Hodgson Wind Ensemble

Friday
March 2, 2018 • 8:00 p.m.

Conductor Cynthia Johnston Turner
Guest Conductor H. Robert Reynolds
Guest Composer Joel Love
Guest Composer Xi Wang
Alto Saxophone Connie Frigo

Program Notes

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)
Theme and Variations, Op. 43a (1943)

We either regret or take delight in informing you that you will not be hearing a typical Schoenberg piece this evening. Theme and Variations, Op. 43a stands out as a masterpiece of tonalism and traditional form, and is especially notable because it was written well after the Second Viennese School of 1903-1925, during which the composer Arnold Schoenberg and his pupils developed the atonal, twelve-tone compositional technique later labeled “serialism.” Depending on your tastes, this may be very welcome or unwelcome news! Fewer composers are more divisive among both casual and studied listeners. But tonal music was Schoenberg’s first love – a love he held throughout his entire life – and it is more than evident in his only piece written for band.

Theme and Variations, Op. 43a was written in 1943 at the repeated request of Carl Engel, then-president of the publishing company G. Schirmer Music. Engel desired a piece for band from a world-famous composer, and also wanted to help Schoenberg out of his financial difficulties. Like many European composers in the 1930’s, Schoenberg had emigrated to the United States to escape the rise of Nazi Germany. Although he was hired to teach music at both the University of Southern California and the University of California-Los Angeles, he and his wife continued to struggle financially. Unfortunately, Engel proved to have bad timing. The piece’s difficulty made it playable only by the top military bands, who were all preoccupied with World War II. An orchestral transcription was completed a few months later and premiered by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1944, but the original band version did not receive its premiere until 1946 by the Goldman Band in New York City.

The work’s difficulty stems from its wide stylistic range and expansive color palate. By 1943, the nearly 70-year-old Schoenberg had lived through (and variously contributed to) the eras of Romanticism, Modernism, Impressionism, Serialism, and Neoclassicism. His life’s work in developing twelve-tone music made him a master manipulator of melodies and timbres. All of these influences and genres can be heard in the piece’s theme and seven variations, which include a waltz, canon, and fugato. And it all ends in G major!

— Program note written by Matthew Sadowski

Joel Love (Born 1982)
Solace (2018)

Just before I began composing Solace, I had a great set of conversations with the leader of its consortium-commission, Connie Frigo. During our discussions, we talked about how well the saxophone can imitate vocal music and both expressed interest in a new concerto with a significant lyrical element. Early on, she suggested I read David Whyte’s Consolations: The Solace, Nourishment, and Underlying Meaning in Words. Whyte’s work meditates on words themselves, illustrating their deeper meaning, often revealing connections between difficult situations and their unexpectedly positive outcomes. Similarly, each movement meditates on a mood and is inspired by either a selection of text or title word from five consolations, picked by either Connie or me. Throughout the concerto, I challenge the soloist to play lyrically in extreme registers (called the “altissimo” register, which is above the typical, written range of the instrument) and while playing virtuosic passages in five unique sound worlds.

Whyte describes joy as the “the sheer intoxicating beauty of the world inhabited as an edge between what we previously thought was us and what we thought was other than us,” which is where “Joy” takes its inspiration. This movement highlights the soloist’s ability to play difficult syncopations, made even
performance UGA
February March 2018

The inspirational text summates my feeling with a slightly different technical challenge. Every new section, the soloist is presented to decide if a proper human future. “This movement for the arts and culture, the Composer, New Music USA, American Music Center, MacDowell Colony residency, as well as five prizes from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP).

Xi Wang has been the recipient of the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts award, Meet the Composer, New Music USA, American Music Center, MacDowell Colony residency, as well as five prizes from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP).

Xi Wang received her B.M. from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, M.M. from the University of Missouri–Kansas City, and D.M.A. from Cornell University. Currently, she is an Associate Professor at the Meadow School of Arts of Southern Methodist University.

About Winter Blossom the composer writes:

Steven Stucky’s sudden death was a shock to the music world. Both he and conductor/teacher Cynthia Johnston Turner were very dear professors and friends in my life while I was pursuing my D.M.A. at Cornell University. They not only taught me how to be a better musician, more importantly, they taught me how to be a better person. So when Cynthia asked if I would write a wind ensemble piece in memory of Steven Stucky, I was honored and thrilled.

An outcry of enormous sorrow, the first movement is a profound lament. Two melodic motives are quoted from Stucky’s music – the opening melody from his “Symphony,” and the minor second descending motive from his Elegy of August 4, 1964. The movement arrives at its climax with heavy and dark harmonies. The second movement juxtaposes multiple musical ideas and contrasting characters vertically while each idea evolves and develops horizontally. This reflects the richness and depth of Stucky’s personality and spirit. The last movement, beginning with chimes, is an adagio that unfolds patiently. The turbulent and anguished motives from the second movement eventually evolve to tranquility and the serene.

Stucky died on February 14, 2016 – a cold winter’s day in Ithaca, NY, but also a day of “warmth” and love – Valentine’s Day. His spirit, through his incredible music, shall radiate with his students and audiences ever after. May Steven Stucky forever rest in peace and love.

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961)
ed. Mark Rogers

Colonial Song (1919)

George Percy Aldridge Grainger was an Australian-born composer, arranger, and pianist. In the course of a long and innovative career, he played a prominent role in the revival of interest in British folk music in the early twentieth century. He left his native Australia at the age of 13 to attend school and develop his career in Europe, first at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt and later in London where he established himself as a pianist and collector of original folk melodies.

In 1914, Grainger moved to the United States, where he lived for the rest of his life, though he traveled widely in Europe and in Australia. He served briefly as a bandsman in the United States Army during 1917-18 and took American citizenship thereafter. After his mother’s suicide in 1922, he became increasingly involved in educational work. A decade later, he became Dean of Music at New York University, and underscored his reputation as an experimenter by putting jazz on the syllabus and inviting Duke Ellington as a guest lecturer. At the same time, he set up the Grainger Museum in Melbourne, his birthplace, as a monument to his life and works and as a future research archive. Twice he was offered honorary doctorates of music, but turned them down, explaining, “I feel that my music must be regarded as a product of non-education.”

Grainger dedicated Colonial Song to his mother. He wrote to conductors:
“No traditional tunes of any kind are made use of in this piece, in which I have wished to express feelings aroused by thoughts of the scenery and people of my native land, Australia, and also to voice a certain kind of emotion that seems to me not unusual to the native-born Colonials in general.

“Perhaps it is not unnatural that people living more or less lonelily in vast virgin countries and struggling against natural and climatic hardships (rather than against the more actively and dramatically exciting counter wills of the fellow men, as in more thickly populated lands) should run largely to that patiently yearning, inactive sentimental wistfulness that we find so touchingly expressed in much American art; for instance in Mark Twain’s ‘Huckleberry Finn’, and in Stephen Foster’s delightful songs. I have noticed curious, almost Italian-like musical tendencies in brass band performances and ways of singing in Australia (such as a preference for richness and intensity of tone and soulful breadth of phrasing over more subtly and sensitively varied delicacies of expression), which are also reflected here.”

– Program note compiled and edited by Matthew Sadowski

Oscar Navarro (Born 1981)

Downey Overture (2011)

Oscar Navarro was born in the village of Novelda, Spain, where he began studying music at an early age. He received a Bachelor of Music from the Conservatorio Superior Oscar Espla in Alicante, Spain. He continued his studies in composition and conducting at the Allegro International Music Academy in Valencia. After completing his studies at the Allegro International Music Academy, he was selected to study Motion Pictures and Television Scoring at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. While at USC, he was awarded the prestigious Harry Warren Endowed Scholarship for Scoring Motion Pictures and Television, which is awarded to the most advanced graduating student in the field of study.

His music has been performed by notable ensembles such as the Cleveland Orchestra, Louisville Symphony, Hollywood Studio Orchestra, the Royal College of Music Film Orchestra, the North Texas Wind Ensemble and the Orchesta Radio of Kiev. His film music has received considerable recognition. He was nominated for Best Original Score at the 2014 GOYA Spanish Academy Awards for his work in the film “La Mula”. He was awarded the Hollywood Music in Media Award in the Classical Music Category in 2016.

Navarro is also the owner and conductor of the Oscar Navarro Symphony Orchestra, based out of Alicante, Spain. The orchestra had its premiere performance in March 2016.

Downey Overture was composed for Orchestra in 2011 as a tribute to the Downey Orchestra in Los Angeles, California and their conductor, Sharon Lavery. The composer says of the piece:

“Downey Overture is a Latin-American fusion with which I wanted to link my birth country, Spain, and California, the land that, as a result of the two years I lived there, has left a permanent imprint on my heart.

An amalgam of rhythm and musical color wrapped in an atmosphere of dance are the essence of this piece. It is joyful, energetic and written with all of my enthusiasm and dedication. It could not have been any other way for the Downey Symphony Orchestra”.

– Program note compiled by Bradley J. Esau

About the Artists

Cynthia Johnston Turner

Cynthia Johnston Turner is Director of Bands, Professor of Music, Area Chair of Conducting, and Artistic Director of Rote Hund Muzik at the Hodgson School of Music, University of Georgia. Turner conducts the Hodgson Wind Ensemble, leads the MM and DMA programs in conducting, and oversees the entire band program including the 430-member Redcoat Marching Band.

Before her appointment at the Hodgson School at the University of Georgia, Cynthia was Director of Wind Ensembles at Cornell University. Earlier in her career Cynthia was a high school music educator, taught middle school beginning instrumental music in Toronto and choral music in Switzerland.

A Canadian, Cynthia completed her Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degrees at Queens University and her Master of Music in music education and conducting at the University of Victoria. Touring with her ensembles inspired her master’s thesis on the musical and personal transformations that occur on tours, and her D.M.A. thesis at the Eastman School of Music centered on the music of William Kraft, one of this generation’s leading composers.

At Eastman Cynthia was the recipient of the prestigious teaching award in conducting. She received the National Leadership in Education Award (Canada), the Excellence in Education Award (Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation), and the Marion Drysdale Leadership Award (also from OSSITF). She is also the recipient of the Donald A. Reick Memorial Award for research with wearable technologies and music pedagogy, and the American Prize for innovative programming with wind bands.

Cynthia has commissioned numerous new works for wind band, contemporary music ensembles, and orchestra, and she continues to actively promote commissions by today’s leading and emerging composers around the world. Under her direction, the Cornell Wind Ensemble was invited to perform at the College Band Directors National Association’s Eastern Division Conference in 2007 and 2012, and the Hodgson Wind Ensemble performed at CBDNA National in Kansas City in 2017. In 2008, the Merrill Presidential Scholars at Cornell recognized Cynthia as an outstanding educator, and in 2009, she was awarded the Kaplan Family Distinguished Faculty Fellowship. Her performances have been praised by such composers as Steven Stucky, William Kraft, Steven Bryant, Marc Mellits, Nancy Galbraith, Peter Lane, Eddie Mora Bermudez, Dana Wilson, Roberto Sierra, and Karel Husa.

From January 2006, Cynthia led the Cornell Wind Ensemble on biennial performing and service tours to Costa Rica that included performances across the country, conducting master classes with Costa Rican teachers, instrument master classes for Costa Rican musicians, and the donation of over 250 instruments to music schools across the country. She led the Hodgson Wind Ensemble to Panama in January 2016 to teach, perform, and donate instruments.

Among other recent engagements, Cynthia has guest conducted the National Youth Wind Ensemble of Great Britain, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth Band of Canada, Concordia Santa Fe, the Ithaca College Wind Ensemble, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the Latin American Honor Band, the National Band of Costa Rica, the National Orchestra of Heredia, and numerous state honor bands. Cynthia
Robert Reynolds has conducted recordings with members from the Detroit Symphony. In addition to these responsibilities, he served as the Henry F. Thurnau Professorship in Wind Conducting. This appointment followed his career in the public schools of Michigan and California before beginning his university conducting at California State University at Long Beach and the University of Wisconsin prior to his tenure at the University of Michigan. He received the D.M.A. degree from the Music Alumni Association of the University of Michigan for his contributions to the many students he has influenced during his career and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Michigan Band Alumni Association. He is also an Honorary Life Member of the Southern California School Band & Orchestra Association.

Professor Reynolds was Past President and the very first recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the College Band Directors’ National Association as well as being Past President of the Big Ten Band Directors’ Association. He has received the highest national awards from Phi Mu Alpha, Kappa Kappa Psi, Phi Beta Mu, the National Band Association, and the American School Band Directors’ Association, and he was awarded the “Medal of Honor” by the International Mid-West Band and Orchestra Clinic. He is the recipient of a “Special Tribute” from the State of Michigan, and he was a member of the National Awards Panel for the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) for over 10 years and in 2001 received a national award from this organization for his contributions to contemporary American music. He is also listed in the New Groves Dictionary of American Music, and his frequent conducting appearances have included the Eastman School of Music, New England Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, Northwestern University, and Manhattan School of Music, as well as the Wind Ensemble at the Tanglewood Institute.

Robert Reynolds has been a featured conductor and lecturer at international conferences in Austria, Australia, Norway, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland. He has conducted in many of the major cities of Japan, Spain, and Sweden including concerts with the Stockholm Wind Orchestra, the Norrkoping Symphony Orchestra and professional wind ensembles in Bilbao and Barcelona, Spain. Many of his former students now hold major conducting positions at leading conservatories and universities, and several have been National Presidents of CBDNA.

Joel Love

Hailed as “extremely moving” by New Music Box and “especially sweet” by the Austin American Statesman, the music of Joel Love (b. 1982) explores an eclectic mix of genres, from short video pieces to works for chamber and large ensembles.

Joel was commissioned to compose a new work, Lightscape, for the opening of light artist James Turrell’s The Color Inside in 2013. The Houston Chronicle commented that Lightscape “evocatively captures the emotion of The Color Inside.” Joel is a two-time winner of the PARMA Recordings Composition Competition, which selected Lux and Synchronicity in Purple Minor for publication. His first work for wind ensemble, Aurora Borealis, was selected as finalista 3rd the International Franck Ticheli Composition Contest.

Joel’s works have been performed by a number of large and small ensembles, exhibited at art galleries, and screened at theaters and festivals around the world. Recent highlights include a number of worldwide performances of his new saxophone octet, Three Images, including the Royal College of Music Saxophone Ensemble and the faculty of the American Saxophone Academy, both in the summer of 2017, and a performance of his first work saxophone quartet, In memoriam, by the award-winning Kneri Quartet during the Grand Prize Gayla Concert at the inaugural M-Prize competition in 2016. Recent commissions include a nation-wide consortium led by Connie Frigo for a new concerto for Solace: A Lyric Concerto for alto saxophone with wind ensemble accompaniment, a new set of saxophone miniatures for Musiqa in Houston, TX, and commission for a new work for chorus, soloists, and orchestra from the Austin-based Panoramic Voices.

His film scores include the documentary film Stitched, official selection at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival. Joel's score for short film Kidfellas, "Best Musical Score" at Houston’s 2011 48-Hour Film Project. Last year, Joel’s score for Socks in the City won honorable mention for "Best Musical Score" at New York City’s 2015 48-Hour Film Project. Other notable collaborations with artists from other disciplines feature a city-wide public art exhibit with artist Karyn Olivier, Inbound: Houston, and a 3-month installation by Prince V. Thomas, On Joy, On Sorrow at the Houston Center for Photography, praised by the Houston Chronicle as “a beautiful piece that feels cleansing to watch.”

Joel recently completed a D.M.A. in Composition from the University of Texas at Austin’s Butler School of Music and holds degrees from the University of Houston’s Moores School of Music (M.Music) and Lamar University’s Mary Morgan Department of Music (B.Music). He lives in Houston, TX, where he teaches music at Houston Community College’s Southwest location in Stafford, TX.
**Xi Wang**

Composer Xi Wang’s original concert music has been performed worldwide by notable orchestras and ensembles such as the Minnesota Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Shanghai Philharmonic, Spokane Symphony, Voices of Change, Soli Chamber Ensemble, and Tippet String Quartet, among others.

Xi Wang is the recipient of the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts award, Meet the Composer, New Music USA, American Music Center, MacDowell Colony residency, as well as seven prizes from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). Xi Wang has received commissions from the Albany Symphony, Shanghai Philharmonic, Voices of Change, Great Dallas Youth Orchestra, Soli Chamber Ensemble, among others.

Xi Wang received her B.M. from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, M.M. from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and D.M.A. from Cornell University. Currently, she is an Associate Professor at the Meadow School of Arts of Southern Methodist University.

**Connie Frigo**

Saxophonist Connie Frigo is an accomplished soloist, chamber musician, teacher, speaker, and founder of numerous festivals. She is sought-after presenter on topics relating to professional development, entrepreneurship, creativity and women in music. She is currently Associate Professor of Saxophone at the University of Georgia where she has taught since 2011.

Highlights of Frigo’s career include six years with the premiere U.S. Navy Band, Washington, D.C., a position she won as a junior in college; seven years touring nationally as the baritone saxophonist with the New Century Saxophone Quartet; and faculty positions at the Universities of Tennessee, Maryland and Ithaca College prior to UGA. She is a Fulbright Scholar to the Netherlands, where she studied with Dutch virtuoso Arno Bornkamp and began a life-long collaboration with Dutch ‘avant pop’ composer JacobTV.

Frigo is an active clinician and guest performer at universities domestically and internationally. In recent years, she has traveled to Italy, Russia, Brazil and Panama to perform and teach. In 2016, she served on the faculty of the American Saxophone Academy at the Eastman School of Music, and in 2017 was a featured guest artist teacher at the Great Plains Saxophone Workshop in Oklahoma. In August 2017, her trio, The Yargo Trio, featuring UGA faculty Angela Jones-Reus (flute) and Liza Stepanova (piano), released their debut album Voices, Reimagined, produced by Mark Records.

Frigo’s students have won concerto, young artist, and chamber music competitions at regional and national levels. Her research on the discipline of creativity and the impact it can have on the learning and teaching of classical music has led to new teaching strategies for the applied studio. She is a 2015 UGA Center for Teaching and Learning Fellow for Innovative Teaching, with a focus on “Flipping the Classroom.” While teaching at The U. of Tenn., she was voted Distinguished Teacher of the Year by the student body.

With a special interest in collaborating with living composers, Frigo has been a part of commissioning and premiering the works of many American composers including Bang On a Can co-founder David Lang, Ben Johnston, John Fitz Rogers, and UGAs own Peter van Zandt Lane, among others.

Frigo is a Henri Selmer Paris artist and D’Addario artist. For the North American Saxophone Alliance, she has served as Coordinator of Competitions (2007-2010) and program committee member and chair (2012, 2014). Her degrees are from Ithaca College (BM), U. of Illinois (MM), Conservatorium van Amsterdam (Fullbright) and U. of South Carolina (DMA).