MAN AND MACHINE: The Music of Steven Bryant

FEATURING THE
Concert Band
Symphonic Band
Symphonic Wind Ensemble

AND

STEVEN BRYANT
COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

Cheryl Lee + Joe Stuever
CONDUCTORS

TUESDAY, MAY 9TH 2017 - 7 PM
PROGRAM

Concert Band

Lightning Field
Through the Mist
The Machine Awakes

John Mackey
Brian Balmages
Steven Bryant

Symphonic Band

Overture for Winds
Two Debussy Moments
  I. The Girl with the Flaxen Hair
  II. Reverie
Coil

Charles Carter
Claude Debussy
arr. Jim Mahaffey
Steven Bryant

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Radiant Joy
Dusk
Ecstatic Waters
  I. Ceremony of Innocence
  II. Augurs
  III. The Generous Wrath of Simple Men
  IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice
  V. Spiritus Mundi

Steven Bryant
Steven Bryant
Steven Bryant

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www.bvwestband.com
Steven Bryant’s music is chiseled in its structure and intent, fusing lyricism, dissonance, silence, technology, and humor into lean, skillfully-crafted works that enthrall listeners and performers alike. His seminal work Ecstatic Waters, for wind ensemble and electronics, has become one of the most performed works of its kind in the world, receiving over 250 performances in its first five seasons. Recently, the orchestral version was premiered by the Minnesota Orchestra to unanimous, rapturous acclaim. The son of a professional trumpeter and music educator, he strongly values music education, and his creative output includes a number of works for young and developing musicians.

John Corigliano states Bryant’s “compositional virtuosity is evident in every bar” of his 34’ Concersto for Wind Ensemble. Bryant’s first orchestral work, Loose Id for Orchestra, hailed by composer Samuel Adler as “orchestrated like a virtuoso,” was premiered by The Juilliard Symphony and is featured on a CD release by the Bowling Green Philharmonia on Albany Records. Alchemy in Silent Spaces, commissioned by James DePreist and The Juilliard School, was premiered by the Juilliard Orchestra in May 2006. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s MusicNOW series featured his brass quintet, Loose Id, conducted by Cliff Colnot, on its 2012-13 concert series.

Notable upcoming projects include an orchestral work for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (April, 2018), an evening-length dramatic work for the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, a choral work for the BBC Singers (July, 2017), a work for FivE for Euphonium Quartet and wind ensemble (2019), and a large work to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the University of Illinois Bands. Recent works include a Concerto for Alto Saxophone for Joseph Lulloff and the Michigan State University Wind Symphony (winner of the 2014 American Bandmasters Sousa Ostwald Award), and a Concerto for Trombone for Joseph Alessi and the Dallas Wind Symphony. Other commissions have come from the Gaudete Brass Quintet (Chicago), cellist Caroline Stinson (Lark Quartet), pianist Pamela Mia Paul, the Amherst Saxophone Quartet (funded by the American Composers Jerome Composers Commissioning Program), the University of Texas – Austin Wind Ensemble, the US Air Force Band of Mid-America, the Japanese Wind Ensemble Conductors Conference, and the Calgary Stampede Band, as well as many others.

Steven studied composition with John Corigliano at The Juilliard School, Cindy McTee at the University of North Texas, and Francis McBeth at Ouachita University, trained for one summer in the mid-1980s as a break-dancer (i.e. was forced into lessons by his mother), was the 1987 radio-controlled car racing Arkansas state champion, has a Bacon Number of 1, and has played saxophone with Branford Marsalis on Sleigh Ride. He resides in Durham, NC with his wife, conductor Verena Mösenbichler-Bryant (Duke University).
COLLABORATIVE ARTISTS

The following classes, student groups, and staff members collaborated on nearly all parts of this concert event to make it a success. All of these classes or groups took inspiration from the theme **MAN AND MACHINE** and the music of Steven Bryant to create the works featured in the Blue Valley West Gallery Hall, this program, and the digital video accompanying **ECSTATIC WATERS**.

Concert Band
Symphonic Band
Symphonic Wind Ensemble
   Drawing I & II
   Painting I & II
Graphic Design I & II
   Digital Imaging
   Ceramics I & II
Textile Design & Fibers
   Sculpture I & II
   Photography I & II
   Portfolio Seminar
Jewelry/Metalsmithing I & II
   Jagged Edge
   The Green Light

Staff:
   Cheryl Lee
   Joe Stuever
   Debra Waldorf
   Bryan Kroeker
   Terry Ensor
   Aimee Price
   Michele Foster-Lowman
   Todd Kurimsky
   Paige Waldorf

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CONCERT BAND

FLUTE
Abhi Cheedella
Sydney Moler
Kayla Noelker
Manasa Rajendiran
Morgen Randazzo
Tayler Randazzo
Gracie Rishmany
Cora Sorensen

SAXOPHONE
Luke Ekstrand
Briana Flores
Sidney MacGillivray
Mac McArthur
Kyle Nissen
Trevor Sinclair
Alexander Valler
Teague Walters

TRUMPET (continued)
Jack Merchant
Mia Noelker
Brian Nohalty
Gabe Pro
Bryce Randazzo
Brandon Sherman
Garrett Stoll
Benjamin Sussman
Saad Zamir

EUPHONIUM
Carter Bullis
Caleb Jenkins
Suleman Shaffie

TUBA
Tanner Rupp
Foster Wickoren

PERCUSSION
Cody Boswell
Anna Brabston
Jaden Dudrey
Josh Faller
Tyler Katt
Cale Knight
James Miller
Lincoln Stegman
Clarissa Wedman

OBOE
Kirsten Casey

CLARINET
Zac Lichtenaur
Jase Shrewsbury

BASS CLARINET
Diane Kershaw
Trenton May

TRUMPET
Hassan Ahad
Kate Bandre
Dylan Beane
Mikey Carney
Connor Crum
Grace Dickerson
Will Hanson
Stephen Imgrund
Emily Lancaster
Jordan Levin
Robbie Mason

HORN
Dante Dugan
Dawson Duran
Jacob Ross

TROMBONE
Goutham Aravinth
Nolan Chilson
Gavin Holmes
Sophie Lamar
Kelland O’Berry
Nick Swarts

CONCERT BAND

Cory Casey
Jase Shrewsbury
**Lightning Field (2015)**
John Mackey (b. 1973)

“Lightning Field” takes its title from a work of art by Walter De Maria. That work is a massive expanse of New Mexico desert, claimed and transformed by the artist via an installation of steel rods: planted in the earth and reaching toward the sky, they call down its power - literally creating man-made lightning storms. Like them, Mackey’s piece speaks to the ancient impulse to summon nature’s power, and the magic such acts unleash. A sense of energy runs throughout the work, with the driving onstage percussion enhanced by the sound of thunder (provided by inexpensive hand-held percussion instruments called “thunder tubes”) surrounding the audience.

**Through the Mist (2009)**
Brian Balmages (b. 1975)

“Through the Mist” is based on simple themes, yet invokes more complex harmonies. Both its length and ranges are consistent with the abilities of beginners; however, directors of more mature ensembles will find that it provides an opportunity for working on musicianship and phrasing without sounding like a typical beginning band work. More advanced groups will want to consider adding quite a bit of rubato throughout, especially leading into fermatas.

The title is based on the softness that images take on when looked at through a fog or light mist. It is a peaceful setting and was written shortly after the birth of my second son, Collin Alexander.

**The Machine Awakes (2012)**
Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

“The Machine Awakes” is the sound of something not human (but of humans hands) – something not entirely organic, but most definitely alive – waking up for the first time. From the opening swirling textures, we sense the first hesitant sparks of thought, attempting to find form and coherence. This new machine – sentient, aware – comes fully awake, possessed of emphatic self-determination and unfathomable purpose.

Artwork by Aubrey Wilkinson
SYMPHONIC BAND

FLUTE
Tess Ryan
Tara Wolff
Anna Stern
Ashley Buehler
Mary Orzechowski
Katherine Orzechowski

OBOE
Natalie Page

CLARINET
Justin Pfeiff
Noah Olthoff
Josh Kim
Faith Marble
Ria Dave
Skylar Cale

BASS CLARINET
Ethan Howells
Mark Bowersock

SAXOPHONE
Elsa Harmon
Fletcher Turner
Jared Ross
Morgan Hennessy
Kradon Zhao

TRUMPET
Zac Cole
Dominic DeCicco
Brock Gell
Cody Hatton
Luke Olthoff
Eric Winger
Ryan Lee
Eunha Kim

TROMBONE
Kelsey Norkey
Will Kossar
Bella Call
Mateo Aleman
Haven Schultz

EUPHONIUM
Ridgely Hatton
Trent Bandre
Joey Yakre
Aidan Bryant

TUBA
Jacob Taylor
Zach Roman

PERCUSSION
Teddy Harbison
Nick Kirk
Jake Manna
Sam Ferguson
Connor Sherman
Jeff Keller
Sophie Bowersock
Ian Morrow
Overture for Winds (1959)
Charles Carter (b. 1926)

"Overture for Winds" is very typical of a band piece written in the 1950s. It's in a traditional concert form—the overture—that features a fast-slow-fast structure. The exciting opening theme is immediately engaging to the audience, and it leads into a lyrical, romantic slow section in the middle. The final section brings back the opening theme in a short fugue-like section, then restates it from the opening section. The piece ends with a dramatic ritardando to create a finale that truly sounds like the opening of a show or concert.

Two Debussy Moments (2016)
Claude Debussy (1862-1918); arr. Jim Mahaffey

Claude Debussy was an important French composer who was very prominent in the Parisian art scene. Many of his works were inspired by art or poetry created by his friends. Two of Debussy’s most famous and most highly performed piano works are included in this concert band setting. "Girl with the Flaxen Hair" is taken from his first set of twelve Preludes and includes rich and unusual harmonies throughout. "Reverie" was one of Debussy’s works for solo piano and incorporates what would later become known as the "Debussy sound."

Coil (2014)
Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

"Coil" began when I took a Tesla Motors Model S electric car for a test drive. It's a fantastic car and a fascinating company, though I didn't want to depict the drive itself in music. Instead, it provided the spark to explore the company's namesake, inventor Nikola Tesla, and in particular the sonic possibilities of his famous Tesla Coils. These buzzing, intense sounds led to composing this groove-entrenched combination of the power of the symphonic band ensemble with abundant samples of actual Tesla Coils and other electrical sources. The samples may be played live by a keyboardist in the ensemble, or played as a pre-recorded track with a click track for the conductor.
SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

FLUTE
Amu Nuney
Kelly Bushouse
Elizabeth Davidson
Evelyn Cheung
Riley England

OBOE
Ella Kempker

BASSOON
Logan Frazier
Yasmin Jarik

CLARINET
Cece Greve
Ethan Bales
Samanta Carreno
Jean Li
David Qi
Chelsea Park
Colby McArthur

BASS CLARINET
Kyle Miller
Pahul Warya

SAXOPHONE
Michael Svoren
Alex Jashinski
Mason Farley
Cameron Harris

TRUMPET
Nick Pfeiff
Alex Renaut
Jake Seager
Alexandra Hardinger
Connor O’Neill
Spencer Norkey

HORN
Branden Kohnle
Ben Caterine
Dante DeCicco
Ansel Herndon

TROMBONE
Brady Gell
Jack Shaw
Izaya Ogden
Karl Miller

EUPHONIUM
Deacon Ridley

TUBA
Ryan Barrett
Nathan Pollock

PERCUSSION
Mark Bowersock
Harrison Jones
Evan Sander
Cam Shaw
Daniel Sizoo
Robert Viazzoli
Radiant Joy (2006)
Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

"Radiant Joy" was my first new work after a compositional hiatus, and one that I hope is equal to its title in character and purity of intent. It comes after a difficult period in my personal life, and thus its character was something of a surprise to me. This work began life as a strict, 12-tone, serialized creature modeled on Webern – I wanted something sparse and tightly constructed (in harmonic and intervallic terms), while still retaining a vital rhythmic pulse. After several sketches that ended in anger and frustration, I realized I was metaphorically banging my head against the creative wall, and perhaps I should stop forcing this music into existence with a prescriptive process, and simply listen inwardly to what I actually wanted to hear. The result is simultaneously the opposite of what I was originally trying to create, and also its direct realization – the vital rhythmic pulse is still prominent, but the harmonic materials veered toward the language of 70s/80s funk/jazz/fusion (take your pick). Regardless, the piece is intended to emanate joy and ‘good vibes’ (literally – the vibraphone is critical to the piece!), for the performers, the audience, and the composer!

Dusk (2004)
Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

This simple, chorale-like work captures the reflective calm of dusk, paradoxically illuminated by the fiery hues of sunset. I’m always struck by the dual nature of this experience, as if witnessing an event of epic proportions silently occurring in slow motion. "Dusk" is intended as a short, passionate evocation of this moment of dramatic stillness.

Ecstatic Waters (2009)
Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

I. Ceremony of Innocence
II. Augurs
III. The Generous Wrath of Simple Men
IV. The Loving Machinery of Justice
V. Spiritus Mundi

"Ecstatic Waters" is music of dialectical tension – a juxtaposition of contradictory or opposing musical and extra-musical elements and an attempt to resolve them. The five connected movements hint at a narrative that touches upon naiveté, divination, fanaticism, post-human possibilities, anarchy, order, and the Jungian collective unconscious. Or, as I have described it more colloquially: W.B. Yeats meets Ray Kurzweil in the Matrix.

The overall title, as well as “Ceremony of Innocence” and “Spiritus Mundi” are taken from poetry of Yeats (“News for the Delphic Oracle,” and “The Second Coming”), and his personal, idiosyncratic mythology and symbolism of spiraling chaos and looming apocalypse figured prominently in the genesis of the work. Yet in a nod to the piece’s structural reality – as a hybrid of electronics and living players – “Ecstatic Waters” also references the confrontation of unruly humanity with the order of the machine, as well as the potential of a post-human synthesis, in ways inspired by Kurzweil.
The first movement, Ceremony of Innocence, begins as a pure expression of exuberant joy in unapologetic Bb Major in the Celesta and Vibraphone. The movement grows in momentum, becoming perhaps too exuberant – the initial simplicity evolves into a full-throated brashness bordering on dangerous arrogance and naiveté, though it retreats from the brink and ends by returning to the opening innocence.

In Mvt. II, Augurs, the unsustainable nature of the previous Ceremony becomes apparent, as the relentless tonic of Bb in the crystal water glasses slowly diffuses into a microtonal cluster, aided and abetted by the trumpets. Chorale-like fragments appear, foretelling the wrathful self-righteousness of Mvt. III. The movement grows inexorably, spiraling wider and wider, like Yeat’s gyre, until “the center cannot hold,” and it erupts with supreme force into The Generous Wrath of Simple Men.

Mvt. III is deceptive, musically contradicting what one might expect of its title. While it erupts at the outset with overwhelming wrath, it quickly collapses into a relentless rhythm of simmering 16th notes. Lyric lines and pyramids unfold around this, interrupted briefly by the forceful anger of a chorale, almost as if trying to drown out and deny anything but its own existence. A moment of delicate lucidity arrives amidst this back-and-forth struggle, but the chorale ultimately dominates, subsuming everything, spiraling out of control, and exploding.

The Loving Machinery of Justice brings machine-like clarity and judgment. Subtle, internal gyrations between atonality and tonality underpin the dialogue between lyric melody (solo Clarinet and Oboe) and mechanized accompaniment (Bassoons). An emphatic resolution in Ab minor concludes the movement, floating seamlessly into the epilogue, Spiritus Mundi. Reprising music from Mvt. I, this short meditative movement reconciles and releases the earlier excesses.

Rain Child
By Shaye Herman

You climb a tree one day,
Only to find the branches disappear below you
And the branches stretch toward the Heavens
You feel the Creases
On your forehead; around your eyes,
Smoothening—chasms fading into a flushes
Expanse
Rich with potential
Rich with Oblivion
You feel your cheeks fatten;
Your hair muss
Your knees scuff
Fighting the urge to giggle hysterically—
At the wonders of the universe
Filling your lungs with piercing air.
The ground (unseen, forgotten)
Seems the most frivolous destination,
An eternity into some future

What matters now is the millions
Of limbs, thick and thin,
Young and twisted,
Stretching eagerly to meet
Your grubby and determined fingertips
Like a mother with outstretched arms,
Awaiting her child’s return home.
Lost in the Concrete Jungle by Jeremy Kline

In the concrete jungle
The asphalt cracked,
amidst the shady grey hue,
Tramped down; down trodden
Certainly forgotten,
Once lied the jungle,
Now jungle anew.
Gone are the rainbows of
browns and greens,
And rise up the aces of
sounds and machines.
Here lies the green
novelty
On concrete cacophony
And out stretched the
jungle, jungle
Never before seen

The plants had once
shown so brightly,
Under the sun, and
moonlit nightly.
But no brilliant life was
soon no more,
When man came to settle
score.
And gone from the forest,
the brilliance it bore
A hundred suns the trees
had seen, just like the
hundred moon.
Despite the wind and rain
the forest weathered,
Despite the pain the
flowers bloomed
But nothing could ever
prepare the trees
For the final test of all.

Much worse than the
seasons of winter or fall.
No shrub nor bush no
might oak
Could escape the smog or
the smoke
And back the jungle
would crawl.
Man's jungle had been
created,
By none other than man
himself.
And no more had nature
dominated the scene.
The only remaining
nature, of human wealth.
The concrete jungle, in
full bloom,
Synonymous with man's
own doom.

Once green now grey, now
man's dismay,
He finds himself lost in a
concrete jungle.
"What could have caused
this?"
Pondered the man, he
muttered in one low
rumble
Man's greatest folly and
greatest feat,
Was complete and utter
lack of regard,
For who's to blame but the
man himself
The sole perpetrator of
his own health
He woke to the fury of the distant thunder
And the elegiac cry of the midnight rain.
He woke to the sightless blackness
And an impenetrable rise of the cold, emotionless metal.

By dawn, the sunlight shined upon the tattered horizon
And unmasked the brittle humanity.
By dawn, he reluctantly opened his eyes
And glanced over the battle wounds on civilization.

In the morning, the sun shined violently on barren ground
And burnt a scar on every inch of life
In the morning, he rose
And stood tottering in the scream of hopelessness.

In the afternoon, the withering stream spiraled into a pond of slurry
And seethes back out as black foam.
In the afternoon, he passed through the ruins of humanity
And laid, languishing, leaning on a scorched tree.

He slept to the impuissance of his body
And the aching of his bleeding heart.
He dreamt of the past, joy, and the liveliness
While the world fell into a silent void in the darkness of the night.
War in the Sky
by Anonymous

Marching to the beat of an inaudible rhythm
smoke, soot, and smog
pouring from a billowing tower
fighting the purity of the sparkling air
The battle wages onward

The charcoal haze gains ground
Dissipating with mechanized motions over the city and

countryside
Plotting, preparing, and planning
To slaughter the defenseless oxygen
But the air finds strength in its invisibility

The sputtering outcome of the atmosphere appears bleak
Its natural beauty is contradicted by the inhumanity in pollution
The faint murmurings of nature are drowned by the grinding of gears
Bashing, brawling, and bombarding
The synchronized smoke will surely prevail

The smog stomps forward with ease and precision
Ransacking the lives of humans and animals
Filling lungs with tar and the sky darkness
Systematically making the planet uninhabitable

There is one last chance for nature to rebel against this chemical tyranny

The battle for Earth ensues
Mankind’s creation against his well-being

Translucent divinity versus an enormous plume of dust
The atmosphere uses sustainability and responsibility as its rallying cry
Crashing, clanking, clattering

Nature miraculously triumphs over the corrosive machinery
The pollution recedes
Quickly but not unknowingly,
they appeared more prevalent.

Around every corner,
new inventions sprang up,
boasting new promises to make life better

Life becomes easier,
people become lazier.

As we stand idly by
Forests become electric playgrounds
and the sweet scent of fresh pine

becomes chimneys
sputtering out belches of smoke.

And what will become of the people?
Unable to work and use their abilities?
Brains will slowly turn to mush
and muscles deteriorate into useless mass.

But it's such a fine line,
isn't it?
are humans slaves to the machines?

Or are we the ones in control?
Once we're unable to tie our shoes,
brush our teeth
do the laundry, without assistance.

And then who is the smart one?
Who has gained rule?

Only time can tell.

Machines
by Amanda Collum
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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