PROGRAM NOTES

Mother Earth

David Maslanka

“Praised be You, my Lord, for our sister, Mother Earth,
Who nourishes us and teaches us.
Bringing forth all kinds of fruits and colored flowers and herbs.”
- St. Francis of Assisi

Canzona

Peter Mennin

American composer Peter Mennin chose this title in homage to the Renaissance instrumental forms of that name. Like the canzoni of Gabrieli, this work features contrasting, antiphonal statements from opposing voices; Mennin has combined that with modern harmony and structure. The work was commissioned in 1950 as part of an effort by Edwin Goldman to develop a significant repertoire for concert band. Mennin wrote six symphonies, concertos, sonatas and choral works. Canzona is the only piece he wrote for concert band.

Variants on a Mediaeval Tune

Norman Dello Joio

“In dulci jubilo” is a melody which has been used by many composers. Dello Joio was inspired by it to compose a set of variations consisting of a brief introduction and theme follow by five “variants” which send the mediaeval melody through five true metamorphoses contrasting in tempo and character.

French Impressions

Guy Woolfenden

“This work is inspired by four paintings by the French painter Georges Seurat (1859-1891), but do not attempt to recreate his pointillist technique in musical terms. The first movement, Prelude, contrast the strange gas-lit world of La Parade de Cirque: Invitation to the Sideshow, which features a sinister-looking trombone player and his ghostly acolytes. The second movement, Can Can, recreates the world of two other paintings, Le Cirque, left unfinished at Seurat’s tragically early death at the age of 32, and Le Chahut, which depicts a curiously stylized Can Can in full swing.”
- Notes by the composer.
Colonial Song

In this piece, the composer expresses feelings aroused by thoughts of the scenery and people of his native land, Australia. It is dedicated to the composer’s mother.

Auguries of Innocence

“Auguries of Innocence” takes its name from that of one of my favorite poems of the great William Blake. Blake offers the idea that the natural world can be regenerated in time and that nature itself can be an augury, or omen, to the lost vision of innocence. The poem is filled with randomly organized cuplets of paradoxical imagery, all focused on the idea that it is wise to see the world through two eyes rather than one. Innocence is juxtaposed with evil, big with small, long with short. In my opinion, the most powerful words, and those that most motivated my decision to honor Blake’s work with my title, come from the opening stanza:

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.”

- Notes by the composer.