

# National Band Association Journal

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***Linda Moorhouse***  
***President***  
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***2004-2006***



# The Piano in Wind Band

Andrei Strizek

I began researching the use of the piano as an ensemble instrument in wind band literature last fall as part of my piano literature course and found that there was very little information concerning this topic. This sparked the desire to explore the topic more. The goals of this ongoing research are to compile a bibliography of band literature that contains significant piano parts and to investigate the reasons why the piano has largely been neglected in band music. Currently I am limiting the scope of my project to original works for band or those works that have been transcribed by the composer, not a third-party.

The piano has, throughout its history, generally been considered a solo or chamber instrument. Many of the great orchestrators of the last one hundred years, such as Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, avoided using the piano in their orchestral music. Aaron Copland and Igor Stravinsky began to use the piano in their orchestrations and demonstrated the ability to utilize the piano's colors in a large ensemble but this trend took a while to cross over to the wind band world.

Most of the original wind band music that was written before the 1970s contains no piano parts at all. Because of the nature of the British military band instrumentation and its tradition, the major works at the beginning of the 20th century written by Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob contain no piano parts. Even later important works written for bands by noted composers Vincent Persichetti, Norman Dello Joio, John Barnes Chance and others also contain no piano parts.

A search through various repertoire lists by the Eastman Wind Ensemble, compiled in *The Wind Ensemble and its Repertoire*, show very few pieces that were scored to include the piano. Even though Frederic Fennell wrote in 1952 that the piano could be included in future compositions for wind ensemble, "as desired," the lack of a pianist on the ensemble's original call list shows that there was not a high demand for one even in his organization.

Prior to the advent of the wind ensemble, Percy Grainger scored for the piano in his wind band works. *Children's March* ("Over the Hills and Far Away") is

generally considered to be the first work written for band that contains a piano part. Written in 1919, the work features the piano as an ensemble instrument, but Grainger made allowances for the lack of a piano in the ensemble by placing cues in the woodwinds and brass. Grainger's *The "Gum-Suckers March"* also features the piano, this time with no cues in other instruments.

Though Grainger's music shows a fondness for the piano as an ensemble instrument (perhaps because of his love of the instrument), we don't see many pieces that use the piano significantly until Joseph Schwantner's *...AND THE MOUNTAINS RISING NOWHERE*, written in 1977. Schwantner's three pieces for wind ensemble, including "From a Dark Millennium and In Evening's Stillness," focus around the amplified piano. In all three works, the majority of the melodic material is introduced by the piano before being scored for the other instruments.

While the increase of piano parts probably cannot be directly credited to "*...AND THE MOUNTAINS RISING NOWHERE*," it is around the time of that composition that more and more composers started utilizing the piano in their band works. This can be attributed to a number of occurrences: the increased desire for different timbres; the increase in the use of the percussion section; the rise of art music written for band; and a shift in viewing the piano as an instrument having qualities that can add to a large ensemble. Many contemporary band composers now utilize the piano in various aspects in their wind band scoring.

Yet, while the use of the piano has increased in large-scale, advanced band works, its use in younger, "educational" band music has been minimal. This phenomenon seems unusual because, as Mark Camphouse writes in "Composers on Composing for Band," nearly every school has a piano available and the odds are high that there are capable pianists in the school music program. The "one-size-fits-all" scoring that is common in young band music can make it difficult to add piano to the instrumentation list because the scoring typically needs to be somewhat transparent for the piano's sound to be heard.

It is my hope that, through this project, I can



## A Select List of Original Wind Band Works with Piano Parts


Composer	Title	Publisher
Broege, Timothy	Sinfonia III	
Broege, Timothy	Sinfonia V	MB
Camphouse, Mark	Declarations	TRN
Camphouse, Mark	A Movement for Rosa	TRN
Camphouse, Mark	The Shining City	Kjos
Camphouse, Mark	Symphony from Ivy Green (Sym. No. 3)	SMC
Camphouse, Mark	To Build a Fire	TRN
Camphouse, Mark	Watchman, Tell Us of the Night	Kjos
Daugherty, Michael	Bizarro	Peermusic
Daugherty, Michael	Desi	TP
Daugherty, Michael	Niagara Falls	TP
De Meij, Johan	Symphony No. 1: Lord of the Rings	HL
De Meij, Johan	Symphony No. 2: The Big Apple	HL
Gillingham, David	A Light Unto Darkness	CAP
Gillingham, David	Apocalyptic Dreams Symphony	SMOC
Gillingham, David	Heroes, Lost and Fallen	HL
Gillingham, David	Internal Combustion	CAP
Gillingham, David	New Century Dawn	CAP
Gillingham, David	Waking Angels	CAP
Gorb, Adam	Awayday	Maecenas
Gorb, Adam	Downtown Diversions	Maecenas
Grainger, Percy	Children's March	SMC
Grainger, Percy	Gum-Suckers March, The	SMC
Grainger, Percy	Hill Song No. 2 (1929 scoring)	
Grainger, Percy	Shepherd's Hey	SMC
Harbison, John	Three City Blocks	G. Schirmer
Holsinger, David	Liturgical Dances	SMC
Husa, Karel	Al Fresco	AMP
Kirby, Rick	Different Voices	BH
Maslanka, David	A Child's Garden of Dreams	CF Maslanka,
David	Hell's Gate	CF
Maslanka, David	In Memoriam	CF
Maslanka, David	Symphony No. 2	CF
Maslanka, David	Symphony No. 3	CF
Maslanka, David	Symphony No. 4	CF
McTee, Cindy	Ballet for Band	
McTee, Cindy	California Counterpoint: The Twittering Machine	MMB
McTee, Cindy	Timepiece	
Nelson, Ron	Morning Alleluias	Ludwig
Nelson, Ron	Passacaglia (Homage on B-A-C-H)	Ludwig
Ogren, Jayce John	Symphonies of Gaia	CAP
Schwantner, Joseph	and the mountains rising nowhere	HM
Schwantner, Joseph	From a Dark Millennium	HM
Schwantner, Joseph	In Evening's Stillness	HM
Ticheli, Frank	Concertino for Trombone and Band	MB
Ticheli, Frank	Music for Winds and Percussion	MB
Welcher, Dan	Minstrels of the Kells	TP
Welcher, Dan	Songs Without Words	TP
Welcher, Dan	Symphony No. 3 ("Shaker Songs")	TP
Welcher, Dan	Zion	TP
Whitacre, Eric	Equus	Carpe Ranam
Whitacre, Eric	Ghost Train	Carpe Ranam
Whitacre, Eric	Godzilla Eats Las Vegas	Carpe Ranam
Wilson, Dana	Piece of Mind	Ludwig
Wilson, Dana	Shakata: Singing the World into Existence	Ludwig
Wilson, Dana	Vortex	BH
Wilson, Dana	Winds on the Steppes	Ludwig

\*Publisher abbreviations are: AMP: Associated Music Publishers; BH: Boosey & Hawkes; CAP: C. Alan Publications; CF: Carl Fischer; HL: Hal Leonard; HM: Helicon Music; MB: Manhattan Beach; MMB: MMB Music; SMC: Southern Music Company; TP: Theodore Presser.



draw attention to the use of the piano and its increasing standardization in wind band literature. Many times the piano part is seen as an unnecessary instrument or as merely an instrument to play the harp cues, and I hope that by providing information on the role of the piano in bands that its proper use will grow at all levels.

*Andrei Strizek is a music education student at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, where he is majoring in euphonium and piano. He is the cur-*

*rent president of UW – Eau Claire's CMENC chapter, and is active in IAJE, NBA and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. In addition to this current project, he recently completed a cross-discipline study of Bach's Goldberg Variations, in which he explored the connections between the harpsichord work and its influences in art, film and literature, as well as conducted interviews with various artists concerning their relationship to the Goldberg Variations. Comments on this article are welcome and can be emailed to [strizeap@awec.edu](mailto:strizeap@awec.edu).* 

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