

Composers on Composing for Band

*"The future of music may not be with music itself
but rather... in the way it makes itself a part of the finer
things humanity does and dreams of."*

-Charles Ives

Composers on Composing for Band gives fresh insight and perspective into the world of music from the ultimate source of its creativity-- the composer. This book demonstrates the desire to bring closer the creative and re-creative realms of music and music-making, thereby promoting greater understanding and more meaningful and mutually beneficial partnership between the composer and the conductor.

While valuable for students in the areas of composition, music education, and applied music performance, this book is intended primarily for wind band conductors at all levels, who are interested in gaining fresh insights and perspectives from the ultimate source of musical creativity – the composer.

The eleven co-authoring composers of this book come from widely varied backgrounds. Their life experiences, professional careers, artistic and educational philosophies? and their approach to the compositional process contrast as vividly as their distinct and unique creative voices. But the reader will also discover some important shared values and principles among the composers.

This unique yet practical book delves whole-heartedly into the composer's world through his own words. It provides the reader with a greater degree of understanding and respect for both the creative and re-creative process, and ultimately will contribute to strengthening of the band profession through more thoughtful interpretations and more musically sensitive performances.

Composers on Composing-for Band offers a wonderful opportunity to establish a relationship with the composers whose music we interpret. The insight that can be gained from this book is rooted in the views of the contributing composers themselves, and provides greater understanding and respect for compositional processes. As we gain experiences with composers through commissioning, speaking with them, hearing them speak at conventions, or reading their words in this book, conductors will become more fully invested in the collaborative process.

"Valuable and fascinating reading for musicians at all levels"

-Mallory Thompson, from the Foreword

Selected Excerpts from Each Chapter

A. Biographical Information

"In 1940, I met the Czech composer Jaroslav Ridky and took lessons from him in theory and composition. It was through his incredible belief and encouragement that I entered the Prague Conservatory. Professor Ridky may have believed in some of my abilities, but as I have realized, he wanted to save me from going to work in the ammunition factory in Dresden, Germany." ■

- Karel Husa

■ Dresden was completely destroyed in an Allied bombing raid in February of 1945.

B. The Creative Process... How a Composer Works.

"Most of the time I cannot escape a tedious and often painful embryonic phase. *Blue Shades* was one such work. It took months of sketching, writing, destroying, and re-writing before it finally revealed itself to me, and then the final decisions seemed so obvious. It was like making a long, tortuous journey to find what was right under my nose."

-Frank Ticheli

"Like all people, I watch world events on television. I see the space shuttles from Cape Canaveral from our windows and meditate on our both incredibly beautiful and utterly cruel world on our one of billions of planets.... It is hard not to bring some of these pictures into my music.?"

- Karel Husa

C. Orchestration

“The potential for passion within a score lies waiting to be unlocked. Composers sense the passion in the moment they’re creating and hope for its realization. However, this music lines in lifeless ink on paper until it’s infused with passion from the conductor and performers alike.”

-Timothy Mahr

D. Views from the Composer to the Conductor -Pertaining to Score Study and Preparation

“It seems like every time I attend a conducting clinic, the lecturer invariably prefaces all other remarks with “Know the score.” Then they immediately go about their way, talking about gestures, facial expressions, and heaven knows what all. These moments make me think of what my college orchestra conductor, George Lawner, was taught by Rafael Kubelik: that “Bad conductors practice gestures. Good conductors study scores!”

-James Barnes

“The entirety of the piece has to be considered when determining the composer’s intent. What is the real meaning behind the piece? What is the message? What do I want to say to the audience through my interpretation of this piece? Just as it is when you are traveling, there are significant elements of each experience that lend color and meaning to your journey. It is up to the conductor to make each of these “places” a special experience for the performer and the listener.”

-Robert Sheldon

E. The Relationship Between the Composer and the Commissioning Party.

“It is my belief that the commissioning process is one of the most important aspects in the creation of quality works for band. This activity is especially crucial at the school band level. Consortium commissions are an inexpensive way to be involved in the process. Through commissioning, the ensemble has the opportunity to contribute quality literature to the existing repertoire while having an individual interaction with a living composer.”

-Jack Stamp

F. Views on the Teaching of Composition and How to Mentor the Young Composer

“My greatest joy as a composer has come from those particular moments when I have realized that I have created something that I know couldn’t have possibly come from my head (which supposedly is filled with a vast knowledge of compositional craft)? but has come directly from my heart. As a mentor, I tell students that they should only pursue a degree in composition if the reason is that there is music inside them that they felt obligated to release.”

-David Gillingham

G. Individuals Who Have Been Especially Influential in My Development and Career.

“The two most influential people in my career were my mother, a pianist and singer, and my father, a French horn player. Our home always had good music, and my taste was set at an early age. Most fathers are not happy when their sons decide to major in music. My father was thrilled. He was aware of the finer things in life.”

— W. Francis McBeth

“In the fall of 1965 Vaclav Nelhybel was coming to conduct two of his recent works, Trittico and Chorale with our college band. The music was big and brash, loud and gritty. They were vibrant and full of thunderings and poundings, and we couldn’t wait for this man to show up on our doorstep! My classmates and I were all young and egomaniacal in those days. The first thought in our collective mind was “we’re hot players and we’re going to show this guy what music is all about!”

Two days later, Nelhybel walked into our band hall, stepped on the podium, lifted his arms, and as I watched that first slashing downbeat of the baton, I realized I didn’t have a clue what his music was all about. I had absolutely no idea how “personal” music could be. In that one electrifying instant, I saw brutality, beauty? angst, anguish, joy? triumph, sorrow? exhilaration, devastation, despair, hope, faith...all in the eyes of one man conducting HIS music.

-David R. Holsinger

H. Ten Works All Band Conductors at All Levels Should Study

Of the eighty-nine works listed the following ten were sited most often:

1. Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*
2. Copland: *Appalachian Spring*
3. Schoenberg: *A Survivor from Warsaw*
4. Mozart: *Serenade No. 10 in Bb (Gran Partita), K. 361*
5. J.S. Bach: *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*
6. Bartok: *Concerto for Orchestra*
7. Beethoven: *String Quartet Opus 132*
8. Beethoven: *Symphony No. 3 (Eroicu)*
9. Brahms: *A German Requiem*
10. Ives: *Three Places in New England*

I. Ten Composers Whose Music Speaks in Especially Meaningful Ways

Of the fifty-six composers listed the following ten were sited most often.

1. Beethoven
2. Copland
3. Mozart
4. Stravinsky
5. Bartok
6. J.S. Bach
7. Ives
8. Barber
9. Britten
10. Debussy

J. The Future of the Wind Band

“The establishment of America’s first, full-time (52-week season) professional wind band is a symbolic and moral imperative. The creation of this enterprise will also prove to be an important first step of taking action to correct the moral dilemma of there being so few available, meaningful employment opportunities for the legions of outstanding players graduating from leading colleges, universities and conservatories. Formation of an enterprise of this magnitude will require extraordinarily innovative design and visionary leadership. This endeavor could prove to be perhaps the single most important legacy my generation can leave to the wind band profession.

We must find ways to increase minority student participation in school band programs. There are tragically few African American and Hispanic American children participating in school band programs. The ethnic and racial make-up of the American mosaic is changing rapidly and we must address these imbalances now, if the band is to remain at all relevant to our changing society.”

-Mark Camphouse

K. Other Facets of Everyday Life

“I read whenever I can. Poetry and fiction are my main interest, but I also read books on music, cinema, wine and food, travel, sports, and socialism. I am a great fan of serious movies, which consider to be the greatest of all art forms. In the warm months I grow organic vegetables in the backyard garden. On my sixteen-foot sailboat Tom Cat, many of my compositions first floated into my head during long sails. I recommend sailing to all composers and musicians.”

-Timothy Broege

Clinician Biographies

A product of the rich cultural life of Chicago, composer-conductor Mark Camphouse received his formal musical training at Northwestern University. He began composing at an early age, with the Colorado Philharmonic premiering his *First Symphony* at age 17. His works for wind band are published by Kjos, Southern and TRN music companies.

They have received widespread critical acclaim and are performed frequently here and abroad. Many may be heard on the Albany, Citadel and Summit labels. Mr. Camphouse has served as guest conductor, lecturer and clinician in 38 states, Canada and Europe. He is an elected member of the American Bandmasters Association and serves as coordinator of the National Band Association Young Composer Mentor Project. Mr. Camphouse is Professor of Music and Director of Bands at Radford University in Virginia, a position he has held since 1984. In 1991, he received the Dedmon Award for Professorial Excellence - Radford University's highest faculty honor. Virginia Governor Mark Warner recently presented Professor Camphouse with a 2002 Outstanding Faculty Award, sponsored by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia - the Commonwealth's highest honor for faculty at Virginia's colleges and universities for demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, and public service.

W. Francis McBeth's higher education was received at Hardin-Simmons University where he studied composition with Macon Sumerlin, the University of Texas, where he studied with Kent Kennan and James Clifton Williams, and the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson. Dr. McBeth was Professor of Music, Resident Composer and Chairman of the Theory-Composition Department at Ouachita University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He held this position from 1957 until his retirement in 1996. Upon his retirement he was appointed Trustee's Distinguished University Professor. He was conductor of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in Little Rock for many years until his retirement in 1972, where-upon he was elected Conductor Emeritus. The most outstanding of his awards have been the Presley Award for outstanding bandsman at Hardin-Simmons University in 1954, the Howard Hanson Prize at the Eastman School of Music for his *Third Symphony* in 1963, recipient of the ASCAP Special Award each consecutive year

from 1965 to present, the American School Band Directors Association's Edwin Franko Goldman Award in 1983, elected Fellow of the American Wind and Percussion Artists by the National Band Association in 1984, National Citation from Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia fraternity in 1985, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia's Man of Music in 1988, Kappa Kappa Psi's National Service to Music Award in 1989, Mid-West International Band and Orchestra Clinic's Medal of Honor in 1993, John Philip Sousa Foundation's Sudler Medal of Honor in 1999 and Past President of the American Bandmasters Association. In 1975 Dr. McBeth was appointed Composer Laureate of the State of Arkansas by the Governor.

Frank Ticheli received his master's and doctoral degrees in composition from the University of Michigan where he studied with William Albright, George Wilson, and Pulitzer Prize winners Leslie Bassett and William Bolcom. He joined the faculty of the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music in 1991 where he is Professor of Composition. Dr. Ticheli was composer-in-residence with the Pacific Symphony Orchestra from 1991 to 1998. He is well known for his works for concert band, many of which have become standards in the repertoire. He has also gained considerable recognition for his orchestral works, with performances by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Detroit Symphony, and the American Composers Orchestra. Awards for his music include the prestigious Charles Ives Scholarship and Goddard Lieberman Fellowship. His twelve compositions for wind ensemble and concert band have been performed widely throughout the world and have received several awards, including the 1989 Walter Beeler Prize. Dr. Ticheli was commissioned by the students of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado to write *An American Elegy*, honoring and commemorating those affected by the shooting tragedy there.

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