

Program Notes to Aboriginal Voices CD recording, Good Vibrations-RJR Digital CD9630

Mark Nelson, Tuba; Ronald YaDeau, Piano
Brian Justison, Cymbals; Eric Hollenbeck, Vibraphone

Program

Villanella for Tuba and Piano by Walter Ross 4:46 track 1
Published by Tuba-Euphonium Press

Villanella for Tuba and Piano was written for and premiered by Mark Nelson as part of an all Walter Ross tuba recital given at the University of Vermont on September 30, 1992. Sylvia Parker accompanied on piano. In the words of Dr. Ross, it is "happy music" based primarily on modal concepts. It is in two parts: a melodic and somewhat dramatic first section followed by a fast 6/8 romp through the tuba registers featuring hemiola and repeated rhythmic figures.

Walter Ross (b. 1936) is currently Professor of Composition at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville and former chair of the Department of Music. He has also served as President of the Southeastern Composer's League. Dr. Ross has written over 100 works, most of them for wind instruments in a variety of combinations, including two trombone concertos along with ten other concertos for wind instruments, a piano concerto, a symphony for chorus and orchestra, a one-act opera, chamber music and many songs. His works are published by Boosey and Hawkes, Tezak Verlag, Dorn Publications, and TUBA Press. *Villanella* is the second piece commissioned by Mark Nelson. In 1986, Dr. Ross wrote Escher's Sketches for solo tuba based on the art work of M.C. Escher for Nelson which is recorded on Nelson's first CD.

Aboriginal Voices by Neal Corwell 7:40 track 2
Published by Nicolai Music P.O. Box 253, Clear Spring MD 21722

Aboriginal Voices for tuba and tape is Nelson's second commission from this talented composer. The following notes were supplied by the composer:

Aboriginal Voices was commissioned by Dr. Mark Nelson. The live premiere was presented February 2, 1995 by tubist Pete Hommel from "Pershing's Own," The US Army Band, at the Eastern Regional TUBA Conference in Washington, D.C. It was Dr. Nelson's interest in world music, and his possession of a didjeridu (an instrument of native Aborigines of Australia, traditionally fashioned from the branch of an eucalyptus tree) that inspired the choice of musical materials for the work. It is the composer's intention, with *Aboriginal Voices*, to place the listener in the environment of the aboriginal hunter. In the opening section, the listener is introduced to sounds of the hunt as well as the otherworldly utterances of the didjeridu. A celebratory dance, full of rhythmic drive, then ensues. At the center of this dance may be found a contrasting section featuring a lyrical solo line and a new tonal palette for the accompaniment. The aggressive primal dance then resumes, propelling both soloist and listener to a robust conclusion. Although *Aboriginal Voices* is an original composition, the choices of musical and sonic materials for the taped accompaniment were made after listening to the many recordings of authentic music of the Aborigines. The melodic and rhythmic characteristics of the native music, as perceived by the composer, were then incorporated into the compositional process for the creation of this new work. Many of the sounds heard on the tape were created by digitally sampling a didjeridu and a few percussion instruments. The remainder were derived from various digital samples of the composer's voice.

Neal Corwell (b. 1959) holds music degrees from Frostburg State (B.S.), George Mason University (M.A.) and the D.M.A. from the University of Maryland. From 1981 until 1989, Neal served as a featured euphonium soloist with the Pershing's Own, The US Army Band in Washington, D.C. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at Shepherd College and is a euphoniumist in the acclaimed professional low brass ensemble, Symphonia. He is a published composer and arranger with his specialty being music for brass solo instruments with synthesizer accompaniment. Neal's debut CD recording as a solo artist, *Distant Images*, was released in Fall 1994 by Nicolai Music. The recording features over an hour's worth of original music for brass and synthesizers, all composed, arranged, and performed by Mr. Corwell.

Three Furies for Solo Tuba by James Grant 10:30 tracks 3, 4, 5
Published by Potenza Music through Grantwood Music Press

Three Furies for Solo Tuba was commissioned by Mark Nelson in 1993 and premiered by him in a solo recital at the Hokkaido Euphonium/Tuba Camp in Sapporo, Japan on May 4, 1993. The composer has supplied the following program notes:

Three Furies for Solo Tuba was composed in January and February of 1993 at the request of tubist Mark Nelson, to whom this work is gratefully dedicated. The surprising -- and indeed, remarkable -- flexibility possessed by the tuba inspired a music that is immediate, good-natured, and fun, requiring of the performer both a keen musicianship and physical stamina. Each of the *Three Furies* is virtuosic in its own right, offering a multiplicity of distinct rhythms, melodic figures and articulations.

Fury I is marked "decidedly jocular" and is a pleasant ramble through the registers of the tuba, featuring angular arpeggios and tonguing demands that one does not usually associate with the instrument. *Fury II*, in the form somewhat reminiscent of a minuet and trio, contrasts series of long, arching arpeggiated figures with an amicable waltz marked "gently inebriated." *Fury III* is relentless and powerful, exploiting the full dynamic and articulative range of the tuba. Again, the performer is met with virtuosic demands not normally encountered in the tuba literature.

James Grant (b. 1954) began composing at the age of nineteen after extensive involvement with theatre and music groups during his high school years in Baltimore, Maryland. He received the B.A. in composition and choral conducting from Hampshire College, the M.A. in composition and theory from the University of Iowa, and the D.M.A. in composition from Cornell University. Grant has received many commissions from individuals and music organizations, and his works have been performed in the United States, Canada, and England and Japan. He was the recipient of a 1989 Vermont Council on the Arts Fellowship in Music, and was named Vermont's Composer of the Year 1989 by the Vermont Music Teacher's Association. Composing full-time in the Baltimore area, Grant is a composer-in-residence for the Fairfax Symphony in Virginia. He is a composer/publisher member of ASCAP, publishing his works under Grantwood Music Press.

Brillenbass by Thomas Lawrence Read 14:03 track 6
Published by American Composers Alliance. Available from the composer C/O Music Dept., University of Vermont, Burlington VT 05405-0145

Brillenbass was written for and dedicated to Mark Nelson, who, together with W. Ronald YaDeau and Brian Justison, gave the premiere performance at Millikin University on February 17, 1994. The composer supplied the following notes:

In the 18th Century the German word Brillenbass was a derogatory description of stereotypical accompaniment patterns whose abbreviated designation (./.) suggested eyeglasses. Appropriation of the term for the present music is not entirely ironic! The work's interrelated sections have the character of a sonataconcerto. The writing is at once virtuosic, humorous and lyrical, and explores some timbral possibilities provided by opposing the tuba with a percussion unit in this case celesta and cymbals. The music's fundamental rhythmic structure is sometimes governed by different, simultaneously projected pulses. This important structural motivator is alluded to by the following citation, included on the first page of the score: "I should like to euphonise that. It sounds an isochronism." (Finnegans Wake)

Thomas L. Read, composer and violinist, was born in 1938 in Erie, Pennsylvania. He is Professor of Music at the University of Vermont. He has composed over ninety works including music for small ensembles, full orchestra, solo voice, chorus and musical theater. His music is published by C.F. Peters Corp. and by the American Composers Alliance. Most of the works in his catalogue were undertaken for specific occasions or on commission from solo performers and ensembles such as Michael Arnowitz, David Cowley, Pam Guidetti, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Raphael Piano Trio, Royall Tyler Theatre, Bertram Turetzky, The Vermont Symphony, and the Burlington Friends of Music. Active in national and local music organizations, he is president of the Vermont Composers Consortium, a member of BMI and ACA, and has served as an officer of the American Society of Composers.

The Dancing King by Jesse Ayers 6:24 track 7
Published by Tuba-Euphonium Press

The Dancing King was written for his good friend Frank Banton and premiered by Jerry Young at the International Tuba-Euphonium Conference, Sapporo, Japan in 1990. The composer has supplied the following notes:

The title of this work refers to King David of ancient Israel, who, upon the recapture of the Ark of the Covenant from Israel's enemies, "danced before the Lord with all his might" (II Samuel 6:14). This music is a depiction of the elation and exhilaration described in the Old Testament scene as the warrior-poet leads his people in praise and thanksgiving.

Jesse Ayers (b. 1951) is one of only six American composers whose music was selected by the International Society for Contemporary Music for performance during World Music Days 1992 in Warsaw, Poland. His music has been performed in the United States, Europe, and Japan, including two International TubaEuphonium Conferences and the MENC national inservice in New Orleans. Ayers has received five consecutive Special Awards from ASCAP as well as grants from Meet the Composer and the American Music Center. In 1996, he was one of five guest composers selected from across the United States to participate in the Symposium for New Band Music and he has been an artistinresidence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Perspectives of New Music says Ayers' music is "appealing in its virtuosity, playfulness, and drive," and TUBA Journal describes his music as having "intense rhythmic drive and beautiful melodic writing sophisticated in texture and pleasurable to listen to." Ayers holds the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Tennessee and the Doctor of Musical Arts

degree from the University of Kentucky. His teachers have included Karel Husa, John Anthony Lennon, David Van Vactor, and conductor Donald Neuen. His compositions include works for orchestra, symphonic band, brass, percussion, piano, and chamber ensembles, as well as choral works, art songs, electroacoustic works, a miniballet, and a suite of traditional Christmas carols orchestrated on electronic music instruments.

Spiritual Alloys (Musings IV) by Eric Nielsen 13:37 track 8

Published by Middle Branch Music P.O. Box 265, East Randolph, VT 05401

Spiritual Alloys (Musings IV) for tuba and vibraphone was premiered by Mark Nelson and vibraphonist Eric Hollenbeck at Millikin University in a faculty recital on February 9, 1995. The following notes about *Spiritual Alloys* were written by the composer:

This single-movement work was written for Mark Nelson during his final few months of residency in Vermont. Knowing that a piece for solo tuba or one for tuba and another instrument would get played more often than one for a larger ensemble, I decided after some thought to compose a duet for tuba and vibraphone. The combination of two metallic instruments, one wind and one percussion, appealed to me, hence the title. The sonic possibilities also were intriguing: the tuba with its wonderful lyrical voice and deep rich sounds; the vibraphone with its shimmer and multi-note effects; both instruments together capable of mystery or agility, gentle, undulating sounds or great power. The piece itself is an attempt to explore some of the above duet possibilities, as well as give each instrument a chance to be heard alone in an extended solo. After an introduction, the first active section, marked by an accented rhythmic figure, is heard. It is followed by the vibes playing alone. The center of the work is a lyrical melody for the tuba with vibes ostinato above it. This section moves without a break into the tuba solo which features the tubist's playing a drone while singing into the instrument. Following the solo comes an active section reminiscent of an earlier part of the piece, but with the basic melodic contour inverted. The piece ends with a furious coda followed by long held notes played pianissimo.

Born in New York City in 1950, Erik Nielsen grew up in rural upstate New York. He has written for many varied chamber ensembles, solo instruments, orchestra, voice, and chorus. He has won awards from ASCAP, the Vermont Council on the Arts, and in 1991 was chosen Vermont Composer of the Year by the Vermont Music Teachers Association. He is a 1994-95 recipient of a Vermont Council on the Arts Fellowship in music. In October, 1995 his Quintet for Piano and Strings was performed in Carnegie Recital Hall. In addition, he is the former Director of the Consortium of Vermont Composers, a position he held for three years.

Concertpiece for Tuba and Piano by Libby Larsen 5:58 track 9

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc. 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016.

Concertpiece for Tuba and Piano is the product of conversations regarding solo tuba repertoire with Mark Nelson after a Vermont Symphony Orchestra concert featuring one of her works. The piece is written specifically for Mark Nelson and the premiere took place at Kirkland Fine Arts Center of Millikin University at a faculty recital on September 6, 1993 with W. Ronald YaDeau, piano. This work is the first tuba piece by Libby Larsen. It is essentially framed within an ABA structure, fast-slow-fast, with contemporary harmonies, rhythmic energy and syncopation, and an emphasis on agility for both the tuba and piano.

Libby Larsen (b. 1950) is an internationally known composer whose works encompass orchestra, dance, opera, choral, theater, chamber, and solo repertoire and are sought after and performed throughout the United States and Europe. Among her awards are National Endowment for the

Arts Composer Fellowships, the American Council on the Arts Young Artist Award, a Bush Artists Fellowship, and commissions from the Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, the Cleveland String Quartet, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Opera, Arkansas Opera Theater, Eugenia Zukerman, Arlen Auger, Minnesota Public Radio, Plymouth Music Series, and the Schubert Club of Saint Paul. She has been Composer in Residence with the Minnesota Orchestra (1983-87) and visiting professor at the University of Minnesota and California Institute of the Arts, as well as a guest lecturer at colleges and universities throughout the country. She is a Co-Founder of the nationally acclaimed Minnesota Composers Forum. Her music is published by E.C. Schirmer and Oxford University Press.

Total time: 63:04

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