

The Development of Wind Band Literature

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Early Wind Band

- In 1798, President John Adams signed an Act of Congress to establish the United States Marine Band.
 - They presented concerts, participate in parades, military drills, and civic and patriotic ceremonies.
- The literature that was available to these ensembles was very scarce. It was limited to transcriptions of orchestra overtures, opera arias, waltzes, polka, popular tunes, patriotic pieces, and marches. "Folk music."
- Community bands flourished around the country at this time
- Throughout the 19th century, various instruments were added, such as the saxophone, three valve brass instruments, and improvements to the clarinet structure.

British Composers (1920s)

- With the rise of importance that the wind band experienced at the turn of the 20th century, British composers sought to compose high-quality band literature.
- Such composers include:
 - Gustav Holst (famous wind piece composed in 1909, premiered in 1920)
 - First Suite in Eb*
 - Gordon Jacob (famous wind piece composed in 1928)
 - An Original Suite for Military Band*
 - Ralph Vaughan Williams (famous wind piece composed in 1923)
 - English Folk Song Suite*
- In 1909, the first major band work of the 20th century was composed: *First Suite in E-Flat* by Holst.
 - Comprised of 3 movements: Chaconne, Intermezzo, and March
 - Based on a single musical idea that ends on half cadence, presented differently in each movement.
 - In the Chaconne, the main idea is repeated 16 times, 6 times in the bass voices, 3 times in the upper and middle voices, 2 times inverted, then 5 more times until the end.
 - Dotted quarter note, eighth note "day to day" rhythm prevalent in March.
 - He did not want a break between movements.



Figure 1.

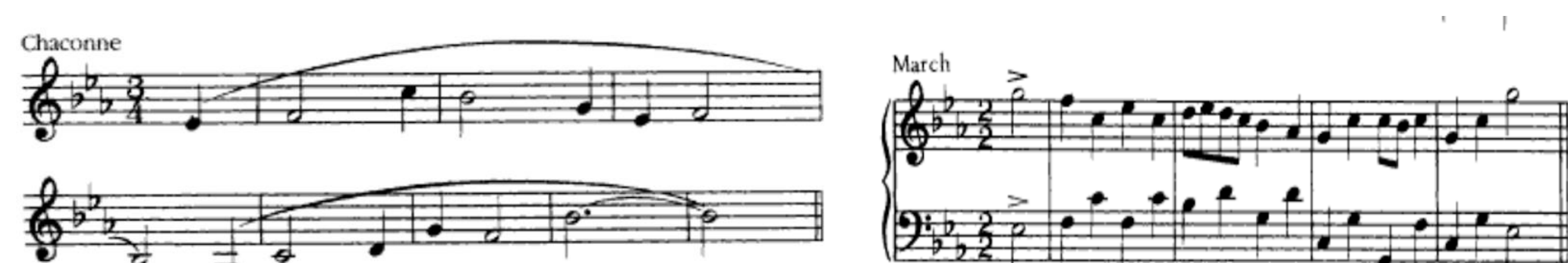


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

John Philip Sousa, "The March King"

- Arguably the most historical figure in the history of wind band.
- Leader of the Marine Band from 1880-1892. Expressed concern of the wind band being considered secondary to orchestra
 - He wanted to move wind bands past the point of playing transcriptions and simple marches. Diverse repertoire was what he wanted.
 - He composed suites, songs, operettas, and 136 marches (most-known)
- He left Marine Band to start his own wind ensemble. Toured around the country to instill the belief in people that wind bands could sound beautiful and are worthy of producing fine literature.
- He never played a piece the way it was published.
 - He would cut out low voices, high voices, change dynamics, and add accents in different places.
 - No performance was the same.

Sousa March Style

- Truly set the standard of what a good march looked and sounded like by developing standards.
 - 4 or 8 bar introduction with thick brass texture
 - AABBCCDC, with C representing the trio section and D representing the break strain.
 - Trio in subdominant key
 - The last trio section typically includes multiple voices layered on top of the ensemble in the subdominant key at a loud dynamic
 - Sousa stinger at the end.



The Thunderer March

- The Thunderer March* was composed in 1889 by John Philip Sousa for Columbia Commandery No. 2, Knights Templar, of Washington, D.C, an organization that he was "knighted in three years earlier."
 - One of his most well-known works.
 - Followed the standards listed above with each recording on YouTube varying in personal group decisions.
 - Emphasizes the "day-to-day" rhythm



Listen to the Music!

Want to listen to some of the music mentioned in this presentation? Scan below.



American Bandmasters Association

- Founded in 1929 by Edwin Goldman. The idea was "promotion of better music for concert band."
- Wanted to raise the musical standards and performance levels of bands



Percy Grainger, Lincolnshire Posy

- Born in Australia, lived there 13 years, then moved to London for 13 years.
- Moved to the US, Served in US Army for 2 years playing oboe, soprano saxophone, and then an instructor.
- Was an avid educator
- Approached by American Bandmasters Association in 1937 to commission a piece for their annual convention. That piece was *Lincolnshire Posy*.
 - In his notes for the piece, he expressed frustration that wind band music was rarely ever composed for except military marches or transcriptions. He noted the exceptions such as Holst and Williams.
 - Premiere was a disaster, given 84 minutes of rehearsal time.
 - Only premiered 3 movements. The piece was not played much afterwards until it regained popularity when the Eastman Wind Ensemble played it in the 1950s under the baton of Frederick Fennell. Popularity of band and compositions increased significantly after this point.
 - A suite of 6 English folk-song arrangements for band.
 - In 1905-1906, he used a wax cylinder to record various folk songs in Lincolnshire, England. Followed these transcriptions faithfully to truly try to encapsulate the singer's intentions. He added textures/harmonies to fit personalities
 - 2nd movement has some 5/4 bars in the slow movement because of transcription rubato

Significant American Composers – Throughout the 20th century, more composers started composing fine works for wind band!

Alfred Reed (1921-2005)

- Prolific composer who composed and arranged for band.
- Many pieces performed in public school band programs are by him as he wrote for all levels.
- Composed around 250 band pieces.
- Piece that is played by so many music programs around the holiday season: *Russian Christmas Music*
- Hounds of Spring* is his most known piece.



David Maslanka (1943-2017)

- Prolific composer in all realms, including chamber works, orchestra, and band
- 8 of his 10 symphonies were for wind bands.
- Pieces of extreme difficulty, beauty, virtuosity
- Passed away while composing the 10th symphony, he asked his son to finish it
 - He had completed the 1st and bit of the 2nd movement.
 - Sketches of 3rd and 4th movement were there.
 - He had already named the first movement after his wife "Allison" who recently passed.
 - His son composed a very emotional Movement 3, titled it after his dad "David."



Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

- The first female composer inducted into the American Bandmasters Association in 2009.
- She has accumulated countless other awards that have been otherwise known as "male-dominated"
- In 1984, was hired as an orchestrator for 100's of video games and films through composer Bill Conti. Studied with John Williams for a bit.
- In 1997, her focus shifted over to composing for wind bands.
- Has composed 5 symphonies for wind ensembles, a plethora of original pieces, and many arrangements.
- Composes high-level college literature all the way to middle school band.
- One Life Beautiful* is a gorgeous piece that focuses on the beauty of life and living your one life to its fullest.
- First female to composer to have work performed at Presidential Inauguration as Vice President Harris was introduced

Figure 1 – Main musical idea of first suite in Eb

Figure 2 – The main music idea in context during first movement.

Figure 3 – The main musical idea inverted during the first movement.

Figure 4 – The main musical idea is prevalent during 2nd movement.

Figure 5 – The main musical idea is prevalent at the beginning of 3rd movement in bass.

Figure 6 – The main musical idea is in subdominant key during trio section of movement 3.

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