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**PROGRAM NOTES**

**EAST OF THE SUN (AND WEST OF THE MOON) – JOHN PRESCOTT**

John Prescott currently serves as a Professor of Music at Southwest Missouri State University and teaches theory, composition and commercial music there. Dr. Prescott earned degrees in music theory and composition while studying at Florida State University and the University of Kansas under the tutelage of John Pozdro and James Barnes. He composes works for band, orchestra, chorus, multi-media, solo and chamber ensembles. Dr. Prescott is also a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the Music Education National Conference and the Society of Composers Incorporated.

*East of the Sun* was commissioned by the South Central Missouri Music Educators Association and received its premier by the All-District Honor Band on November 11, 2000. It was commissioned in memory of John East (1949-1999), who served as the band director in Willow Springs, Missouri from 1976 until the time of his death. His colleagues and students respected him highly and during his time as director, he was a positive force for bands and school music. The musical motive that begins the slow section of *East of the Sun* is a fragment of a love song written for John East by his wife LeEtta.

**BANDANCES-THE THREE PIECES FOR CONCERT BAND – NELSON KEYES**

Nelson Keyes was born on August 26, 1928 in Tulsa, Oklahoma and earned Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees at the University of Texas before moving to California to study with Arnold Schoenberg for a brief period of study in 1950. Keyes served in the United States Air Force and returned to the University of Southern California for doctoral studies following this service. While there, he studied under Ingolf Dahl and Halsey Stevens. Upon completion of his degree, Dr. Keyes taught at USC and Long Beach City College until he was assigned through the Ford Foundation Young Composer’s Project to work in Louisville, Kentucky. After four years, Keyes took a teaching position at Kansas State Teachers College and then returned to Louisville in 1969, where he remained throughout the remainder of his career.

**BANDANCES** was written for the Louisville, Kentucky area school system during the composer’s tenure there. Nelson Keyes describes the work in these words: “The work is intended as ‘serious light music’ – music of a light nature, but intended for serious concert performance … The opening fanfare-like Allegro is fully scored. The slow movement uses an eleven-measure chaconne in a contrapuntal, baroque-like style. The quick, cheerful finale is based on the traditional song ‘Old King Cole’”.

**THE AYRES OF AGINCOURT – RICHARD MEYER**

Richard Meyer taught band at both the high school and middle school levels in the Pasadena, California School District for ten years before going on to teach instrumental music at Oak Intermediate School in Temple City, California and conducting the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestra. He composes music for concert band, string orchestra and full orchestra.

*The Ayres of Agincourt* was inspired by the famous victory of England’s King Henry the Fifth over the French forces in the early 1400s at Agincourt, France. This battle, in which the English were outnumbered five to one, is depicted in William Shakespeare’s play “Henry the Fifth”. The melodies (ayres) are original, but are intended to sound like the English songs that might have been sung by the men in King Henry’s army.

**ENGLISH DANCES – MALCOLM ARNOLD, ARRANGED BY MAURICE JOHNSTONE**

Sir Malcolm Arnold was born in Northampton, England in 1921 and through the years has become one of the greatest figures in twentieth century music. His compositions include nine symphonies, seven ballets, two operas, over twenty concertos and music for brass band and wind ensemble. In addition to these, he also wrote 132 film scores, among which is the Oscar-winning score to *Bridge on the River Kwai*. Malcolm began his professional musical career as second trumpet with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1941, but by the end of the 1940s he was concentrating all of his efforts on composition. Over the years he has received numerous recognitions including honorary degrees in Great Britain and the United States, music society honors and a knighthood in 1993. He passed away in 2006.

Maurice Johnstone was born in Manchester in 1900 and remained in the region for the majority of his life. Johnstone studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music, worked for a time in retail and in journalism, and eventually gained employment as a secretary to Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Later on he worked in the Music Department of the BBC and held close ties with them throughout his career as head of various departments. He died in 1976.

**THE SYNCOPATED CLOCK – LEROY ANDERSON**

Although the name may not seem familiar, the music of Leroy Anderson has become a great part of the American tradition, including one of his best-known works, *Sleigh Ride*. Nearly all of his compositions were originally written for orchestra and then most of them were transcribed for band or other groups by Anderson himself. Leroy Anderson was born in June, 1908 in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Swedish immigrants. He studied music at Harvard University and earned both a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degree in music. In the early 1930s, he continued his studies at Harvard in pursuit of a PhD in German and Scandinavian languages. During this time, Leroy became Director of the Harvard University Band and wrote a number of arrangements for the band that brought his work to the attention of Arthur Fiedler, Director of the Boston Pops Orchestra. Although he passed away in 1975, Leroy Anderson continues to receive honors and tributes including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

*The Syncopated Clock* is another of Leroy Anderson’s best-known works and is in the medium of an orchestral miniature, which Anderson used frequently. It was composed around 1945 while Leroy was a translator and interpreter in the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps assigned to the Pentagon as Chief of the Scandinavian Department of Military Intelligence with the rank of Captain. In the early 1950s, CBS-TV chose *The Syncopated Clock* as the theme for its new program “The Late Show” and used it for more than 25 years.

**BEOWULF: AN HEROIC TRILOGY FOR SYMPHONIC BAND – W. FRANCIS MCBETH**

William Francis McBeth was born in 1933 in Ropesville, Texas. His early musical training took the form of piano lessons with his mother before taking up the trumpet in the second grade. After high school, McBeth attended Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. He also served in the military from 1954 to 1956 with the 101st Airborne Band at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Following his service in the military, McBeth began teaching at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, where he taught until his retirement in 1996.

*Beowulf* (the music) is a descriptive work based on three statements from the epic poem by the same name. *Beowulf* is an Old English heroic epic poem of unknown authorship and is commonly cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature. The poem dates from between the 8th and the early 11th century and takes place in Denmark and Sweden. The hero, Beowulf, battles three antagonists throughout the course of the poem; these are Grendel, who has been attacking the resident warriors of a mead hall called Heorot; Grendel’s mother; and an unnamed dragon. During this last battle, Beowulf is fatally wounded and later laid to rest in Geatland.