



COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

**Department of Music**

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Graduate Composition Recital  
**Matthew Rinker, Composer**

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Saturday, December 18, 2004  
2:00 P.M.  
Harris Theatre

## **Program**

### **Trio for Trumpet, Piano and Drumset**

Movement I

Movement II

Trumpet - Tom Palance, Piano - Christine Hagan, Drum Set - Alex Krause

### **The Pillars of Heracles**

Wakefield High School String Orchestra

Gene Pohl, Conductor

### **Ridge Road March**

Swanson Middle School Concert Band

Paul Norris, Conductor

### **Roadtrip**

Soprano Saxophone – Peter Fraize, Guitar - Matthew Rinker, Bass - Topher Dunne, Drums - Alex Krause

### **Two Pieces for Guitar**

*I. Apologies Unspoken*

*II. Burning Both Ends*

Guitar – Tim Evans

### **Iowa**

Paul Norris, Conductor

Flute - Alicia Botelle; Clarinets - Gretchen Teel, Dawn Henderson (Bass Cl); Bassoon - Denny D’Alelio; Horns - John Findley, Bradley Johnson, James Criswell; Xylophone - Kevin Estes; Percussion - Carol Erion; Piano - Michael Salvatierra; Violin - Gene Pohl; Viola - Estelle Roth; Bass - Topher Dunne

Thanks to my parents (Charles and Lora), my siblings (Natalie and Jeremy), and my in-laws (Linda, Frank and Maryellen) for their love and support.

There are many teachers who have been very influential in my musical development. Three of whom stand out. First, Earl Jackson with whom I took my first music theory class with in high school, and later studied composition and arranging with. Studying with him was one of the main reasons I am a professional musician and a teacher today. Secondly, Dr. Thomas Korth whom I studied composition with at Howard University. Dr. Korth had a way of suggesting ways to make my pieces better while still letting me make the decisions, and I learned so much. Lastly, a huge thank you to my current teacher Dr. Glenn Smith. I have learned so much from you in the past couple of years musically and in other ways. Thank you so much.

Sometimes learning happens outside of institutions as well. Thank you to all the musicians I have had the pleasure to perform with over the years especially the two bands that I played with for much of my musical life “Graffiti” (Alex Krause, Rich Delos Reyes, Chris Given, and the late Nestor Ovares) and “Stickman” (Peter Fraize, David Marsh III, Jim Levy and Francis Thompson).

Thanks also to my students and fellow staff members (past and present) at Gunston Middle School. I have learned more from you all than you from me.

Thanks to all my fellow students and teachers at Howard University (esp. Fred Irby III) and George Mason (esp. Dr. Tom Owens).

A huge thank you to all the wonderful musicians who performed in this recital. All of them were volunteers. What a marvelous and talented bunch. Special thanks to Gene Pohl and Paul Norris who not only performed and conducted but also rehearsed their school ensembles and brought them to perform. Thank you also to the parents of the student musicians performing today for your ongoing support and encouragement (not to mention transportation, instruments etc.)

Thank you to the staff here at Harris Theater (esp. production mgr. Dan Hobson and stage mgr. Alison Bodwell).

Thanks Yuri for your time and expertise in recording the recital!

I almost called *Roadtrip* “Roadkill” because I was thinking of the famous story of how Charlie Parker got his nickname (not that I am comparing the piece or myself to Parker in any way). On further reflection however, I decided that my first idea sounded rather harsh and I would spend too much time explaining it to everyone. But, the driving ostinato bass line in the “A section” of the piece still reminded me of being on the road. Almost all of us have been on a long trip in the car at some point in our lives and I like the mental picture of the quartet driving along and discovering new things (and hoping that we all make it to the end of our journey in the same vehicle).

The first movement of *Two Pieces for Solo Guitar* is sub-titled *Apologies Unspoken*. Sometimes the words “I’m sorry” just don’t say enough. The slow melancholy, repetitive nature of this movement attempts to capture the feeling of really being sorry and having no more words to communicate this. The second movement *Burning Both Ends* captures a totally different feeling. This movement is all about those times at about two in the morning when I feel like I am on a roll and just have to finish this one last thing (which leads to another thing, and so on). I think this feeling is shared by almost all composers and graduate students.

*Iowa* began as an attempt, during a Thanksgiving visit to my father-in-law’s house in Des Moines, to write a fugue in the J.S. Bach tradition. As I started writing however, my mind began to wander away from the fugue subject to other themes and other textures, and I wondered how it would sound to begin as a fugue and intersperse other ideas. The piece is constructed almost entirely of three thematic ideas (the fugue subject being the first). These ideas are first presented as separate ideas and are later combined and integrated to form a texture that combines the imitative counterpoint of a fugue with more homophonic textures.

### Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to thank my wife Stacy who is always there for me and helps me in so many ways that I could not begin to list them even if there was all the space in the world in this program. I love you Stacy.

My children have put up with so much waiting and “not now daddy has to do his homework” during this process. Thank you Paige and Garrett. Paige has also helped me study for a few tests.

### Program Notes

In most endeavors diversity is valued. In composition, the ability to write for a variety of levels, in a variety of styles for various types of ensembles is certainly a strength. In this program an attempt was made to include such variety. The program includes two pieces for student ensembles. *The Pillars of Heracles* was written for a high school string orchestra and *Ridge Road March* was written for a middle school concert band. The remaining pieces were composed with professional level musicians in mind.

*Trio for Trumpet Piano and Drum Set* started with an idea that ended up in the middle of the second movement. The idea is symmetrical both physically and tonally. Each hand in the piano does the exact same thing and the lines move in contrary motion. The scale used for this is sometimes referred to as a “diminished-whole-tone” scale. Jazz musicians call it the “Altered” scale. The second movement evolved as sections based on this scale contrasted with more modal and pentatonic ideas. The first movement is much less rhythmic and is meant to set a mood and introduce some of the thematic material explored in the second.

The title of the string orchestra piece *The Pillars of Heracles* comes from Greek mythology. Heracles (perhaps better known as Hercules) the demigod hero is said to have erected pillars where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea. These Pillars commemorated his journey to the West (symbolic, in Greek mythology, of the underworld and the conquering of death). This story is the tenth of Heracles’ famous “Twelve Labors” in which he defeats the monster Geryon, his giant herdsman Eurymachos, and the two-headed dog Orthrus in order to return home with Geryon’s cattle.

*Ridge Road March* was originally written for my middle school band at Gunston. The school is just off Arlington Ridge Road. My goal was to write a march that was appropriately challenging yet accessible to the middle school aged musician. When I started the piece I wanted to see if I could still write like we all used to (i.e. without the computer). Of course once completed, I reproduced my pencil sketch on the computer so I could easily reproduce parts and a legible score (I’m not a gluten for punishment after all).