

*THE
AMERICAN
BRASS QUINTET*

Raymond Mase, Trumpet

Kevin Cobb, Trumpet

David Wakefield, Horn

Michael Powell, Trombone

John D. Rojak, Bass Trombone

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Elizabethan Ayres

Fyer, Fyer!

*Good morrow, fair ladies
of the May*

Gaude Maria virgo

When lo, by breake of morning;

I follow lo the footing

Thomas Morley

(1557-1602)

(edited by Raymond Mase)

Quinteto Concertante (1990)

Chóte

Scherzo

Seresta

Rondó

Oswaldo Lacerda

(b. 1927)

Brass Quintet (1998)

Anders Hillborg

(b. 1954)

INTERMISSION

Entrance (2004)

David Sampson

(b. 1951)

Chansons

En l'ombre d'ung buissonet

El grillo

Plaine de dueil

De tous biens playne

Kanon; N'esse pas ung grant deplaisir

Josquin des Prés

(c.1440-1521)

Copperwave (2006)

Joan Tower

(b. 1938)

(edited by Raymond Mase)



*The American Brass Quintet is supported, in part, by the National Endowment
for the Arts and the American Brass Chamber Music Association, Inc.*

*The American Brass Quintet appears by arrangement with Stanton Manage-
ment, 45-05 Newtown Road, Astoria, NY 11103, www.StantonMgt.com*

Elizabethan Ayres Thomas Morley

*A Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and student of William Byrd, Thomas Morley was one of the most esteemed musicians of his day. He was organist at St. Paul's Cathedral in London and active in nearly every genre of English music. Morley was instrumental in the popularity of the Italian madrigal in England at this time, and during the 1590s, published numerous volumes of his own works and those of Italian madrigalists. In 1601 he compiled and published **The Triumphs of Oriana**, a collection of twenty-six madrigals by the most illustrious English composers in tribute to Queen Elizabeth I.*

*Morley's **Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke** (1597) and **Consort Lessons** (1599) are considered the best sources of information about sixteenth-century musical composition and performance practice. In his **Consort Lessons**, Morley illustrates the techniques of adapting vocal models for instrumental performance as was commonly done in this period. While best known for his light madrigals and canzonets like **Fyer, Fyer!** and **Good morrow, fair ladies of the May**, Morley's five-part motet **Gaude Maria virgo** shows him in complete command of a more serious, weighty style.*

– Note by Raymond Mase

Quinteto Concertante Osvaldo Lacerda

Osvaldo Lacerda graduated from the Carlos Gomez Conservatory of Music in 1960 with studies in piano, harmony, and composition with Camargo Guarneri. In 1963, he received a Guggenheim Foundation grant to study in the U.S. for a year, where he studied composition with Vittorio Giannini and Aaron Copland. He is founder and Artistic Director of three musical societies in São Paulo, and has won many national composition prizes. Lacerda acknowledges the influence of the work of Brazilian musicologist Mario de Andrade. In addition, he shares a basic philosophy with Ralph Vaughan Williams; their music is written in a national idiom intended to be universally understood. Lacerda's music attempts to capture the essence of Brazil's musical soul through the incorporation of its folk and popular music into his own. The composer writes:

*I had already written a brass quintet in 1977, **Fantasia e Rondó**, which was very well received and performed by brass performers, including the American Brass Quintet, that played its premiere in the Inter-American Music Festival in Washington, D.C., on April 27, 1980. So, in 1990, I decided to compose another brass quintet. Suddenly I had an inspiration: why not a concertante one, with few counterpoints but with beautiful solo melodies, accompanied by good rhythms and harmonies? Thus this work was born.*

It has the following four movements:

- (1) **Chóte** (= Schottisch) is a Central-European dance that came to Brazil in the nineteenth century. Here it acquired some musical characteristics that make it different from its European model. It is still danced in some parts of this country. The trombone is the soloist.*
- (2) **Scherzo** explores one of the many features of the French horn – the vigor.*
- (3) **Seresta** is a Brazilian serenade that tries to make the bass trombone really sing...*
- (4) **Rondó** in an animated tempo, with the two trumpets recalling some features of the beautiful music of our Northeast.*

*The first performance of **Quinteto Concertante** was by Quinteto de Metais de São Paulo on October 24, 1991, in Rio de Janeiro.*

Brass Quintet Anders Hillborg

Anders Hillborg has shown often that he has an extraordinary imagination when it comes to producing new sounds from traditional instruments. His **Brass Quintet**, commissioned by the Swedish Concert Institute for the Stockholm Chamber Brass in 1998, manages to offer some wonderfully novel sounds while it also projects the lively energy and physicality that we often associate with music for any sort of brass ensemble. This eight-minute work in a single movement begins with a cascade of minor thirds, the tiniest possible motivic fragment, tossed at a breathtaking pace from one instrument to another, soloistically or in small pairings. The minor third – one of the most familiar intervals in music – helps keep the piece feeling basically tonal, in spite of the unusual sonorities and harmonies that do appear in its course. Regarding the work, Hillborg has written:

As in most of my more recent pieces, the pulsative element is prominent; the music “ticks” and pulsates and the rubato of classical music is foreign to it. The piece has two principal moods: one is a rhythmically vital structure in which brief fragments are thrown out and echo between the instruments in fiery, pulsative explosions, while the other is a calm, completely accentless stream with no audible rhythm. Apart from a number of cluster-like passages, the harmony is clearly influenced by tonality and the piece ebbs out in a dreamlike chorale.

Perhaps the most striking sound in the work occurs when Hillborg asks his players to “perform backwards” – to play the wind instruments in such a way as if to sound like a tape running in the wrong direction. In such a situation, the “ping” of the attacked note, which normally is rather sharp, then dies away on the breath, comes at the end, while the breathy after-glow of the sound begins it, grows in intensity, and ends with a sharp attack. This approach, contrary to normal performance technique and sounding more like an electronic manipulation, requires a high degree of virtuosity to bring off. The very playful opening sets the mood for the piece and acts as a touchstone in measuring and reacting to other elements that come along later, especially the relaxed *träumerei* of the close.

– Note by Steven Ledbetter

Entrance David Sampson

Entrance is a concise minute and a half composition that was written in the spring of 2004 as a gift to the American Brass Quintet to honor our fruitful collaboration over the past twenty years. Beginning with a pleasant introduction reminiscent of Collier Jones, each instrument is given a bow. This civility shortly gives way to comic exuberance. After nearly losing control, the piece rights itself with a final flourish.

David Sampson is currently Composer-in-Residence of the Colonial Symphony Orchestra. Recent major commissions and premieres have included the National Symphony Orchestra, Memphis Symphony, Barlow Endowment, New Jersey Symphony, Bergen Foundation, Princeton Pro Musica, Chicago Chamber Musicians, American Composers Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, Chamber Music America, Pew Charitable Trust, National Endowment for the Arts, New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and the American Brass Quintet.

David Sampson, recipient of the 1999 Goddard Lieberman Fellowship awarded by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Jerome Foundation, Cary Trust, and the Dodge Foundation, among

others. He holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, Hunter College, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Ecoles d'Art Americaines, where his teachers included Karel Husa, Henri Dutilleux, and John Corigliano in composition; and Gerard Schwarz, Gilbert Johnson, Robert Nagel, and Raymond Mase in trumpet. His music is published by Editions Bim, Cantate Music Press, and Concordia Publishing House.

Chansons Josquin des Prés

Few musicians have enjoyed more stature in their lifetimes or had a more lasting influence on those who followed than Josquin des Prés, who is often regarded as the most important composer of the High Renaissance. He was hailed by contemporaries as "the best of the composers of our time" and by Martin Luther with "He is master of the notes; others are mastered by them." Josquin's *chansons* are masterful in counterpoint and variety of spirit – from the light-hearted *El grillo* (The Cricket), to *Plaine de dueil* (filled with grief) and stand as some of the earliest music the American Brass Quintet has adapted for modern performance. Interestingly, Josquin's output of twenty masses, one hundred motets, and seventy-five secular pieces was long forgotten until he was rediscovered by the music historian Burney in the late eighteenth century. Josquin's *Chansons* are recorded by the American Brass Quintet on their fortieth anniversary compact disc *American Brass Quintessence* (Summit DCD 263).

– Note by Raymond Mase

Copperwave Joan Tower

Known and admired for her bold and energetic music, Joan Tower is one of America's most successful and best-known composers of concert music. Her first orchestral work, *Sequoia*, has remained in the repertoire, with performances by the orchestras of Saint Louis, New York, San Francisco, Minnesota, Tokyo NHK, and Toronto, as well as the National Symphony and London's Philharmonia. Joan Tower's tremendously popular five *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* have been played by more than 400 different ensembles. Since 1972 Tower has taught at Bard College, where she is Asher Edelman Professor of Music. She is composer-in-residence with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, a title she also held for eight years at the Yale/Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. The first woman ever to receive the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in Composition (1990), she was inducted in 1998 into the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters and in 2004 into the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University.

The composer writes of *Copperwave*:

What [the title] means is that copper (in brass) creates a weighty (and heavy) motion and feeling that travels in waves (and circles) throughout the piece. Another more "background" story is that my father was a mining engineer and dealt with copper in some of his jobs in Latin America where the family lived for nine years, hence the "conga" rhythm.

Copperwave was commissioned for the American Brass Quintet by the Juilliard School for its Centennial Celebration. This commission was supported by the Trust of Francis Goelet.

BIOGRAPHY

Currently in its forty-ninth season, the *AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET* has been internationally recognized as one of the premiere chamber music ensembles of our time. The *ABQ*'s rich history includes performances in Europe, Central and South America, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, and all fifty states of the U.S.; a discography of over fifty recordings; the premieres of over one-hundred contemporary brass works, and in the last decade, mini-residencies that have brought the *ABQ*'s chamber music expertise to countless young musicians and institutions worldwide. *ABQ* commissions by Samuel Adler, Bruce Adolphe, Daniel Asia, Jan Bach, Robert Beaser, William Bolcom, Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, Eric Ewazen, Anthony Plog, Huang Ruo, Steven Sacco, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, William Schuman, Ralph Shapey, Joan Tower, Melinda Wagner, and Charles Whittenberg are considered among the most significant contributions to the modern brass quintet repertoire. In the last two seasons, the *ABQ* has premiered new works by Robert Dennis, Robert Maggio, Paul Moravec, David Sampson, and Adam Schoenberg, and released two new recordings – *Cheer Boys Cheer* (volume two of Civil War brass music of the 26th North Carolina Regimental Band), and *Jewels* (*ABQ* concert favorites). During the 2007-2008 season, the *ABQ* premiered and toured *Two Elements* for brass quintet and piano by Grammy-winning composer-pianist Billy Childs commissioned for the *ABQ* by a grant from the New York State Music Fund. This year the *ABQ* will premiere a new work by Gordon Beeferman (the first of four brass quintets by emerging composers funded by a grant from the Jerome Foundation), a new piece for brass quintet and organ by Justin Dello Joio, and will complete their ninth recording for Summit Records to be released in celebration of the *ABQ*'s fiftieth-anniversary season in 2010.

Equally committed to the promotion of brass chamber music through education, the *American Brass Quintet* has been in residence at The Juilliard School since 1987 and at the Aspen Music Festival since 1970. Many young ensembles, including the Extension Ensemble, Manhattan Brass Quintet, and the Meridian Arts Ensemble, have worked with the *ABQ* through these residencies, and gone on to establish their own presence in the brass chamber music field. Since 2001 the *ABQ* has offered its expertise in chamber music performance and training with a program of mini-residencies as part of its regular touring season. Designed to offer young groups and individuals an intense chamber music experience over several days, *ABQ* mini-residencies have been embraced by schools and communities throughout the United States and internationally.

Through its acclaimed performances, diverse programming, commissioning, extensive discography, and educational mission, the *ABQ* has created a legacy unparalleled in the brass field. Hailed as "the high priests of brass" by *Newsweek*, "positively breathtaking" by the *New York Times*, and "of all the brass quintets, the most distinguished" by the *American Record Guide*, the *American Brass Quintet* has clearly defined itself among the elite chamber music ensembles of our time.



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