

Arts at St. Bede's
presents
Menlo Brass Quintet

7:30 p.m., Saturday, October 1, 2005



front row, left to right

Samuel King - French horn, Dan Hallock – trumpets

back row, left to right

Barbara Sigler - trombone, Ron McWilliams – trumpets

Bob Lipton - tuba

St. Bede's Episcopal Church
2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park
www.stbedesmenlopark.org

Program

Handel Mini-Suite

- I. The Rejoicing from Music for the Royal Fireworks
George F. Handel
arranged by Chuck Seipp
- II. Allegro Vivace from the Water Music
George F. Handel
arranged by Fred Mills
- III. Bouree from Il pastor fido George F. Handel
arranged by Bernard Fitzgerald

Amazing Grace

Traditional
arranged by Luther Henderson

Symphony for Brass, Quintet No. 1, Opus 5

Victor Ewald

- I. Moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

Intermission

A Simpler Life

Christopher Dedrick

- I. Mist Rising Mountain
- II. Spring Hymn
- III. Carnival of Waking Dreams

Chicken

Bob Lipton

Summertime *from Porgy and Bess* George Gershwin
arranged by Jack Gale

A reception follows in the Great Hall

Program Notes

Handel Mini-Suite

The Menlo Brass enjoys these gems from George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), combined here to form a Mini-Suite. The first two were written for George I, King of England. Handel was expressly asked by the king to use as many "martial" instruments as possible to celebrate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle in 1749, resulting in *Music from the Royal Fireworks*. The *Water Music* was written in 1717 for George I's royal procession on the Thames. It was intended to be light, buoyant, and refreshing, and to be played loudly enough to drown out the scatological welcome given to the new king by London's boatmen as they exercised their traditional right of uncensored expression. The *Bourrée* from "*Il pastor fido*," a Handel opera, was written in 1712. Handel and brass make a splendid collaboration, as even a king could tell.

Amazing Grace

Brass players not only have shared in a long classical music tradition, we are also an integral part of a rich Dixieland heritage. Dixieland represents a truly North American art form that, from its beginning, welcomed brass. It is a style of improvisation that has grown up in America, superimposing Black/African music traditions on imported European marches and church music. The essence of Dixieland, as well as the beauty and emotion of *Amazing Grace* have been captured in this arrangement by Luther Henderson. *Amazing Grace* features Dan Hallock on cornet.

Symphony for Brass, Quintet No. 1, Opus 5

Russian-born Victor Ewald (1860-1935) was not a musician by trade, but an engineer and teacher who had music as his avocation. In the Russia of the 19th Century, many musicians, including the greatest, were "amateurs," having another profession in addition to their art. A cellist and hornist, Ewald wrote several brass quintets for the conical brasses common in his day. Ewald played the cello with the Belayev String Quartet, named after a famous editor in St. Petersburg. Belayev published this *Symphony for Brass* in 1912.

Ewald's *Quintet* recalls the style of Tchaikovsky in its melancholic key, the dark tonality of *Bb* minor, and the 5/4 meter of the second movement. The first movement is in sonata form. The second movement in *Gb* major and in 5/4, is composed of two adagios around a scherzo. The third movement is a fantasy built on motives taken from the preceding movements, organized around an arc-like structure ABCBCBA and coda. The piece finishes with a fanfare in the bright tonality of *Bb* major.

A Simpler Life - Commissioned by the Menlo Brass Quintet

Christopher Dedrick (b 1947) is an American-Canadian composer, arranger, conductor, singer, and music producer. He has won three Gemini awards from the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television for best original music scores. While in his teens, Chris was signed to his first recording contract. He began conducting, arranging for, and recording with many well-known artists. In the early '70's, Chris served in the U.S. Air Force as chief arranger for the Airmen of Note. Chris is known for his chamber works, jazz pieces, and small symphonic works, a complement to his success as a songwriter, popular arranger, film, and TV writer.

The Menlo Brass immensely enjoys performing Chris Dedrick's arrangements of pieces originally done for the Canadian Brass. His arrangements provide great beauty through lush harmonies and spare, lucid writing. As a trumpet player, Chris has an excellent understanding for the capabilities and limitations of brass instruments, enabling him to score rich harmonies from only five brass. *A Simpler Life* was commissioned by and for the Menlo Brass Quintet, and was completed in May, 2001. Chris created a wonderfully rich texture of beautiful melodies and harmonies that are both delicate and transparent, with sweeping lines and exciting emotion. He exposes the warmth of each player with a relatively simple harmonic backdrop. Recognizing the innate beauty of simplicity over complexity, Chris reached for the beauty and natural flexibility of each instrument and the challenges of an intimate and precise ensemble. The composition consists of three movements, providing vivid visual images. *Mist*

Rising Mountain starts with solo horn with slight pauses, as if to listen for an echo from the mountain. The first trumpet follows in that style, which has something of an Irish ballad at its roots. The overall attitude is wonder and joy. *Spring Hymn* has a chorale nature, as though there is another brass choir or string group behind the brass quintet, when the timbre and intonation of the chords are lined up so that the overtones and resultant tones "kick in." The feeling is inner strength; deep conviction that ironically has within it a kind of prayer for support. *Carnival of Waking Dreams* has precise rhythmic, metronomic drive, but with the addition of a dance feel. The Menlo Brass gave the world premiere of *A Simpler Life* on April 28, 2002.

Chicken

Chicken is a piece Bob Lipton (b 1954) wrote years ago for a rock band. He has arranged it for many different groups and instrumentations. The title came from the phrase, "chicken with its head cut off." The Menlo Brass is pleased to feature one of Bob's many fine compositions on this program.

Summertime from Porgy and Bess

George Gershwin (1898-1937) came to music with a burning ambition. He learned the art of songwriting and by 1919 had his first hit. Gershwin was among the first to oscillate between the concert hall and the Broadway stage. This artistic schizophrenia caused the lines to be blurred, at least for the critics, between the serious and the popular, and Gershwin was never accorded the respect his talents deserved.

When Gershwin read "Porgy" by DuBose Heyward, he was taken with the storyline, and obtained Heyward's permission to put it to music. He relocated to South Carolina for 20 months, studying African-American music and language patterns for the score. The show premiered in Boston in 1935, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Whether *Porgy and Bess* is an opera or a musical depends upon one's definition of each, but regardless, it is unquestionably America's most enduring musical drama, as *Summertime* is its timeless ballad of the South.