

REFERENCE RECORDINGS OF ADVANCED
FLEXIBLE-INSTRUMENTATION
LITERATURE FOR WIND BAND

by

JOSEPH F. GLAESER

RANDALL COLEMAN, COMMITTEE CHAIR
MATTHEW BOYLE
KEN OZZELLO
JOSEPH SARGENT
THEODORE TROST
JONATHAN WHITAKER

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ABSTRACT

This project comprises an album of flexible-instrumentation music for Wind Band (flex band music) and an accompanying manuscript discussing the need for this type of music in support of music education in the United States. Recordings took place at the Bryant-Jordan Hall recording studio on the campus of The University of Alabama between January 25 and February 25, 2021. The album consists of two works for flex band, each presented in three discrete mixes/instrumentations, with each part having been recorded individually to facilitate the production of multiple different final products. The manuscript discusses the benefit to directors and students of smaller instrumental ensembles in being able to hear flex band music performed by different combinations of instruments. Also included in the manuscript is a brief historical overview of the wind band and its various instrumentations focused on fostering an understanding of the necessity for flex band music, background information on the compositions and their composers as justification for their selection for this project, and biographical information on the performers.

DEDICATION

This manuscript and the associated recordings are dedicated to my parents Joe and Maureen Glaeser. Without their love, guidance, and insistence I never would have developed my passion for music which has driven me to pursue this goal. My father was an amazing man who did everything he could to provide for his family and I miss him every day. His guidance was infallible and his support and pride unmatched. My mother is one of my absolute favorite people on the planet and I am so proud of her for kicking cancer in the butt and still being here for me to talk to and enjoy her well-earned retirement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Tom Wolfe for his tireless assistance in the recording studio. He is so eager to help students learn and he selflessly gives of his time to provide a high-quality experience. I wish there were more hours in the day to spend in Bryant-Jordan with him.

I absolutely must thank the members of my committee, Dr. Matthew Boyle, Dr. Ken Ozzello, Dr. Joseph Sargent, and Dr. Jonathan Whitaker for their help and guidance in the massive undertaking that was this project. Their flexibility with changes that had to be made due to COVID-19 was unparalleled and their unwavering support was paramount to my success.

I am happy to have a platform from which I can publicly thank all those musicians and educators who have supported me in my education and career. I would especially like to thank Mr. Dennis Naughton who saw something in me at a young age and has been a champion of mine since he gave me a push to teach his band camp at North Springs High School in 2007. His fabulous wife, Mrs. Christy Naughton, was instrumental in hiring me for my first teaching job as her assistant at Northwestern Middle School, and I am forever in her debt (but I still will never say Go Cocks!). Mr. Ryan Borger and Dr. Edward Spurka worked tirelessly to form a position at Cambridge High School for me to realize my dream of moving from teaching Middle School to High School, and I cannot express my gratitude to them for putting so much faith in me. There are so many more people who have helped me become who I am, and though they did not contribute directly to this project, it would not exist without each and every one of them.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not dedicate a significant amount of space to thanking the person who has most shaped me into the musician that I am. Professor Randall Coleman, chair of my committee, is a once-in-a-lifetime friend. I am fortunate to have known him for twenty years and he has supported me in everything I have ever taken on. From not letting me quit band when braces made trumpet playing nearly impossible for me, to somehow letting me register for two band classes, AP Music Theory, and a choir class in my senior year of high school, he has done more to support my journey than anyone save my own father. After my father passed, Randall became like a surrogate, and I have been so fortunate to have him in my life every day. I have to thank him for never making me drum major in high school, instead insisting that I stay on the field and perform—just his sly way of getting me comfortable playing in front of crowds—which made all the difference in my trumpet playing career. His connections in the band world have plugged me in to a network of amazing musicians and educators upon whom I have been able to call for guidance and advice throughout the years and will for many to come. I wish him all the best in his new adventure as Director of Bands at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and simply cannot wait to see the program that he builds there!

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INTRODUCTION

The unprecedented events of the year 2020 have all but destroyed the ability to provide live and in-person rehearsals and performances of wind bands, especially at scholastic levels. Band directors across the country and the world have been challenged to find ways of musically enriching their students' lives that safely abide by federal, state, and local regulations. Some school districts have divided their school population into smaller groups, necessitating band directors to rehearse with groupings of instrumentalists that are not traditionally scored together and for which little literature may have been previously available. A group of the world's most respected composers who write for the wind band medium has risen to the challenge in a combined effort to keep music alive and available in our schools by expanding the repertoire for what is known as a flexible instrumentation ensemble or, "flex band."

The goal of this project was to create multiple renditions of two pieces scored for flex band, each rendition produced with different instrumentation, thus highlighting the truly elastic nature of the scoring and the inherent ability of the director to utilize any combination of instrumentalists. Flex band can be more than a passing trend, as this music has a place in our profession—there are many smaller, rural, or underfunded scholastic band programs which, even in the pre-COVID-19 era, did not have sufficient membership or diversity of instrumentation to facilitate the playing of repertoire scored in the typical fashion. Not only does the lack of instrumentation issue arise in these programs year-round, it also seems to occur in larger school band programs. In larger programs, there may be enough students to form one or more complete concert ensembles but also a significant number of musicians remaining who, if added to an

ensemble, would upset the balance achieved by proper distribution of instrumentalists. With the increased volume of flex band repertoire, these students can be placed in a different class and given access to quality literature.

A SELECTIVE HISTORY OF THE WIND BAND

The wind band in its most basic form—a group of wind instrument players—has existed for tens of thousands of years. For the large majority of this time, music was played on the instruments available or, once music was eventually written down, was written by court composers to fit the instrumentation of that court’s available musicians. By the 1600s it had become common for composers to be specific about notating precisely which instrument should be used for which musical line as music began to be transportable and played by different ensembles around Europe. Various instrumental ensembles moved in and out of popularity, but in 1762, under King Louis XV, a major period of change began in France. The most common ensemble of the period had been an octet comprised of two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, and two horns, funded by the local commanding officer, but the French now formed bands of 16 players—a double octet. These bands persisted until 1789 when the French National Guard band, consisting of 45 musicians, was assembled by Bernard Sarette. The following year this band expanded to 70 players.¹

The instruments in this band were set by the bandleader and did not vary according to the music being performed. This concept of a fixed instrumentation band proliferated throughout the armed forces of Europe and composers were expected to write music to fit these ensembles; thus, a repertoire of music began to be created for it. This concept arrived in the United States in 1798, when President John Adams authorized the formation of the United States Marine Band as a Fife

¹ Foster, *Wind Bands of the World*, 31.

and Drum band with a “drum major, fife major and 32 drums and fifes” through an act of Congress.² Bands became increasingly popular in the United States and the community band, a longstanding tradition in parts of Europe, developed in America out of the model of the military bands.

Community bands proliferated in the 1800s—there were over 3,000 community bands in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century comprising approximately 60,000 musicians.³ In 1825 the first professional band was formed in the United States: The Independent Band of New York. This band’s leadership was eventually overtaken by Thomas Dodworth and in 1836 he changed the instrumentation of the band from a mixed instrumentation to all brasses. Several other community bands then followed suit.⁴ Brass bands became the popular medium until the mid 1800s. In 1853 the American Brass Band was renamed the American Band of Providence, Rhode Island as it introduced woodwinds into the ensemble.⁵ Later, Patrick Gilmore took over the band of the 22nd Regiment of New York and renamed it to the “Gilmore Band,” shifting instrumentation away from brasses and toward woodwinds.⁶ This band became immensely popular and its success led other bandleaders to reintroduce woodwind instruments to their ensembles as well as raising their standards of performance and repertoire.⁷

Following the popularization of the reincorporation of woodwinds into the band, the instrumentation of community and professional bands fluctuated depending on the availability of musicians, needs of the literature, and preferences of band leaders. By the turn of the century the

² Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 8.

³ Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 8.

⁴ Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 6.

⁵ Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 7.

⁶ Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 8.

⁷ Foster, *Wind Bands of the World*, 90.

wind ensemble was introduced in America in the form of the Longy Club, established by George Longy in 1900. Longy announced his intention to create the ensemble as well as his goals with the group, saying, “I propose to give a series of public concerts in Boston, at which a number of works especially written for wind instruments will be performed ... There is no lack in the number, the variety, or the excellence of the pieces, but the difficulty in organizing a company of artists of homogeneous talent has naturally caused this form of concert to be on infrequent occurrence.”⁸ Wind bands (professional, collegiate, and community) of the 20th century would typically play transcriptions of operatic overtures, orchestral literature, and marches, so to play music written specifically for wind instruments at that time meant that Longy would have had to reorganize his ensemble’s instrumentation based on what the composer called for on each piece.

Around 1930, bandleader Edwin Franko Goldman, along with support from fellow conductors and bandsmen Frank Simon and John Philip Sousa, took up the movement to secure the wind band’s place as a popular medium with audiences and composers. They elected to do this by creating the American Bandmasters Association (ABA), an organization which is today one of the largest of its kind. The ABA’s purpose, established in early meetings of the founders was to “[further] the interests of outstanding American Band Masters, and of interesting composers, arrangers, and music publishers in Wind Band music.”

⁸ Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 10-11.

The goals set forth by the organization were:

1. Mutual Helpfulness and the promotion of better music through the instrumentality (sic) of the school.
2. To secure the adoption of a universal band instrumentation, so that band publications of all countries will be interchangeable.
3. To induce prominent composers of all countries to write for the band.
4. To establish for the concert band a higher standard of artistic excellence than has generally been maintained
5. And to do all possible to raise the standards of bands and band music.⁹

Take special note of goal number two. In 1930, there was a strong desire to standardize the instrumentation of bands so that composers would know what to write for and thus enable access to more music by more ensembles. This goal was not met, and composers continued to score for band as they saw fit. Around the 1940s pianist and composer Percy Grainger began experimenting with a new style of writing for the band. Grainger would write parts for many instruments but allow conductors the choice of which instruments were to be used. He called this “elastic scoring” and said that it allowed his music to be accessible to a wider range of school bands and orchestras.¹⁰ This, unfortunately, was not a trend that caught on with other composers of the time. In fact, it took nearly another half-century before the wind band began to see music written for variable instrumentation.

Advocates for the band medium, such as the members of the ABA, encouraged composers to write music expressly for the band to add to its repertoire of original literature and increase the perception that the band was a medium worth taking seriously. This movement was joined in 1952 by Frederick Fennell and his new project for the Eastman School of Music, the Eastman Wind Ensemble. Not only did Fennell join the chorus of voices advocating for

⁹ Foster, *Wind Bands of the World*, 138-39.

¹⁰ Glaeser, "The Music of Percy Grainger," 45.

additional and higher quality repertoire written exclusively for the band, seeking out popular and highly regarded composers and personally asking or commissioning them to write for his group, he joined the debate about instrumentation simply with the instrumentation he used to create his ensemble. In 1960, yet another band organization, the College Band Directors National Association held a two-day conference in New York to discuss the growing issue of forming a standard band instrumentation.¹¹ They apparently agreed upon a band of 72 members, but years later the president of the organization said,

“The resulting band of seventy-two pieces had not only never existed, but not a single piece of music had ever been written for it ... As a consequence, band scores today, at least an increasing number of them, original works and transcriptions alike, are much more varied and interesting, simply because the composer or arranger is not shackled by an imposed instrumentation, but instead he can feel free to write for an instrumentation that will present his musical ideas the most effectively.”¹²

Arrival at Current Instrumentation Practices

There are currently two fairly standard groupings of instrumentation used when forming a wind band: the Wind Ensemble and the Symphonic Band. The Wind Ensemble is modeled after the Eastman Wind Ensemble, and the Symphonic Band is modeled after the collegiate symphony bands of the 1940s–1950s, though they are typically not so large. These early Symphonic Bands are exactly what the name implies: a wind band version of the Symphony Orchestra. The instrumental forces used were meant to mimic the large string sections as well as the full complement of wind players found in a large orchestra. A typical Symphonic or Symphony Band’s instrumentation can be exemplified by that of the Michigan Band in the early 1940s. This ensemble regularly numbered one hundred musicians, divided as shown in Table 1, below. This

¹¹ Whitwell and Ostling, *The College and University Band*, 69.

¹² Whitwell and Ostling, *The College and University Band*, 70.

was not the case for the Eastman Wind Ensemble. Fennell stated in the April 1987 issue of *The Instrumentalist* that his idea for the ensemble’s instrumentation came from “...the basic format of the British military band ... increasing it to allow for triples among the reeds required for Stravinsky’s *Symphonies*, each player would be the soloist his private teacher always taught him to be ... we would sit in the straight rows of orchestral seating ... I wanted a carefully-balanced instrumentation capable of performing styles from the 16th century and moderate-sized chamber music to Paul Hindemith’s new *Symphony in B-flat*.”¹³ Fennell’s instrumentation is reproduced in Table 2.

Woodwinds

8 to 10 flutes
 3 to 4 oboes (English horn)
 24 to 28 Bb clarinets
 3 alto clarinets
 3 bass clarinets
 3 to 4 bassoons
 5 to 6 saxophones (alto, tenor and baritone)

Brass, Strings, Percussion

6 to 8 cornets
 2 trumpets
 6 to 8 French horns
 4 baritones or euphoniums
 6 trombones
 6 tubas
 2 string basses
 1 or 2 harps
 4 to 6 percussion

Table 1: University of Michigan Band Instrumentation, 1940s

¹³ Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 64.

Reeds

2 flutes and piccolo and/or alto flute
 2 oboes and English horn
 2 bassoons and contrabassoon
 1 E-flat clarinet
 8 B-flat clarinets or A clarinets (divided as demanded by composers)
 1 E-flat alto clarinet
 1 B-flat bass clarinet
 2 alto saxophones
 1 tenor saxophone
 1 baritone saxophone

Brass, Strings, Percussion

3 cornets in B-flat or 5 trumpets in B-flat
 2 trumpets in B-flat
 4 horns
 3 trombones
 2 euphoniums
 1 E-flat tuba
 1 BB-flat and 2 BB-flat tubas if desired
 Other instruments—percussion, harp, celesta, piano, organ, harpsichord, solo string instruments and choral forces if desired
 1 string bass

Table 2: Eastman Wind Ensemble Instrumentation, 1952

The Wind Ensemble typically employs more performers than are used for most pieces, only utilizing one performer per part with limited exceptions. These exceptions commonly include the flute (doubled or sometimes tripled), clarinet (frequently tripling the sopranos and doubling the basses), euphonium (doubled), and tuba (doubled). Aside from these instruments, those not called for on a given piece are typically dismissed from the stage. Oboe (including English Horn), Bassoon (Contrabassoon), so-called “specialty clarinets” (Sopranino, Alto, Contra-Alto, and Contra-Bass), Trumpet (Cornet, Flugelhorn), Trombone, and Percussion are the sections with their numbers most often in flux, with some pieces having more parts for these instruments than others, and other pieces not having parts for some of these instruments at all. The generally accepted justification behind this practice is simple: if the composer wished to have more of a given instrument, they would have written more parts for it. This stems from the roots of the wind band as an ad. hoc group assembled and arranged by the requirements of the music to be performed.

Development of the Public-School Band

In the midst of all of the instrumentation-shifts that were taking place with bands in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries the public-school band came into being. By the 1920s the existence of bands was commonplace in public schools—both secondary and post-secondary—in the form of marching bands and concert bands, though there was great variation in all of these entities. In the 1940s the National High School Band Association (NHSBA) had established some recommendations for instrumentation of a high school band based upon the size of the school. For the 1943 NHSBA Competition these recommended instrumentations ranged from 68 to 80 players.¹⁴

Modern school bands, like all bands in the United States, have no standard instrumentation, though there are some accepted standards. Excluding the most basic literature for beginners, composers who write for band are expected to provide parts for the following instrument families: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion. The number of parts written per instrument varies widely as well as the inclusion of other instruments such as Piccolo, Contrabassoon, and Bass Clarinet. Due to this wide variation and the nature of a school's scheduling, the model of the rotating Wind Ensemble is rarely followed in public schools; rather, a director sets an instrumentation for their class and everyone plays on every piece, doubling as necessary so that all students are engaged in rehearsal no matter the piece being played. The instrumentation set by the director is at their discretion, with many schools' top-performing groups closely mirroring the preferred instrumentation of Frederick Fennell for the Eastman Wind Ensemble.

¹⁴ Goldman, *The Concert Band*, vol 1, 91-94.

Many public schools have multiple bands; often this is a decision of the director based on three primary concerns: scheduling and grade level, skill level of performers, and maximum ensemble size (dictated by rehearsal space, performance space, available equipment, or simply the preference of the director). Bands are thus often divided by skill level, allowing the director to select music which is more ability-level appropriate for more students by placing the most talented students together in a band which performs more challenging literature and the less-advanced students into a group which performs less challenging literature. The existence of a lower ability-level group can allow students a chance to learn more advanced concepts while still maintaining a level of achievement which encourages them to continue, rather than attempting to perform literature which is too challenging. Conversely, performing literature which is easy enough to allow success by the less-advanced players is frustrating for the most talented players when they are able to master the music long before their peers.

WHAT IS FLEX BAND?

Origin

Simply put, flex band music is music written in such a way that the instrumentation of the ensemble is flexible. A composer might write only four distinct parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) but provide transpositions of these parts so that they are playable on a number of different instruments in various keys, clefs, and octaves. In this way, a piece, depending on the arrangement, can be performed with a minimum number of players (usually 4–8) or adjusted by means of doubling to whatever number of players is available.

Wind band music is typically classified into grades 1–6 based roughly on years of study required of the musicians before a piece is appropriate for them to play. For example, a Grade 2 piece would likely be appropriate for 7th graders who started band in the 6th grade. Flex band music existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic but has historically been geared toward the earliest stages of beginning band courses. There does not appear to be any reliable information regarding the initial creation of flex band music, but the popularly held belief is that this literature was first developed to fit the model of early instrumental music education common throughout the United States. In this model, students start in more homogenous classes which diversify in instrumentation over time as new instruments are added. For example, a beginning band program would have a class dedicated to woodwind instruments in which students are limited to Flute, Bb Soprano Clarinet, and Eb Alto Saxophone for a time period ranging from several weeks to a semester. As time goes on, some students would transition to studying other woodwind instruments like Oboe, Bassoon, Tenor Saxophone, or Baritone Saxophone.

Eventually this woodwind class would combine with a brass and percussion class, allowing it to become a fully formed wind band. Having flex band music enables classes like this to study and perform music which is harmonically complete regardless of the instrumentation present at a given time.

COVID-19 Surge

Most flex band music available from top national music retailer JW Pepper, for example, appears to fall into grades 0-3. Table 3 shows the breakdown of flex band music distribution as of April 1, 2021.¹⁵

Publishers' Difficulty (Approximate Grade Level)	Number of Flex Band Pieces Available
Beginning (Grade 0.5)	8
Very Easy (Grade 1)	36
Easy (Grade 2)	110
Medium Easy (Grade 3)	212
Medium (Grade 4)	49
Medium Advanced (Grade 5)	7
Advanced (Grade 6)	2

Table 3: Flex Band Music Available from J.W. Pepper

This imbalance of literature written or arranged for flex band is already improved from what it was before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2020. Efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus resulted in limiting the number of musicians allowed to occupy a rehearsal or performance space. These limitations were based on factors such as room size, social distancing, air exchange rates, and newly adopted rotating or split class schedules. A number of school districts throughout the country moved to a model where students did not attend school in person every day, but instead alternated between attending in person and attending virtually (either synchronously or asynchronously). Often, these student groupings did not take into

¹⁵ "Flexible / Adaptable Instrumentation Sheet Music at Jw Pepper."

consideration the instrumentation that would be present at the school for band class on a given day. Many band directors had to scramble to find repertoire that their students could play in these small, non-traditional instrument groups, only to find that very few pieces existed. This void resulted in a call-to-action for wind band composers.

In April of 2020 composer Frank Ticheli received a phone call from conductor Allan McMurray in which the latter expressed his concern that there was not music available for teachers to use if the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of musicians able to be present in the classroom. Ticheli agreed and enlisted the help of conductor Robert Ambrose, and together they formed the Creative Repertoire Initiative (CRI).¹⁶ The two worked together calling on composers to join their effort to provide teachers with music which would be accessible by ensembles of varying instrumental composition. The composers they contacted “jumped on board immediately, offering their time and talents without understanding fully what they were getting themselves into; they just wanted to help.”¹⁷

The group “settled on a two-fold mission: (1) to create “adaptable” pieces, either arrangements of current works or new compositions, that could be performed in virtually any situation, and (2) to inspire, empower, guide, and amplify the voices of other composers who wished to do the same.”¹⁸

Members of the CRI include: Robert Ambrose, Brian Balmages, Steven Bryant, Michael Daugherty, Julie Giroux, Jennifer Jolley, John Mackey, Pete Meechan, Alex Shapiro, Frank Ticheli, Omar Thomas, and Eric Whitacre.¹⁹ The group has a webpage and a Facebook group

¹⁶ Ticheli, "The Creative Repertoire Initiative," 14.

¹⁷ Ticheli, "The Creative Repertoire Initiative," 14.

¹⁸ Ticheli, "The Creative Repertoire Initiative," 15.

¹⁹ Ticheli, "The Creative Repertoire Initiative," 17.

which, at the time of writing, had more than 5,500 members. These highly reputable composers have contributed resources to aid others in the creation of this type of repertoire and given a platform to all composers where newly released adaptable works can be shared.

The possible uses for this type of music are vast in number and are certainly not constrained to the unprecedented circumstances of 2020 and 2021. Ticheli offers, “While the COVID-19 pandemic served as the catalyst for the immediate creation of adaptable music, we recognize that the very same music may well serve a vital purpose long after the pandemic has passed. Small instrumental music programs, college and university conducting classes, and anyone looking for ways to supplement mainstream large ensemble music may find adaptable music a welcome resource.”²⁰ Indeed, the CRI has met its goal of creating a catalogue of music in adaptable formats; the CRI page of the Wind Repertory Project²¹ lists over 175 titles that have been created as part of the initiative. Hopefully, composers will continue to release new high-quality music in adaptable or flex formats to benefit students for generations to come.

²⁰ Ticheli, "The Creative Repertoire Initiative," 16.

²¹ "Initiatives: Creative Repertoire Initiative."

JUSTIFICATION & METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT

Flex Band Music and Variable Recordings

Reference recordings of flex band music in a variety of instrumentations are an exceedingly rare and exceptionally valuable tool for educators. Historically, flex band pieces have been written at such a low degree of difficulty that the only groups to perform them are comprised of beginners and so there is a lack of high-quality performance recordings from real-world scenarios. On average, there is but a single reference recording of each flex band piece, distributed by the publisher and which is, with an unfortunate frequency, a MIDI realization of the score rather than a performance by live musicians. High quality reference recordings can be helpful for educators in the process of learning a score, allowing them to hear all parts performed accurately and aiding them in making decisions about tempo, balance, and timbre. This is even more true in flex band music than in fixed-instrumentation pieces as any number of instruments could be performing a given part at once, thereby drastically changing the listening environment for the band director. This increases the difficulty of error-detection, a critical part of the rehearsal process and one which is truly necessary to help students grow and develop their skills as instrumentalists.

These reference recordings can be just as useful to students as they are to educators. Students of all levels can benefit from hearing their music performed accurately whether it is as a play-along track for at-home practice or a high-quality concert performance by an exceptionally talented group of musicians from which a more advanced player can learn nuance of phrasing, style, and articulation. Having varied recordings of the same piece allows a greater diversity of

instruments to be heard on each part which, in turn, helps student musicians to hear their instrument model the proper execution of the performance practice which is being asked of them.

Composers & Pieces Chosen

Johannes Hanssen—Valdres

Johannes Hanssen was a Norwegian musician who lived from 1874-1967.²² He joined the Oslo military band (brigademusikken) as a tenor horn player in 1900 and remained until 1926 when he became conductor of the band. He served as the conductor of the ensemble until 1946, except for a break during the Second World War.²³ Hanssen also played the double bass for the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the National Theatre in Oslo, and other orchestras. He was, in the first half of the 20th century, “one of Norway’s most active and influential bandmasters, composers, and teachers.”²⁴ He was recognized for his talents with the King’s Order of Merit in Gold as well as King Haakon VIII’s Jubilee Medal.²⁵ In addition to his performing career, Hanssen was an educator who taught conducting and music theory, writing two textbooks on music.²⁶ Surprising given the fame and popularity of his music, very little information on the composer is available.

Hanssen’s most famous piece, *Valdres (Valdres marsj)*, was also his first composition. He completed it in 1904 and it was performed by his regiment band, with the composer performing on tenor horn. Notably, Valdres is a region in the South of Norway, situated between Oslo and Bergen and the piece is so named because the opening theme (played by clarinet,

²² "Johannes Hanssen- Bio, Albums, Pictures Naxos Classical Music."

²³ "Valdres Marsj."

²⁴ Smith, *March Music Notes*, 183.

²⁵ Stehle, "Hanssen Program Notes."

²⁶ Smith, *March Music Notes*, 185.

cornet, or trumpet)²⁷ is the traditional bugle call of the Valdres Battalion, originally a medieval tune played on a traditional Scandinavian horn called the Lur. The second theme is a Norwegian folk tune traditionally played on Hardanger Fiddle (similar to a violin), and the trio is in the style of a traditional Norwegian folk tune over a Norwegian drone bass.²⁸

Hanssen revisited the piece several times throughout his lifetime, making new arrangements for orchestra, brass band, and a revised wind band version in 1954.²⁹ Late in life, Hanssen is said to have written the following about *Valdres*³⁰,

“I think the beautiful signal of the Valdres battalion, upon which the march has been written, invites to a joyfull (sic) march including what we call typical Norwegian melodies and rythms (sic). I state with satisfaction that the Valdres march has been accepted both by the choosy music critics of Oslo as well as by the ‘boys in the street’, who whistle it whenever I pass along. It has given me a lot of pleasure, that to a certain degree is overshadowed by the fact that I never since, in my long life, have succeeded in writing something better than this, my first attempt as a composer.”³¹

The piece has been performed and recorded all over the world and is considered by many to be one of the greatest marches of all time, as evidenced by its inclusion as one of only ten pieces selected for the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops’ 1964 album *The World’s Greatest Marches*.³² The piece appears on nearly one hundred albums available in the Naxos and Discogs catalogues—a true testament to its popularity.³³ The adaptable arrangement performed on this album was created by composer and arranger James Curnow.

²⁷ "Valdresmarsj | Johannes Hanssen / Arr. John Philip Hannevik - Orchestra Noten & Partituren - Hebu Musikverlag Gmbh."

²⁸ "Valdres Marsj."; Smith, *March Music Notes*.

²⁹ "Valdresmarsj | Johannes Hanssen / Arr. John Philip Hannevik - Orchestra Noten & Partituren - Hebu Musikverlag Gmbh."

³⁰ The source for this information cannot be verified, but so little information on Hanssen and his music is available, the author thought it pertinent to include, nonetheless.

³¹ "Valdres Marsj."

³² "The World's Greatest Marches."

³³ Figures available through website searches at Naxos.com and Discogs.com

Julie Giroux—Our Cast Aways

Julie Giroux is a Massachusetts native, lifelong composer, and 1984 graduate of Louisiana State University. Her first piano lessons were at 3 and shortly thereafter, at age 8, she began her career as a composer with her first published work for concert band appearing at age 13. Upon graduation from LSU, she left the band world to compose for television and film, working with legends such as Bill Conti, Martin Scorsese, Madonna, Celine Dion, and more. Giroux has been prolific in the field of commercial music, earning such accolades as several Emmy awards, as well as Oscar, Grammy, and Golden Globe award nominations. Giroux was the first woman and youngest person ever to win the Emmy for “Outstanding Individual Achievement in Music Direction.” She eventually made a return to the concert band world and her works for the concert band medium are highly received and often programmed by elite ensembles the world over. She is regularly sought after for clinics and commissions. Her professional associations include ASCAP, The Film Musicians Fund, Kappa Kappa Psi, Tau Beta Sigma, and the American Bandmasters Association.³⁴

Our Cast Aways was originally composed for wind band in 2018 but was reorchestrated for flex band in 2020. The title refers to rescue animals—those who have been cast away by society—and is dedicated to “Those who rescue, Those who get rescued, and especially for Those whose rescue never comes.”³⁵ Ms. Giroux writes “This work is dedicated to all those who work hard in the fight to end puppy mills, to rescue suffering pets and to provide care and medical attention to all those rescued. It is dedicated to those companions who get rescued and

³⁴ Giroux, "Julie Giroux Biography."

³⁵ Giroux, "Our Cast Aways," (2020), Music Score.

for those whose rescue never comes.”³⁶ The piece was commissioned by the Bednarcik, Plank, Murphy, Thompson, and Traughber Junior High School Bands of School District #308, Oswego, Illinois, Rachel Maxwell, Coordinator. The original is scored for 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 3 Soprano Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, 2 Alto Saxophones, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, 3 Trumpets, 4 Horns in F, 3 Trombones, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion.

³⁶ Giroux, "Our Cast Aways."

MAKING THE RECORDINGS

As with many things in 2020 and 2021, the process of recording this album was atypical. Normally the conductor would assemble the performers for one or several rehearsals before gathering together in a studio space to record over the course of a day. COVID-19 protocols eliminated the possibility of gathering musicians together indoors, thus, a plan was made to record each performer individually. This necessity shaped the direction of the project in so much that fewer performers were required in order to record all of the parts; for example, a single clarinet player recorded two parts which are heard simultaneously rather than two players being required for a full-ensemble recording session. Recording sessions took place in the isolation booth of the Bryant-Jordan Hall recording studio on the campus of The University of Alabama under the supervision and tutelage of Professor of Musical Audio Engineering Tom Wolfe.

Tracks were recorded and mixed digitally in Logic Pro X on a Mac Pro. This Digital Audio Workstation was chosen over AVID Pro Tools because of the ease of use in situations requiring video. A video of the conductor was deemed necessary due to the extreme variability in tempo of Julie Giroux's *Our Cast Aways*, as a click track would not have provided enough information for the performers to accurately perform the rubato requested. This video was displayed on a monitor in the studio while performers recorded their parts to help achieve uniformity of tempo throughout the many fluctuations in the score. The microphone of choice for the project was a Røde Classic with tube amplifier, yielding warmth and presence through all registers of each instrument.

Each performer was asked to record all (or nearly all) of the parts on each piece which are performable on their instrument. In some cases this was only one part, but in others, like percussion, this was over ten parts between the two pieces. This wide range of individual tracks gave maximum flexibility in final scoring choices by the conductor during production, resulting in the ability to create the three discrete versions of each piece from a single recording.

INSTRUMENTATION AND PERFORMERS

Tables 4 and 5 indicate the instrumentation used and the performers recruited to the recording project. Not all instruments written for by the composers were available and not all parts recorded were used in the final mixes.

Part/Instrument	Performer	Highest Music Degree Earned or In-Progress
Soprano		
Flute	Alanna Bradley	BS Music Education
Oboe	Georgia Nelson	BM Oboe Performance
Clarinet	Jessi White	BS Music Education
Trumpet	Spence Howell	DMA Trumpet Performance
Alto		
Clarinet	Jessi White	BS Music Education
Alto Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Trumpet	Spence Howell	DMA Trumpet Performance
Tenor		
Clarinet	Jessi White	BS Music Education
Alto Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Tenor Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Horn	Matt Meadows	MM Horn Performance
Baritone		
Bassoon	JT Holdbrooks	BM Bassoon Performance
Tenor Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Horn	Matt Meadows	MM Horn Performance
Trombone	Stephen Whimple	DMA Trombone Performance
Euphonium	Aaron Easdon	BS Music Education
Bass		
Bassoon	JT Holdbrooks	BM Bassoon Performance
Baritone Saxophone	Grey Vandeberg	BM Saxophone Performance
Trombone	Stephen Whimple	DMA Trombone Performance
Tuba	Tom Yan	DMA Tuba Performance
Percussion		
All Percussion	Nathan Rearick	MM Percussion Performance

Table 4: Instrumentation for Valdres by Johannes Hanssen

Part/Instrument	Performer	Highest Music Degree Earned or In-Progress
Soprano 1		
Flute	Alanna Bradley	BS Music Education
Oboe	Georgia Nelson	BM Oboe Performance
Clarinet	Jessi White	BS Music Education
Soprano Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Trumpet	Spence Howell	DMA Trumpet Performance
Soprano 2		
Flute	Alanna Bradley	BS Music Education
Oboe	Georgia Nelson	BM Oboe Performance
Clarinet	Jessi White	BS Music Education
Trumpet	Spence Howell	DMA Trumpet Performance
Alto 1		
Alto Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Trumpet	Spence Howell	DMA Trumpet Performance
Horn	Matt Meadows	MM Horn Performance
Alto 2		
Alto Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Trumpet	Spence Howell	DMA Trumpet Performance
Horn	Matt Meadows	MM Horn Performance
Tenor		
Bassoon	JT Holdbrooks	BM Bassoon Performance
Tenor Saxophone	Blake Adams	BM Saxophone Performance
Trombone	Stephen Whimble	DMA Trombone Performance
Euphonium	Aaron Easdon	BS Music Education
Baritone		
Bassoon	JT Holdbrooks	BM Bassoon Performance
Baritone Saxophone	Grey Vandeberg	BM Saxophone Performance
Trombone	Stephen Whimble	DMA Trombone Performance
Euphonium	Aaron Easdon	BS Music Education
Bass		
Contrabassoon	Matthew Huff	DMA Bassoon Performance
Baritone Saxophone	Grey Vandeberg	BM Saxophone Performance
Tuba	Tom Yan	DMA Tuba Performance
Percussion		
All Percussion	Nathan Rearick	MM Percussion Performance

Table 5: Instrumentation for Our Cast Aways by Julie Giroux

CONCLUSION

The primary function of this project is to provide directors and students with a reference recording for two significant pieces of wind band repertoire as scored for and performed by flex band. Another purpose is to promote the continued publication of high-quality literature in this format long after the eventual end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional benefit might be derived from a breakdown of this process from the point of view of the conductor as ensemble director. The following paragraphs will highlight lessons learned through this process as well as give insight to the decision-making process which ultimately led to the recordings presented on the album.

Initially, this project was intended to be recorded in a group setting rather than recording individual parts in a studio isolation booth. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 mitigation protocols in place at The University of Alabama for the 2020-2021 school year prevented this ensemble recording approach from being used. I find that recording individual musicians for an ensemble piece becomes increasingly difficult with each subsequent part that is recorded. Aligning the performances to a single tempo is not an easy task, nor is it possible for those who have already recorded to adjust their intonation as further parts are added. Of course, digital manipulation of tempo and pitch is possible, but this reduces the musical integrity of the project while also becomes increasingly evident as more digitally manipulated parts are layered on top of one another.

Overall, having individuals perform their parts in isolation in a studio was significantly more difficult than a typical ensemble recording where all musicians are present at the same

time. This sentiment has been echoed by band directors across the country throughout the duration of the 2020-2021 school year as they have attempted to put together performances while in online, hybrid, or other non-traditional rehearsal settings. Not only was the overall methodology of the project disrupted by the pandemic, but personnel and instrumentation within the studio model were affected as well. There are no specialty clarinets on this recording (bass clarinet, contra-alto clarinet, etc.) due to the lack of availability of the players to whom those instruments are currently assigned. Normally, those instruments are shared among the studio, but during COVID-19 the protocol is that only one person may play an instrument until it is professionally disinfected at the end of the semester.

Luckily, thanks to the nature of flex band music, I was able to compensate for the lack of the low clarinets by using the other available instruments on those tenor, baritone, and bass parts where the low clarinets would have been utilized. The final mixes were adjusted to allow woodwind timbres to be heard despite the lack of the low clarinets by boosting the low saxophones and bassoons. My personal affinity for the low clarinet sound and timbre means that I would prefer to have the clarinet family more present in the recording; nevertheless, it works well and is a complete realization of the score even without these instruments.

I think that under normal circumstances, where all musicians can rehearse and perform together, band directors will find that they enjoy programming flex band repertoire with their ensembles. It increases the opportunity for the director's artistic choices to affect the final product, allowing them to decide timbres, density of the texture, and sometimes where to assign a solo line in addition to the conductor's usual decisions regarding tempo, volume, and style. Flex band literature also, as mentioned previously, makes a wider array of literature available to a larger group of musicians, and students and directors alike will benefit from this increased

exposure to quality literature. Students will also benefit from the increased responsibility of playing in smaller groups, assuming that sometimes they may be the only person or one of few playing a part at a given time.

I hope that the recordings will be of use to other members of the profession in making decisions about programming these works and how they can choose to perform them, and I hope that I may lend my experience to future students as they work to hone their musical decision making.

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