Program Notes

David Maslanka (Born 1943)

Over the past four decades, composer David Maslanka has become one of America’s most original and celebrated musical voices. He has published dozens of works for wind ensemble, orchestra, choir, percussion ensembles, chamber ensembles, solo instrument, and solo voice. However, he is especially well-known for his wind ensemble works. Of his nine symphonies, seven are written for wind ensemble, and an additional forty-one works include among them the profound “short symphony” Give Us This Day, the heart-wrenching A Child’s Garden of Dreams, and the amusing Rollo Takes a Walk. Year after year, Maslanka’s music is programmed by professional, collegiate, and secondary school wind ensembles around the world.

When Maslanka wrote A Child’s Garden of Dreams, he was living in New York City and teaching music composition at Sarah Lawrence College and New York University. He was rapidly becoming interested in psychology, psychotherapy, and meditation, and was particularly captivated by the writings of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung. Maslanka began to incorporate self-hypnosis and lucid dreaming into his meditative exercises, which heavily influenced his musical thought. He began to notice specific symbols in his “mental landscape,” that he translated into music. Today, Maslanka’s unique compositional technique is known for its emphasis on meditation, psychoanalysis, self-discovery, and the accession of one’s own subconscious energies. His search for spiritual and metaphysical discovery ultimately spurred him to leave New York City in 1990, and move to Missoula, MT, where he continues to live and work.

About his piece, the composer writes:
A Child’s Garden of Dreams was commissioned by John and Marietta Paynter for the Northwestern University Symphonic Wind Ensemble. It was composed in the summer of 1981 and premiered by Northwestern in 1982.

The following is from Man and His Symbols by Carl Jung:

A very important case came to me from a man who was himself a psychiatrist. One day he brought me a handwritten booklet he had received as a Christmas present from his ten-year-old daughter. It contained a whole series of dreams she had had when she was eight. They made up the weirdest series of dreams I have ever seen, and I could well understand why her father was more than just puzzled by them. Though child-like, they were uncanny, and they contained images whose origin was wholly incomprehensible to the father. . . . In the unabridged German original, each dream begins with the words of the old fairy tale: ‘Once upon a time.’ By these words the little dreamer suggests that she feels as if each dream were a sort of fairy tale, which she wants to tell her father as a Christmas present.

The father tried to explain the dreams in terms of their context. But he could not do so because there appeared to be no personal associations to them. . . . The little girl died of an infectious disease about a year after that Christmas. . . . The dreams were a preparation for death, expressed through short stories, like the tales told at primitive initiations. . . . The little girl was approaching puberty, and at the same time, the end of her life. Little or nothing in the symbolism of her dreams points
Music for Prague 1968

Maslanka selected five of the twelve dreams as motifs for the movements of the composition.

Karel Husa (Born 1921)  

Music for Prague 1968 (1969)

Czechoslovakian Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Karel Husa graduated from Prague's Music Conservatory in 1945. Afterwards, he traveled abroad studying composition at the Paris National Conservatory with Arthur Honegger, Nadia Boulanger, Jaroslav Ridky, and conducting with André Cluytens. Even with strong nationalistic ties to Czechoslovakia, Husa left Europe in 1954 to teach Music Theory at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. During his career, Husa has contributed greatly to the wind band repertoire.

One of his most important original compositions is Music for Prague 1968, which was commissioned by the Ithaca College Concert Band. The piece was premiered in Washington, DC, on January 31, 1969, with Kenneth Snapp conducting a concert for the Music Educators National Conference (now known as the National Association for Music Education).

In 1968, Czechoslovakia began to experience a relaxing of Communist economic policies and a lifting of restrictions on media, speech, and travel. The Soviets denounced this "revolution" and, after several failed attempts at negotiation, sent Eastern Bloc armies to invade the country on the night of August 20th. When Husa heard about the invasion while on vacation at his summer cottage in upstate New York, he resolved to write a new composition for band that would honor the beauty of his native city, Prague, but also express the tragedy of the occupation.

It is the composer's wish that the following foreword be printed in its entirety in all concert programs of each performance of Music for Prague 1968:

Three main ideas bind the composition together. The first and most important is an old Hussite war song from the 15th century, Ye Warriors of God and His Law, a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years, whenever fate lay heavy on the Czech nation. It has been utilized also by many Czech composers, including Smetana in My Country.

The second idea is the sound of bells throughout Prague, named also the City of 'Hundreds of Towers,' has used its magnificently sounding church bells as calls of distress as well as of victory.

The last idea is a motif of three chords first appearing very softly under the piccolo solo at the beginning of the piece, in flutes, clarinets, and horns. Later it reappears at extremely strong dynamic levels, for example, in the middle of the Aria.

Different techniques of composing as well as orchestrating have been used in Music for Prague 1968 and some new sounds explored, such as the percussion section in the Interlude, the ending of the work, etc. Much symbolism also appears: in addition to the distress calls in the first movement (Fanfares), the unbroken hope of the Hussite song, sound of bells, or the tragedy (Aria), there is also the bird call at the beginning (piccolo solo), a symbol of the liberty which the City of Prague has seen only for moments in its thousand years of existence.

-- Program Note compiled by Jonathan Poquette
The Hodgson Wind Ensemble

conductor: Cynthia Johnston Turner

FLUTE
Rachel Anders
Emily Cho
Alexis Letourneau
Tafy Su
Erin Wallace
Emily Zirlin

OBOE
Cassidy Brown
William Jones
Marah Stefanisko

CLARINET
Jason Abraham
Pedro Alliprandini
Yujin Chang
Connor Croasmun
Katherine Grace Dukes
Berek Ha
Dylan Horne
Kathryn Koopman
Jesse Norton
Sable Thompson
Maggie Watts

BASSOON
Nikolos Bacote
Matthew Huff
Naomi McKinney
Darby Woodling

SAXOPHONE
Hannah Cavender
Rick Firestone
Caroline Halleck
Addison Mason
Shawna Pennock

HORN
Meredith Boyd
Brooke Martin
Sarah Mendes
Duncan Robertson
Andrew Sehnann
Anna Zurawski

Percussion
Emily Johnson
Nicholas Martinez
Kamran Mian
Erin Sermin
Keller Steinson
Nathan Tingler

PIANO
Yuxin Ni

TRUMPET
Shaun Branan
Yanbin Chen
Michael Mej
Ben Otero
Lille Smith
Kwanza Williams

ELECTRIC ORGAN
Geneva Stonecipher

STRING BASS
Diogo Lima

HARP
Tyler Hartley

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS
Bradley Esau
Jonathan Poquette
Matthew Sadkowski

All players rotate in their sections.

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UGA Symphony Orchestra
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Saturday, September 24 • 10:00 a.m.

UGA Theatre
Hodgson Concert Hall
Saturday, November 5 • 10:00 a.m.

UGA Wind Symphony
Hodgson Concert Hall
Saturday, October 22 • 10:00 a.m.

UGA Core Concert Dance Company
New Dance Theatre
Saturday, February 11
10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Georgia Children’s Chorus
Hodgson Concert Hall
Saturday, March 25 • 10:00 a.m.

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