? I did exactly this. I never use key signatures, and my piece wanders all over the tonal map. The only remark I've had is about the notation: be prudent in choice of accidentals and spare no courtesy markings. That seems obvious, but I didn't realise at first just how extreme you should be. Leave no doubt as to what the note is, even though it might already seem utterly clear to you or me.

Steven Bryant, Lab Manager, The Juilliard School. For further information, please e-mail me at steve@gorillasalad.com, or look in on my website at <http://gorillasalad.com>

What Goes....in the Night Julie Giroux

5.25 minutes, mid-level Grade 3

The piece has:

1 odd meters - 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8 and one 1/4

2 A true development section complete with counterpoint - my forefathers would be proud!

3 Independent parts - all parts are interesting and get the spotlight more than once. (none of which are hard)

4 Unusual instrument combinations and colours especially for a grade 3. I am known for this in my grade 5 and 6 works anyway so this request was easy

5 Percussion parts that are vital to the piece in every respect. There is not one note that is there just for the hell of it. Because of the nature of the piece, they are kept very busy and add a lot of texture and interest

6 This piece has **no formula!** The piece is not ABA or any other over-used form. My recent works are pretty much A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H... etc... This is a world of remote controls... I too, am addicted. I get bored if I have to hear the same things over and over, regurgitated through the band. I like the gear stripping method myself... an emotional roller coaster. Keeps the kids and audiences interest too! If the subject matter allows, this is my preferred method of composing.

7 The piece is highly programmatic, full of suspense and emotions... lots of ups & downs with a very, very dark side to it - hence the title.

8. Key Signatures-3,1-2-& 3 flats, but not necessarily the tonal centre. I have used key signatures that would produce the least amount of accidentals and have used accidentals whenever there is any doubt (something that comes in handy with clinic groups for me - amounts to a lot fewer wrong notes from the very beginning!)

9 Cues. A few. For balance purposes only. I like to give conductors options. I also like the way it allows the work to fit a group.

10 Tempos - from $\text{♩}=76$ through 132-140 (the end). All instruments **MUST** be able to play triplets in 4/4 & in the 6/8 form. Also, the dotted 8th-16th-8th rhythm in the triplet 4/4 form and in 6/8. This is essential to the work. I have been assured by many that this is very do-able in grade 3 bands.

11 Everybody has a part that is important and exciting. Nobody will be bored. They will all be challenged and when it is over, they will definitely have more confidence because of the exposure and responsibilities that they ALL have in this work. This is something I truly believe in. A tuba player's fingers can move as quickly as the euphoniums and they don't have to be sitting on the root of a chord all the time.

What Goes...in the Night will be played by Richard Jones and the Richmond School Wind Orchestra at BASBWE on 6th April.

Repertoire for Young Bands

Tim Reynish

I was lucky enough to be in Toulouse recently, viewing my newest grandson, and took the opportunity of visiting the new art gallery, Les Abbatoirs, the perfect use for the building, with high ceilings and enormous wall spaces. There was an exhibition of "avant garde" art, some from the Pompidou Centre, together with a special exhibition by the French artist Soulage, eighty four works almost exclusively in black and white.

This contemporary exhibition was exciting, as was the appreciative noise of over a hundred children, some as young as six years old, being introduced to the gallery and the paintings. No tired clichés here, no faded academic procedures or structures, in fact out of the entire collection, there were only two artists that either my wife or I had ever come across before.

I sat there amid the enthusiastic mayhem of questions and answers, musing on the sort of education French children are given, perhaps not quite so trammelled by the National Curriculum as we are in England, and wondering what the musical equivalent of this experience would be: electronic

simulation of funky pop music, or wind bands playing the latest commercial publications straight off the conveyor belt? We would certainly not be introducing them to the latest avant garde wind works, and there's no room for free expression in our Grade 2 and 3 catalogues. So what should we look for in selecting music for our young players? While in France, I listened to 120 works at Grade 2 and Grade 3, selected for the GIA. I have no brief to say what is good or bad, I can only write about what I like. Some of the works are marked on my list CBU, "Could Be Useful", or "OK, Gimmicky but Fun" or "Sounds great but cliché-ridden". A lot of composers at this level know exactly how to make a poor band sound quite good, but their lack of critical faculties and of real musical invention leads them to write music which none of us would choose to play on our first study instrument, nor encourage in our composition classes. Time and time again I found myself writing "trite harmonies - pretentious fanfares - ordinary melodic material - corny sequences - academic - repetitive - cliché - cliché - cliché".

My old friend and Best Man, Guy Woolfenden, always challenges me to write something myself, and I can't - I know that the easier the music, the more difficult it is to write. For what it's worth, I am looking for music which conveys some emotional impact, and which avoids melodic, harmonic and rhythmic clichés - and these might be contemporary or traditional clichés, it makes no difference. Not being an academic, nor a composer, most of my feelings are gut reactions rather than a reasoned decision.

My list includes a good deal of transcriptions of renaissance music - it works well for school children, as Peter Maxwell Davies discovered forty years ago in Cirencester. I find Timothy Broege an interesting composer, and also that a lot of the music published by Larry Daehn and Neil Kjos is music through which I can teach musical values, phrasing, intonation and tone, balance, voicing, not just ensemble and dynamics. These two elements are to my mind given undue emphasis in a lot of our repertoire and performance practice, particularly when geared towards contests and competitions.

There are other works against which I pencilled *Could Be Useful*, but often I asked myself, would I perform that if it were written for solo instrument and I was picking a recital programme, or what would be my view if a student gave me that progression in a class room situation. So much of our music *Could Be Useful* but really has no place in teaching children about music and aesthetics.

REPERTOIRE

Tim Reynish's personal selections of Grade 3 repertoire.

GRADE 2

<i>The Battle Pavane</i>	Margolis	Manhattan	2.45
<i>Fanfare, Ode and Festival</i>	Margolis	Manhattan	4.21
<i>A Little French Suite</i>	La Plante	Bourne	5.37
<i>Three Pieces for Band</i>	Broege	Bourne	6.37
<i>All the Pretty Little Horses</i>	Anne McGinty	Queenswood	3.12
<i>Chant Rituals</i>	Elliot del Borgo	Belwin	5.29
<i>Dinosaurs</i>	Bukvich	Phoebus	7.06
<i>Fa Una Canzona</i>	Daehn	Daehn	1.32
<i>Renaissance Festival & Dances</i>	Pearson	Kjos	5.41
<i>Sinfonia</i>	Broege	Manhattan	6.04
<i>When the Stars begin to fall</i>	Allen	TRN	3.54

GRADE 3

<i>Daydream</i>	Mahr	Kjos	4.28
<i>Downland Suite</i>	Ireland/Brand	G&M Brand	17.25
<i>Dreams and Fancies</i>	Broege	Leonard	6.04
<i>I Am</i>	Boysen	Kjos	8.05
<i>In Memoriam, Kristina</i>	Yurko	Ludwig	8.12
<i>Irish Suite</i>	Applebaum	Eur/American	5.32
<i>Renaissance Suite</i>	Susato/Curnow	Jenson	6.43
<i>Retreat & Pumping Song</i>	Stanhope	H L Music	6.19
<i>Rhosymedre</i>	Vaughan Williams	Galaxy	3.38
<i>With Quiet Courage</i>	Daehn	Daehn	4.15
<i>Ye Banks and Braes</i>	Grainger	Schirmer	2.45
<i>American Riversongs</i>	La Plante	Daehn	6.01
<i>Canterbury Chorale</i>	de Roost	de haske	5.27
<i>Courtly Airs and Dances</i>	Nelson	Ludwig	12.20
<i>Down Longford Way/ Shendoah</i>	Grainger/Osmon	RBC	4.58
<i>Mazama</i>	Chattaway	Allen	8.34
<i>Mystery on Mena Mountain</i>	Giroux	Southern	5.18
<i>The Renaissance Fair</i>	Margolis	Manhattan	3.34



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