



JOHN CORIGLIANO

Circus Maximus Gazebo Dances

The University of Texas Wind Ensemble
Jerry Junkin



John Corigliano (b.1938)

Circus Maximus: Symphony No. 3 for large wind ensemble

Gazebo Dances for band

For the past three decades I have started the compositional process by building a shape, or architecture, before coming up with any musical material. In this case, the shape was influenced by a desire to write a piece in which the entire work is conceived spatially. But I started simply wondering what dramatic premise would justify the encirclement of the audience by musicians, so that they were in the center of an arena. This started my imagination going, and quite suddenly a title appeared in my mind: *Circus Maximus*.

The Latin words, understandable in English, convey an energy and power by themselves. But the Circus Maximus of ancient Rome was a real place – the largest arena in the world. 300,000 spectators were entertained by chariot races, hunts, and battles. The Roman need for grander and wilder amusement grew as its empire declined.

The parallels between the high decadence of Rome and our present time are obvious. Entertainment dominates our reality, and ever-more-extreme “reality” shows dominate our entertainment. Many of us have become as bemused by the violence and humiliation that flood the 500-plus channels of our television screens as the mobs of imperial Rome, who considered the devouring of human beings by starving lions just another Sunday show.

The shape of my *Circus Maximus* was built both to embody and to comment on this massive and glamorous barbarity. It utilizes a large concert band, and lasts approximately 35 minutes. The work is in eight sections that are played without pause.

I. Introitus. Trumpets and percussion surrounding the audience play fanfares, signaling the opening of the work. The full band enters with a primitive call from the clarinets. A short central section features the lowest winds and brass followed by the joining of the offstage and onstage ensemble playing together this time, and reaching the first climax of the work.

II. Screen/Siren. A saxophone quartet and string bass call from the 2nd tier boxes in seductive inflections. Other instruments scattered around the hall (clarinet, piccolo,

horns, trumpet) echo the calls, which are suddenly interrupted by ...

III. Channel Surfing. Our need for constant change echoes the desires of the ancient mob, only now we can access it all by pressing a button. Music in this section is constantly interrupted by other music and comes from all sections of the hall.

IV. Night Music I. Tranquility in nature. Away from cities, forest sounds suspend time. Animals call to each other.

V. Night Music II. The hyper night-music of the cities pulse with hidden energy and sudden flashes. Sirens and distant battles onstage build the tension to ...

VI. Circus Maximus. The peak of the work incorporates all the other movements and is a carnival of sonic activity. A band marching down the aisles counterpoints the onstage performers and the surrounding fanfares. Exuberant voices merge into chaos and a frenzy of overstatement.

VII. Prayer. In answer to this, a long-lined serene melody is set against a set of plagal (IV-I) cadences that circle through all the keys. The rising line grows in intensity against the constantly changing harmonies as the chords overlap from stage to surround trumpets and back.

VIII. Coda: Veritas. Music from the Introitus enters almost inaudibly, but grows in intensity until it dominates the “prayer” music, and the surrounding trumpet calls reach an even higher peak. A gunshot ends the work.

Gazebo Dances was originally written as a set of four-hand pieces dedicated to certain of my pianist friends. I later arranged the suite for orchestra and for concert band, and it is from the latter version that the title is drawn. The title *Gazebo Dances* was suggested by the pavilions often seen on village greens in towns throughout the American countryside, where public band concerts were given on summer evenings early last century. The delights of that sort of entertainment are portrayed in this set of dances,

which begins with a Rossini-like *Overture*, followed by a rather peg-legged *Waltz* (only rarely in three-quarter time) a long-lined *Adagio* and a bouncy *Tarantella*. Each movement was given a dedication which are as follows: I. for Rose Corigliano and Etta Feinberg; II. for John Ardoin; III. for Heida Hermanns; and IV. for Jack Romann and Christian Steiner.

In both materials and temperament I think of this as a piece of my youth, and so it was appropriate, if aggrieving, to return to the *Tarantella* when, in 1990, I was composing my *Symphony No. 1*. Jack Romann, the co-dedicattee of that movement, had suffered horrifying dementia before he

died of AIDS, and the folk origins of the *Tarantella* (as a dance to ward off the fever induced by the bite of the tarantula) haunted my memory of this movement as they never had at the time of its composition. Thus this music became his memorial in the *Scherzo* of that piece, distorted beyond recognition as Jack had been, but heard here in the 1972 *Gazebo Dances* in the version I prefer to remember.

Gazebo Dances was composed in 1972, and was recorded in 1992 by pianists John and Richard Contiguglia on *John Corigliano: Early Works on CRI Records (CRI CD 659)*.

John Corigliano

Photo: J. Henry Fair



John Corigliano

John Corigliano is among the most honored composers in the United States. He was awarded the 2001 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his *Symphony No. 2*, introduced in November 2000 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and subsequently heard in New York, Helsinki, Berlin, and Moscow. In March 2000, Corigliano's third film score, for *The Red Violin*, was awarded the Academy Award ("Oscar.") Corigliano's *Symphony No. 1*, an impassioned response to the AIDS crisis, captured the 1991 Grawemeyer Award for Best New Orchestral Composition; The Chicago Symphony's recording of the piece won the Grammy awards for both Best New Composition and Best Orchestral Performance, and it has been played by over 150 different orchestras worldwide. A Distinguished Professor of Music at the City University of New York, Corigliano was named in 1991 both to the faculty of the Juilliard School and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, an organization of American's most prominent artists, sculptors, architects, writers, and composers: he is one of the few living composers to have a string quartet named after him. Commissioned by The

Metropolitan Opera, where it premiered in December 1991, Corigliano's "grand opera buffa" *The Ghosts of Versailles* sold out two engagements at the Metropolitan (1991 and 1994) as well as its 1995 production at the Chicago Lyric Opera. The nationwide telecast of the Metropolitan's premiere production was released on videocassette and laser-disk by Deutsche Grammophon. Following its premiere, *The Ghosts of Versailles* collected the Composition of the Year award from the first International Classic Music Awards. In April 1999, *The Ghosts of Versailles* received its European premiere, in a new production directed and designed for the opening of the new opera house in Hannover, Germany, and is due for another revival at the Met in the '09-'10 season. Recent works include 2004's *Circus Maximus: Symphony No. 3*, for multiple wind ensembles; *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* ("The Red Violin") released on compact disk by Sony in December 2007 with Marin Alsop leading soloist Joshua Bell and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the orchestral song cycle *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan*, recorded for Naxos in March 2007, with JoAnn Falletta leading soprano soloist Hila Plitmann and the Buffalo Philharmonic (Naxos 8.559331). Corigliano's catalogue includes three symphonies, seven concerti (for violin, flute, clarinet, oboe, guitar percussion, and piano), numerous shorter works for orchestra and an extensive catalogue of chamber works, which have been recorded on numerous major labels. His music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer, Inc.

The University of Texas Wind Ensemble

Conducted by Jerry Junkin, The University of Texas at Austin Wind Ensemble has firmly established itself as one of the world's elite wind bands. Active in the area of commissioning new music for the repertoire, the ensemble has offered world premiere performances of works by many of the leading musical minds of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Graduates of the Wind Ensemble hold major positions in each of the Washington-based military bands and major symphony orchestras throughout the world. The Wind Ensemble made its European debut in 1991, and its New York debut at Carnegie Hall in February 1998. Following a return engagement to in 2005, the ensemble embarked on a seventeen-day European Tour during the summer of 2008. The group made its California debut in 2007 at the Festival del Sole in Napa Valley. The Wind Ensemble maintains a relationship with IMG Artists.



Jerry Junkin

Jerry Junkin serves as conductor of the Wind Ensemble and Director of Bands at The University of Texas at Austin, where he also holds the title of University Distinguished Teaching Professor. Additionally, he is the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Dallas Wind Symphony, as well as Music Director and Conductor of the Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia. Performances under his leadership have won the praise of such prominent musicians as John Corigliano, David Del Tredici, Gunther Schuller, Karel Husa, William Kraft, Jacob Druckman and Michael Colgrass, among many others. In February 2005 he led the world premiere performances of Corigliano's *Circus Maximus: Symphony No. 3*, in both Austin and Carnegie Hall. The *New York Times* named the recent release on the Reference Recordings label with Jerry Junkin and The University of Texas Wind Ensemble, *Bells for Stokowski*, one of the best classical CDs of 2004.

Top: Jerry Junkin conducting The University of Texas Wind Ensemble
Right: The last note of Circus Maximus (photos by Chris Lee)



Circus Maximus

Instrumentation and Positions

STAGE (Stage Band)

First Tier
Second Tier
Third Tier
Balcony

- Stage Band**
 4 Flutes (1 and 2 doubling Piccolos)
 4 Oboes (1 doubling English Horn)
 3 Clarinets in B flat
 2 Bass Clarinets
 1 Contrabass Clarinet
 3 Bassoons
 Contrabassoon
 4 Trumpets in B flat (1 & 2 doubling Trumpet in D)
 4 Horns in F
 4 Trombones
 2 Euphoniums
 2 Tubas
 Piano
 Harp
 Timpani
 Percussion *(4 - 5 players)

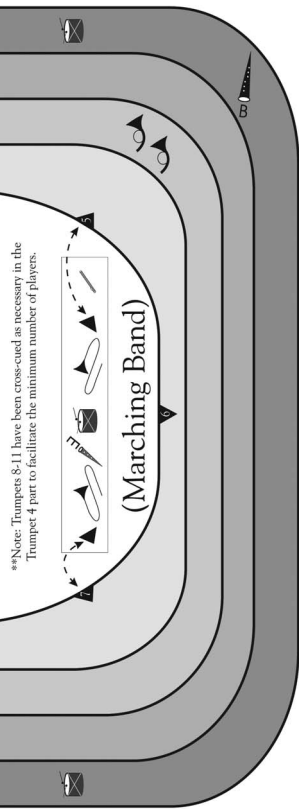
- Surround Band**
 1 Clarinet in B flat
 4 Saxophones (2 Alto, 1 Tenor, 1 Baritone)
 11 Trumpets in B flat *(7 or 9 minimum)
 2 Horns in F
 3 Percussion
 String Bass

- Marching Band**
 Piccolo/Flute
 Clarinet in E flat
 2 Trumpets in B flat (Trumpets 3 and 7 from Surround Band)
 2 Trombones
 Percussion (Percussion 2 from Surround Band)



*Note: A 12-gauge shot gun is required. It should fire a full load/black powder "popper" made by Winchester. Smokeless gun powder charges are an acceptable alternative, but the black powder is louder and throws a much larger flame from the barrel. Because of safety/insurance issues, a licensed pyro-technician may need to be hired to fire the shot gun instead of having a percussionist do so.

**Note: Trumpets 8-11 have been cross-cued as necessary in the Trumpet 4 part to facilitate the minimum number of players.



Piccolo



E Flat
Clarinet



B Flat
Clarinet



French Horn



B Flat
Trumpet



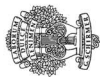
Trombone



Percussion



Saxophone
Quartet
and
String Bass



G. Schirmer, Inc.
New York, NY

Performance plan courtesy of G. Schirmer, Inc.

Playing
Time:
52:54

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**John
CORIGLIANO**
(b. 1938)

**Circus Maximus:
Symphony No. 3 for large
wind ensemble (2004)**

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|--|------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Introitus | 3:27 |
| 2 | Screen/Siren | 4:48 |
| 3 | Channel surfing | 5:03 |
| 4 | Night Music I | 6:41 |
| 5 | Night Music II | 4:00 |
| 6 | Circus Maximus | 4:05 |
| 7 | Prayer | 5:59 |
| 8 | Coda: Veritas | 1:40 |
| Gazebo Dances for band
(1972) | | 17:06 |
| 9 | Overture | 4:49 |
| 10 | Waltz | 2:57 |
| 11 | Adagio | 6:36 |
| 12 | Tarantella | 2:34 |

**The University of Texas Wind Ensemble
Jerry Junkin**

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American flag, folk artist, 1880s



AMERICAN CLASSICS

The Circus Maximus of ancient Rome was a real place. The largest arena in the world, it entertained over 300,000 spectators daily for nearly a thousand years. Chariot races, hunts and battles satisfied the Roman public's need for grander and wilder amusement as the Empire declined. The parallels between the high decadence of Rome and our present time are obvious. Entertainment dominates our culture, and ever-more-extreme 'reality' shows dominate our entertainment. Many of us have become as bemused by the violence and humiliation that flood the 500-plus channels of our television screens as those mobs of imperial Rome who considered the devouring of human beings by starving lions just another Sunday show. The shape of *Circus Maximus* was built both to embody and comment on this massive and glamorous barbarity.

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