**Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906–1975) Trans. Donald Hunsberger

*Festive Overture* (1947) [7 min]

Despite living under the artistic constraints of Soviet Russia, Dmitri Shostakovich persevered and composed a substantial number of works, including 15 symphonies and string quartets. Born in St. Petersburg, Shostakovich was already playing piano and composing at an early age. In 1926, he graduated from the (then) Petrograd Conservatory at the age of 20 with his Symphony No. 1 serving as his thesis. As his compositional style matured, it was deemed “formalist”, a handy generic term of condemnation (and usually of ensuing punishment) affixed to nearly any work of art that was not considered to glorify the Soviet ideal adequately. Shostakovich was formally condemned twice by Stalin for being too formalist, and consequently lived in fear of his life until after Stalin died in 1953.

Perhaps it was with a sense of relief that the Stalin era had ended that Shostakovich wrote the carefree and brilliant *Festive Overture* in 1954. The piece was composed in a whirlwind just three days prior to a concert commemorating the 37th anniversary of the October Revolution at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Shostakovich’s friend and music critic Lev Lebedinsky commented on “the speed with which he wrote [which] was truly astounding. Moreover, when he wrote light music, he was able to talk, make jokes and compose simultaneously, like the legendary Mozart. He laughed and chuckled, and in the meanwhile, work was under way and the music was being written down.”

The overture begins with heralding trumpets and low brass followed by a much quicker tempo featuring long, running woodwind lines. The opening fanfare returns briefly toward the end and almost stops before an even quicker tempo than before brings us to the finish.

The transcription we are performing this afternoon was published by Donald Hunsberger in 1965, just as he was beginning his 37-year tenure as conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble. As is common with band transcriptions and arrangements, Hunsberger transposed the original A major into a more wind friendly Ab major.

**Steven Bryant** (1972)

*Dusk* (2004, rev. 2008) [6 min]

*Dusk* is a simple, chorale-like work that captures the reflective calm of dusk, paradoxically illuminated by the fiery hues of sunset. The dual nature of this experience is striking, 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.

Dusk was commissioned and premiered in 2004 by Langley High School Wind Symphony, Andrew Gekoskie, conductor. In 2008, it was revised by the composer, which is the version we are performing this afternoon.

Steven Bryant is an American composer of orchestral, wind ensemble, electronic and chamber music. Bryant studied composition with John Corigliano at The Juilliard School, Cindy McTee at the University of North Texas, and Francis McBeth at Ouachita University. He resides in Durham, NC with his wife, conductor Verena Mösenbichler-Bryant.

**Joseph Turrin** (1947)

*The Sounding of the Call* (2014) [13 min]
The Sounding of the Call is inspired by what opens Jack London’s novel The Call of the Wild. It is the first quatrain of John Myers O’Hara’s poem Atavism. The stanza outlines one of the main motifs of The Call of the Wild: that Buck, when removed from the "sun-kissed" Santa Clara Valley where he was raised, will revert to his wolf heritage with its innate instincts and characteristics. The verse is "Old longings nomadic leap, Chafing at custom's chain; Again from it brumal sleep. Wakens the ferine strain."

The Sounding of the Call was commissioned by a consortium of soloists, this afternoon’s soloist included, for the 2012 Ellsworth Smith International Trumpet Solo Competition. The work was premiered by Philip Smith, the former Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic, and the University of Hartford Hartt School Wind Ensemble.

Not only a recipient of several commissions from the New York Philharmonic, the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, and Live from Lincoln Center, Joseph Turrin’s works have been championed by such noted musicians as: Kurt Masur, Zubin Mehta, Erich Leinsdorf, Bram Tovey, Wynton Marsalis, Frederica von Stade, Canadian Brass, Ann-Sophia Mutter and others.

Joseph Turrin studied composition at Eastman School of Music and Manhattan School of Music. He is currently on the Music faculty of Rutgers University, Montclair State University and Kean University.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) arr. Brian Belski
Letter from Home (1944) [7 min]

Letter from Home is a 1944 orchestral composition by Aaron Copland. The piece was commissioned as a patriotic work by Paul Whiteman for his Radio Hall of Fame Orchestra and suggests the emotions of a soldier reading a letter from home. However, researchers have discovered while he wrote this work, Copland received a wealth of letters from his sister, telling him the news of his mother’s death and his brother Ralph’s time in the army. Thus, it has been argued that Copland may have intertwined some of his own feelings of grief and loneliness into this work. The work is incredibly sentimental in both atmosphere and music, which brings warmth and nostalgia to an increasingly difficult situation.

Aaron Copland was considered in his lifetime by peers and critics alike as the “Dean of American Composers.” Copland composed several of the 20th century American masterworks for orchestra, including Fanfare for the Common Man, Symphony No. 3, Appalachian Spring, and Billy the Kid. Along with his close friend, Leonard Bernstein, Copland helped elevate American orchestral music to a peer level with European compositions. Both composers employed American idioms in their compositions, particularly jazz.

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)
“Lads of Wamphray” March (1905) [9 min]

Grainger composed this march as a birthday gift for his mother in 1905, basing it on melodies and musical material from a Scottish "border ballad." The poem celebrates a bloody skirmish between two clans in 1593. In the march, Grainger sought to express the dare-deviltry of the cattle-raiding, swashbuckling English and Scottish "borderers" of the period as portrayed in collections of border ballads of the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries.

Percy Aldridge Grainger was born in Melbourne, Australia and was schooled mostly under the auspices of his mother. By the age of 13, he had made his debut as a solo pianist and was soon moving to Frankfurt to study at the Hoch Conservatory. Following his education in Germany, he
moved to London with his mother and slowly established himself as an international concert pianist. However talented he was at the piano; he always had a yearning to compose. It was during this period that Grainger toured the English countryside collecting folk songs straight from the source: often working-class, common folk. Grainger’s interest in this collecting was not of merely arranging these songs into neat compositions, but rather to emphasize the way the singer presented the songs, with the resulting rhythms, inflections, and ornaments.

David Maslanka (1943-2017)

_Give Us This Day_ (2006) [17 min]

From the Composer:

The words “Give us this day” are, of course, from the Lord’s Prayer, but the inspiration for this music is Buddhist. I have recently read a book by the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn (pronounced “Tick Nat Hahn”) entitled _For a Future to be Possible_. His premise is that a future for the planet is only possible if individuals become deeply mindful of themselves, deeply connected to who they really are. While this is not a new idea, and something that is an ongoing struggle for everyone, in my estimation it is the issue for world peace. For me, writing music, and working with people to perform music, are two of those points of deep mindfulness.

Music makes the connection to reality, and by reality, I mean a true awareness and awareness. _Give Us This Day_ gives us this very moment of awareness and awareness so that we can build a future in the face of a most dangerous and difficult time.

I chose the subtitle, “Short Symphony for Wind Ensemble,” because the music is not programmatic in nature. It has a full-blown symphonic character, even though there are only two movements. The music of the slower first movement is deeply searching, while that of the highly energized second movement is at times both joyful and sternly sober. The piece ends with a modal setting of the choral melody “_Vater Unser in Himmelreich_” (Our Father in Heaven) – No. 110 from the 371 four-part chorales by Johann Sebastian Bach.

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1943. He attended the Oberlin College Conservatory where he studied composition with Joseph Wood. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, and did masters and doctoral study in composition at Michigan State University where his principal teacher was H. Owen Reed.

Maslanka’s music for winds has become especially well known. Among his more than 150 works are over 50 pieces for wind ensemble, including eight symphonies, seventeen concertos, a Mass, and many concert pieces. His chamber music includes four wind quintets, five saxophone quartets, and many works for solo instrument and piano. In addition, he has written a variety of orchestral and choral pieces.

He served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, and was a freelance composer in Missoula, Montana from 1990 until his death in 2017.

Program notes by Gregory C. Depp