

9.27.26 Illinois State University Wind Symphony Program Notes

La Fiera Asturiana

Duration - 3'

Written in honor of the composer's grandmother, a flamenco dancer from Asturias, Spain, who died of cancer at age 34, ***La Fiera Asturiana*** is a passionate march in triple meter infused with the spirit of her heritage. The opening evokes a vibrant street festival, with flamenco dancers brought to life through sultry woodwind and trumpet melodies over characteristic Spanish percussion. As the intensity subsides and the tonality shifts, the music becomes more intimate, reflecting her father's memory of watching his mother dance with joy. This dream is suddenly broken by the anguish of illness, as the music darkens and slows dramatically. A dialogue follows — the low brass voicing a father's call to persevere, answered by the high winds representing his children. The work closes with a triumphant return of the march theme, a tribute to resilience and to the enduring spirit of the grandmother who inspired it.

- Program Note by Tyler Holstrom for Northshore Concert Band program, 19 December 2025

Funeral March

Duration - 7.5'

Edvard Grieg met Richard Nordraak, a fellow Norwegian, in 1863. Together they championed nationalism in their musical activities, a cause that had lain dormant in Grieg's thoughts up until this time. Nordraak already had the Norwegian National Anthem to his credit, composed four years earlier when he was seventeen. From the time of their meeting the two young composers worked closely together until Nordraak's health began to fail three years later. In October of 1865, Nordraak suffered a "violent attack of inflammation of the lungs that developed into galloping consumption". Because Grieg was on his way to Rome, Nordraak did not have the solace of his friend's company during the lonely months of his illness. He died on March 26, 1866, in Berlin. Grieg, then in Rome, was ignorant of his death. The very day he heard of it, April 6, 1866, he wrote ***The Funeral March in A minor for Richard Nordraak*** for piano, as a monument to the memory of his dear friend.

One year later, Grieg arranged the work for military band, transposing it to g minor. He included the piece in a Philharmonic Society concert in Christiania (Oslo) later that year. In 1878, Grieg made yet another version of the work, this time for brass choir. The existence of this third score went unnoticed until Geoffrey Emerson obtained a microfilm of it from Oslo University.

-Program Note from score

the softest breath

Duration - 7.5'

the softest breath was written to memorialize the music and teaching of David Maslanka. David was a tremendously important artist to many, myself included, and I was lucky enough to have spent several weeks with him and his family at his ranch in Missoula, Montana. During these visits, I would spend the morning writing, either in his studio if he was out running errands or doing chores, or in a practice room at the University of Montana music building.

David did not give me much direction for these composing sessions, other than to write, and spend time with traditional four-part texture. Composing in this strict style, derivative of Bach, was at the core of

David's practice. To him, it was meditative, pure, simple, and perfect. To me, as a young student, it was an assignment: restrictive, prescribed, purposeful.

When David passed away suddenly in 2017, I didn't know what to do. It felt right to pay homage to his memory by making something, but nothing felt correct. In truth, I started the process of creating what has become *the softest breath* many, many times. Each time, there was a block. What I was trying to make happen did not want to happen. It wasn't until I began the piece with the process David taught me so many years ago in Montana that, finally, the music poured out.

the softest breath is a pastiche, written in a quasi-Maslanka style, with several subtle quotations and references to many of his works laced throughout. It is a synthesis of his teachings through his music and how they have helped create my voice as a composer. There is a brief chorale at the close, echoing so many of David's works and reminiscent of my time writing in his studio in Missoula, to remind me to continually center on the meditative, the pure, and the beautiful perfection of the simplest, softest moments in life.

- Program Note by composer

John and Jim

Duration - 7.5'

I first heard the name Obergefell in 2015 when the case that bears it, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, was decided by the Supreme Court. Among the most important in history for queer Americans, this landmark ruling granted marriage rights to all same-sex couples. At that moment, Obergefell was etched in history. For those writing about the law, the name would thereafter be written in italics, and today it's as much a shorthand for the case law of marriage equality as it is the name of a man. But at its core, the case begins with two people.

John Arthur and Jim Obergefell were married in July of 2013. They had been together in a loving relationship for 22 years, and Jim was caring for John as he faced the end stages of ALS. In the last year of John's life, they traveled on a medical plane to Maryland -- one of just a handful of states where same-sex marriage was legal at the time -- to be married. The marriage ceremony was conducted on board the plane before they returned home to Ohio for their last months together. John passed away that October, and, because Ohio did not recognize their marriage as legal, Jim had to challenge the state in court to be listed as John's surviving spouse on his death certificate. The state appealed, and the court battle worked its way through the legal system until 2015, when Jim and his team were victorious before the Supreme Court. Their efforts ensured that the relationships of same-sex couples, including my marriage to my husband, would be seen as equal under the law. For that I am deeply and personally grateful.

John and Jim is my effort to pay tribute to the men whose love and devotion gave rise to great change, and I do so by interpolating source material from an iconic piece of traditional wedding music:

Pachelbel's *Canon in D*. In my youth I adored Pachelbel's *Canon*, and I learned a piano arrangement of it when I was 11 years old. For months I would play the piece every morning before school, endlessly repeating its bass line while improvising melodies when the treble clef's music ran out. Through these explorations, I discovered some basic principles of music composition, and it was through the Pachelbel that I began composing in earnest. It was also around that time that I first learned of its use in weddings, as it was the frequent soundtrack to reality TV shows chronicling the weddings of straight couples. At the time it saddened me that music I found so beautiful was emblematic of something that, according to the

law, I could never have. It feels fitting then, that in the year of my own wedding to my partner of 11 years, reframing (and perhaps reclaiming) the Pachelbel should provide the inspiration for a celebration of marriage equality.

My piece is a conversation between two alternating phrases, one of which uses melodic fragments and harmonic progressions from the *Canon in D* as source material. In the *Canon*, Pachelbel establishes a single bass line and layers it with several melodies, two of which are quite iconic but never performed simultaneously in the original. I disassembled and rewrote these to work harmoniously with one another upon the arrival of the piece's climax, which appears after several minutes of what I think of as the music finding and piecing itself together. Ultimately, I believe *John and Jim* sounds like both a departure and nod to the piece that first inspired me to compose. All of this takes place in a reverberant atmosphere, where notes linger and continually echo around one another, symbolic of both the persistence and impact of people like John and Jim.

John and Jim was commissioned by The Columbus Pride Bands and the Queen City Freedom Band of Cincinnati for the 2024 Pride Bands Alliance Annual Conference, where it was premiered on July 20, 2024, by Dr. Jon Norywota and the combined concert bands. Heartfelt thanks to the Pride Bands Alliance for this opportunity to tell my story and celebrate John Arthur, Jim Obergefell, and the progress that has been made in the name of love.

- Program Note by composer

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Duration - 4'

In his final job as cantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Bach had the unenviable task of composing, rehearsing, directing, and performing nearly 60 sacred cantatas a year. Over his lifetime he would write some 400 of these, though sadly nearly half are lost. The *Cantata No. 147* (Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben) was first performed on 2 July 1723. The final chorale is *Jesus, des Menschen Freude*.

The work is in the form of a cantus firmus chorale prelude, where the melody appears in long notes within an inner voice which is orchestrated below a more elaborate triplet melody woven contrapuntally around it.

- Program Note by Nikk Pilato

Symphony in B flat

Duration - 18.5'

The *Symphony for Concert Band* was composed at the request of Lt. Col. Hugh Curry, leader of the United States Army Band, and was premiered in Washington, D.C., on April 5, 1951, with the composer conducting. This three-movement work is the only symphony that Hindemith wrote expressly for the wind band. The suite shows Hindemith's great contrapuntal skill, and the organized logic of his thematic material. His melodies develop ever-expanding lines, and his skill in the organization and utilization of complex rhythmic variation adds spice and zest to the strength of his melodies.

Although *Symphony in B-Flat* features unique uses of dissonant chords and nonharmonic tones, it preserves neo-classical tonality, forms, and rhythmic and melodic patterns. Short figures are apt to form themselves into ostinatos to provide the background to broad and declamatory melodies; these melodies

will often repeat characteristic phrases of awkward lengths so as to disturb the even flow of the basic rhythm. A slow section will alternate with a scherzando section, and the two will combine to form the third portion of a movement.

The first movement is in sonata allegro form in three sections, with the recapitulation economically utilizing both themes together in strong counterpoint. The second and third movements develop and expand their thematic material in some of the most memorable contrapuntal writing for winds. The second movement opens with an imitative duet between alto saxophone and cornet, accompanied by a repeated chord figure. The duet theme, along with thematic material from the opening movement, provides the basic material for the remainder of the movement. The closing section of the third movement utilizes the combined themes while the woodwinds amplify the incessant chattering of the first movement. The brass and percussion adamantly demand a halt with a powerful final cadence.

The *Symphony in B-Flat* rivals any orchestra composition in length, breadth, and content, and served to convince other first-rank composers -- including Vittorio Giannini, Vincent Persichetti, Paul Creston, and Alan Hovhaness -- that the band is a legitimate medium for serious music.

- Program note by Hubert Henderson and James Jorgenson

Biographies

Dr. Anthony C. Marinello, III serves as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Bands at Illinois State University where he is the conductor and music director of the Illinois State University Wind Symphony. In addition to overseeing all aspects of the wind band program, he leads the graduate program in wind conducting and teaches undergraduate courses in instrumental conducting.

As conductor of the Illinois State University Wind Symphony, Dr. Marinello has collaborated with numerous esteemed colleagues and composers including William Bolcom, Steven Bryant, Donald Grantham, and Chen Yi. He is also active in the commissioning and performing new works for wind band including a recent commission, world premiere, and subsequent recording of *Come Sunday* for wind ensemble by composer Omar Thomas.

He joined the faculty at Illinois State University after serving at The University of Texas at Austin as the Assistant Director of the Longhorn Band and Director of the Longhorn Pep Band. Prior to his appointment at The University of Texas, Marinello served on the faculty of Virginia Tech as Assistant Director of Athletic Bands. Marinello has previously taught in the public schools of Louisiana, Ohio, and Texas and remains committed to serving the music education community as an active guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator.

Dr. Marinello has been inducted into Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity. At Illinois State University, he has received numerous awards including the Illinois State University Service Initiative Award, the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts (WKCFA) Teaching Initiative Award, the WKCFA Service Initiative Award, the WKCFA Research Initiative Award, and the Illinois State University New Faculty Start-up Award.

Dr. Marinello holds memberships in the College Band Directors National Association, Tau Beta Sigma, Kappa Kappa Psi, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. Marinello earned the Bachelor of Music Education degree

from Louisiana State University, the Master of Music Degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from The University of Texas at Austin.

Wyatt Onsen is a small town born educator, conductor, and musician. Wyatt holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Illinois State University. He currently attends Illinois State University as he pursues his Master of Music in Wind Band Conducting. There, his duties include assisting with the Big Red Marching Machine, Pep Band, coaching undergraduate conductors, as well as guest conducting the Wind Symphony, Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band, and University Band. While his primary instrument is percussion, he has also taken lessons for voice and performed in regional community choirs and chamber singer groups. While an undergraduate student, Wyatt performed in Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band, and Percussion Ensemble here at Illinois State University. Outside of music in academia, Wyatt has played in jazz ensembles, musical theatre pits, Drum Corps International, and appeared on stage in several community theatre productions.

Professionally, Wyatt served as the Director of Bands and Choirs at Streator Township High School from 2021-2026. Under his direction, the marching band received many awards and maintained a sense of growth and enrollment. He grew the choir program to larger numbers and hosted several festivals for ILMEA and Conference Schools. Additionally, Wyatt taught a guitar class and formed a private lessons studio for students wanting to continue learning the guitar. Aside from band and choir duties, Wyatt also was the music director for spring musicals and implemented a Rock Ensemble. Under his direction, students were able to explore genres of music and different ways to perform. The Rock Ensemble gained momentum quickly and became a way for any student who loves music to perform. In 2022, Wyatt received The LaSalle County Excellence In Teaching Award because of his efforts in both the classroom and outside. He remains an active educator and continues to assist regional high school marching bands while serving as a graduate teaching assistant.

Wesley Anderson is currently serving as a Graduate Assistant with the Illinois State University Band Department. Wesley is also a Sergeant and Musical Performance Team Leader with the 144th Army Band, where he has led over 65 missions, revived the Big Band, and conducted and composed for major civic events, including the Illinois Polish Freedom Day Ceremony. His military education includes the Army School of Music Advanced Individual Training (earning Distinguished Honor Graduate honors), Basic Leaders Course (earning Commandant's List honors), and Advanced Leaders Course (earning Distinguished Honor Graduate and Distinguished Leader honors).

An active educator, Wesley earned his Master of Arts in Teaching from Western Illinois University and served as Director of the award-winning music program at ROWVA High School from 2022 to 2025. During his tenure, he doubled student participation in music each school year, secured full program funding to make music free for all students, led ROWVA to its first top three finish in the IHSA, and founded the district's first Tri-M Music Honor Society. Wesley's ensembles consistently earn superior ratings at contests. His work as an educator has been recognized with the district's Teacher of the Year award and the Illinois State Board of Education's Award of Meritorious Service. He currently teaches the Jazz Ensemble at Evans Junior High and as Orchestra Director of the Youth Music Illinois Concert Orchestra.

A summa cum laude graduate of Berklee College of Music in Film Scoring and Composition, Wesley was awarded the prestigious Wachter Fellowship while in his undergraduate studies. Wesley has recorded over 50 film and video game projects, performs regularly as a jazz musician, has appeared as a guest conductor with the Knox-Galesburg Symphony, and is an active clinician, composer, arranger, and drill designer. Wesley remains committed to fostering a community of musicians who show up, bring a positive attitude, and have fun making music together.