WIND MUSIC FOR THEATER: *CAVE,*

COMPOSED BY RUSSELL PECK

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A MANUSCRIPT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
in the School of Music
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2014

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ABSTRACT

This DMA manuscript is composed of two parts. The first is an essay focusing on Russell Peck (1949-2005) and his piece *Cave*. The written essay begins with a discussion of wind music for theater and the different techniques that composers use in this genre. It also looks more in-depth at a small sample of these pieces and the purpose, place, and intention of these works. The majority of this essay, however, focuses on Russell Peck and his piece *Cave.* The essay looks at technical, musical, and performance considerations of the piece and how they enhance the performance. Recommendations for future performances are discussed. Interviews with friends and family members of Russell Peck provides greater insight into him as a person as well as his compositional style and thought process when composing this piece. The second part of this DMA manuscript is a professional quality DVD of a full performance of *Cave* with the University of Alabama Symphonic Band on their April 14, 2014, concert.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank who helped me along this journey. I would like to start with my committee. To Dr. Kenneth Ozzello, my advisor, for thinking of this idea and allowing me to try something different. His support, guidance, and hard work allowed me to combine my two passions, music and dance. Thank you for everything over the past five years. I would also like to thank Dr. Linda cummins for giving me the option to do a doctoral project and for being an incredible guide through this doctoral program. To Dr. Tom Robinson, a man who brought theory to life and made me excited about it, thank you for your guidance through this project. To a fellow oboist, Dr. Shelly Myers thank you for your enthusiasm and support for me throughout this journey. I also appreciate Stacy Alley for taking time out of her busy schedule and to work outside of her department on this project. And to Randall Coleman, a dear mentor and friend, whose is guidance throughout my professional and educational career has meant more to me than he will ever know. Thank you for giving me the time and allowing me to use your ensemble for this project.

I would also like to thank Cameron Peck and Larry Livingston for speaking with me about *Cave* and sharing their memories of Russell. Your insight was invaluable as I put together this essay.

I would like to thank my mother, Jody Elliott, for her love and support throughout my life. Her sacrifices and care have let me achieve my dreams and grow to be the person I am today. To my sister Susan Dalton, thank you for always being there with unconditional love. And to Jerry Dalton, my father, thanks for always believing I can do anything. And to Jonathan

Williamson for your support and for bearing with me through this past year as I put all this together.

Finally to the professors, faculty, and students at The University of Alabama. Thank you for teaching me, guiding me, and being there for me throughout this journey. I leave here a better person because of you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Modern wind band music has been around since the middle of the nineteenth century. Some of the earliest types of wind bands were created by the military.[1] These ensembles were modeled after the Western European music ensembles and were used to signal troop movement, accompany ceremonial functions, boost solider and community morale, and to provide entertainment. As the popularity of wind bands grew, so did the number of composers who wrote or transcribed for the medium. The famous professional concert bands such as the Sousa Band and the Goldman Band flourished into the early twentieth century.

While the band movement grew exponentially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the repertoire concert bands performed was mostly transcriptions of orchestral masters' works. Only a few composers like Sousa and Garafulla graced the programs alongside the European Masters. Fredrick Fennell effected a paradigm shift in the band repertoire when he created the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1952. Instead of the large concert band instrumentation of the Sousa era, he used only one player on a part. Fennell embarked on a highly successful fifty-year crusade to have original works written by some the most prominent composers such as Persichetti, Grainger, and Respighi.

One of the sub-genres of the wind band repertoire is music for theater, sometimes also referred to as "experimental music." For the purposes of this essay, wind music for theater will be defined as compositions that require the performers to do something in addition to playing their own instruments. This could include speaking, singing, acting or using props, lighting,

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[1] Richard K Hansen, *American Wind Band, a Cultural History* (GIA Publications, Inc., 2005), 12.

costumes, etc. In this genre, almost anything that the composer can think of could be incorporated into a piece.

The pieces from this genre are programmatic and meant to conjure imagery or tell a story. To do this, the composer uses other means in addition to music. With music for theater, wind bands are able to break away from their conventional concert settings and deliver a performance that is both auditory and visual at the same time. Other closely related genres like opera or musical theater achieve similar performances with even more use of visual elements.

In the modern wind band repertoire, one of the most common techniques that composers use to create music for theater is adding vocal music to their pieces. Taken from the long tradition of choral music, these techniques allow composers to incorporate lyrics into their instrumental pieces. In the third movement of *Of Sailors and Whales*, Francis McBeth (1933-2012) requires the entire band to sing.[2] The haunting melody is enhanced by the lyrics telling the story of finding the "great whale." McBeth writes in unison and in harmony, creating the effect of a full choir. Percy Grainger's (1882-1961) *Childrens March: Over the Hills and Far Away* also calls for members of the ensemble to sing in unison.[3] By using the instrumentalists as a choir, Grainger creates the sound of children singing as they march away.

Composers have expanded their limits into other mediums for theatrical music. Daniel Bukvich (b. 1954) composed *Voodoo,* which forces the players to memorize their music. He took it one step further and added optional visual elements for the piece. On his website he writes, "It is as much a theatrical event as a piece of music, calling for the use of flashlights, arm

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[2] B Kopetz, "Of Sailors and Whales", *Instrumentalist* 50 (1996): 26-33.

[3] Percy Grainger and Adolf Schmid, *Children's march: Over the hills and far away* (G. Schirmer, 1928).

waving, chanting, singing, blowing into brass mutes, surrounding the audience, and playing on parts of wind instruments, such as mouthpieces, trombone slides, and trumpets with tuning slides removed."[4]

In *The Purple-Roofed Ethical Suicide Parlor*, Donald Erb (1927-2008) composed the piece with a companion electronic tape that is played during the performance. He also writes for the woodwinds to have 16 oz. bottles filled with different levels of water and play them in a way similar to the flute at various times throughout the piece.

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970) is also known for his forward-thinking compositions. In his piece *Godzilla Eats Las Vegas,* Whitacre thinks of it as a "bad Godzilla movie" and encourages the musicians to act out the different parts of the movie. Performers can dress up like Elvis or showgirls as well as throw paper across the stage to act out the fight against Godzilla. Whitacre also says performances can include lighting and video effects. Whitacre's only goal is to "get a laugh" and entertain the audience. He wants performances of this piece to be anything but the typical performance for most concert bands.[5]

As composers continue to develop new ideas and push the boundaries of wind band music, wind music for theater will continue to grow and evolve. Composers can use the techniques discussed in this paper as well as continue to develop new ideas to create unique and entertaining pieces. This gives ensembles other options for their performances. In a society

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[4] Daniel Bukvich, "Voodoo," http://www.bukvichmusic.com/comp/voodoo/ (accessed October 9, 2013).

[5] Eric Whitacre, *Godzilla Eats Las Vegas* (Carpe Ranam, 1996).

where people are more responsive to visual stimuli[6], the development of the wind music for theater will allow ensembles to reach newer and younger audiences.

[6] B E Stein *and others*, "Enhancement of Perceived Visual Intensity by Auditory Stimuli: A Psychophysical Analysis", *Journal of cognitive neuroscience* 8, no. 6 (1996), 9-11.

CHAPTER 2

RUSSELL PECK

Russell Peck (1954-2009) was a world-renowned composer and clinician whose music has been played by many orchestras and wind ensembles. His catalogue includes over fifty works for orchestra, concert band, and chamber groups.[7] His music is enjoyable to both the musicians and audiences and he enjoyed much success with commissions and requests for performances totaling over 1,800 by 2001.[8]

Peck was born in Detroit, Michigan, on January 25, 1954.[9] He began studying music at an early age when he started piano lessons with Clark Eastham. He would have Peck study orchestral scores and learn to play them on the piano as well as assign him various composition and orchestration projects. This early exposure to composing sparked Peck's desire to write and create music.[10] In high school, Peck decided he didn't want simply to study these pieces; he wanted to be a part of them. So he learned to play the trombone and played in concert bands and orchestras through college.

Russell Peck received his bachelor of music degree at the University of Michigan where he studied with Gunther Schuller, Leslie Bassett, and Ross Lee Finney.[11] He went

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[7] *Composer Russell Peck's Music for Orchestra*, Music of Russell Peck (Greensboro, NC: Pecktacular Music, 2009).

[8] Joseph Stevenson, "Cave, for Band", *All Music*, http://www.allmusic.com/composition/cave-for-band-mc0002516923 (accessed September 15, 2013).

[9] "Russell James Peck", *News & Record* (2009): B7. http://obituaries.news-record.com/obituaries/news-record/obituary.aspx?pid=125008438#fbLoggedOut (accessed September 15, 2013).

[10] Cameron Peck, (Interview with author) (October 1, 2013).

[11] Stevenson, "Cave, for Band".

on to get his Masters and Doctorate in composition from Michigan and then became the composer-in-residence for the city of Indianapolis. It was there where he met his wife, Cameron Gordon Peck, who was an undergraduate music major at Butler University.[12] In 1974, Russell Peck accepted a position as Professor of Music Theory at Northern Illinois University. There he worked with Larry Livingston, who was the conductor of the wind ensemble. While they had already met while at the University of Michigan, it wasn't until they worked together at Northern Illinois University that they became lifelong friends.[13]

Peck left Northern Illinois University in 1977 for an interim position in Music Composition at the Eastman School of Music. His short residence at Eastman led him to take a position the same year at the North Carolina School of the Arts in Greensboro, NC, where he taught music theory, history, and composition. He remained on the faculty there until 1979 when Peck decided to stop teaching altogether and focus all of his attention on composing. He remained in Greensboro, NC with his wife until his death in March of 2009.

Russell Peck began his composition career in the height of the dodecaphonic and chance music movements. The 1950s and 1960s were full of composers using twelve-tone rows and aleatoric electronic compositions that were praised by collegiate conductors and educators for their academic merit. Larry Livingston said "he [Peck]

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[12] "Russell James Peck".

[13] Larry Livingston, (Interview with author) (September 17, 2013).

didn't want to write like this."[14] Peck felt that while this music had its place, he wanted to write music that was enjoyable to play and to listen. His wife, Cameron, joked that Russell spent much of his time repeatedly listening to his own pieces so he wanted to at least like the music he was listening to.[15] In a program note in 2009, Livingston said:

> In an era which demanded perforce that all "serious" composers write music in the "modern" style, which is to say guaranteed to befuddle the uninitiated listener, Russell was the first rebel with a cause. He decided early on that his music would sing, dance, and appeal to the vox populi. He folded melodic and rhythmic devise familiar to everyone into his own inimitable langue, rich in affective meaning. Though he became somewhat of an outsider in the contemporary music establishment, he flourished as a working composer, relying entirely for sustenance on performance royalties rather than holding a faculty position in a university.[16]

Peck had three major resources from which he drew inspiration. His primary passion was orchestral music and the great European composers like Beethoven and Sibelius. Being born and raised in Detroit, Peck grew up immersed in Motown music. Cameron said he would often buy tickets to the Motown reviews and would listen for hours. She said "his music is full of rhythms and ideas that he loved from the music he heard in Detroit."[17] His third major influence was gospel music. He enjoyed the rich harmonies and chord changes he heard in the music. He also loved the energy and drive

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Peck, Interview with author.

[16] Larry Livingston, "Note from Larry Livingston," Programming Note, September 19, 2009.

[17] Peck, Interview with author.

that came from gospel music. Cameron added in her interview that her husband also enjoyed writing music that she liked. "He was the composer, of course, but I was his sounding board."[18]

Peck was always composing no matter where he was and whatever the time of day. According to his wife, Russell did not "punch a clock" or have set times he would write, and while his music may sound "easy," it did not come easy to him. She said he would just sit at the piano and "just play stuff, make things up, jam, and sketch stuff out." He would put these ideas in what the family called a "hope chest" that he would come back to when he found the right place for one of his musical sketches. He would also spend time out in nature when he needed inspiration and would take long hikes or go kayaking to clear his mind. Cameron mentioned that he would get up out of bed if something struck him at night. "He wouldn't stop until his music was just right. Even if that meant going back and changing something after it had been printed and performed."[19] Livingston also recalled some advice he had given Peck as he was just beginning to be successful:

> When you try to translate pop and rock music gestures to an orchestra, you have to be careful if it works. Some of your ideas don't translate into the power you thought they would. Some work better than others. Russell's music was the first person to wake up and smell the coffee. We [collegiate conductors] are about to take music out of the

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

> culture. We have to make music nurses and bus drivers can relate to, not just college band directors.[20]

Peck spent much time talking with musicians and learning about their instruments. He wasn't afraid to ask if something he wrote was too hard to play or didn't fit right. While he didn't know how to play every instrument, he had a great understanding of each instrument's capabilities.

Some of Peck's earliest compositions were written for chamber ensembles. Many of these works brought together unlikely combinations of instruments and demonstrated his attempt to write for the "modern" style that was popular at that time. One of his first published works *Two Songs on Poems of William Carlos Williams* was written in 1963 and features a soprano, celli, and flutes. Another work written just one year later, *Seven-Fold Amen,* is written for cello, percussion, and celesta. Overall, Peck composed over twenty pieces for various types of chamber groups. Some of the most popular chamber pieces were written later in his career: *A "Minor Monster-Piece"* and *Big Shot Brass*, both for brass quintet as well as *Don't Tread on Me or My String Quartet*. Through his use of singable melodies and references to popular music of the time, these pieces show his desire for his music to be accessible and interesting to the audience.

It goes without saying that Peck spent much of his time composing for his favorite genre, the orchestra. One of his first compositions in this genre was *Signs of Life*, a two-movement work for string orchestra written in 1983 and later revised in 1986 to add an

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[20] Livingston, Interview with author.

additional movement to the beginning and to feature a special plucking technique developed by Peck himself.

Another piece for orchestra, *Peace Overture*, shows Peck's love for humanity and offers a glimpse of another large part of his life as a humanitarian. The piece was written as a "musical tribute to all the people who have struggled against conflict itself towards a just and lasting peace."[21] The premiere took place as part of the Birmingham International Festival of Arts and was a commission by the Alabama Symphony.

One of Peck's most popular pieces was written as a concerto for percussion trio and orchestra. *The Glory and the Grandeur* was premiered by the Cincinnati Orchestra with the Percussion Group Cincinnati in 1988. Taking inspiration from his earlier work *Lift-Off*, this piece is a great example of Peck's ability to write for percussion and to incorporate his love of blues and Motown rhythms. In an article in *The Journal of the Percussive Arts Society*, Scott Herring writes, "'The Glory and the Grandeur' has a decidedly American feel with its bluesy scales and popular rhythms. The skills required of the percussionists and the theatrical thrill provided by their aerobic movements about the stage will close any orchestral concert with thunderous applause."[22]

Russell Peck wrote several pieces that can be classified as "music for theater." His wife Cameron said that Russell loved theater and enjoyed being on stage. He would often attend performances of his pieces and would talk to audience members, whether they were children or adults. Cameron said he "loved catching their attention and giving

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[21] Russell Peck, *Peace Overture* (Greensboro, NC: Pecktacular Publishing, 1988).

[22] Scott Herring, "Percussive Notes", *The Journal of the Percussive Arts Society* 9, no. 11 (1988), 17.

them a musical experience that he had had as kid."[23] In 1972, the New Orleans Philharmonic commissioned Peck to write a piece for one of their children's concerts. As he was planning the piece, he envisioned the use of a narrator to help tell the story. He wrote the narration as part of the music, so it was integrated within it and not just something that happened on top of the music. *Where's Red Robin* takes the shape of a nursery rhyme using a young bird to tell the tale of springtime and rebirth.[24] As the emotions of the text change so does the music and the two weave a strong imagery that the young audience loved. Peck served as the narrator of the piece for the premiere performance.[25]

In 1976, the New Orleans Philharmonic again commissioned Peck to compose another piece for their children's concert series. This time it coincided with America's bicentennial so Peck thought it would be appropriate to again incorporate a narrator to tell the story. *Jack and Jill at Bunker Hill* read like a nursery rhyme and Peck again read the narration at the premiere performance.[26]

Peck's most popular piece for theater, however, came in 1985 when the Florida Symphony commissioned him to write a piece for their young people's concerts. *Thrill of the Orchestra* is described as a demonstration piece on the score and is meant to

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[23] Peck, Interview with author.

[24] Russell Peck, *Where's Red Robin* (Greensboro, NC: Pecktacular Publishing, 1995).

[25] Peck, Interview with author.

[26] Ibid.

introduce the different instruments and sections of the orchestra to the audience. This piece has been played hundreds of times by orchestras all over the world.[27]

Peck's catalogue also includes pieces for wind ensemble. His first published piece for this genre was *American Epic.* It was very popular in the early 1960s and received many performances around the country. Unfortunately, the piece wasn't fully supported by the publisher and eventually went out of print. His next piece for wind ensemble was *Cave* written in 1977 for the Northern Illinois University Wind Ensemble. After the success of *Cave,* Peck's publishers asked him to write some more wind music but to gear them towards young bands. His pieces *Funky Boogie* and *Star Machine* were widely popular and are still available today through his own publishing company.

After several disagreements with his publishers and rental agents, Peck wanted to take more control over his pieces and who was playing them. Peck and his wife Cameron created *Pecktacular Music* and began publishing and renting all of Peck's musical catalogue on their own. Cameron acted as director of the company so Russell could focus on composing. She also acted as the copyist, creating manuscripts and parts from Peck's sketches. The practice of self-publishing is very common in the twenty-first century; however, in the 1970s and 1980s there were few composers who had the means to print their own music. Cameron continues to direct and manage Peck's music and plans to do so until she retires and passes the business down to their daughter.[28]

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[27] Russell Peck, "The Thrill of the Orchestra" , http://www.russellpeck.com/thrill_of_the_orchestra.html (accessed September 3, 2013).

[28] Peck, Interview with author.

Peck was more than just a composer. He was also a humanitarian and political activist. He had a deep care for the downtrodden and forgotten people in third world countries. He spent a large part of his life and personal resources to try to eradicate world hunger. He strongly believed that every person on earth should have access to food and water. He felt that only once every person had these basic rights could society begin to eliminate human conflict. Peck worked tirelessly on his project called "Starvation-Free World" and made several appearances with the United Nations. It was after one of the appearances that he wrote *Signs of Life*. His thirty-year crusade was never fully realized. A formal resolution was created in the United Nations; however, no nation agreed to sponsor it, so it did not pass.

In the winter of 2009, Russell Peck left his house on one of his typical walks through the woods. After several hours when he did not return, his family and friends began to search for him. A week-long search and rescue operation culminated in finding his body in the very woods he loved and used as inspiration on many of his pieces. Tragically, Peck had taken his own life and was pronounced dead on March 1, 2009. People have speculated upon why he chose to take his life, and some think it was because he knew he may never achieve his mission to rid the world of hunger. Livingston said that he could not understand why people had to go hungry. "His crusade had bankrupted him and he simply could not cope."[29]

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[29] Livingston, Interview with author.

His friends and family remember him as an enthusiastic and energetic person. He was a "wonderful teacher and a force to be reckoned with."[30] He was smart, funny and satirical, and he was remembered for his sense of humor and the way he made people laugh. He and his wife were together for thirty-seven years, and she still misses him every day. "He was very kind and a highly charged person around people. He loved to kayak, canoe, and really any type of physical activity."[31] She also said that he often lived at two extremes. He would spend time out in a public setting, in front of audiences, and orchestras and was always outgoing and open. However at home he loved to be alone and cherished his solitude and quiet time. "His mind was always going and he had lots of ideas all of the time but needed time to process them."[32]

Russell Peck was a great composer and a great human being. His music is full of passion and energy and is truly a reflection of his personality and ideals. His orchestral compositions have become staples in the modern day literature. Even after death, he still can reach hundreds of new audiences with his educational and theatrical compositions and bring his love of music to a new generation of listeners.

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Peck, Interview with author.

[32] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

CAVE

Cave, also known as *Cave of the Winds* was written by Russell Peck in 1978[33] and was premiered by the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Wind Ensemble under the direction of Larry Livingston. The piece was composed personally for Livingston, and the first performance took place at the 1978 *National Wind Ensemble Conference* (NWEC). The NWEC was created in the late 1960s and was championed by major wind band conductors such as Donald Hunsberger, Fred Fennell, Robert Reynolds, and Frank Battisti. The final conference was held in 1978[34] and featured the University of Northern Illinois with an entire concert of experimental music and music for theatre conducted by Livingston. Other works on the concert included The *Eve of St. Agnes* by Jan Bach and *The Purple Roof Ethical Suicide Parlor* by Donald Erb[35].

Peck composed the music with the imagery of an underworld cave inhabited by musicians who have lost the ability to see. The musicians are unified by a single rhythmic pulse and create music without anyone observing. He includes a poem in the score that describes the atmosphere of the underworld which reads:

> In the cave there is no sunlight. Everyone has lost sight,
> wearing sunglasses over their atrophied eyes.
> Plants abound in the Cave, nourished by vapors and black light.
> The Musicians of the Cave never read music. How could they?
> All music is by feel. No one is watching. No inhibitions
> Everyone moves to the music, ensembles in unison.

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[33] Russell Peck, *Cave* (Greensboro, NC: Pecktacular Music, 1978).

[34] Frank L Battisti, *The Winds of Change: The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band/ensemble and Its Conductor* (Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002). 95-96.

[35] Livingston, Interview with author.

> The cave is located on a Sethian node three miles below the earth's crust underneath a cornfield in Dekalb, IL. The rock walls ring to on unchanging pulse upon which all the Cave dwellers build their spontaneous symphonies.[36]

Peck envisioned a repeating motif, similar to Ravel's *Bolero,* and saw how this could be built in a "theatrical way."[37] At that time, Larry Livingston and the NIU Wind Ensemble were champions for experimental music and often performed pieces that required the performers to act or do things other than playing their instruments. They would perform in costume or include lighting and staging ideas in their performances. Cameron Peck recalls that the university was a "vibrant and fun place with interesting faculty and student groups. Audiences came to wonder 'what will they think of next.'"[38] The ensemble knew Russell Peck well and were accustomed to music for theater, were very enthusiastic about the composition and the performance.[39]

The audience at the premiere was a little more divided in their response to the piece. The audience was initially captivated at the opening of the piece by the "weird looking contrabass clarinet. It is already a peculiar instrument."[40] Livingston recalls that there were three different types of reactions. One group was enthusiastic that it was music that they could relate to. There was a noticeable melody and clear structure. Another group applauded that is was a cutting edge

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[36] Peck, *Cave*.

[37] Peck, Interview with author.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Livingston, Interview with author.

[40] Peck, Interview with author.

piece of music adding visual elements and acting to the performance. The final group, however, thought that music like this should not be allowed and had no place in the collegiate repertoire.[41]

Musical Considerations

Cave was composed for traditional American wind ensemble instrumentation with some expanded parts (See Appendix A) such as a fourth flute and fourth trumpet part. He also includes important contrabass clarinet and double bass parts. However, these parts are cued in other instruments such as the bass clarinet and tuba in case the original instruments are not available. Peck writes specifically for ten percussion players calling for a solo bass drum player, six mallet players (2 vibraphone, 2 marimba, bells, and chimes), and three players for various auxiliary instruments including tam-tam, vibraslap, and cymbals. If ten players are not available, the vibraphone and marimba parts could be reduced to two players instead of four. The conductor could also combine the bells, chimes, and auxiliary parts for fewer players.

The entire piece is approximately six minutes long and follows an arch form beginning and ending with a bass drum solo and a climax roughly two-thirds into the piece at letter G. The piece is written with a key signature for C Major; however, the music doesn't function in that key. The piece is more easily understood in a bluesy E minor. The opening section is built around an e-minor pentatonic riff that makes up the recurring ostinato (See Figure 3.1). The trumpets join in on a C-dominant-seventh motif (See Figure 3.2) and the flutes answer with a Dorian C-minor blues riff (See Figure 3.3). Both of these occur over what can be considered an E pedal tone.

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[41] Livingston, Interview with author.

Figure 3.1- Contrabass clarinet e-minor pentatonic ostinato- Measure 1

Figure 3.2- Trumpet C-dominant seven chord- Measure 10

Figure 3.3- Flute c-minor dorian blues riff- Measure 14

The bass drum begins the piece as if summoning the musicians in the cave and bringing them together with an eighth-note rhythm that becomes an ostinato, which lasts throughout the entire piece. This ostinato occurs on its own for several seconds before the contrabass clarinet enters in the second measure. The contrabass clarinet becomes the first wind musician to be awakened by the pulse of the cave and begins another layer of the ostinato. The contrabass clarinet is soon joined by the double bass and the soprano clarinets. The layers continue to build as more and more performers are brought together. The trumpets and flutes begin a conversation of two different motifs using glissandi and covering the full range of the instrument. They

continue to alternate back and forth as other sections add into the texture. Eventually all instruments are playing the motifs simultaneously.

At letter C, Peck changes the rhythmic ostinato and places it in the saxophones and mallet percussion. Here he begins to introduce major seconds and minor thirds into the harmonic structure. He writes "Dolce" as a solo oboe enters. This new double-reed texture acts as a catalyst to bring more energy to the music. Once again the layers build as more instruments add in around the oboe solo offering other parts of the overall ostinato.

The texture changes again at letter D as the rhythmic motion is transferred to the vibraphone. The trombones and double bass also become important as they begin to outline a harmonic motion from G to A. This keeps the E-minor pentatonic idea but centers the riff on scale degree 4, A. The saxophones, trumpets, and mallet instruments alternate between a CM7 chord occurring over the bass' G and an f# half-diminished chord occurring over the bass' A. These bass notes are not what might support those upper same structures in a standard R&B vamp, which might use A and D instead, producing a more straightforward Am^9–D^9 pattern, yet G and A create interesting tension as they represent the 2nd and 3rd tones of the E-minor pentatonic. This simple harmonic progression continues as more mallet percussion join the ostinato and the woodwinds begin to trade riffs with the trombones.

The entire ensemble is brought together as all the musicians in the cave have congregated and are playing at full volume at letter F. Peck recaps various motifs from the previous sections and combines them together into one large sound. The harmonic progression remains the same alternating between the CM7 and F# half-diminished chords (Am^9–D^9) every measure. The forward motion is aided by the forte-piano chords in the brass and low reed instruments and

continues to the resolution at letter G. Here the full ensemble is playing at fortissimo but quickly decrescendo down to pianissimo. The upper woodwinds provide the moving line that also diminuendos down to pianissimo. This diminuendo idea repeats four times, each time getting softer as the cave musicians begin to fade away.

The opening ostinato returns, this time in the double bass, trombone, and marimba. The flutes and piccolos also play motifs reminiscent of the opening ideas. The musicians in the cave begin to return to their respective parts of the underworld fading away to nothing. At letter H the woodwinds and vibraphone continue the motif until one last statement of the opening ostinato theme that is broken up between various instruments. They sustain the last note and finally fade into niente leaving only the bass drum ostinato that has remained constant throughout the entire piece. Slowly the bass drum also fades to niente to end the piece.

There are no published music lists that include a difficulty level for *Cave.* However, the limited and flexible range and rhythms indicate that it could be played at various levels, from intermediate high school ensembles through collegiate wind ensembles. The music is meant to be memorized for the staged performance therefore, much of the music is repetitive and comes back in the same pattern throughout the piece. Some difficulty lies in the various performing techniques asked of the wind players (APPENDIX B). The brass and woodwind players are asked to perform glissandi and to play to the highest or lowest note they are capable of playing. The piece is meant to be performed with the true wind ensemble instrumentation with one person on each part. While some lines are doubled in other instruments, the piece requires a strong interdependence of the players, especially in the percussion parts. However, in a large ensemble

situation such as a wind symphony or symphonic band, parts may be doubled at the conductor's discretion.

The rhythms are very syncopated and might even be considered a pseudo-jazz style. Peck writes in the score to *Cave* that the "overall concept of phrasing should reflect Blues and Jazz sources."[42] The accents often occur on the upbeat and he writes close harmonies within each section and as an ensemble. He also writes out a "swing style" at times with dotted eighth-note to sixteenth-note patterns. Special attention should be taken on all articulations to achieve the jazz style. Even the physical notation appears more like a piece of jazz music than a concert band work (See Figure 3.4). Cameron Peck personally created the manuscript by hand and the notation was devised along with Russell Peck to make memorization easier.[43]

Figure 3.4

[42] Peck, *Cave*.

[43] Peck, Interview with author.

Technical Consideration

One aspect of the piece that increases the level of difficulty is the presence of the constant bass drum ostinato. The solo bass drum part is written in 3/8 time and remains the same throughout the piece. The rest of the music is written in 4/4 time causing a constantly shifting downbeat for the bass drum player. Since the bass drum acts as the "pacemaker for the group,"[44] it is crucial the player maintains a steady eighth-note pulse throughout. The part is also written to steadily crescendo from the beginning to letter G, so special care should be taken not to peak early dynamically.

The piece requires a strong sensitivity to dynamics and phrase shaping. The piece begins at a pianissimo dynamic and steadily builds to a full ensemble fortissimo statement. The players are asked to crescendo very quickly at times from soft to loud or with forte-piano markings within a single measure. It is important not to reach full volume too early. Each section must be allowed to grow within itself but also collectively until the tutti section at letter F and ultimately the climax at letter G.

In a traditional concert setting, the piece would use a conductor, which requires several considerations. The constant tempo makes it easy for the conductor to manage the pacing of the piece. After giving the initial cue for the bass drum player to start, the conductor should allow him or her to play without direction. Once several seconds have passed, the conductor can give preparatory gesture to cue the contrabass clarinet player to play and begin conducting. After establishing the ostinato, the conductor can be free to cue and shape the various entrances of the motif. Throughout the piece the conductor should be careful not to conduct every beat or appear

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[44] Peck, *Cave*.

to be just keeping time. He or she can give different emphasis to certain beats to show direction of the musical line to the players. Gestures of syncopation[45] can also assist players in playing parts that enter on the off-beat.

At letter C, the conductor can offer a change in conducting style adopting a more lyrical pattern to match the "Dolce" expressive marking. Again the conductor can focus on cuing new entrances as a posed to focusing on the pulse of the ostinato. It is crucial that the conductor keep the overall balance of each section under control, allowing the important melodic lines to come out of the texture and the supporting parts to remain in the background. This is especially important as more sections are added through letter E and then at letter F when all parts are playing.

Letter G should bring another change in conducting style as the instruments begin to fade away. Each repetition of the two bar phrases should demonstrate a smaller gesture from the conductor to show the decrescendo. A minimal pattern is all that is required to show the delicate change in dynamics four measures after G. The wind players' final two measures of the wind players are especially challenging because Peck divides the original motif amongst the players (See Figure 3.5.) Once again using a gesture of syncopation would greatly help the players know where to enter on the off beats. The fermata does not need to be conducted and the conductor can just show the release for the winds. The bass drum player can continue the rhythm slowly fading away until the conductor indicates the last note.

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[45] Elizabeth A H Green, Mark Gibson and Nicolai Malko, *The Modern Conductor : A College Text on Conducting Based on the Technical Principles of Nicolai Malko As Set Forth in His the Conductor and His Baton* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 46.

Figure 3.5

Performance Considerations

Cave was composed for the Northern Illinois University Wind Ensemble to be included in a large concert of pieces of wind music for theater. The piece can be performed in a traditional concert band setting, but Russell Peck and the conductor for whom it was written,

Larry Livingston, created options for a theatrical presentation. Peck had developed an interest in musicians performing without printed music and composed *Cave* as a way to make that happen. As a professor at NIU, he also knew Livingston and the members of his ensemble well so he enjoyed creating this piece specifically for them.[46] His wife Cameron actually performed the solo contrabass clarinet part at the premier.[47]

Peck was present at every rehearsal to create the theatrical environment. Livingston recalls that Peck acted as a "stage director" and knowing the parameters of the performance space and the goal of the concert, developed the lighting, staging, and set design for the theatrical presentation. Livingston went on to say that Peck wanted each performance to be different and for each conductor to create his or her own experience for their audience.[48] Peck writes in his score, "The decor concepts are optional and are subject to creative interpretations. Alternatives may be developed, consistent with the atmosphere of CAVE."[49] Peck however, does include suggestions in his score to aid in developing the performance (APPENDIX C).

The primary difficulty in a theatrical performance such as this is memorizing the music, something that is seldom asked of wind ensemble musicians. The stage must be clear of chairs and stands and the lighting should begin blacked out. As the first instruments begin to play a single spotlight can be used to illuminate the stage. As each instrument is added, other lights can be used to illuminate the players. Peck urges to never use white and suggests starting with blue

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[46] Peck, Interview with author.

[47] Livingston, Interview with author.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Peck, *Cave*.

light to keep the mood dark and mysterious. He also suggests that table lamps and floor lamps can be used one the stage and can be manipulated directly by the performers. The lighting should continue to grow until at letter G all the lights are on. As the music fades away, the lighting is reversed, slowly fading away to darkness and concluding with one light on the solo bass drum that is extinguished on the last note. Peck suggests using different floral plants and other set pieces as well as placing dry ice in water to create a fog to elicit the environment of an underground cave. The players are asked to wear sunglasses to mimic the blind creatures Peck describes in his poem.

Peck includes a diagram for possible placement of the performers around the stage. He groups like instruments together and shows possibilities for directions they can face. He asks that the players move together both to feel the pulse but also to visually interpret the music better for the audience. He writes that the players can also move around the stage as long as it does not interfere with the music. Peck recommends using raised platforms to create multiple levels in "the cave" and allow each musician to be seen by the audience.

A full theatrical performance of *Cave* would require a lot of preparation and planning. Another option for the performance of this piece could be a hybrid performance where the players are seated in a traditional concert band setting but perhaps use some lighting effects such as flashlights or costuming like hats or sunglasses. This alleviates that need to memorize the music but still provides the audience with a unique, visual concert experience.

Cave is a very versatile piece and is able to stand in a traditional concert setting or as a theatrical presentation or somewhere in the middle. It has been recorded by the University of

North Texas Wind ensemble on their *Deja View* album,[50] and theatrical performances can be found on websites such as YouTube and Vimeo. Peck intended the piece to be enjoyable by both the performers and the audience and offers endless options for creativity by the conductor. Its easy playability make it possible for most intermediate ensembles as well as collegiate groups looking for a new addition to their repertoire.

The University of Alabama Symphonic Band produced a full theatrical performance on April 14, 2014. The music was rehearsed by the author with two 20-minute rehearsal blocks in a traditional concert band setting. The blocking[51] and choreography was taught in two additional 20-minute rehearsal blocks in a rehearsal hall and a 2- hour dress rehearsal in the performance hall. Lighting, choreography, and sets were also be designed by the author. For complete performance notes of this presentation please see Appendix D.

The performance by the Alabama Symphonic Band opens as a lone cave explorer arrives in a mysterious cavern. Suddenly he hears the sound of a distant drum and begins to look for a way out. As he is escaping he comes across a scary contrabass clarinet and retreats in the opposite direction. He runs into a group of trumpets that force him to go a different direction. He continues to search for an escape as more and more cave-dwelling musicians emerge to greet the intruder. The cave diver becomes enchanted by an oboe player and forgets that he is trapped in the cave. Eventually he finds an instrument of his own and joins in on the musical adventure. As the cave musicians begin to retreat back to their parts of the cave, the explorer is left alone to

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[50] Russell Peck, "Cave", *Deja View* (North Texas Wind Symphony) (Klavier, October 27, 1998).

[51] Blocking is a theater term which means where the performers are placed on the stage and how they move from place to place

play the final note of the piece and as the last notes of the bass drum fade away, he also disappears into the cave, happy with his new home.

Recommendations for Future Productions of *Cave*

The availability of the University of Alabama Symphonic Band was very tight and there was little rehearsal time available with the performers. Fortunately, the musicians were very talented and relatively quick to learn blocking and choreography. This may not be the case with every ensemble, therefore it is the recommendation of this author to allow plenty of time for the musicians to learn and memorize the music prior to beginning any rehearsal with movement. This would allow the performers to focus only on one aspect of the piece at a time, music then blocking and choreography.

The members of the University of Alabama Symphonic Band had a more difficult time learning the blocking and being comfortable with moving in different ways. More rehearsal time should be allowed for learning blocking so the performers can become more comfortable. Fewer rehearsals with longer blocks of time may be more productive than more frequent, shorter rehearsal blocks. This might allow the performers to better learn and retain the information before having to switch to a different task. It would also be beneficial to rehearse in the performance venue as much as possible so the performers can get comfortable with the space available and the director can get a better picture of the overall production. Lighting and props should also be incorporated as early as possible in the learning process.

Depending on their experiences, some performers me be reluctant to move and play at the same time. Participation in marching band or other visual performing arts may help the

performers become comfortable more quickly. Improvisation exercises may help students to become more comfortable with themselves and the people around them. For this production of *Cave,* six members of the University of Alabama Million Dollar Band Color Guard were used as feature dancers. This allowed them to achieve more difficult choreography and even incorporate fabric for a more visual performance. By having feature dancers, the musicians were also less responsible for carrying the visual interest and allowed them to focus solely on their music for a portion of the production. This could also be a great way for band directors to collaborate with dance groups or color guards in their schools and work with other teachers in the process.

This production of *Cave* tells a story by using a main character that acted as a "cave explorer" that eventually becomes a member of the cave musicians. This again allowed one person to carry more of the visual interest so the responsibility musicians to move was not as demanding. This was very successful and also allowed the audience to connect more to the performance as they followed the character through the piece.

Larry Livingston said that Russell wanted each performance to be different as long as it stayed true to the original intent.[52] Directors should feel free to think of new and innovative ways to perform this piece and highlight the strengths of their own musicians in the visual choices. Understand that it may take longer than expected for all performers to memorize the music and then learn the blocking. Even with experienced musicians, this is not a piece that can be put together quickly but it can be extremely rewarding for both the director and the performers. It will provide everyone involved, including the audience, with a unique and exciting change to a traditional concert.

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[52] Livingston, Interview with author.

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APPENDIX A

Instrumentation

Piccolo 1 & 2
Flute 1, 2, 3, & 4
Oboe 1 & *2- *Oboe 2 optional, cues in Oboe 1
Clarinet 1, 2, 3, & 4 (Bb)
Bass Clarinet & *Contrabass Clarinet- *optional, cues in other parts
Alto Saxophone 1 & 2
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone

Trumpet 1 & 3 (Bb)
Trumpet 2 & 4 (Bb)
Horn 1 & 2 (F)
Horn 3 & 4 (F)
Trombone 1, 2, 3, & Bass
Baritone and Tuba

* Double bass (may be amplified- *optional)

Timpani
Percussion

I. Bass Drum solo- 1 player
II. Mallet Percussion- 4 players
vibraphone, marimba, wind chimes (all kinds)
III. Chimes- 1 player
IV. Bells- 1 player
V. Regular Percussion- 3 players
vibraslap, tam-tam, bass drum, snare drum, suspended cymbal (high and low)

APPENDIX B

NOTATION SYMBOLS

NOTATION SYMBOLS

Highest practical note

Lowest practical note

Open, closed hand position for Trumpet Harmon mute

In winds, a legato chromatic rip – "quasi glissando"

When final note is a grace, glissando should extend to, and lead directly into, the next beat (i.e., it should not finish too early)

Repeat first note in rhythm given

Appendix C

PERFORMING DIRECTIONS

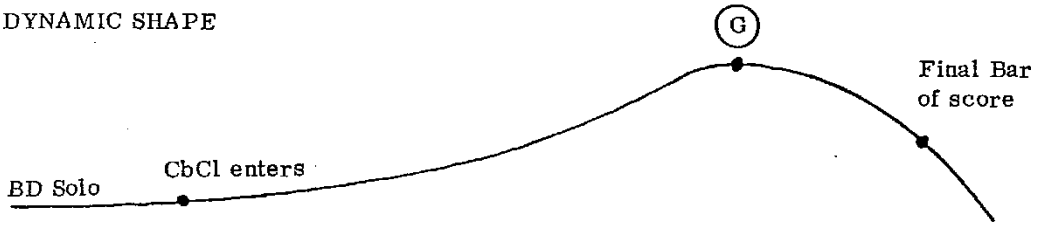
CAVE may be performed as a regular concert piece. However, it was designed to offer several unique options for its presentation.

It may be performed without a conductor and/or music and music stands. There is an independent bass drum ostinato which establishes the tempo, and the other instrumental parts are simple enough to be memorized.

The goal of such a performance, without conductor and music, is to permit the players undistracted total involvement with the sound and with each other, as musicians. It also permits deployment of players on stage in ways having greater visual interest, special lighting, and more physical movement by the players.

The Bass Drummer plays solo. This part is crucial, a pacemaker for the group. It consists of one figure $\frac{3}{8}$ ♩♩ 𝄾 , repeated throughout, and this figure establishes the tempo of the eighth note for everyone. The Bass Drum soloist begins alone, as softly as possible, and from the beginning to letter (G), leads the ensemble in a gradual crescendo which should hit the climax at (G) like a breaking wave:

DYNAMIC SHAPE



Note that the Solo Bass Drum begins before the rest of the group and continues after they all have finished. The Solo Bass Drum emerges from silence and subsides into silence. It should be remarked also that, dynamically, the climax is sustained at (G) and then relaxes rather quickly to the reflective coda.

With such a dynamic shape there is a natural tendency to accelerate. This should not be suppressed but should be organic, as would occur in a human pulse under increasing tension or exertion. The Solo Bass Drum is marked "steady, but not mechanical; like a heart-beat".

Since the Solo Bass Drum is in $\frac{3}{8}$ and the rest of the ensemble is in $\frac{4}{4}$, there will be a consistent cross rhythm, although the eighth notes will be of equal value.

It is the Contrabass Clarinet player who must establish the $\frac{4}{4}$ meter at his entrance. The player begins on any eighth note of the pattern established by the Solo Bass Drum. The exact moment of the entrance by the Contrabass Clarinet is at the player's discretion, timed for optimum dramatic effect.

The Solo Bass Drum player has been given a critical role and should be chosen carefully and given the best available instrument.

DECOR

For the most complete theatrical presentation, all players should wear sunglasses and dark clothing. Many large plants (real or artificial) are placed among the players at various levels. Copious amounts of mist can be produced by vats of hot water filled with dry ice.

The piece should begin in darkness broken only by a blue light illuminating the Contrabass Clarinet at the player's entrance. Thereafter, as each instrument or

Appendix D

Stage Directions

Start blackout

Sound of someone landing on stage.
Spotlight on cave explorer

Spotlight on Bass Drum player
- Bass drum player begins playing (Player located on balcony close to center of stage)

Measure 1
(Soft lights up on player)
- explorer stumbles upon CbCL
- Explorer runs away and starts starts exploring a new part of the stage...runs into vibraslap
(Soft lights up on player)

Letter A
- Trumpets play from front row
- Explorer runs to explore
- Flutes stand up front row in the hall and startle the explorer
- Explorer continues to stage
- Explorer continues to make his way around the stage looking for way out

Letter B (More lights on)
- clarinets appear
- Groups continue to make their way to stage
- Explorer continues to make his way around the hall looking for exit

Letter C
- Saxophones begin moving around the stage
- Oboe comes center stage pushing the explorer to the ground
- Explorer watches oboe players and becomes “hypnotized”

Letter E
Dancers Enter

Letter F
(Full lights)
- Explorer gets brought Sunglasses and an instrument (Trumpet)...begins playing
- Explorer center stage

Letter G
(Lights fade as players exit)
- People begin to back away from explorer as they fade away and disappear off-stage
- People exit stage or jump off the front of stage

Single light left on bass drummer
- bass drum fades leaving only explorer
- takes off sunglasses and squints into audience
- smiles, shrugs and jumps off the edge of stage

Lights to black

Costume Design
Black pants
Black long sleeve shirt
Sunglasses

Lighting Design
House lights in Moody Concert Hall

Video Recording
Four HD video cameras controlled by ProCat Audio and Video
- Wide shot from first balcony center
- Medium shot from first balcony center
- Stage left from first balcony on edge of stage
- Shoulder/Vest camera from second row on the floor

Video Editing
Apple MacBook Pro
iOS 10.9
iMovie 10.0.3

Appendix E

From: **Pecktackular Music** peckmusic@russellpeck.com
Subject: permission_Cave video on ProQuest
Date: April 25, 2014 at 11:14 AM
To: Adam Dalton daltonaf@gmail.com

April 25, 2014

Mr. Adam Dalton
30 Stonewater Creek Drive, apt. B
Jackson, TN 38305
770-880-8019

Dear Adam:

Regarding the video recording of *Cave* by Russell Peck that you staged, produced and directed as part of your final dissertation from the University of Alabama:

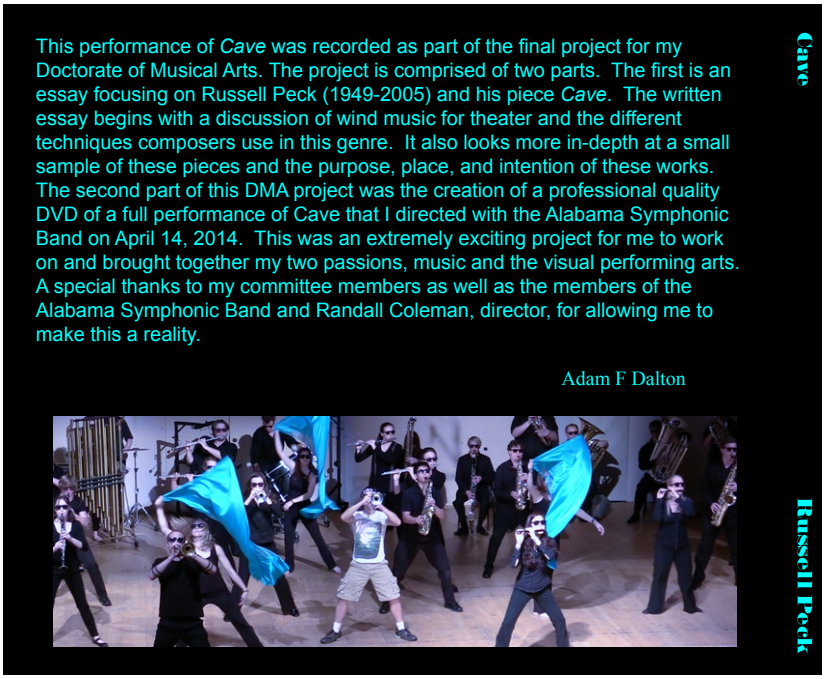
I received your request for permission to include that video recording performance by the Alabama Symphonic Band with your online DMA Manuscript on the website ProQuest.

This letter will serve as the granting of that specific permission and sync rights. This is being done with the agreement that the video recording will not be sold in any manner.

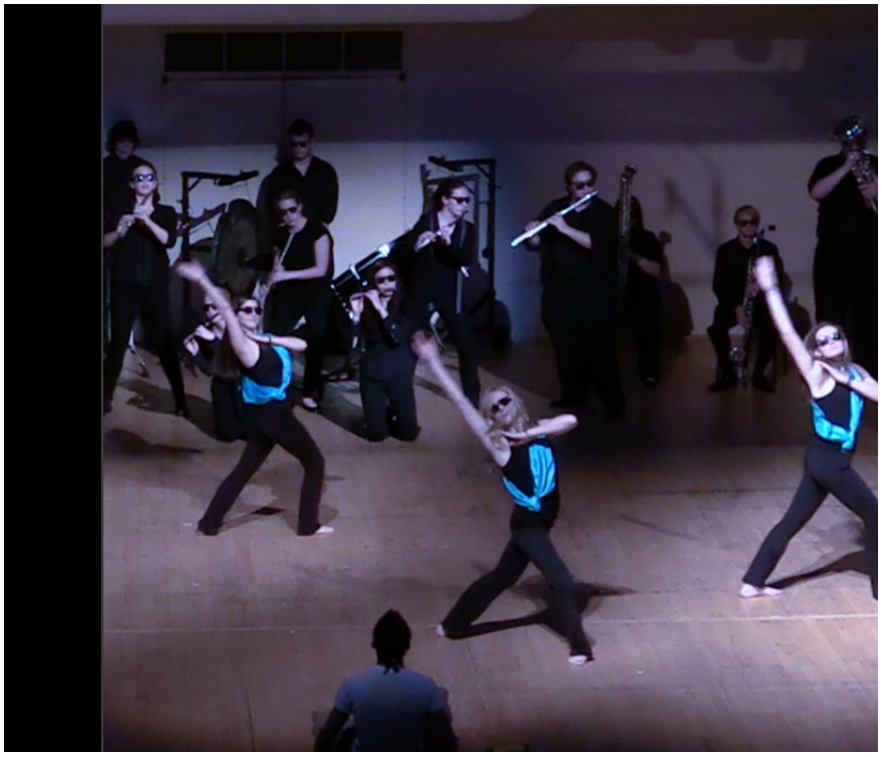
Best wishes,

Cameron Gordon Peck, Director
Pecktackular Music
3605 Brandywine Drive
Greensboro, NC 27410
336-288-7034
www.russellpeck.com

Appendix F


This performance of *Cave* was recorded as part of the final project for my Doctorate of Musical Arts. The project is comprised of two parts. The first is an essay focusing on Russell Peck (1949-2005) and his piece *Cave*. The written essay begins with a discussion of wind music for theater and the different techniques composers use in this genre. It also looks more in-depth at a small sample of these pieces and the purpose, place, and intention of these works. The second part of this DMA project was the creation of a professional quality DVD of a full performance of Cave that I directed with the Alabama Symphonic Band on April 14, 2014. This was an extremely exciting project for me to work on and brought together my two passions, music and the visual performing arts. A special thanks to my committee members as well as the members of the Alabama Symphonic Band and Randall Coleman, director, for allowing me to make this a reality.
Adam F Dalton
Cave
Russell Peck

The University of Alabama
Symphonic Band
presents
Cave
Russell Peck
Directed by
Adam Dalton



Russell Peck wrote *Cave* for Larry Livingston and the Northern Illinois University Wind Ensemble as part of an "experimental music" concert in 1978. The piece can be performed in the traditional concert band setting with the musicians sitting in chairs and reading from the music on their stands. However, Peck intended the piece to be performed with a more theatrical approach and even offers suggestions for lighting, staging, and props in his score. Peck offers the poem as inspiration:

In the cave there is no sunlight. Everyone has lost sight,
wearing sunglasses over their atrophied eyes.
Plants abound in the Cave, nourished by vapors and black light
The musicians of the Cave never read music. How could they?
All music is by feel. No one is watching. No inhibitions.
Everyone moves to the music, ensembles in unison

This performance by the Alabama Symphonic Band opens as a lone explorer arrives in a mysterious cavern. He hears the sound of a distant drum and begins to look for a way out. As he is escaping, he comes across a scary contrabass clarinet dweller. Slowly more musical cave dwellers emerge to greet the intruder. He is found by two siren-like oboe players and becomes enchanted, forgetting that he's in a dark cave. Eventually he finds an instrument of his own and joins in the musical adventure. The cave dwellers begin to retreat back into their parts of the cave. The explorer is left alone as the bass drum heartbeat fades away. He disappears into the cave, happy with his new home.

DVD

DVD

DVD

DVD