

## Program Notes

### What Remains...

JaKobe Henry (b. 1998)

JaKobe Henry is a versatile trumpet player, educator, researcher, and composer. He is currently pursuing a DMA in jazz performance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign while serving on the faculty of Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, IL. JaKobe has studied with Charles Daval, Tito Carillo, Ronald Romm, and Chris Probst. He maintains a busy performance schedule with central Illinois orchestras in addition to composing jazz and classical music. This piece, titled *What Remains...*, was written in early 2024. JaKobe wanted to write a trumpet solo piece for younger players that draws upon contrasting musical styles while blending classical and jazz elements into a satisfying piece for a recital.

### She Danced in the Rain

Cait Nishimura (b. 1998)

Cait Nishimura is a Japanese Canadian composer based in Waterloo, Ontario. Known for writing nature-inspired, programmatic music, Cait has established herself as a prominent voice in the concert band community. Since winning the Canadian Band Association's composition prize in 2017, Cait's music has been presented at MusicFest Canada, The Midwest Clinic, and numerous other international conferences and festivals. Her work has become increasingly popular among educational music communities, with new works being regularly commissioned and performed around the world. Cait is passionate about empowering others through art and strives to set a positive example for future generations of musicians through her creative work and her dedication to mental health awareness and environmentalism. She is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre and holds degrees in music and education from the University of Toronto. About this work on tonight's recital, Cait offered the following:

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about learning to dance in the rain. This phrase reminds us to be adaptable, curious, openhearted, and brave; it inspires us to find the light in the darkness and hold onto hope during challenging times. This piece was written for my friend Caitlin Jodoin, someone who has always embodied this approach to life. My hope is that this music finds others who are learning to dance in the rain, too.

### Four Paintings by Grant Wood

Barbara York (1935-2020)

Barbara York enjoyed a fulfilling career in both Canada and the United States for over 45 years. During that time, she performed as a pianist, choral and theater director, and as a composer. She received numerous commissions from soloists and ensembles at home and abroad, including several from the low brass community. In 2012, York was commissioned by John Manning (my beloved former teacher) to write this *Four Paintings by Grant Wood* for tuba and piano. The work is based on four prominent paintings, including *Stone City, Iowa*, *Young Corn*, *American Gothic*, and *Parson Weem's Fable*. York endeavored to create sonic representations of the paintings. *Stone City, Iowa*, for example, is a work noted for its embodiment of joyful escapism. As such, the two main melodies are effervescent and tuneful. Additionally, the listener follows a rider on a horse viewing Wood's scenery. The rolling hills and quickly passing objects during the ride are captured by the sudden accented notes that seemingly jump out of the texture. *Young Corn* is a memorial to a teacher Grant Wood had while living in Cedar Rapids. Instead of something sounding somber or morose, this painting—and subsequent translation to music—is reminiscent, melody-centered, and deeply emotive.

*American Gothic*, which famously debuted in 1930 at the Art Institute of Chicago, was the result of Wood's encounter with a small Victorian farmhouse near Eldon, Iowa. Wood was drawn to a window that seemed out of place. He sought to paint a scene where the farmhouse is dark and

unsettled while the man and woman in the front appear to be looking in the viewer's direction. Reactions from rural Iowans were overwhelmingly negative, which caused Wood a great deal of anxiety. Wood had mixed emotions about Iowa because of his complex relationship with rural culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a closeted queer person, Wood felt like he never truly belonged. York's music alludes to this internal struggle with its frequent shifts in tempo, style, and character. In *Parson Weems' Fable*, Wood portrays the story of George Washington famously chopping down his father's cherry tree. The opening gesture in the piano is a musical quote from "Hail to the Chief," which was first performed in 1815 to honor George Washington. The tune played by the tuba represents reflects the act of chopping down the tree, while the lyrical section that immediately follows is a sweet apology to Washington's father. A cheerful closing section symbolizes the joy Washington and his father felt after their confrontation.

### **Similes for Tuba and Piano**

**Chris Dickey (b. 1984)**

My Grandpa Jim (1933-2018) had a charming sense of humor that often left people in fits of laughter. He could easily tell captivating stories to young children, many of which included several quirky similes or metaphors. After he passed away, my brother and I reminisced about all the phrases Grandpa Jim would say. In that time of sorrow and grief, we were able to laugh and reflect on the impression our grandfather made on us. I do not consider myself a composer. As Grandpa Jim would say, I compose slower than molasses in January. Still, in summer 2024 I experienced a burst of creativity that resulted in this set of miniatures for tuba and piano. The short pieces are inspired by a simile, some of which I say in everyday speech or while I am teaching students. My personal favorites include "like ten pounds of sausage in a five-pound casing," which describes someone or something being a wee bit over the top or excessive, and "as cute as a corgi wearing a bow tie." I think the image of a precious corgi wearing a bow tie speaks for itself, yes? Tonight's world premiere performance is dedicated to Jim Dickey. Fun fact: this music represents my first time writing music for piano. Yuna Roh said I did well, so that means something!

### **Sonatina for Tuba and Piano**

**James Naigus (b. 1987)**

James Naigus is currently Assistant Professor of Horn at the University of Georgia. He is a co-founder of the Cor Moto Horn Duo with Drew Phillips. Naigus makes frequent contributions to the Horn Call, the journal of the International Horn Society. In addition to numerous orchestral performance credits, Naigus is a passionate composer. His works have been performed by soloists and ensembles throughout the United States and abroad. To date, he has published over 60 compositions with Wavefront Music Publishing, Veritas Music Publishing, and his own self-published pieces. Naigus is a graduate of the University of Iowa (DMA—go Hawks!), the University of Florida (MM), and the University of Michigan (BM).

Naigus's music has been praised for its ability to provide technical and musical challenges while remaining accessible to performers of many ability levels. His harmonies are rich, colorful, and at times refreshingly unpredictable. This Sonatina for Tuba and Piano was written in 2023 for David Zerkel. Melodies feature flowing, lyrical lines, a somber elegy, and a conclusion with a burst of energy. The work is performed without pause.