

Premiere Concert

2 p.m.
Friday, July 20, 2018

Delta Omicron Triennial Conference
Wyndham Lake Buena Vista
Lake Buena Vista, Florida

The Music of Dr. Sy Brandon

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission

Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity

Delta Omicron Foundation, Inc.

P R E M I E R E C O N C E R T

The Music of Dr. Sy Brandon

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission

PROGRAM

Friday, July 20, 2018

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission:

Emoticons II for Flute, Clarinet, and PianoSy Brandon

Trepidation

Melancholy

Exhilaration

Anger

Gratitude

Michelle Worthing, *flute*

Denise O'Malley, *clarinet*

Sharon Dobbins Alberson, *piano*

ContrastsSy Brandon

Daniel Taylor, *euphonium*

Brenda Dannewitz, *piano*

ABOUT THE COMPOSER AND HIS WORK



Sy Brandon is professor emeritus of music at Millersville University in Millersville, Pennsylvania, where he taught low brass, composition, orchestration, music history, electronic music and music industry for 24 years. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in music education from Ithaca College and a D.M.A. in composition from the University of Arizona. Brandon has received numerous composition awards and commissions. His compositions and arrangements are varied and accessible, and he composes effectively for both young

performers and professionals. More about his current work can be found at <http://cooppress.net>.

Emoticons II for Flute, Clarinet, and Piano

Emoticons II is an aural representation of contrasting emotions for flute, clarinet and piano in five movements. It is the 2018 Thor Johnson Memorial Commission from the Delta Omicron Foundation.

The first movement, "Trepidation," is through-composed. It consists of several cells of ideas. The first idea is the "Overt" cell, as it is a strong declaration of trepidation. The second cell is the "Furtive" cell, and it contains a syncopated figure followed by an diminished 7th arpeggio in contrary motion. The third cell consists simply of half-step trills alternating between instruments and can be called the "Anticipation" cell. The next cell is in the form of a triplet that can be called the "Scream" cell. The last cell is an extended section consisting of even half-step eighth notes in contrary motion and a more sustained counter melody. This section is called the "Sneaky" cell. These cells are freely combined and are developed in subtle ways.

Movement two is called "Melancholy." It begins with a solo flute playing a moody melody in 5/4 that undergoes four variations through transformation of musical material and scoring. The four-note chromatic motif that appears at the end of the melancholy melody serves as transition to the middle section that is a temporary brightening of mood. It is in the minor mode still with some chromatic wandering. It builds to a climax of frustration that returns to the melancholy melody variants, but in a different order than the beginning.

The third movement, "Exhilaration," is in 6/8 meter. This movement is a contrast between diatonic and chromatic. The A sections are diatonic and are clear examples of exhilaration. The B sections, development, and coda are chromatic and depict the battle between containment of the excitement and unbridled outbursts. The containment is at a softer dynamic and the outbursts of exhilaration use of a hemiola figure at a forte dynamic. The "outburst" motive occurs frequently in unexpected spots throughout the movement.

(continued)

Two types of anger are represented in the fourth movement, which manifests itself in an ABA form. The A sections are overt anger. They are at a loud dynamic, dissonant, and utilize a series of dotted rhythms that add to the agitation. A rapid trill that is like someone's temper boiling over answers the dotted rhythms. The B section is a seething kind of anger. It begins with an arpeggiated piano part at a soft dynamic and lyrical line in the flute and clarinet that is atonal, creating an unsettled feeling. A trill is also included in this melody as a reminder of the boiling over temper. The orchestration varies in this section before the containment of the anger implodes as the tempo and dynamics increase. The return to the A section concludes the movement.

The influence for this last movement, "Gratitude," is the theme song to the PAX TV show, "Hope Island." This music contains a very uplifting Irish sounding flute melody and also features interesting cross rhythms of twos and threes. The form of this movement is a passacaglia where an eight-measure bass melody occurs throughout the movement. The passacaglia theme is stated by itself at the beginning in the left hand of the piano. The rhythm of this theme contains beats that are divided into two parts and beats that are divided into three parts. The next statement adds harmony to the theme in the right hand of the piano. The flute melody is introduced in the third statement. It too has beats that are divided into two parts and beats that are divided into three parts, sometimes lining up with the passacaglia theme and other times creating cross rhythms. The fourth statement gives the flute melody to the clarinet and the flute plays a countermelody. The end of this statement smoothly modulates to a new key where the left hand of the piano plays an open fifth drone reminiscent of Scottish and Irish music. The passacaglia theme moves to the right hand of the piano while the drone continues. There are three more variations over the passacaglia theme that use the melody and countermelody previously introduced, but with different orchestration. The end of this section accelerates to an Allegro tempo where the passacaglia theme is elongated in places to a sustained note and the flute and clarinet play scale-like passages as filler material. At the end of this interlude, the listener is brought back to more variations using the passacaglia theme, melody and countermelody and the cross rhythms become more complex. Another Allegro interlude occurs before a final statement of the passacaglia, melody and countermelody at a faster tempo, leading to an exciting and uplifting conclusion.

Contrasts

Contrasts was commissioned in 2009 by John DeVento. The title came about as a result of the two contrasting sections, but as the piece progressed, it also reflected the contrasts of tessitura, articulation, dynamics, and sudden changes in musical ideas that occur. The first slow section is in ABA form with a cadenza at the end that leads to the Allegro. The Allegro section is in arch form (ABCBA) where the C section serves as a development of ideas from the A and B sections as well as introducing a new idea that is treated canonically.

The composer is also a poet. Following are the poems he wrote to go with the movements of *Emoticons II*.

Trepidation

My irrational mind
 works overtime
Conjuring perceptions
 larger than life
Turning fears into horrors

Night sounds become threats
Cloaked in unsettled harmony,
Dissonance, and syncopation

I quiver under the covers
Rapid trills possess my body
Not-knowing worse than knowing

Screams erupt unheard
For I am alone
Or am I really alone?

Now silence envelops me
More of a threat
 than the night sounds
I scream inside my head

There is no relief from this torture
I fear living through the night
 more than death
Will this nightmare ever end?

Melancholy

A dark melody wanders
Obscure in atonality
Looking for resolution
Unable to find it

Fleeting chords hint at answers
That don't exist
At least not for me

Circumstances cloud my judgment
Painting with blacks and grays
On the palette of my mind

A chromatic kernel of hope
Rises from the depths of my despair
Illuminating possibilities so distant
They collapse in a heap of anguish

I am engulfed again by hopelessness
The same hopelessness from before
Rearranged in familiar
 yet unfamiliar patterns
Of the elusiveness of life's purpose

Exhilaration

A burst of joy brightens the sky
Reaching with augmented triads
Before spilling over in song
Its lilt enlivens my senses
A smile breaks out across my face
All is well with the world

Should I be this happy?

I try to contain my rapture
Behind quiet rising motifs
Alternating with bass note
Fragments of my joy
To no avail
Hemiola explosions erupt
uncontrollably
Before I can rein them in again

This goes on
Until I can no longer
Squelch my enthusiasm for life
Lilting songs return in full glory
Setting my spirit free
From life's restraints
For a few moments
of unbridled joy

Anger

Explosions rock my psyche
With uneven, long-short bursts
Verbal assaults bruise humanity
Violent manifestations of frustration

Quiet seething simmers atonally
Trills threaten an eruption
Aftershocks of the explosions
That cannot be contained

Temper and tempo increase
Control implodes, hatred explodes
Unintended consequences
Scar the eternal landscape

Was anything gained?

(continued)

Gratitude

Gratitude is grounded in faith
A single tonal melody
Steadfast during uncertainty
The foundation
 of past, present and future

Bathed in harmonious triads
Reinforcing its stability
Melody and harmony
Serve as one

Another voice joins the chorus
A melody of its own
High above the rest
Exalting its praise

Its song is taken over by another
While a counter melody swirls
A descant of support
For life's gifts

A drone appears
As a steady reminder
All things
Are rooted in faith

Melodies of gratitude
Reaffirm God's love
Building to a crescendo
And a new statement of strength

Sustained notes
Ornamented by flourishes
Praise God's kindness
For all things good

Thankfulness abounds
In all its splendor
Driving forward
With increased tempo and dynamics

Love overflows
From the source
As we bow our heads
In reverence

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Michelle Worthing received a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and a Master of Music degree in flute performance from Kent State University. She studied with Maurice Sharp of the Cleveland Orchestra, Russell Friedewald at Michigan State University and Raymond DeMattia at Kent State. She is retired from the Hudson Public Schools in Ohio after teaching instrumental music for 32 years. She played concerts in the public schools for the Akron Children's Concert Society for over 20 years, and continues to play professionally in the Akron area.

Denise O'Malley lives in Munroe Falls, Ohio, with her husband and three sons. She is a graduate of the University of Akron with a Bachelor of Music and a teaching certification Special K-12. She serves as the Director of Music for Northminster Presbyterian Church in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, where she directs various vocal choirs and handbell choirs. Denise enjoys playing in musical organizations in her surrounding communities of Cuyahoga Falls and Kent. She frequently plays woodwinds for musical productions in various local theaters including Weathervane Playhouse, Hudson Players and Rubber City Theater.

Sharon Dobbins Alberson is a graduate of the Kent State University School of Music, the University of Akron School of Law, Harvard Divinity School and Oxford University. For two summers she was a Blossom Festival

Music Scholar with the Cleveland Orchestra. She has spent her professional life in interdisciplinary endeavors through teaching Applied Ethics at the university, music ministry, chaplaincy, solo singing, accompanying, musical directing and composing and producing faith-based musicals for local and national charities. She studied piano with her brother Bill Dobbins (Eastman School of Music) and the late Margaret Baxstresser (Kent State University School of Music).

Daniel Taylor is currently the director of bands at Thurgood Marshall Fundamental Middle School in Saint Petersburg, Florida, where he has the pleasure of teaching 250 young students across beginning, concert, and jazz ensembles. He graduated from Florida State University in Spring 2010 with a Bachelor of Music Education degree. While at FSU, he studied euphonium with Paul Ebbers and served as principal euphonium under the batons of Patrick Dunnigan, James Croft, and Richard Clary. He is a former chapter president and national delegate for the Gamma Nu chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi. He also served his last semester on campus as a drum major in the FSU Marching Chiefs. His personal and professional affiliations include the National Association for Music Education, Florida Bandmasters Association, and Florida Music Educators Association. In his recent performance schedules, he has performed as featured soloist and principal euphonium with the First Coast Wind Ensemble, Florida Wind Band, and Wind Symphony of St. Petersburg.

Brenda Dannewitz has been serving Delta Omicron as the National Music Adviser since 2015 and as Xi Province President for 12 years. Born and raised in central Illinois, she holds a Bachelor of Music degree with a concentration in piano from Illinois Wesleyan University. While there, she was an active member of Sigma Chapter and held many officer positions. She spent the majority of her career (34 years) teaching chorus and guitar at Osceola Middle School in Seminole, Florida. Throughout her career, she has held many leadership positions in the music education field, serving as representative, secretary, treasurer and president of the Pinellas Music Educators Association and as the Florida Vocal Association's District 9 chair and coordinator. Recently retired after a 39-year career, she continues to play for singers and instrumentalists, organizations, schools, and churches in the Pinellas County area.

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission



This commission honors the memory of Dr. Thor Johnson, National Patron, who died in 1975. He often served as a judge of the Triennial Composition Competition. A native of Wisconsin, he earned his degrees from the Universities of North Carolina and Michigan. After service in World War II, he became the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony beginning in 1946 and continuing for the next 11 years. He then moved to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois to accept the position of Director of Orchestral Activities. During this period he organized the Chicago Little Symphony, a touring orchestra that was critically acclaimed.

In 1967, Johnson became the conductor of the Nashville Symphony. He also was widely known as a guest conductor with ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the symphonies of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Rochester, and New Orleans. For many years, he was choral conductor at the Ann Arbor, Michigan, May Festival.

The son of a Moravian minister, Johnson devoted himself to the discovery and performance of Early American Moravian music and established the Early American Moravian Music Festival in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1957.

Delta Omicron honored this great friend of the fraternity in 1972 with the commission of a work by Gail Kubik, "Pastorale and Spring Valley Overture," which was premiered at the Annual Peninsula Music Festival at Fish Creek, Wisconsin.