

Ken Drobnak is an active performer on tuba and has performed with the Billings Symphony, Helena Symphony, Greater Lansing Symphony and the South Dakota Brass Quintet. He recently gave a lecture on Holton instruments at Indiana University as part of the 2014 International Tuba-Euphonium Conference. He serves as Director of Bands & Low Brass at



Northwestern, where he conducts the Athletic Bands, Jazz Band and Concert Band. He also instructs the entire instrumental music education curriculum and applied lessons for all wind and percussion players. He began examining the history of the Ranger Band last year, initially as a hobby, and found a remarkable archive left by Oscar Stover, Director of Bands at Northwestern from 1960 - 1976. In fact, he is presenting a poster session on Stover in March at the 2015 National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association. Stover rose to national prominence as Drillmaster of the Michigan State Marching Band at the 1954 and 1956 Rose Bowls. Stover continued to be active on the national and state level after moving to Alva and was inducted in the Oklahoma Music Educators Hall of Fame in 1989.



Lawana Newell is a candidate for the DMA Degree in Vocal Performance at the University of Oklahoma where she studies with Dr. Dolores Leffingwell. She completed graduate studies in Vocal Performance at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA. As an undergraduate she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Church Music and Music Education from Pfeiffer College, a private Methodist college located in Misenheimer, NC where

she was one of three students nationally chosen to receive a Fellowship of United Methodist Musicians Merit Scholarship. Lawana Newell has served on the faculties of Pfeiffer College and Walters State Community College. In addition to her vocal accomplishments, Mrs. Newell is a talented vocal accompanist, choral director and organist. She has had extensive experience developing church music programs including adult, youth, graded children choirs and hand bell programs.

Upcoming Instrumental Performances at NWOSU

The Ranger Concert Band & Jazz Band
Herod Hall

Thursday, March 12
7:30 PM



presents

Faculty Recital

with

Ken Drobnak, Tuba

and

Lawana Newell, Piano

First Presbyterian Church
Alva, Oklahoma

February 28, 2015
7:30 PM

www.drobnakbrass.com

Brown, who passed away on May 19, 2008. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings of peace; who publishes good tidings of good, and who declares salvation; who says to Zion, Your God reigns!” (Isaiah 52:7) The composer notes “It was privilege for me to write this piece for the Browns, who shared with me some of their most intimate thoughts and feelings in the process of losing their son. It was a great challenge for me to write this memorial piece for their son and I agonized over it for months. But the Browns became for me not only a great support, but also a true inspiration in the writing of this piece – they also became for me the embodiment of Faith, Hope and Love and a living example that ‘the greatest of these’ is always Love. This piece has become one of, if not my own favorite of all the pieces I have written so far. It is, as has been said before about my work, ‘deceptively difficult’ (or deceptively easy if you would prefer). The piece was not only extremely difficult to write, but is also more than apparently difficult to play both within its long-breathed phrases and also within its musical and emotional transparency. There is virtually nowhere to ‘hide’ in this piece, either as a composer or as a performer, so one is both assisted and also trapped by and within its simplicity and transparency. *How Beautiful* should be nothing but that – simple, transparent, emotional, yet sincere and ‘unaffected’ in that sense when it is performed well . . . This is not a complicated piece technically, but is a very demanding piece both musically and emotionally. The beauty of the sound and phrasing . . . is extremely gratifying to me.”

Saltarella (Souvenir de Sorrento)

An Italian violinist and composer, Guido Papini gave a successful performance debut when he was only 13 years

Program Notes

O Mio Babbino Caro

Giacomo Puccini has long been regarded as one of the leading Italian composers of opera. Puccini grew up in a family of musicians and learned composition through his relatives. *O Mio Babbino Caro* is from the opera *Gianni Schicchi*, composed on a libretto by Giovacchino Forzano, who derived much of the work from canto xxx in Dante’s *Inferno*.

Libretto:

Oh my dear father, I like him, he is very handsome.

I want to go to Porta Rossa to buy the ring!

Yes, yes, I want to go there! And if my love were in vain,

I would go to Ponte Vecchio and throw myself in the Arno!

I am pining and I am tormented, Oh God! I would want to die!

Daddy, have mercy, have mercy! Daddy, have mercy, have mercy!

Flight of the Bumble Bee

In his autobiography, Rimsky-Korsakov wrote: “The first signs of musical ability showed themselves in me very early . . . before I was two I could distinguish all the melodies my mother sang to me; at three or four I was an expert at beating time on a drum to my father’s piano playing.” By age six, he was taking piano lessons. Rimsky-Korsakov’s paternal family had a military background and his father was a civil governor. From his mother’s side Rimsky-Korsakov claimed to inherit a love of folksong. Glinka and his operatic work *The Life of the Tsar* had a great affect on the young Rimsky-Korsakov. When Rimsky-Korsakov’s naval duties began to relax in the mid 1860s, he was able to take in more time for music composition and also for visiting friends Borodin, Dargomizhsky and singer Sofia Zotova. The *Flight of the Bumble Bee* is from the stage work *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*. *Flight of the Bumblebee* is immediately recognizable for its prestissimo tempo and

complex patterns of chromatic sixteenth notes. In the orchestral version, the sixteenth runs are assigned to various instruments in succession. The work, however, has been arranged for many different instruments to demonstrate a soloist's virtuosity.

Suite No. 2 for Tuba and Piano (Jesse)

Alec Wilder's music is a unique blend of American jazz and the classical European idiom, hence, it is difficult to classify and describe with common labels. During his lifetime, much of his music was not accepted; jazz music was not "jazzy" enough, and his classical music was not "avant-garde" enough for the academic elite. He was born in Rochester, New York, and studied privately at the local conservatory, the Eastman School of Music. But as a composer, he was largely self-taught. His best known works are likely the octets written for unusual combinations of instruments, and were a combination of jazz and popular elements. Legendary tuba artist Harvey Phillips was introduced to Alec Wilder by mutual friend and hornist John Barrows. The initial meeting resulted in a lifelong friendship and partnership that resulted in many compositions for the tuba. Wilder first wrote a six-movement suite for Harvey about "a charming little elephant named Effie," (*Suite No. 1*). As their friendship grew, Wilder wrote many works for Harvey, including a suite for each one of Harvey's children (Jesse, Thomas and Little Harvey). In his autobiography, Harvey notes that "each suite is a remarkable reflection of each son's personality; maybe the boys grew up to reflect the music that Alec had written for them." Wilder wrote an astonishing amount of music for Harvey, a partial list includes: five suites, ten tuba duets, ten tuba trios, ten tuba quartets, chamber music, a concerto (premiered with the

U.S. Air Force Band), and a *Convalescence Suite* for when Harvey was in the hospital.

Suite No. 1 for Cello (BWV 1007)

J.S. Bach wrote the six suites for cello during his employment under Prince Leopold in Cöthen. The post was the first exclusively secular position he held. Leopold wanted Bach to make his Capelle one of the leading ensembles of the day. Bach wrote several of his most celebrated collections in this time period: the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin, the sonatas for violin and harpsichord, the four *Ouvertures* for orchestra and the first volume of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Bach also wrote a book of two and three part *Inventions* for his son Wilhelm. In his book *Music in the Castle of Heaven*, John Eliot Gardiner writes about the cello suites: "The deliberately restrictive medium teems with interpretative matter implied by, but not containable within, the notation. Their skeletal nature means that the music is festooned with little time-bombs of harmonic potential that tease the listener to speculate on how they might turn out - what chords are really implied, in other words. In order to grasp and 'realise' Bach's harmonic movement, both player and listener are drawn in and required to complete the creative act." On performing the music of Bach, Pablo Casals comments: "Where interpreting Bach's music is concerned, there are no hard and fast rules . . . The best thing to do is to discard all preconceived ideas and try to approach in our performances whatever the music conveys to us ... "

How Beautiful

How Beautiful was written by Barbara York at the request of Matt and Kristy Brown in memory of their son, Eli Reuben