



THE CUMBERLAND QUINTET

# Into the Blue

WORKS FOR  
WIND QUINTET BY  
Ewazen, Piazzolla,  
Uhl, Rota, Berger,  
Ravel, Mahler,  
Lecuona, Danner

Known for his expressive melodies and colorful harmonic writing, **Eric Ewazen** (b. 1954) is one of the most performed composers of our day. *Cumberland Suite* is Ewazen's third wind quintet. He writes:

*Cumberland Suite* is gratefully dedicated to my friends in the Cumberland Quintet, who premiered the work in November of 2004. Having known their wonderful and expressive playing, I wanted to write a piece for them that showcased their artistry. My two previous quintets for wind instruments (*Roaring Fork* and the *Cascadian Concerto*) were both programmatic works, deriving their musical material from scenes and images from nature. With the *Cumberland Suite*, I wanted to write a work that was modeled after the delightful Baroque Dance Suites of the 18th century with their distinctive rhythms and moods. The work is tonal/modal with contrapuntal lines that playfully thread their way through the music. Each instrument at one point or another has the primary theme, which then gets tossed about. The contrapuntal passages also alternate with heroic, chordal passages, where the instrumentals all join together in harmonic unity. From the opening bright-sounding Allemande, to a flowing, cascading Courante, to the stately and elegant Sarabande, to a final sparkling Gigue, the work explores a variety of colors and emotions allowing the individual colors of the wind quintet to shine.

Among the most renown tango musicians in the world, **Astor Piazzolla** (1921-1992) was also one of Argentina's most influential composers. At the age of eight he was given his first bandoneon, and as a teenager he realized his dream of playing with the best tango orchestras in Argentina. In 1941 he began composition study with Alberto Ginastera, and his symphonic work *Buenos Aires* won him a scholarship to study with Nadia Boulanger. She considered his classical pieces well constructed, but upon hearing him play one of his tangos Boulanger advised him to embrace the "true Piazzolla" in that music. *Milonga sin Palabras* (Song without Words), arranged by Bill Scribner, is an expressive example of Piazzolla's distinctive style.



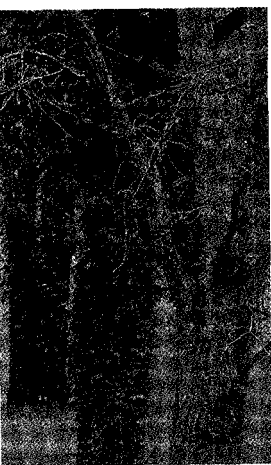
*Vier Stücke*, by **Alfred Uhl** (1909-1992), is a charming composition, displaying Uhl's ability to combine aspects of traditional, tonal and contrapuntal writing with more nontraditional rhythm and harmony. Alfred Uhl was an Austrian composer who studied at the Vienna Music Academy, later joining its faculty in 1945. All four pieces offer vivid imagery and are excellent examples of Uhl's clever and witty writing. *Zahnräder* mimics the sounds of a cog railway, often found in Germany and Austria. These railways make use of gear wheels to help pull the trains up steep mountains. *Dudelsack*, or bagpipes, features a drone and English horn to imitate the tone color of bagpipes. The third movement is a delightful waltz and is followed by a *trepak*, which is a quick Russian dance in duple meter.

**Nino Rota** (1911-1979) is probably Italy's best-known film composer. His many scores include Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, Coppola's *Godfather* series, and many of Fellini's major films. Presented here is Adam Lesnick's arrangement of the haunting theme from *Amarcord*, Fellini's look back to his childhood among the colorful characters in a small Italian town. Rota is also known for his numerous operas, ballets and chamber works including the charming *Petite Offrande*, an original piece for woodwind quintet.

**Jean Berger** (1909-2002) is chiefly known for his vocal/choral compositions, but his fresh, tonal style lends itself very well to the wind quintet. A native of Germany, Berger lived in Paris and Rio de Janeiro before making the United States his home. After serving as a staff arranger for both CBS and NBC in the late 1940s, Berger held faculty positions at Middlebury College in Vermont, the University of Illinois, and the University of Colorado-Boulder. His *Partita for Wind Quintet* was composed in 1970.

French composer **Maurice Ravel** (1875-1937) composed the text and music for his *Trois Chansons*, for unaccompanied mixed choir, before serving in the military in World War I. The second of the three chansons, *Trois beaux oiseaux du paradis*, has been arranged for wind quintet by Wilson Ochoa. The music depicts a story of three birds of paradise bringing the message of a soldier's death to his beloved. The colors of the birds match the blue, white and red of the French flag.





Three beautiful birds of paradise,  
(My beloved is away at war)  
Three beautiful birds of paradise  
Have passed by here.  
The first was bluer than the sky,  
(My beloved is away at war)  
The second was the color of snow,  
The third of reddest red.

"Lovely little birds of paradise,  
(My beloved is away at war)  
Lovely little birds of paradise,  
What brings you here?"  
"I bring a look from blue eyes.  
(Your beloved is away at war)  
"And I, on your snow-white brow,  
Am to lay a kiss, even purer."

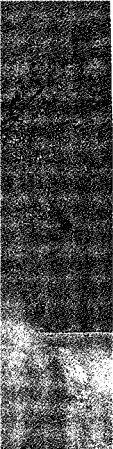
"Red bird of paradise,  
(My beloved is away at war)  
Red bird of paradise,  
What do you bring?"  
"A dear heart all crimson,  
(Your beloved is away at war)...  
"Oh! I feel my heart growing cold...  
Take it with you."

It was in 1887 that **Gustav Mahler** (1860-1911), browsing in the Leipzig library of Carl Maria von Weber, pulled from a shelf a copy of the poetic anthology *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The poems had been collected from German country folk, edited and published in the early 19th century by Achim von Arnim and Clements Brentano. Many of the poems were still common to German readers, including Mahler himself. Through the 1890's Mahler set many of these poems to music with orchestral accompaniments. While some found their way into his Symphonies, a set of thirteen was published independently under the title *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Trevor Cramer has selected three of the lighter songs and arranged them for wind quintet. *Rheinlegelchen* (Rhine Legend) is a fanciful tale of lost love. *Wer hat dies Liedel Erdacht?* (Who Thought Up This Ditty?) is a humorous vignette sung by a young man who admires an innkeeper's daughter. *Lob des Hoben Verstandes* (In Praise of High Intellect) is a biting commentary on music critics in which the critic (played by a jackass) judges a singing contest between a cuckoo and a nightingale.

**Ernesto Lecuona** (1895-1963) was one of Cuba's most important musicians in the first half of the 20th century. One of the founding members of the Havana Symphony, during his lifetime he was known as a pianist and composer. His many film scores include *Always in My Heart*, which was nominated for an Academy Award in 1942. One of his most famous pieces is *Malagueña*. Adam Lesnick's lovely arrangement of *La Comparsa* is described as: ". . . the gradual approach of a carnival procession [bassoon ostinato imitating pitched tambor drums] and carries one through all the excitement until the last faint notes of the departing parade die away in the distance."

"Folk music with overdrive" was how Alan Lomax described bluegrass music: a uniquely American blend of Appalachian folk song, Negro spirituals and work songs, white gospel, and, of course, the blues. **Greg Danner** (b. 1958) takes this rich history of string bands, banjo pickers, guitar strummers, and cornball humor as the source for his suite for wind quintet titled *Into the Blue*. Each of the five movements takes a particular bluegrass icon for inspiration, beginning with *Skillet Licker's Stomp*. Back in the 1920's, string bands played for barn dances,





cornhuskings, and other social occasions, and Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers was one of the most popular bands of the day. *Skillet Licker's Stomp* is an energetic reminder of the old-time string band sound. The Carter Family, perhaps more than any other musicians of the day, preserved American folk music through their studious collection and recording of more than 300 songs, including one of their favorites, *Wildwood Flower*. Bill Monroe is widely regarded as "the Father of Bluegrass Music," bringing it a new vitality with his energetic rhythms and amazing voice. His style blended folk, jazz, and blues into his own unique sound. Of the more than 500 songs he composed, *Blue Moon of Kentucky* was his favorite. Uncle Dave Macon was an entertainer of the first rank. Coming out of a vaudeville tradition, Uncle Dave's mixture of song, banjo playing, and comedy made him the Grand Ole Opry's first star. *Uncle Dave* brings back some of the fun that made him a household name. With Lester Flatt on guitar and vocals and Earl Scruggs playing banjo like no one else in the world, a new chapter in bluegrass music was written. With their band, the Foggy Mountain Boys, they popularized bluegrass music to an unprecedented level. *Bluegrass Breakdown* is a fast-paced finale, pairing each of the five instruments of the quintet in a continuous chain of duos.

Established in 1972 as a resident faculty ensemble at Tennessee Technological University, the **Cumberland Quintet** has built a solid reputation for unique programming and fine musicianship. The group has toured throughout the United States and in Europe, performing to a wide variety of audiences. Commanding a large repertoire of music from all periods, the quintet offers the standards and classics, exciting modern works, and lighter popular music. They have performed in live radio and television broadcasts, and have been part of an educational public television series aired nationally. The ensemble has also performed as guests artists at conferences for the College Music Society, Tennessee Music Educators Association, Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, National Flute Association, and International Clarinet Association. This is their fourth CD.



## **THE CUMBERLAND QUINTET**

**ROGER MARTIN, FLUTE**

**WILLIAM WOODWORTH, OBOE**

**ANNE THURMOND, CLARINET**

**JAMES LOTZ, BASSOON**

**GREG DANNER, HORN**

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# Into the Blue

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Wattenbarger Auditorium, Tennessee  
Technological University, Cookeville,  
Tennessee. Engineered by Bob Clark  
and mastered by John Mayfield.

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TEL: 518-436-8834 FAX: 518-436-9843

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509 AUSTIN ROAD, CUMBERLAND, U.K.  
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