



The Score

Spring 2015

Director's Notes, Jay Durner

The Best Kept Secret in Blacksburg!

What could be the best kept secret in Blacksburg? In my brief experience with the Blacksburg Community Band, I think that one of the answers could be our community band! The more people I talk to about the band, their performances, the availability of membership, and their contribution to the community, the more I am met with, "I didn't know there was a community band in our town!" Truly a disconcerting response!

The Blacksburg Community Band is a thriving entity of our community that provides an opportunity for young aspiring musicians, seasoned professionals, and all abilities in between. Rehearsals are held once a week through most of the year, and we encourage attendance on a regular basis. Our repertoire is geared to please everyone, whether as a performer, or as a listener. The compensation for our members is overwhelming! The band members perform not only for their own pleasure, but for that of our listeners. Imagine the great feeling you have when a senior citizen comes up to you after a performance and tells you with tears in her eyes, that the last song you played tonight was one of her late husband's favorites, and it brought back so many memories for her. Or the young child who hears a classic march for the first time and feels the need to parade around the audience pretending he is conducting the band. It brings a smile to all! Live music stirs the emotions like no other art form!

The community band, currently in its 26th year, offers concerts throughout the year at a variety of venues. In addition to a formal Spring, Fall and Holiday concert we perform at community events such as the Ruritan's Fish Fry, the Fourth of July Parade and Concert, multiple concerts at Senior living facilities, and a smattering of presentations in the surrounding area.

I am very proud to be the director of this fine organization of musicians, and hope that you would also embrace this organization with your support by attending our events, giving financial assistance where appropriate, or even becoming a participating member. Let's not let the Blacksburg Community Band be a little secret – take pride in what our town has to offer!

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It's About Time

After running through BANDOLEROS in a recent Band rehearsal, Renee asked why I wrote it in 7/4. The short, flip answer is "Why not?"

Another answer comes from Gustav Holst, when someone mentioned that the rhythms in a piece of his were difficult: "I know, but that's how it came out. What could I do?" I'm with Gustav.

But then I got to thinking about unusual time signatures. People seem to think that anything not duple (2/4 or 4/4) or triple (3/4, 6/8, etc.) never happened before Dave Brubeck suddenly burst on the scene with TAKE FIVE in the fifties, and nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Brubeck just brought 5/4 to the attention of the general musical public.

Way back when, in Gregorian chant days, there was no set time signature. The words and the Choirmaster dictated the length of the notes, and there was no such thing as a downbeat. But when music went secular, thanks mainly to the troubadours and nobles that liked to party, people started dancing, and the rhythm became important, as in American Bandstand's "It's gotta good beat, it's easy to dance to". And, since people usually have two feet, duple meter evolved, with occasional pieces in a quick triple, with each foot coming down on the first of the three beats.

But these rules don't apply in the concert hall.

- The first bigtime piece with a 5/4 rhythm is the second movement of Tchaikovsky's "Pathetique" Symphony, but Borodin had shifted meters quite a bit in the finale to his Second Symphony.
- And let us not forget the "Promenade" of Mussorgsky's PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION, where the composer depicted himself strolling from picture to picture in 11/4. But Mussorgsky was just being honest: he was overweight, unkempt, and from all reports probably drunk at the time. Nobody ever said Modeste moved like a ballet dancer.
- There is also an Overture by Anton Reicha, first performed some sixty years earlier, that tootles along in a jolly quick 5/8 that must have given the first performers fits.
- And then there's MARS from Holst's THE PLANETS.
- And finally, THE RITE OF SPRING by Stravinsky, from 1913, where it's hard to find two measures with the same time signature in a row.

More recently, when Jerry Goldsmith wrote the theme for THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. he put it in 5, and it was very cool. In later seasons they changed in (without Goldsmith being consulted) into 4/4, and even into 3/4 for THE GIRL FROM U.N.C.L.E. spinoff, and it was no longer cool. Goldsmith went to 7/4 for his theme for ROOM 222, and nobody noticed, because it was gently humorous, and performed on an ocarina. Leonard Bernstein used 7/4 in his CANDIDE OVERTURE, to great effect.

So why did I write BANDOLEROS in 7/4? Well, why not?

BANDOLEROS! Is on the tentative playlist for our Spring Concert. Come hear the world premiere of this composition by Steve. There will be other new compositions by Steve as well.

From our President, Jennifer Hundley

Hello Band,

Welcome to spring! I want to take this opportunity to thank our board members for all they do to help the band run efficiently. I would also like to thank members of the band who volunteered to serve on the committees that will assist board members. The help is greatly appreciated and allows for more member involvement and input into the operation of the band. If anyone has suggestions for improving the band please feel free to share them with myself or another member of the board. Do you know past members who have stopped coming, or have friends and acquaintances that use to play? If so, please invite them to join the band. It is never too late to start playing again!

Without everyone taking time out of their busy schedule for rehearsals and concerts there would be no band. The Spring Concert offers a great opportunity to showcase the music the band has been working over the two and a half months. It is a reflection of everyone’s dedication and hard work. The band has great energy and enthusiasm for playing and bringing music to the community. It is wonderful that an organization can bring together so many people of various ages, skill levels, and careers together to share their enjoyment of making music.

Warm regards,
Jennifer

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Spring Concert

April 12 3:00 PM

Blacksburg High School

“Something for Everyone” Tentative Program

Overture Jubiloso

**Hebrides SuiteMarches
des Parchutistes Belges**

Ballade (Saxophone Solo)

**Swing Low, Sweet Saxes
(Saxophone Quartet)**

Bandoleros

Twilight

The Comeback March

**Opening Night on
Broadway**

Satchmo!

Carollton March

Spring Concert Program Notes



Guest Musicians

We are fortunate to have these guest musicians participating in our Spring Concert.

Benjamin Lawson, Alto Saxophone soloist

Benjamin Lawson is currently a graduate student within Virginia Tech's School of Education, pursuing his Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Lawson also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and Saxophone Performance from Virginia Tech, where he studied saxophone with Dr. David Jacobsen. Currently student teaching at Floyd County High School with Mr. Jay Durner, Lawson aspires to becoming a high school band director. An active member of the Natural Grooves Saxophone Quartet, this is Lawson's first ever solo performance with concert band.

The Natural Grooves Saxophone Quartet

The Natural Grooves Saxophone Quartet is based out of Blacksburg, Va., and is comprised of four graduate students of music education at Virginia Tech. The members include Robert Deis on Soprano, Matthew Turner on Alto, Matthew Pangle on Tenor, and Benjamin Lawson on Baritone. The *Natural Grooves* share a passion for music and are dedicated to performing and sharing music with others. Notable performances include the premier of Kristen Fowler's *Tango* at the 2012 ACC Undergraduate Research Conference, the invitation to perform at *Exposition 1* at the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, the 2013 and 2015 International Saxophone Symposiums, among other performances in the area.

"Satchmo!" the music; Satchmo the musician



Satchmo is the nickname given to Louis Armstrong, a popular and influential Jazz cornet player, band leader, singer and entertainer whose career spanned almost 50 years from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Armstrong was born in 1921 to a very poor family in New Orleans, the grandson of slaves. The child of a broken family, he spent his youth in a rough neighborhood known as "the Battlefield."

At the age of 6, Armstrong began his formal education at Fisk School for Boys. Music was an integral part of the curriculum at Fisk and the school hired distinguished Creole musicians to teach there. It also had its own choir and presented operettas. Armstrong learned to read and write at Fisk, but he dropped out by 1912 (at age 11). On Dec. 31 of that year, Armstrong was arrested for shooting his stepfather's gun in celebration of the New Year and was sent to the Colored Waifs' Home for Boy where he stayed for more than a year. While there he played in the school's band, which marched in neighborhood parades and performed at picnics.

After dropping out of the Fisk School at age eleven, Armstrong joined a quartet of boys who sang in the streets for money. When bystanders would throw money to the boys, allegedly, he would put the coins in his mouth so that the bigger boys could not steal them. Thus he was nicknamed "satchel mouth" which was later shortened to "Satchmo."

Armstrong's music education also came from hanging outside of music clubs and listening to cornet players such as Joe Oliver who later taught him to play and recruited him to Chicago to perform with his band. In 1924 Armstrong received an invitation to go to New York City to play with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, the top African-American band of the day (and where he switched from cornet to the trumpet to blend in better with the other musicians in his section).

As a jazz musician Louis Armstrong was an innovative soloist who added his distinctive gravelly voiced scat singing and humor to his performances. From the streets of New Orleans to clubs, theaters, television and movies Louis Armstrong was a talented entertainer.

The score Satchmo!, arranged by Ted Ricketts, is a medley of songs popularized by Louis Armstrong over his long and successful career.

The medley concludes with the theme from "Hello Dolly!" the title song of the popular 1964 Broadway musical which was first sung by Carol Channing who starred in the original Broadway cast. Prior to the opening Louis Armstrong was asked to make a demonstration recording to promote the show. The musical was very successful with "Hello Dolly!" winning a Grammy for Song of the Year and Armstrong's recording garnering for him a Grammy for Best (Male) Vocal performance. He also performed the song together with Barbra Streisand in the popular 1969 film, "Hello Dolly!" Even though he was well into his 60s the success of this song brought Satchmo to the attention of a broad, younger, audience.

This is a link to a performance in 1965 which has multiple encores illustrating his improvisational solo style and singing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7N2wssse14>

(Multiple sources including Wikipedia)