
Commonwealth University of PA - Mansfield Concert Wind Ensemble
Mergers and Acquisitions
Volume I
Dr. Adam F. Brennan, Conductor
Galan Allison, Saxophone Soloist
MANSFIELD
COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
Mark Masters

Track List

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2. TAKE FLIGHT — Joseph T. Spaniola (info@josephspaniola.com) (3:46)

3. MANSFIELD OVERTURE — James D. Ployhar (Manuscript) (5:56)

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6. Homage to Machaut (6:00)

7. FANTASIA for Alto Saxophone and Band — Claude T. Smith (Boosey and Hawkes) *Galan Allison, Saxophone Soloist* (9:35)

8. UNTIL MORNING COME — Andrew Boss (Murphy Music Press) (6:39)

9. LA MEZQUITA DE CORDOBA — Julie Giroux (JulieGiroux.org) (11:20)

About Commonwealth University of PA - Mansfield

Mansfield University, now a part of Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania, was the first Pennsylvania state institution to grant a certificate to teach music and has had a long, rich tradition of music excellence since its founding in 1857. Students at Mansfield University study with distinguished faculty who are eager to help you achieve your performance and educational goals. The department features numerous large and small performing ensembles, including orchestra, bands, choirs, and chamber ensembles. Our graduates are regularly accepted into the finest graduate programs in music, are active as performers throughout the United States, and include some of the finest music educators in the country. The Mansfield University Music Department offers everything an aspiring musician needs to succeed. Thank you for visiting with us, and please feel free to contact us by email at music@mansfield.edu or phone at (570) 662-4710.

The Music Department has 20 faculty members and a student body of over 110 majors. The department is an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and approved through the NAMM Affiliated Music Business Institutions. The MU Concert Wind Ensemble has been Grammy Nomination Eligible in more than thirteen categories. Recording annually, the MU CWE is hailed as one of the finest performing wind bands in the country.



Dr. Adam F. Brennan has been director of bands and professor of percussion studies at Mansfield University from 1995-2025. The Mansfield University Music Department, now known as Commonwealth University of PA – Mansfield, is recognized as one of the finest in the State of Pennsylvania. Dr. Brennan has served as Chair of the Music Department for six years, served as vice president and then president of the University Senate, has served no less than 5 terms as president of the Pennsylvania Collegiate Bandmasters Association, and has held other administrative responsibilities involving assessment, leadership development, and strategic planning for both CU-Mansfield and PASSHE. In addition, he is the founder and conductor of The Great Lakes Wind Symphony, a professional wind-band, and is co-founder and co-owner of AllThingsBand.com, a web-based publishing company owned by B&P Music Productions. An accomplished composer, conductor, author, drill designer, and performer, Dr. Brennan remains a much sought-after clinician and guest artist. Following his departure from CU-Mansfield in 2025, Dr. Brennan will pursue his composing, publishing, and guest clinician work.

Dr. Brennan received his Bachelor of Arts degree in music education and a Master of Arts degree in theory and composition, with an emphasis in composition, from Western Illinois University. He earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in instrumental conducting from the University of Oklahoma where he studied with Dr. William K. Wakefield. He is a certified Clifton Strengths Quest Educator.

Dr. Brennan has recorded and published numerous compact discs with the Mansfield University Bands including *Strike Up the Bands!, This Could Be the Start of Something Big, Music From the Endless Mountains, Tenebrae*, which features the world premiere of Dr. Brennan's composition for band entitled *Tenebrae (Dark Hours), American Portraits, North Central Winds, Concord!, Resonance, Sun and Shade, Critical Speed: The Music Of Greg Danner, Volume II, The Music of David Holsinger, Vol. 12, Ecstatic Vision, High Upon the Eastern Hill, Gusto! Friends, Rhapsodies and Musical Relish, Amazing Wond on Symbol, Music of the Spheres*, and *The Music of Composer Adam F. Brennan*. Since 2013 Dr. Brennan's recordings with the MU Wind Ensemble have yielded the status of Grammy Eligible for Nomination in twelve different categories. Dr. Brennan can also be heard as a percussionist on *Twilight Offering Music* released by the University of Oklahoma Percussion Ensembles, and as a conductor on Western Illinois University's *Fantasy Variations*. His compositional works are heard on *The Music of Adam F. Brennan, vol. I*, released by Mark Custom Recording, with volume II scheduled for release in the fall of 2025. His published compositions and recordings can be found on www.allthingsbands.com. Since 2021, Dr. Brennan has three final compact disc compilations with the MU Concert Wind Ensemble schedule for release in the fall of 2025, also from Mark Custom Recording.

Dr. Brennan recently co-authored (2022) a conducting text to serve basic conducting, instrumental conducting, and rehearsal techniques courses, entitled *Making Meaningful Music; Building Techniques, Critical Thinking, Interpretation, and Leadership in Conductors* through Sentia Publishers. In 2025, his text will be split into two volumes with a supplement which includes music examples, the majority of which were created by Dr. Brennan for conducting development and pedagogy.

Dr. Brennan's responsibilities while at CU- Mansfield have include administrating the band program, coordinating the instrumental conducting program and conducting the Concert Wind Ensemble, the school's top wind and percussion ensemble. He developed the program's master's in instrumental conducting and was chair of the university graduate council for several years. Dr. Brennan also directs the Marching Band, *The Spirit and The Pride of Pennsylvania!* where he writes all musical

arrangements and coordinates the staff and wrote drill for the group in the last six years. In addition to these ensembles, he teaches courses in percussion techniques and instrumental conducting, as well as music theory and music composition lessons.

Activities while at CU-Mansfield included hosting concert band festivals and adjudications, marching festivals, percussion symposiums, and annual conducting symposiums. He hosted many alumni reunions for both the concert wind ensemble and the marching band. In addition, he directed and coordinated many music camps for band and percussion and served as a performer and later director of the Almost Famous Wellsboro Town Band for over 25 years. In 1996, he introduced the music department to the PRISM Concert concept, and that annual performance has prospered for 27 years under his leadership and event coordination. He developed the MU Steel Pan program and has been instrumental in development of instrument inventories for the benefit of the music program, including securing specialty instruments in the wind and brass families, and an extensive inventory of top-of-the-line percussion equipment. The band library has grown significantly under his care, doubling in size to over two thousand holdings. His impact on facilities includes work in support of marching band practice facilities and storage, recording and lighting upgrades to Steadman theatre.

Dr. Brennan has also served as the percussion ensemble arranger and pit ensemble consultant for the World Champion Empire Statesmen Drum and Bugle Corps, was caption head of the DCI Class-A 60 Champion Northmen Drum and Bugle Corps and was the artistic director and arranger of the International Marine Tattoo of Rochester, New York. He has been involved in sixteen world premieres at Mansfield University and his ensembles have performed internationally in Canada, France, London, and Germany, including appearances in the 2012 World Olympic Games. More recently the wind ensemble and marching units were featured at the 2024 New Years Celebration in London, England. The wind ensemble and alumni also performed in historic Carnegie Hall to a standing ovation in May of 2025.

He has received numerous invitations to state conventions to present papers, clinics and performing ensembles, and is actively involved in commissioning projects both locally and regionally. He is an accomplished drill designer and writes for a variety of high school and collegiate programs across the U.S. He is regularly commissioned for special concert compositions annually and is known for his deeply passionate, highly educational, and moving clinic work in the field of band education.

From 1989-1995, Dr. Brennan was Associate Director of Bands and Percussion at Western Illinois University. Prior to this, he served as Director of Bands at Kankakee Valley High School in Wheatfield, IN. An active composer and clinician with over 150 arrangements and compositions and over 200 guest-conducting and clinical engagements, Dr. Brennan travels extensively serving as guest conductor and clinician at festivals and conventions.

In November of 2005 Dr. Brennan was awarded *The Silver Baton* from Kappa Kappa Psi for having maintained a record of excellence and continuous quality of service to bands band members, and instrumental music education. In April of 2003 and for an unprecedented second time in 2025, Dr. Brennan received Mansfield University's *Bertram Francis Award* from Kappa Kappa Psi for outstanding contributions to the MU Band program. In October of 2002 he was honored by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia with the *Orpheus Award* for significant and lasting contributions to the cause of music in America and in 2007 he was elected for membership in the prestigious American Bandmaster's Association where he currently serves as secretary to the ABA Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Advancement committee. In 2014 he was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from his Alma Mater, Marian Catholic High School. He was nominated for and received the Employee of the Year award from Mansfield University in 2010 and was presented with the Presidential Coin of Distinction at MU in 2016. His composition, Symphony No. 1 is currently a finalist for the American Prize in Composition.

Dr. Brennan's compositions span a variety of media, including concert band/wind ensemble, orchestra, percussion ensembles, steel pan bands, marching band (originals and arrangements), jazz bands, and chamber ensembles. You can find the music of Adam Brennan at www.allthingsband.com.

Dr. Brennan's professional memberships include the College Band Director's National Association, the Music Educator's National Conference and the Pennsylvania Music Educator's Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia National Music Fraternity, Tau Beta Sigma and Kappa Kappa Psi Band Fraternities (honorary member), and the Autism Society of America. An advocate for autistic children, Dr. Brennan is actively engaged in promoting autism awareness and educational rights for special needs children and was a founding member and member of the Board of Directors for the Tioga County Autism Coalition (TASC). Dr. Brennan resides in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania with his wife and their six children.

Visit: www.adam-f-brennan.com

Galan Allison was a senior music education major at the time of this recording. They are a saxophone primary and voice secondary and hail from Mechanicsburg, PA. After graduation, Galan immediately went to graduate school at the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University to complete a Master of Music Degree in saxophone performance.



Program Notes

CELEBRATIONS by John Zdechlik

In 1988, Zdechlik was commissioned to compose a work commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Medalist Concert Band of Bloomington, Minnesota, with Dr. Earl C. Benson conducting. This seventy-member community concert band was awarded the prestigious Sudler Silver Scroll by the John Philip Sousa Foundation in 1996. *Celebrations* is a dynamic work that alternates between two themes: the first utilizes rapid ascending phrases in the woodwinds against a marked background by the brass and percussion and the second grandiose theme is worked into the composition to provide a chance to reflect on past triumphs. These themes ultimately combine in a final, majestic ending.

- Program Note from United States Marine Band concert program, 6 June 2019

TAKE FLIGHT by Joseph T. Spaniola

Take Flight is a Concert March with great flourish, mixed meter, and interesting rhythmic pulse. Calmness and lilt bring to listener along on a soaring flight, drifting through clouds and blue skies.

Joseph T. Spaniola (born May 7, 1963) is an American musician and chief composer/arranger for the United States Air Force Academy Band. Since 2007, he has served as professor and director of music theory and jazz studies at the University of West Florida. Spaniola graduated with a B.A. and M.A. from Michigan State University and has a PhD. in composition from the University of North Texas. In 2016, he was named Commissioned Composer for the Florida State Music Teachers Association

-Program Note from Composer and Adam Brennan. Bio from Wikipedia

MANSFIELD OVERTURE by James Ployhar

Mansfield Overture was commissioned by Mansfield University Wind Ensemble. The piece was rediscovered by DOB Adam F. Brennan when rummaging through the department's band library. The title and composer caught Brennan's eye, and upon opening the work discovered it had been written for the MU Wind Ensemble and was commissioned in part, by the University chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. It is truly a gem of a work and largely, unknown.

James D. Ployhar (22 September 1926, Valley City, N.D. – 2 January 2007, Fargo, N.D.) was an American composer, music educator, and film producer.

Ployhar attended Valley City State University in Valley City, North Dakota, was initiated into the Beta Rho chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity in 1952, and also originated the Fargo Big Band All-Stars, a musical group that frequently performed in and around Fargo, North Dakota, including regular engagements at Silent Movie Night, held at the historic Fargo Theatre.

Mr. Ployhar taught nineteen years in the public schools and was enthusiastically welcomed throughout the United States and Canada as a clinician and a conductor.

He was considered to be one of the most prolific writers in the field of music education. He was responsible for many great American songs, including the instrumental piece, *Cool Blues for Trumpets*, *March of the Irish Guard*, *Crazy Clock* and *Korean Folk Song Medley*. He was the author of the *Contemporary Band Course*, Belwin-Mills Publishing Corporation of New York, composer of *The Fickertail*, official North Dakota march, and recipient of the citation of excellence by the executive committee of the National Band Association. Mr. Ployhar was past president of the VCSC Alumni Association (1975-76) and is a member of the V-500 Foundation.

On May 20, 1977, Mr. Ployhar was given the Distinguished Alumnus Award at Valley City State University. In 1994, he was one of the co-producers of the Disney film *Iron Will*.

MEDIEVAL SUITE by Ron Nelson

Medieval Suite was written in homage to three great masters of the Middle Ages: Leonin (middle 12th century), Perotin (c. 1155-1200), and Machaut (c. 1300-1377). These are neither transcriptions of their works nor attempts at emulating their respective styles. Rather, the music served as a sort of launching pad for three pieces which draw on some of the stylistic characteristics of music from that period, e.g., repetition of rhythmic patterns or modes, modules of sound, proportions that produce octaves, fourths and fifths, use of Gregorian chant, syncopation, long pedal points where a sustained tone regulates melodic progression.

Homage to Machaut evokes the stately, gently syncopated and flowing sounds of this master of choral writing. The movement consists of a statement with two repetitions, each with different instrumentation. It closes with the same chant and instrumental textures which opened the suite.

Homage to Leonin evokes his sinuous melodic style and use of Gregorian chant. It is a "mood piece" in which a chant on the Dorian mode is gradually transformed into a perfectly symmetrical eight-tone scale. The movement follows the form of an arch with a large climax, after which it closes as it began.

Homage to Perotin springs from his Viderunt, with its driving rhythmic intensity, repetition, and pedal points. The opening section features insistent dissonances in alternation with brass fanfare-like passages. A second theme played by unison brass is written in the Aeolian mode.

Medieval Suite was first performed March 18, 1983, at the National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association by the Western Michigan University Symphonic Band, Richard J. Suddendorf, conductor.

- Program Note by Ron Nelson

FANTASIA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND BAND by Claude T. Smith

Fantasia for Alto Saxophone and Band was written for soloist Dale Underwood of the United States Navy Band, Washington, D.C. It is set in a traditional fast-slow-fast form and literally explores more than the entire traditional range of the instrument. As with many of Smith's compositions, it is characterized by great rhythmic vitality and technical brilliance.

- Program Note from Texas Tech University Symphonic Band concert program, 27 February 1985

Written for Dale Underwood and dedicated to the United States Navy Band, Commander Joseph Phillips, conductor.

- Program Note from score

UNTIL MORNING COME by Andrew Boss

Until Morning Come (2018) is written for and dedicated to Alex Kaminsky and the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Wind Symphony for their "Our Reply" concert, which was performed in response to the shooting that occurred at their school on February 14, 2018. The work was written in loving memory of the deceased victims of the shooting and is also dedicated to the living victims of gun violence as they seek love, peace, and understanding.

- Program Note from University of North Texas Wind Ensemble concert program, 19 February 2019

This is our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.

- Leonard Bernstein

LA MEZQUITA DE CORDOBA by Julie Giroux

In 169 B.C. the Romans founded Córdoba. After the fall of Rome, it existed under the rule of the Visigoths and became the capital of Al Andalus, Muslim Spain, in 716.

The Moors conquered Córdoba in the eighth century, and by the tenth century the city boasted a population of 500,000, compared to about 38,000 in Paris. According to the chronicles of the day, the city had 700 mosques, some 60,000 palaces, and 70 libraries -- one reportedly housing 500,000 manuscripts and employing a staff of researchers, illuminators and book binders. Córdoba also had some 900 public baths as well as Europe's first street lights.

Reigning with wisdom and justice, the rulers of Córdoba treated Christians and Jews with tolerance. They also improved trade and agriculture, patronized the arts, made valuable contributions to science, and established Córdoba as the most sophisticated city in Europe.

When the Moors conquered Córdoba, they found a Visigoth cathedral, promptly pulled it down and built a mosque complex, the walls of which enclosed about four acres. It was over 40 years in the making. Over the centuries, the Moors roofed over and developed more and more within this complex. Muslim, Christian, and Jewish faiths alike were practiced within its walls, an unprecedented feat then and literally unheard of today.

When the Christians reconquered Córdoba in 1236, the new rulers were so awed by its beauty that they left it standing, building their cathedral in the midst of its rows of arches and columns. Thus it is preserved today, fondly referred to in Spain as "La Gran Mezquita."

La Mezquita contains over 500 marble, granite, and alabaster columns. Mixed into the califal styles, one can see the Byzantine and oriental influences, as well as Hispano-romanic and Visigoth elements throughout the mosque. The grandeur of La Mezquita and its colorful political and religious history has earned it its place as a true wonder of the civilized world.

La Mezquita de Córdoba opens with the destruction of the original Christian church in 716 A.D. and proceeds as a musical celebration of its multi-cultural, religious and artistic accomplishments.

- Program Note by composer

Credits

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