

On the Edge

UNI WIND ENSEMBLE

DANNY GALYEN, CONDUCTOR

SOPHIA PATCHIN, GRADUATE STUDENT CONDUCTOR

GARRETT ARENSDORF, GRADUATE STUDENT CONDUCTOR

PROGRAM

Anahita (2005) Roshanne Etezady (b. 1973, USA)
1. The Flight of Night 15 minutes
2. Night Mares
3. Sleep and Repose/The Coming of Light

Mare Tranquillitatis (2007/2012) Roger Zare (b. 1985, USA)
7 minutes
Garrett Arensdorf, graduate student conductor

INTERMISSION

The Last Hive Mind (2018) Shuying Li (b. 1989, China/USA)
6 minutes
Sophia Patchin, graduate student conductor

Danse Funambulesque (1925/1930) Jules Strens (1893-1971, Belgium)
11 minutes

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FLUTE

*Juliana Becerra
Carissa Blumka
*Miranda Finn
Hannah LaCroix
Jennifer Valenzuela

OBOE

Blake Daale
*Lauren Geerlings

BASSOON

Marco Olachnovitch
*Sophia Patchin
Kate VanGorp

CLARINET

Emma Bennett
Annika Dagel
*Lindsay Davison
Angelina DeSocio
Elizabeth Stanish
*Abby Voshell

SAXOPHONE

Hannah Elerding
Zack Iiams
Lindy Slocum
*Claire Uselding
Kate Wilken

TRUMPET

Jetta Colsch
Abigail Holschlag
Sean Kiefer
*Kate McAlister
Dora Roorda
Eric Torneten

HORN

JD Deninger
Maddie Klein
*Patrick Mooney
Mitchell Stevens

TROMBONE

Zac Clark
Kristen Engelhardt
*Spencer Schnetzer
Morgan Uitermarkt

EUPHONIUM

Morgan Westphal

TUBA

Aidan Anderson
*Garrett Arensdorf
Isaac Sand

PERCUSSION

Sean Middleton
Tess Lorraine
Jesse Sheehan
Quinn Wubbena
Zachary Kendrick
Kyle Langston

BASS

Mac Brandt

PIANO

Madelyn Potter

HARP

Gretchen Brumwell+

Additional Performers for *Danse Funambulesque*

Rylee Scheel, trumpet
Dr. Maddy Tarantelli, Eb horn+
Morgan Stumpf, Eb horn
Dr. Brett Copeland, baritone+

*Section Leader
+Faculty performer

PROGRAM NOTES

Tonight's performance features four compositions for wind band loosely based on the theme "On the Edge." The compositions are inspired by a Zoroastrian Goddess of the Night, the Moon landing of Apollo 11, Humanity's battle with AI, and a Tightrope Walker. In *Anahita*, Roshanne Etezady depicts the goddess tearing through the night sky on her chariot pulled by fearsome horses - eventually fleeing to the West to escape the rising sun, at the edge of daybreak. In *Mare Tranquillitatis*, Roger Zare paints an image of the crater where the first humans walked on the Moon. The music oscillates between beauty and isolation, on the edge of humanity's exploration and questions of what lies beyond. *The Last Hivemind* by Shuyling Li is written for 21 musicians, and inspired by an episode of the TV show *Black Mirror* where humans are chased by robotic dogs - with implied warnings about the dangers of artificial intelligence and humanity's very existence. The performance concludes with Belgian composer Jules Strens magnificent tone poem *Danse Funambulesque* - the dance of the tightrope walker - whose heroics and death-defying feats are continuously... "On the Edge."

Anahita

In the Assembly Chamber of the State Capitol Building in Albany, New York, there are two murals that were completed in 1878 by the New England painter William Morris Hunt. These works are enormous -- each approaching 18 feet in length -- and are considered the culminating works of the artist's career.

One of these murals, *The Flight of Night*, depicts the Zoroastrian Goddess of the Night, Anahita, driving her chariot westward, fleeing from the rising sun. However, if you travel to Albany today, you won't see *The Flight of Night*. Two years after Hunt completed the giant murals (and only one year after his death), the ceiling in the Assembly Chamber began to leak. By 1882, *The Flight of Night* had already been damaged, and by 1888, the vaulted ceiling in the Assembly Chamber had to be condemned. A "false" ceiling was erected, completely obscuring Hunt's murals, and today, most of *The Flight of Night* has been destroyed by the elements. Only the lowest inches of the original painting are still visible.

Anahita draws inspiration from photographs of Hunt's masterpiece before its decay as well as from the Persian poem that inspired Hunt originally. The first movement, *The Flight of Night*, is characterized by dramatic, aggressive gestures that are meant to evoke the terrifying beauty of the goddess herself. Movement two, *Night Mares*, is a scherzo-like movement that refers to the three monstrous horses that pull the chariot across the sky. In the final movement, *Sleep and Repose/The Coming of Light*, we hear the gentler side of the night, with a tender lullaby that ends with trumpets heralding the dawn.

William Morris Hunt received the following translated Persian poem from his brother, Colonel Leavitt Hunt:

Anahita

*Enthroned upon her car of light, the moon
Is circling down the lofty heights of Heaven;
Her well-trained courses wedge the blindest depths
With fearful plunge, yet heed the steady hand
That guides their lonely way. So swift her course,
So bright her smile, she seems on silver wings.
O'er-reaching space, to glide the airy main;
Behind, far-flowing, spreads her deep blue veil,
Inwrought with stars that shimmer in its wave.
Before the car, an owl, gloom sighted, flaps*

*His weary way; with melancholy hoot
Dispelling spectral shades that flee
With bat-like rush, affrighted, back
Within the blackest nooks of caverned Night.
Still Hours of darkness wend around the car,
By raven tresses half concealed; but one,
With fairer locks, seems lingering back for Day.
Yet all with even measured footsteps mark
Her onward course. And floating in her train
Repose lies nestled on the breast of Sleep,
While soft Desires enclasp the waist of Dreams,
And light-winged Fancies flit around in troops.*

- program note by Roshanne Etezady

Mare Tranquillitatis

Mare Tranquillitatis translates to "Sea of Tranquility," and is the famous location on the moon where Apollo 11 landed and the first man set foot on the lunar surface. The music seeks to capture a dichotomy of emotions -- tranquil beauty and restless isolation. All of the musical material is derived from only two ideas -- the descending fourth heard in the opening bar, and the flowing and surging melody heard not long after. These two ideas trade back and forth within a contrapuntal texture, swelling and flowing as they interact with each other. The music recedes into a quieter realm and a quartet of soloists emerges, juxtaposing the lush full textures with a delicate and intimate passage.

After many peaks and dips, the emotional arc of the piece culminates in the long-awaited return of the second theme. It grows and transforms into a sweeping gesture, bringing closure to the pent-up tension from before. What follows is an epilogue, and the piece ends with one final tender moment with the solo quartet.

An award-winning Chinese-American composer, Zare has written works for a variety of ensembles, including solo, chamber, choral, and full orchestra works. Currently, he serves as assistant professor of music in the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University.

- program notes adapted from the website of Roger Zare

The Last Hivemind

The Last Hive Mind was written for conductor Glen Adsit and the Foot in the Door Ensemble at The Hartt School. Inspired by several episodes of the British TV series *Black Mirror* and the general idea of recent increasing debate around the artificial intelligence and how it will affect our daily lives as human being, I put some of my personal thoughts, standing, and imagination into this work. Thanks to Glen who came up with this very dynamic and matching title at the preliminary stage of my writing of it— the title also helped in the shaping of how the musical narrative is navigating its own way throughout.

Specifically, I was struck by the idea in one episode of *Black Mirror*, the "Metalhead." After the unexplained collapse of human society, a group of people tried to flee from the robotic "dogs," a huge hive mind with metal built bodies and powerful computer "brains." The failure is almost predictable, but one detail that struck me the most was that the whole reason that a few human beings got trapped in the crazy chasing by the robotic dogs was because of their effort of searching a comforting gift for a very sick child — and the gift is just a fluffy teddy bear.

In *The Last Hive Mind*, there are two forces fighting with each other — the robotic, rhythmic, seemingly unbreakable “hive mind” music, versus the dreamy, melodic, and warm “lullaby” tune. Lastly presented by the piano, the “lullaby” music is also a quote from my mini piano concerto *Canton Snowstorm*. As the title indicates, this work depicts the struggle between the artificial intelligence, or the hive mind, and the dimming humanity; furthermore, the work implies the final collapse and breakdown of the last hive mind followed by its triumph.

- program note by Shuyling Li

Danse Funambulesque

Jules Strens studied violin at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and for a while he received advice from Paul Gilson in orchestration. In 1926 he became member of the “Synthétistes” group of young progressive composers of the twenties who were all pupils of Paul Gilson. During this period, he experimented with electro-acoustic music and began his musical career as violinist and composer. Starting 1922 he was first violinist at the “Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie”. From 1931 to 1934 he was conductor of the “Association Symphonique de Bruxelles”. At the end of his life he was more active as an organist. As a composer, he was self-taught and prolific. His musical production is all embracing and earned him several awards. His first compositions were undeniably influenced by the conceptions of Richard Strauss. His symphonic variations *Gil Blas* are a good example of this tendency. Strens's more mature works use polyrhythm and ostinato. The Belgian Music Center says ““The most typical compositions written in this technique are *Danse funambulesque*, *Danse tragique* and *Rhapsodie polyrythmique*.”

Danse Funambulesque was originally composed for chamber orchestra in 1925. Strens re-scored it for band in 1929 and added a dedication to Arthur Prevost, then Director of The Band of the Belgian Guides. Prevost was a leading figure in the musical life of Brussels, leading the first Belgian performances of Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, *Octet*, and *Piano Concerto*, among other notable works.

Danse Funambulesque is inspired by the death-defying feats of a tightrope walker at the circus. The piece begins with a quiet meditation, perhaps conveying the tightrope walker's moments before stepping out the wire itself. This reverie gives way to a series of increasingly frenetic episodes that convey the ever-increasing tension of the high-wire act.

- program notes from the University of Maryland Wind Orchestra