PROGRAM NOTES

Gavorkna Fanfare

*Gavorkna Fanfare* exploits the idea of a fanfare for full Wind Band, rather than the traditional brass and percussion instrumentation. The opening pyramids lead to the melodic minor third cluster heard in original and inversion simultaneously. A polychordal transition based on the upcoming “fugato” subject leads to a minimalist accompaniment to the 4-part counterpoint. The opening idea returns with a coda based on the melodic minor third. -Notes by the composer

Shakespeare Pictures

Nigel Hess is well-known as a composer and conductor for television, theatre, film and the concert hall with an extensive and varied output. His concert music includes the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, commissioned by His Royal Highness Charles, Prince of Wales in 2007 in memory of his grandmother. *Shakespeare Pictures*, commissioned by Birmingham Symphonic Winds, originates from incidental music composed for productions by the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon and London, and is now expanded and re-orchestrated to form a new three-movement suite for symphonic wind orchestra.

Julius Caesar – The Entry to The Senate

*Julius Caesar – The Entry to the Senate*: starring Peter McEnery and David Schofield, featured a spectacular Senate scene, complete with cathedral organ and a battalion of brass players that fanfare the imminent death of Caesar himself. *A Winter's Tale – The Statue*: “Music, awake her, strike!” So says Paulina as the statue of Hermione comes to life at the end of this magical play. “Descend: be stone no more; approach; strike all that look upon with marvel.” *Much Ado About Nothing*: Actually used as the entr’acte in the production itself, this concert overture uses material from the joyous dance sequences scattered throughout the well-known love story of Beatrice and Benedict, played on this occasion by Sinead Cusack and Derek Jacobi. Keith Allen

The Golden Hour

*The Golden Hour* was originally the middle movement of a composition for saxophone octet called “Three Images”. In photography, the term
“the golden hour” refers to the time just before sunset or after sunrise, during which daylight is reddish and soft. The warm, softer, and more diffused light from the sun makes shadows less harsh, softens contrasts, and enhances the color of the subject. Likewise, this work is a warm pallet of sounds with indistinct murmurings and overlapping dynamic contrasts softening the edges all around. -Notes by the composer

Angels In The Architecture

Angels In The Architecture begins with a single voice singing a 19th-century Shaker song:

I am an angel of Light
I have soared from above
I am cloth’d with Mother’s love.
I have come, I have come,
To protect my chosen band
And lead them to the promised land.

This “angel” represented by the singer, frames the work, surrounding it with a protective wall of light and establishing the divine. Other representations of light played by instruments rather than sung include a traditional Hebrew song of peace (Hevenu Shalom Aleichem) and the well-known 16th century Genevan Psalter, Old Hundredth. These three borrowed songs, despite their varied religious origins, are meant to transcend any one religion, representing the more universal human ideals of peace, hope, and love. An original chorale, appearing twice in the work, represents my own personal expression of the aspirations.

In opposition, turbulent, fast-paced music appears as a symbol of darkness, death, and spiritual doubt. Twice during the musical drama, these shadows sneak in almost unnoticeably, slowly obscuring, and eventually obliterating the light altogether. The darkness prevails for long sketches of time, but the light always returns, inextinguishable, more powerful than before. The alternation of these opposing forces creates, in effect, a kind of five-part rondo form (light-darkness-light-darkness-light).

Just as Charles Ives did more than an century ago, Angels in the Architecture poses the un-answered question of existence. It ends as it began: the angel reappears singing the same comforting words. But deep below, a final shadow reappears – distantly, ominously. -Frank Ticheli

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