

Opening Concert

Titled “A Night of World Premieres” the opening concert featured musicians from Messiah College, conference hosts William Stowman and Rebecca Wilt, and a number of prominent musicians from the state of Pennsylvania. The concert opened with the U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps Bugles performing *Spirit of America* by Dane Snyder. This rousing piece, barely thirty-seconds long, was the perfect fanfare opening to get the conference off to a majestic start. The Messiah College Wind Ensemble, directed by Bradley Genevro, followed with William Bergsma’s *March With Trumpets*. Featuring extended lines for the trumpet section, this extended fanfare was noble in character, had an effective lyrical middle section, and was a fine piece of Americana that was enjoyed by the large and appreciative opening session crowd. Well done!

After welcoming remarks by Messiah College President Kim Phipps and ITG President Bill Pfund, the concert continued with the premiere of *Masquerade for Trumpet, Piano, and Winds* by Bruce Yurko. Featuring conference hosts William Stowman on solo trumpet and Rebecca Wilt on piano, an extended introduction presented contemplative lines within an atonal framework. Tone clusters eventually gave way to harmonies wherein each chord brought forth a mini-cadenza by Stowman. Throughout the piece the piano and trumpet parts acted as equal partners in the presentation of solo lines against the accompaniment of the winds. The second (fast) section of this work took off in triplet patterns with violent rhythmic bursts bouncing between the piano, trumpet, and wind ensemble. The lyrical section that followed showcased Stowman’s beautiful phrasing, tone quality, and ability to develop soaring melodic lines. Knowing what life is like for a conference host in the days and weeks leading up to a conference, it was nothing short of amazing to hear how musical and accurate the Stowman/Wilt duo could play under that kind of pressure. Bravo!

Ponder Anew composed by Terry Everson (commissioned for the Messiah Trumpet Ensemble) was based on the hymn tune *Lob den Herrn*. A marvelous blend of traditional religious melodies within a poignant contemporary harmonic language, this is an effective piece that displayed fine piccolo work particularly toward the end of the piece! The premiere of *Overture – Blessed Trinity* by Messiah College student Marcus Venables displayed a youthful enthusiasm (the composer is seventeen years old) that highlighted all of the sections of the ensemble in a lively, rhythmically vibrant jaunt through a variety of moods and emotions. Keep an eye on this young composer; he will have *much* more to say in the future.

Path of Discovery by Erik Morales featured idiomatic writing evenly spread around the ensemble of five college teachers drawn from throughout the state of Pennsylvania. The performers did an excellent job of alternating between the lyrical and technical demands of the work. Orchestrated for B-flat trumpet, flugelhorn, and piccolo trumpet sonorities the group navigated the various sections of the piece with authority and confidence. This work was originally written for the Grand Valley State University Trumpet Ensemble who took the work to NTC (and won) several years ago.

David Gillingham's *Glorified* was commissioned by Messiah College for the centennial celebration of the college (taking place this year). Uplifting in character, homophonic and polyphonic writing presented some exposed lines (especially in the woodwind section) that was handled with ease. This is a perfect example of a composer providing something for practical use that will undoubtedly transcend its immediate purpose and be employed for a variety of uses long after 2009. In a program that featured many different turns in mood and character, *Pitter Patter and Other Charms* by Stanley Friedman (brass quintet and piano) provided the evening with yet another premiere. This composition was written for the Messiah Faculty Brass Quintet with Rebecca Wilt on piano. Each movement was based on the composer's impressions of a different member of his family. The first had a ragtime feel, the second took the form of a jazz ballad (reminiscent of George Gershwin's melodic style), and the finale delighted the audience with a frantic race of technical lines between various members of the ensemble...no doubt that family member is always a bit late!

The last welcome of the evening came from conference hosts Rebecca Wilt and William Stowman. Rebecca reminded us that one of the great things about ITG conferences is how much new music we all get to hear and that this conference will prove to be extraordinary in that regard and William thanked the Messiah College administration, students, and his family for their support in helping to make the 2009 ITG Conference possible. In a *tour de force* only rivaled by the typical finale of a Festival of Trumpets concert, the evening ended with Richard Strauss's *Koenigsmarch*. As a graduate of a church-related liberal arts college, I was incredibly impressed by the quality and quantity of effort put out by this exceptional group of musicians. Messiah College should be congratulated for marshalling the resources required to put on this program, and especially for doing it so well! (GM)

Tuesday Late Night Jam Session

ITG has a tradition of late night jam sessions and the 2009 Conference was no exception to this rule. A great rhythm section, a variety of trumpet soloists (all with fine ideas to share), and a crowd of enthusiasts there to support live jazz made for a wonderful way to wind down the opening night of the conference. The Tuesday night session, coordinated by composer/arranger & trumpeter/pianist Ronnie Waters, featured a handful of soloists (all of very fine quality) who made their way through a number of standards alternating their extended solos among each other and with the members of the rhythm section (piano, bass, and drums). Each soloist was given the time, space, and attention to develop extended solos. All in attendance enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, the great ideas shared between the musicians, and the consistently high level of artistry from all the participants throughout the set. This session was about making new friends, sharing some great ideas and having a rollicking good time. Very cool! (GM)