

# Mud Season Concert Program Notes

## Written by our Advanced Credit Students

*\*Denotes a program note that was selected to be read at the concert*

### Concert Band

*Written by Silvia Hale:*

**Foundry** is a piece written by John Mackey. It is a unique piece because it features non-traditional percussion instruments such as mixing bowls and piles of metal. The piece also has plenty of wind parts that stand out from all the percussion. Mackey chose to name the piece Foundry, because of all the “found” instruments in it. Since there is so much metal, the piece also sounds like a steel factory with all the clanging of the percussion.

**Ballad for Benny** is written by composer Philip Sparke. The piece was written for Philip’s son Benjamin, after he was born. Ballad for Benny is a slow, melodic piece that begins with a soft waltz melody which leads to a climax that takes the piece into a bridge. Played by upper woodwinds, the bridge takes the piece back to the main melody played by the whole band. The piece then ends with a quiet ending, with instruments fading out one at a time.

*Written by Lexi Husband:*

**Foundry** was written in 2011, by the composer John Mackey. The style of this piece is very percussive and metallic. John Mackey composed Foundry because he wanted to show/celebrate that percussionists can make anything an instrument, including metal piles, metal bowls, sheet metal, and a broken sink faucet.

**Ballad for Benny** was written by the composer Philip Sparke. This piece of music is very soft and sweet-sounding. Philip Sparke composed this gentle ballad as a present for when his son Benjamin was born on February 14th, 2001.

*Written by Lex Johnson:*

**Ballad for Benny:** *Ballad for Benny* was written by Phillip Sparke as a birthday present for his son, Benjamin. Despite being a ballad full of long, flowing melodies, it has an underlying motion that pushes the tune along. This combination creates a beautiful song that’s simultaneously peaceful and joyous and leaves the listener filled with a calm happiness.

**\*Foundry:** John Mackey, the composer of *Foundry*, was inspired by percussionists’ ability to make just about anything into an instrument. He took advantage of this by writing a piece starring a variety of unique percussion instruments, including piles of metal and mixing bowls.

The wind instruments accent the percussion and tie the piece together, painting a picture of blacksmiths forging metal in a foundry. Fun fact: this piece requires more percussionists than we had in our band, so we recruited a few choir members to play the extra parts.

*Written by Sebastian Lorenz:*

**Foundry**, composed by John Mackey in 2011 is a jam packed piece. This piece has a very strong way of conveying the sounds of a foundry within the music. A foundry is a factory or workshop that casts metal. The strong rhythms of the low brass and reeds as well as the horns join with the percussion to create a powerful industrial roar. The percussion has the very unique opportunity to use metal bowls and pieces of metal along with the traditional instruments of the section.

**Ballad For Benny**, written by Phillip Sparke is a very melodic and heart warming waltz. This piece was written as a birthday present for his second son, Benjamin. This piece starts with a very calming interlude from the flutes and works its way to the main melody brought to life by the clarinets and alto saxophones. This Ballad is full of crescendos and decrescendos as if the piece was breathing and flowing. Ballad For Benny calmly ends with a gentle fade by the whole band.

*Written by Ceci Wendling:*

**\*Ballad For Benny:** This lyrical piece was composed by Philip Starke in dedication to his son shortly after his birth. His love for his son is made apparent through the beautiful, flowing, melody that travels throughout the piece. Ballad for Benny is a beautiful piece, but more than that it is a catharsis for both the composer and for the players. Starke translates emotion into music so beautifully which is truly apparent in this piece.

**Foundry:** Foundry is essentially the antithesis of Ballad for Benny. It is highly energetic and intensely quick paced. The composer, John Mackey, used his incredibly inventive mind to create percussion parts in the piece that rely on non-percussion items as instruments. He is widely regarded as one of the most creative modern day composers in his frequent deviation from traditional musical practices. This piece was written as a celebration of percussion, which comes through beautifully while being supplemented by interesting and highly variable wind instrument parts.

## **Concert Choir**

*Written by Bethany Davis*

**\*Famine Song:** In the 1980s, the African country of Sudan experienced a terrible famine. Basket weavers used baskets for survival during such a depressing time. Four American women who called themselves VIDA wrote this song, inspired by the stories of these basket weavers.

The song was then arranged by Matthew Colluton. It now represents the hardship and sadness of the Sudanese famine, and helps us all remember to be thankful for everything we have.

What made this song so difficult was not only was it separated into Altos, Sopranos, Tenors, and Bases, but these four groups were also separated into different parts. There are many different places during the piece where the Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Base 1, and Base 2, all have different parts going at once, and often in various different rhythms.

It took our group a long time to memorize these rhythms and be able to sing our parts without stepping into another part that wasn't right for our range. After many practices, we finally grew to not only be able to perform the song, but perform it beautifully. We hope you enjoy this masterpiece created so long ago, and we hope it helps you remember just how beautiful life is.

**Take Me To the Water:** Rollo Dilworth created "Take Me To The Water" by using quotes from "Down by the Riverside" and "Wade in the Water". Using this as well as his own lyrics, he made this piece. It's a Gospel song that is beautiful in every way.

This song had many different rhythms going on at one time that were hard to do without slipping up. We had to remember not only our parts, but the parts around us so we knew when our cue was to start singing. However, after a lot of hard work, we have mastered this masterpiece and we hope you like it!

*Written by Cordelia Durand:*

**\*Take me to the Water** is a contemporary gospel piece written by Rollo Dilworth in 2008. While this song was only published in 2008, it combines lyrics from songs that were written before the American civil war: Down by the Riverside and Wade in the Water. Down by the Riverside an African-American spiritual, the song was used as an anti-war protest song. Wade in the Water is an African-American spiritual associated with songs of the Underground Railroad. In Take me to the Water, water is used as a metaphor for spiritual cleansing (like a baptism), but it is also used to hint at escaping slavism and becoming free.

**Famine Song**, written by a vocal quartet, VIDA, and arranged by Mathew Culloton. VIDA is a group that was founded in Bloomington, Indiana in 1995. Their music is meant to cover struggles and joys that are felt across many cultures. Famine Song takes inspiration from basket weavers in Sudan. It is meant to share the pain and hope that the people in the famion of the 1980s felt.