

NOTES from the Concord Band

Since 1959

“the community band with a professional attitude”

Fall, 2015

Box 302, Concord, MA 01742

(978) 897-9969

www.concordband.org

The Concord Band Begins 57th Season on Saturday, October 24th, with *Mystical Moments*

Join the Concord Band as we celebrate our 57th season, presenting both old gems and new works for symphonic concert band. We embark on our 2015-2016 season voyage with a program that presents a wide range of original compositions and arrangements for band, by composers born between 1865 and 1932. The program includes original works from the symphonic wind ensemble repertoire and arrangements of orchestral masterpieces.

Our Fall Concert, *Mystical Moments*, will be presented at 51 Walden, Concord's Performing Arts Center, on Saturday, October 24, 2015, at 8:00 PM. The concert features music with programmatic undertones penned by American and international composers, and traverses a series of mysterious and magical musical episodes.

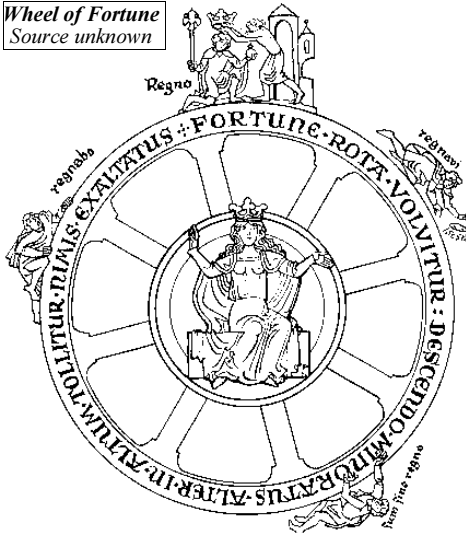
Old Churches is one of many original works by American-born composer Michael Colgrass, and is based on early church music known as Gregorian Chant. This mysterious monastic scene employs moments of aleatoric chance techniques (pitches played without rhythm at each player's discretion) and unison call and response chant melodies.

Prelude and Dance of the Mystic Flames is a setting for band by William E. Rhoads suggested by the piano preludes of Alexander Scriabin. Paying a nod to Scriabin's interest in mysticism, the arrangement for band captures the lush and complex harmonic sonorities and dissonant musical system of the original Scriabin piano preludes, opening with a slow and majestic Andante, and concluding with a brisk and furious Allegro.

German-born composer Carl Orff is widely known not only for his musical output, but also for his internationally-recog-

nized and revolutionary music education method that continues to be employed by music educators around the globe. In the original score of *Carmina Burana*, one of the most exciting works of the 20th century, the subtitle reads “Profane songs for singers

Wheel of Fortune
Source unknown



Carmina Burana, in an arrangement of Carl Orff's masterpiece for symphonic wind ensemble by John Krance, epitomizes the theme of the Concord Band's 2015 Fall Concert.

and vocal chorus with instruments and magical pictures”. John Krance's arrangement for band fully incorporates the vocal parts into the concert band instrumentation and authentically preserves the emotional and musical intent of the original orchestral/vocal setting. Originally consisting of twenty-five sections, this arrangement includes thirteen, about which Krance writes, “The work begins and ends depicting the crushing anguish of the victims of Fortune's ruthless wheel (*O Fortuna, Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi*); the remaining sections are devoted to the joys of spring and nature, the pleasures of the tavern and the gaming table, the delights of love, the irony of fate”.

Among his countless marches, the instrumentation of John Philip Sousa's *Nobles of the Mystic Shrine* is unique, as it includes harp, triangle, and tambourine. The inclu-

sion of these non-traditional marching band instruments provides a setting, texture, and style derived from the clanking and chiming Turkish music associated with the Shriners, previously known as the “Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine”. Also unique is the musical form—an introduction and first strain set in Bb minor, unusual for the majority of Sousa's marches. Sousa was a Shriner and member of the Temple Almas in Washington, D.C., being named the first honorary director of the Temple Shrine Band in 1922.

The Sorcerer's Apprentice (which is set in a musical form known as a *scherzo* [joke]) by Paul Dukas is widely recognized thanks to the Disney animated film classic, *Fantasia*, in which Mickey Mouse plays the title role. A highly programmatic and challenging work arranged for band by Mark Hindsley, the arrangement places much of the difficult orchestral violin and viola writing in the band flute, oboe and clarinet parts. The work captures the magic of the sorcerer's apprentice casting his master's magical spell on the broomstick to bring water from the well, leading to a tidal flooding and furious conclusion.

The title of John Barnes Chance's *Incantation and Dance* may conjure images of religious association, but it is purely a work of mystery and imagination, ending with ferocious syncopations, fast and wild woodwind flourishes, and driving brass and percussion exchanges.

Chernomor's March is from Mikhail Glinka's setting of the 1842 opera, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, in which Chernomor is an old dwarf with a long white beard who is also an evil sorcerer. Arranged for symphonic wind ensemble by Concord Band clarinetist Jerry Vabulas, the march portrays an individual (Chernomor) and his profound sense of self-importance. Beginning with a pompous opening motive that repeats many times, each restatement says the same thing over and over. just a little louder each time. (JRO)

Perfect Summer of 2015

In a rare experience, the Concord Band's 2015 summer season took place without a rainout. Following the record-breaking mountains of snow just a few months earlier, it was hard for most of us to believe that we would be blessed with such wonderful weather and substantial audiences. Music Director Jim O'Dell only dared acknowledge our good fortune when the echoes of the final chord of our final piece at Fruitlands Museum had become inaudible.

An Experiment

The Concord Band Board of Trustees has made admission to its 2015 Fall and 2016 Winter Concerts free, with voluntary donations by attendees accepted with gratitude. We hope that this will make it easier for those who attend as well as the Band, and perhaps result in larger audiences.

An Introduction to a few of the Percussionists' Less-Often-Called-for Instruments

The author of this page, and founder/ editor of this newsletter, is the senior member of the Concord Band, having joined the ensemble in January, 1970. He is also a percussionist, who began his lifelong love affair with the snare drum 63 years ago.

Almost every instrumental section of the modern western concert band includes multiple instruments: flutes and piccolos; Bb, Eb, alto and bass clarinets; alto, tenor and baritone saxophones; trumpets and cornets; tenor and bass trombones, etc. But no section of the band includes anything close to the number of distinct instruments as does the percussion section.

Many concert attendees are familiar with the most frequently-played percussion instruments: timpani (set of four or five), bass drum, pair of crash cymbals and suspended cymbal, tam-tam (gong) snare drums of various depths, various kinds and sizes of tom toms, triangle, tambourine, maracas, wood block, sleigh bells and the principal members of the "mallets" family: the xylophone, glockenspiel (bells), vibraphone and chimes.

What we want to do in this article is to make you more familiar with a few of the more important among the less-often-called-for percussion "accessory" instruments. (It's not clear why these are referred to as "accessory", but to call them "minor" might lead to confusion.) We include here only instruments that have been fairly often called for in music played by the Concord Band. To hear how these instruments sound, visit the Internet.

In no particular order: **roto-toms** (sets of one to five) may be thought of as a cross



It's Time to Make Your Concord Band **Holiday Pops** Reservations

Now is the time to make your reservations for the Concord Band's annual **Holiday Pops** concerts, to be held at the Performing Arts Center at 51 Walden Street in Concord on December 11th and 12th at 8:00 PM. Guest artist: Boston Symphony Orchestra principal oboist John Ferrillo.

There's no better way to begin the holiday season than to enjoy an evening of great music and fun in the festive 51 Walden holiday atmosphere! Holiday Pops with the Concord Band has become a tradition with many area families and sells out early. Table seating is priced at \$25 per adult and \$15 per child (under 12), including beverages and snacks. Return your reservation card today! Holiday Pops reservations can also be made by visiting concordband.org or by calling 978-897-9969.

between timpani and tom-toms. They have no shells (cylindrical components), but their heads can be tuned to a definite pitch by rotating them. Sometimes they are used as higher-pitched timpani; more often they are used as tom-toms.

Castanets are not played by percussion-



ists as they are by Flamenco dancers. Having them mounted as shown permits precise rhythms to be played with the hands.

The **guiro** [we'-ro] (Spanish for gourd)



is generally made from plastic these days, but it continues to be most often used to play an iconic Latin rhythm that takes advantage of the instrument's grooves.

The **ratchet** can be hand-held or



clamped to the rim of a bass drum. When the handle is turned, the thin strips of wood are vibrated by the ridges in the rotating drum, producing a buzzing sound.

Traditionally, **claves** [clah'-vays] (photo, top right) are two solid rosewood cylinders that are struck together using a particular stationary grip for the lower clave. This assures that the sharp, distinctive sound of the Latin rhythms played on them isn't muffled.



The **bell tree** is a stack of isolated concentric brass cups usually played with two brass beaters pressed inward while they are moved downward or upward to produce a sequence of increasing or decreasing indefinitely-pitched bell-like sounds.

The **whip** (or whip-crack) is a pair of hinged boards with handles that can be slammed together

to produce the sound of a bullwhip. The Concord Band produced its own over-sized whip (not shown) many years ago for its annual Holiday Pops performances of Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*.

The dollar value of the Concord Band's extensive array of percussion instruments is substantial, but it has been collected over many years. Some instruments have been donated and some have been obtained through grants. All of the instruments are shared with the Concord Orchestra, and some have been purchased jointly. Nevertheless, it does cost more than \$40,000 a year to run the Band.

To help the Concord Band financially, please write a check for as much as you can afford and mail it in the enclosed envelope. If you have no return envelope, simply send your check, made payable to the Concord Band, to Post Office Box 302, Concord, MA 01742. As the Band is an IRS-qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your contribution to the Band is always tax-deductible.



The Concord Band Concerts at 51 Walden **FALL CONCERT**

Saturday, October 24th
8:00 PM

HOLIDAY POPS

Friday and Saturday

Dec. 11th & 12th, 8:00 PM

For reservations: use enclosed reservation card, visit concordband.org or call (978) 897-9969