



NACUSA CONCERT

BRIGHT MARVELS

New music by NACUSA SF Composers
Played by the Menlo Brass Quintet
Palo Alto Arts Center Auditorium
1313 Newell Road in Palo Alto, California
Saturday, July 16, 2022, 3:00 pm

P R O G R A M

JOHN BILOTTA	Entrata
ALLEN SHEARER	October
MARY FINEMAN	Source of All Mercy
DAVIDE VEROTTA	Bright Orange for Brass
ADRIENNE ALBERT	A Prayer for Peace
GREG BARTHOLOMEW	Marvel

I N T E R M I S S I O N

L PETER DEUTSCH	5/4 Fugue in G Major
JULIE L SCHNAPF	This Way Comes
GREG A STEINKE	Eagle Soar from Alaskan Tableaux
ILANA COTTON	On a Silver Plate
BRIAN HOLMES	I Feel Cool!

The Players

The **Menlo Brass Quintet** enjoys a reputation as one of the San Francisco Bay Area's finest brass quintets, known for outstanding musicianship and the unparalleled diversity of their repertoire featuring more than 1,000 compositions, including over 100 original pieces, performed for the enjoyment of over 510 concert and special event audiences. The group performs a wide variety of music, from Baroque and Classical, to Broadway musicals, popular tunes, Dixieland, and jazz.

The Menlo Brass Quintet was founded in 1982 and celebrates 40 years of musical programs this year. They have been the featured group in many local concert series, at conventions, and on local radio. They have performed together with several premier vocal groups of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Quintet provided music for the inaugurations of the President of Stanford University and the Chancellor of the University of California at Santa Cruz, and twice performed Gunther Schuller's *Diptych for Brass Quintet and Concert Band* with the Stanford Symphonic Band. The Menlo Brass were featured in the Stanford University Centennial Celebration and, starting in 1996, have played at every Commencement Ceremony at Stanford University through 2018. They have given concerts for a number of local schools, introducing students to the charms of music and the pleasure of playing in ensembles, particularly on brass instruments!

In keeping with their interest in new music as well as the classics, the Quintet commissioned and premiered Chris Dedrick's *A Simpler Life*. In 2001, and again in 2016, they performed entire concerts featuring the premieres of original compositions that had been written specifically for them by members of the National Association of Composers USA (NACUSA), San Francisco Chapter. They performed original works by several composers at the American Society of University Composers' convention at San Jose State University. A composition was written for and premiered by the Menlo Brass Quintet at the *Alea II* New Music Concert at Stanford University. The Quintet's recording of the *Bar-B-Que Suite*, an original work by Idaho composer Dan Smith, was chosen as the winner of the Boise Brass Quintet's 2005 Brass Quintet Recording Competition. The Menlo Brass have been sought out by composers from other countries and around the United States as a group willing – and able – to present a new work in its finest form.

The Menlo Brass Quintet regularly provides brilliant musical highlights for celebrations and church services at Menlo Church, First Baptist Church of Menlo Park, Epiphany Episcopal Church in San Carlos, First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame, and First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, to name but a few. They have also contributed lighter music for dozens of receptions, grand openings, and summer park concerts. The Menlo Brass has twice performed pre-game music, the National Anthem, and "7th inning stretch" tunes at San Francisco Giants baseball games.

Members of the Menlo Brass Quintet are Dan Hallock and Mike Pakaluk on trumpets, Brian Holmes on horn, Randall Chase on trombone and Joel White on tuba.

The Composers

John G. Bilotta was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, but has spent most his life in the San Francisco Bay Area where he studied composition with Frederick Saunders. His works have been performed by soloists and ensembles around the world including Rarescale, Earplay, the Talea Ensemble, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, Chamber Mix, North/South Consonance, Musica Nova, the Avenue Winds, the Presidio Ensemble, the Boston String Quartet, the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Kiev Philharmonic, the Oakland Civic Orchestra, San Francisco Cabaret Opera, Bluegrass Opera, Boston Metro Opera, the Thompson Street Opera, New Fangled Opera, Floating Opera and VocalWorks. He serves on the Board of Directors for Goat Hall Productions and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc. He is currently president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of NACUSA.

The *Entrata* is a short, energetic fanfare for brass quintet. Play with abandon!

Allen Shearer has received awards in music including the Rome Prize Fellowship; the Aaron Copland Award, a Charles Ives Scholarship; the Sylvia Goldstein Award for his *Three Lyrics*, written at the Copland House; four residencies at the MacDowell Colony, and grants and commissions from the NEA. He has composed eleven operas, including *The Dawn Makers*, *Middlemarch in Spring*, and *Howards End, America* with librettist Claudia Stevens. The premiere of *Middlemarch in Spring* was named one of the Ten Best Operatic Events of 2015 by the San Francisco Chronicle and was among the Encyclopedia Britannica's notable cultural achievements worldwide for that year. Shearer earned performance degrees at the Akademie Mozarteum in Austria and a PhD at UC Berkeley. His composition teachers were Fred Lerdahl, Andrew Imbrie, Seymour Shifrin, and Max Deutsch in Paris. He is a founding director of Sonic Harvest and a member of the board of Ninth Planet.

October, written in 2020, opens with a rather wistful scalar melody which then appears in inversion and again right-side-up, then gives way to other material in contrasting moods, and finally reappears near the end. My concerns while composing it were to create a clear and cogent musical form, and to write for brass players in a way that shows not only their technical skill but also their ability to shape a musical line with grace and nuance. *October* lasts 8 minutes.

Mary Fineman is an award winning composer, pianist, singer/songwriter and teacher. Originally from Baltimore, she trained as a classical pianist, studied music theory with Grace Newsom Cushman, and piano in Montreal with Philip Cohen and Lauretta Altman. She taught at Concordia University, did jazz studies at McGill, and later taught at Temple Jr. College in Texas. She has accompanied instrumentalists and dancers. Her music trajectory changed radically in 2003 after visiting an “energy healer”; she started hearing her own music and began creating and performing works ranging from art song to pop to neoclassical. She has performed at numerous venues across the Bay Area, and has recently won awards for three of her compositions from the National League of American Pen Women. Find lyrics, learn more, and listen and purchase music, etc. at www.maryfineman.com

This is my first composition for brass. This piece was based on a song I had written a while ago, but had never finished. As I heard it in my mind, I thought it would lend itself very well to brass quintet. It has been a thrilling challenge and learning curve to do this composition for the esteemed Menlo Brass Quintet.

Davide Verotta was born in an Italian town close to Milano and moved to San Francisco as an eager twenty-six-year-old. A professor at UCSF in biomathematics and statistics (gasp) for thirty years, he has been actively involved in the SF new music scene for a good twenty, and eventually left math behind to concentrate exclusively on composing (he finds no connection between the two). Trained as a pianist at the Milano Conservatory, SFCM, SFSU and as a composer at SFSU and UC Davis, Davide teaches piano and composition privately and at the Community Music Center in SF. He has received numerous composition commissions, grants, and international competition prizes. Please visit www.davideverotta.com, his YouTube Channel, and his IMSLP page for music scores.

Bright Orange for Brass was commissioned by the Oakland Civics Brass in 2021. Originally written for 13 players it is divided in five sections. The first and fourth sections are slow, the second section serves as an introduction to the third, which is faster and dance-like. The last is the fastest and uses an irregular rhythm, with beats divided 2-2-2-3, which is common in the Balkans and Roma music.

Award-winning composer **Adrienne Albert** (ASCAP) has had her chamber, choral, vocal, orchestral and wind band works performed throughout the U.S. and across the globe. Her music is widely known for its “melodic and lyrical beauty” and “whimsy and playfulness”. Having previously worked as a singer with composers such as Stravinsky, Bernstein, Glass, and Schuller to name a few, Albert began composing her own music in the 1990s. Her music has been supported by noteworthy arts organizations including the National Endowment for the Arts, ACF, Meet TheComposer/Rockefeller Foundation, Subito Awards, MPE Foundation, ACME, and yearly ASCAP awards. She has been composer-in-residence and a visiting composer at numerous colleges and universities in NY, California, Alaska, and Colorado. A graduate of UCLA, Albert studied composition with Stephen Mosko, and orchestration with Albert Harris. Her music is widely recorded, published by Kenter Canyon Music. www.adriennealbert.com

It seems critically important at this time in our lives, in our histories, in our world, that we must work toward a more peaceful world, more loving relations between peoples throughout our world and greater understanding between cultures. Let us pray for a kinder, more gentle world without endless wars.

The music of award-winning American composer **Greg Bartholomew** is frequently performed throughout North America, Europe and Australia. Born in 1957 in St Paul, Minnesota, Bartholomew was awarded the Cheryl A. Spector Prize twice (in 2012 for the *First Suite from Razumov* and in 2013 for *Summer Suite*), the Silver Platter Repertoire Award (for *The Tree*), and First Place in the 2006 Orpheus Music Composition Competition (for *Beneath the Apple Tree*). A two-time Finalist for the American Prize in Choral Composition, he was the 2012/2013 Composer in Residence for the Cascadian Chorale. www.gregbartholomew.com.

Marvel was commissioned by the Mirari Brass Quintet and was composed in 2014. The Latin word *mirari* is the source of the word *marvel*, and means "to wonder at," just as you may *marvel* at the wonders of nature. As a noun, anything that provokes wonder, admiration or astonishment is a marvel: *The Eiffel tower is an engineering marvel*. This piece seeks to reflect wonder, admiration and astonishment in honor of the Mirari Brass Quintet.

L (no dot) PETER DEUTSCH lives in Sonoma County, California. An experienced singer, he performs with Circa 1600. His compositions range in idiom from Renaissance to post-tonal, using a large harmonic palette centered around modal scales: he enjoys creating "new wine in old bottles," using older forms as containers for modern material. His work to date includes four choral commissions; releases through PARMA Recordings include music for chorus, string quartet, woodwind and brass quintets, and piano trio, featuring work with Trio Casals. PARMA's release MOTO FINALE, which includes Deutsch's string trio work "Winter 2005", won a silver medal in the classical category of the Global Music Awards in 2022.

The 7-note subject of this upbeat and energetic fuga a 4 came to me at the tail end of a dream: I managed to write it down immediately after I woke up. While the piece's original setting was for piano, I found it works even better for brass quintet, since this allows for more textural variety as well as giving the players time to rest since no more than 4 parts are active at a time. The compositional details adhere closely to 18th-century practice, but I couldn't resist throwing in a jazz-flavored "blue note" chord two bars before the end!

Julie Schnapf made a dramatic shift away from her career in neuroscience at the National Institutes of Health, Stanford University, and UCSF in order to step fully into her other passion—music composition. Dr. Schnapf sees a striking parallel between the pursuit of

scientific discovery and the creation of music. Starting with a few elementary components—a handful of mathematical expressions, or a smattering of musical gestures—she combines, expands, and transforms these building blocks into unique complex shapes that tell a story. In her musical compositions one can clearly hear these structural elements, which often depict an overarching narrative or a colorful persona. Dr. Schnapf says that her curiosity and drive for music can be traced to a childhood of piano lessons. She has since acquired a more rigorous study of music theory and composition at the College of Marin under the tutelage of Dr. Trevor Björklund.

This piece was conceived in its entirety during the Covid pandemic. The original idea was to create something joyful—a kind of 21st century *Fanfare for the Common Man*. But instead, the dread, chaos, and never-ending gloom brought on by the pandemic forced its way onto the page. The continual dirge-like beat of the tuba bespeaks the onward relentlessness of the contagion, while the recycling parallel minor scales, modeled after the Shepard Tone illusion, and the chaotic superposition of motives intensify our alarm. The piece concludes as it begins with the tuba singing its dirge into the foreseeable future.

Dr. **Greg A Steinke** is retired, former Joseph Naumes Endowed Chair of Music/Art and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Marylhurst University, Marylhurst, Oregon; Associate Director, Ernest Bloch Music Festival ('93–97) and Director, Composers Symposium ('90–97) (Newport, OR); served as the National Chairman of the Society of Composers, Inc. (1988–97). Composer of chamber and symphonic music and author with published/recorded works and performances across the U. S. and internationally; speaker on interdisciplinary arts, and oboist specializing in contemporary music. Dr. Steinke is a past national president of NACUSA (1012-19) and also currently serves on the NACUSA Cascadia Chapter Board.

This composition is based on a trip made to Alaska some years ago to play in a music festival during which time I was able to travel in the countryside and soak up the atmosphere and milieu of Alaska.

Composer **I'lana Cotton** has created works for a broad range of genres, from solo piano to small chamber groups to large choral and instrumental ensembles. She holds a Master of Arts degree in composition from the UCLA. A California resident for many years, she was active in multi-art collaborations and performance. Since moving to southern Oregon in 2003, she has written over 35 works for Rogue Valley ensembles, including four commissions for the Siskiyou Singers. The Rogue Valley Symphony commissioned *Cantus*, a large-scale work for orchestra, in honor of its 50th anniversary season, which was premiered in October, 2017. She was active in NACUSAsf for over 10 years, and helped form NACUSA chapter in southern Oregon in 2006. <http://www.notimemusic.com>

Brian Holmes usually writes for solo voice or chorus. He has been composer in residence of four local choruses, including the San Francisco Choral Artists and Vivace Youth Chorus of San Jose. His works include three short operas, two cycles of carols for soloists, chorus, and orchestra, two musicals, a Requiem Mass (*Amherst Requiem*, which won the 2012 American Prize in Choral Composition), a dozen song cycles, and about a hundred choral works. Works for instruments include concerti for brass trio and orchestra, toy piano and chamber ensemble, and many double basses and orchestra. Holmes is a retired physics professor; his specialty was the physics of music.

Vivace asked me to write a piece based on poems written by school children. Kenny wrote a poem that included the lines: 'I feel cool sagging my pants, but I hate black cats'. Kenny's sense of rhyme was off, but his structure was superb. So I asked everyone in the chorus to write pairs of lines with the same structure, but better rhymes. My favorites: 'I feel cool hanging with my buddies, but I hate social studies', 'I feel cool playing x-box, but I hate chicken pox'. *I Feel Cool!* is an arrangement for quintet of the resulting chorus piece.

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BENEFACTORS

David Ach
Adrienne Albert
Anne Baldwin
Laura Barton
John Beeman
John Bilotta
Semyon Bokman
Joanne Carey
Sondta Clark

Allan Crossman
L Peter Deutch
Brian Field
Gary Friedman
Jacob E. Goodman
Susan and Stephen Harrison
Carolyn Hawley
Lisa Largent
Sheli Nan

Emily Ray
Roberta Robertson
Karl and JoAnn Schmidt
Kent Smith
Artifex Software
Greg Steinke
Vanguard Charitable
Davide Verotta

The National Association of Composers, U.S.A. (NACUSA), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in 1933 by Henry Hadley originally as the National Association of Composers and Conductors. It is one of the oldest organizations devoted to the promotion and performance of music by Americans. Many of the most distinguished composers of the 20th and 21st Centuries have been NACUSA members. NACUSA has chapters in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco (NACUSA SF), Baton Rouge, Virginia, Texas, and Tennessee. The NACUSA SF chapter produces four concerts each season featuring music by its members. Please visit the NACUSA SF chapter website at <http://www.nacusasf.org>