

Ken Drobnak, a native of Medina, Ohio, specializes in tuba performance, low brass instruction and wind conducting. His research interests include the history of Frank Holton & Company and the career of Mr. Oscar Stover. Stover served as Director of Bands at Coffeyville Junior College (Kansas), Assistant Band Director at Michigan State University under Leonard Falcone and Director of Bands at Northwestern Oklahoma State University.



Drobnak has performed with the Greater Lansing Symphony Orchestra, Billings Symphony Orchestra, Helena Symphony Orchestra, South Dakota Brass Quintet and numerous other chamber ensembles. Tuba-Euphonium Press has published many of his arrangements for solo tuba and tuba/euphonium ensemble. His primary teachers include Tucker Jolly and Phil Sinder. He also studied with Deanna Swoboda and Karl Hinterbichler.

As a conductor, Drobnak has led athletic bands, concert bands and chamber ensembles in the public schools and at the collegiate level. Drobnak is in demand as a clinician, guest conductor and judge throughout the central United States. His primary conducting teachers include Robert Jorgensen, Michael Golemo, Eric Rombach-Kendall and Wesley Broadnax.

Drobnak has authored several articles and presented numerous clinics on the history of Frank Holton & Company, most recently at the 2014 International Tuba-Euphonium Conference and 2015 Great Plains Regional Conference. After discovering the archives of Oscar Stover at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Drobnak initiated a research project into Stover's career with several publications currently in preparation. Drobnak presented a poster at the 2015 National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association on this topic.

Drobnak is in his first year at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He holds a D.M.A. in Tuba Performance from Michigan State University, M.M. in Conducting from The University of New Mexico and two baccalaureate degrees in Music Education and Tuba Performance from The University of Akron.

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley
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School of Music

presents

Faculty Recital

with

Ken Drobnak, Tuba

and

Ken Saxon, Piano

with guest artist

Carol McNabb Goodwin, Bassoon

TSC Arts Center
Brownsville, Texas

December 15, 2015
7:30 PM

www.drobnakbrass.com

Program

Introduction and Allegro Spiritoso	Jean Baptiste Senaillé (1687-1730) arr. Philip Catelinet
Suite No. 4 for Tuba and Piano (Thomas Suite)	Alec Wilder (1907-1980)
In two	ed. Gunther Schuller
Slowly	
In one	
Lively	
Remember?	James Grant (b.1954)
“Dutch” Suite in G Major (S.-16)	P.D.Q. Bach (1807-1742)?
Mr. Minuit’s Minuet	ed. Peter Schickele
Panther Dance	
Dance of the Grand Dams	
The Lowland Fling	
	<i>Carol McNabb Goodwin, Bassoon</i>
How Beautiful (Isaiah 52:7)	Barbara York (b. 1949)
Saltarella (Souvenir de Sorrento)	Guido Papini (1847-1912)
	trans. Charles Villarubia and Rick Rowley

Saltarella (Souvenir de Sorrento)

An Italian violinist and composer, Guido Papini gave a successful performance debut when he was only 13 years old. Later, he led a string quartet in Florence and developed a reputation for performing with a brilliant technique and expressive tone quality. For a brief period of time, he was a court violinist to the Queen of Italy. In the mid-1870s, he moved to England and became a soloist with a philharmonic orchestra in London. While serving as the principal violin professor at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, he inaugurated an important series of chamber concerts. He composed more than 200 works, however, he is known more for his pedagogical studies, such as *A Technical Work for the Practice of the Different Bowings Most in Use*. A *saltarello* is a rapid Italian dance, most commonly in triple meter and involving jumping movements. The term dates from a Tuscan manuscript circa 1400, though little is known about its precise performance practice. As a dance, the form appeared throughout Europe. The tempo was most rapid in Italy and necessitated the dancers stepping closer to the floor in order to keep pace. In terms of structure, the *saltarello* generally consisted of several repeated strains with several different contrasting sections. Those written in a duple meter were sometimes called *saltarello tedesco*. The term *saltarella* is a linguistic variant of *saltarello* and may indicate a different region of origin within Italy. Papini wrote this *Saltarella* around 1890, perhaps in 1892, for violin and piano. Likely written to showcase Papini’s own technical ability, it has been transcribed for other solo instruments. This arrangement was completed by Rick Rowley and Charles Villarubia, Professor of Tuba at The University of Texas at Austin.

How Beautiful

How Beautiful was written by Barbara York at the request of Matt and Kristy Brown in memory of their son, Eli Reuben Brown, who passed away on May 19, 2008. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings of peace; who publishes good tidings of good, and who declares salvation; who says to Zion, Your God reigns!” (Isaiah 52:7) The composer notes “It was privilege for me to write this piece for the Browns, who shared with me some of their most intimate thoughts and feelings in the process of losing their son. It was a great challenge for me to write this memorial piece for their son and I agonized over it for months. But the Browns became for me not only a great support, but also a true inspiration in the writing of this piece – they also became for me the embodiment of Faith, Hope and Love and a living example that ‘the greatest of these’ is always Love. This piece has become one of, if not my own favorite of all the pieces I have written so far. It is, as has been said before about my work, ‘deceptively difficult’ (or deceptively easy if you would prefer). The piece was not only extremely difficult to write, but is also more than apparently difficult to play both within its long-breathed phrases and also within its musical and emotional transparency. There is virtually nowhere to ‘hide’ in this piece, either as a composer or as a performer, so one is both assisted and also trapped by and within its simplicity and transparency. *How Beautiful* should be nothing but that – simple, transparent, emotional, yet sincere and ‘unaffected’ in that sense when it is performed well . . . This is not a complicated piece technically, but is a very demanding piece both musically and emotionally. The beauty of the sound and phrasing . . . is extremely gratifying to me.”

Program Notes

Introduction and Allegro Spiritoso

Jean Baptiste Senaillé was a French violinist and composer who first studied with his father, Jean Senaillé. Though many of Jean Baptiste’s musical activities remain unknown, his career included service to courts in France and Italy. His reputation as a composer eclipsed his reputation as a performer, and he composed a series of violin sonatas that combined gracious French melody with Italian harmonies. After his death, one publication wrote that “Senaillé had been in Italy and had been one of our finest violinists, but he had not attained the perfection Baptiste [Anet] either in vigor or in beauty of execution, although he had been better at composition; the sonatas which he gave us are genteel and have the advantage even over those of Michel [Mascitti].” (New Grove, 1980)

Suite No. 4 for Tuba and Piano (Thomas Suite)

Alec Wilder’s music is a unique blend of American jazz and the classical European idiom, thus, it is difficult to classify and describe with common labels. During his lifetime, much of his music was not accepted; jazz music was not “jazzy” enough, and his classical music was not “avant-garde” enough for the academic elite. He was born in Rochester, New York, and studied privately at the local conservatory, the Eastman School of Music. But as a composer, he was largely self-taught. His best known works are likely the octets written for unusual combinations of instruments, and were a combination of jazz and popular elements. Legendary tuba artist Harvey Phillips was introduced to Alec Wilder by mutual friend and hornist John Barrows. The initial meeting resulted in a lifelong friendship and partnership that resulted in many compositions for the tuba. Wilder first

wrote a six-movement suite for Harvey about “a charming little elephant named Effie” (*Suite No. 1*). As their friendship grew, Wilder wrote many works for Harvey, including a suite for each one of Harvey’s children (Jesse, Thomas and Little Harvey). In his autobiography, Harvey notes that “each suite is a remarkable reflection of each son’s personality; maybe the boys grew up to reflect the music that Alec had written for them.” Wilder wrote an astonishing amount of music for Harvey, a partial list includes: five suites, ten tuba duets, ten tuba trios, ten tuba quartets, chamber music, a concerto (premiered with the U.S. Air Force Band), and a *Convalescence Suite* composed when Harvey was in the hospital.

Remember?

For over three decades, James Grant has been commissioned by individuals, choruses, chamber ensembles and orchestras who have performed his music throughout the world. He is a past first-prize winner of the Washington Cathedral Choral Society's choral composition competition; the South Coast (CA.) Choral Society's International Choral Competition; the Louisville Orchestra Competition for New Orchestral Music; and, in 2002, was one of five American composers to win the Aaron Copland Award.

Grant's colorful musical language is known by musicians and audiences for its honed craft and immediacy, and his ability to compose music appropriate to specific levels of experience has found him working with groups ranging from professional orchestras, choruses, solo recitalists, new music ensembles and ballet companies to community choruses, university choral and instrumental ensembles, and youth orchestras. His music is regularly programmed at music festivals, symposia, and clinics; and his desire to

compose new music for a given repertoire and specific instrumentation has led to many successful consortium commissions, a concept championed by the composer. (James Grant)

“Dutch” Suite in G Major

Everything about P.D.Q. Bach’s “Dutch” Suite is nether: the country mentioned in the title, the ranges of the instruments employed (the ranges of instruments in the 18th century were defined in relation to Middle C; both the bassoon and tuba, therefore, were thought of as being largely below C level), the quality of inspiration and craftsmanship, and (probably) the place of composition, since the composer did most of his writing under the piano. The last and least son of the great Johann Sebastian Bach visited the Netherlands in all likelihood during the Period of Great Wandering that preceded the Period of Great Immobility during which he produced the monument of incompetence that is his *oeuvre*. It is not at all implausible that the Mr. Minuit to whom the first piece is dedicated might have been a descendant of the Peter Minuit who made New York City what it is today. Nor is it all that implausible that the Panther Dance refers to animals seen in the zoological garden established by the famous painter Peter Paul Rubens more than a century before P.D.Q.’s visit. Whether the “Grand Dams” of the third movement are old mothers or large dykes remains to be proven, but the Lowland Fling is a well-known dance still performed to this very day in Holland; it is always performed below sea level and is characterized by bends. The “Dutch” Suite, modest to the point of being puny when compared to the “French” and “English” Suites of J.S. Bach, was written during the Contrition Period of P.D.Q. Bach’s all-too-long creative life. (Peter Schickele)