

Program Notes

Regarding the **Woodwind Quintet No 2**, David Maslanka writes: [The] movement through the entire piece shifts by degrees from an assertive, technically demanding character to music that is quite placid and ethereal. The first movement is, for the most part, aggressive and driving. Its exposition consists of several relatively brief ideas sharply intercut. The center of the movement is a complete fugue employing a number of traditional devices including retrograde, inversion, and retrograde-inversion of the subject, rhythmic augmentation and diminution, and *stretto*. The recapitulation consists of a quiet and thoughtful reworking of the introduction to the movement and an evolution of one of the short ideas from the exposition. The second movement has an underlying attitude of mystery and elusiveness. The pleasant and lulling quality of the opening gives way to a much more emotional and demanding music. The recapitulation further evolves the soothing character of the beginning, and the coda effects a mysterious disappearance. The third movement is a chaconne, a continuous set of variations over a brief repeated harmonic pattern. This radically simple harmonic scheme, laid out in whole notes, persists undisturbed until the coda. Above it unfolds a solo, a duet, a trio, then a drive to the movement's climactic point. The music then subsides to a restatement of the opening oboe solo, followed by a chorale-like coda that summarizes the entire piece. (<https://davidmaslanka.com/works/quintet-for-winds-no-2/>)

As a performer encountering this work for the first time, I first noted the tremendous physical demands placed on each musician. The oboist plays in the extreme high register in long passages in the first movement. In the third movement, the hornist plays a stirring thirty-five measure passage ending with a held high C, and then continues to play for fifty additional measures, instead of getting a well-earned rest. The entire flute part is virtuoso *plus* (the flute is always virtuoso, BTW). Over in the bassoon part, this voice leads the fugue in the first movement, provides the jazz soul in the second movement, and plays very high-register lyrical solos in the third movement.

“What about the clarinet?”, you may ask. As the clarinetist, I am proud to fill the role parallel to that of the violist in a string quartet; always present, never too loud, and hoping for but not expecting for glory. In this work the clarinet is an ostinato instrument for most of the time, playing repeated patterns without pause. During the first movement, my first rest of more than two beats occurs only at measure 69. (A further rest happens during the oboe's screaming high-register cadenza in the first movement.) I enjoy many measures of rest in the second movement and return to being a constant and faithful companion in the third movement, as the clarinet and horn play for the entire movement without rest. Clarinet as golden retriever, if you will.

David Maslanka made his mark first as a wind ensemble composer, writing weighty works (mostly on serious topics) that reflect both his childhood in New England and his time lived in Montana. The traditional compositional devices detailed in his program notes and the sheer length of *Woodwind Quintet No. 2* (approximately 20 minutes) places this work in the same classification of serious wind music. Is it worth the physical demands placed on the performers? You, the audience, will answer that question.

-Shannon Scott

Wooden Miniatures was commissioned by Washington State University in commemoration of the WSU Library Addition. Most of the compositional work was done in April and May of 1994. The work is dedicated to the Solstice Wind Quintet and they presented the premiere performance at the dedication of the Library Addition in August of 1994. The work was published by Advance Music (Germany) in 2010.

Since the work was composed for a ceremonial occasion, the goal was to create positive and uplifting music. Since the time frame available for the performance was somewhat limited, it was necessary to condense some of the musical ideas. The goal was to create a piece which had the feeling of a complete work yet was short and concise.

Wooden Miniatures is in three movements: I. Made of Mahogany features brilliant, sprightly colors; II. Teak Elephants is more melancholy and reflective; and III. Fashioned from Boxwood begins with a march-like *fugato* followed by a return of material from the first movement. The title is a play on words. Three short pieces featuring woodwinds can be categorized as “Wooden Miniatures,” but then I began to think about libraries, especially personal libraries and the carved wooden figures and bookends sometimes found on the shelves, and I was reminded of the wooden elephants which my grandfather kept in his library.

-Greg Yasinitsky

Valerie Coleman (b. 1970) has emerged as a preeminent voice in 21st century woodwind performance and repertoire. As a founding member of the revolutionary chamber group Imani Winds, Coleman’s compositional voice was introduced to the world through works for woodwind quintet that embrace popular music, jazz, and assert her African American identity. **Afro Cuban Concerto** was composed for the Imani Winds in 2001. Of the work the composer writes “Afro-Cuban Concerto is a work that focuses on Afro-Cuban rhythms, the feel of Santeria worship, and the virtuosity of

wind instruments (Santeria worship has its origins in the Caribbean and is based on the Bantu and Yoruba beliefs of Western Africa combined with elements of Roman Catholicism). Often mistaken for a 'neo-classic' work due to its harmonic structure, the essence within the Concerto is purely African and Cuban. All African-derived music has a basic structure from which all music from every genre (including classical) has benefitted. It is the feel of spirituality, passion, and rhythmic precisions that brings the essence of Afro-Cuban music to life in this piece. As with virtually all of the composer's works, performers are encouraged to improvise when they have solos (within the Afro-Cuban vernacular for this work) and embellish when the mood hits."

-Jacqui Wilson