

# **Allegheny Sketches**

## Instrumentation

Flute 1 & 2

Oboe 1 & 2

Clarinet in Bb 1 & 2

Bassoon 1 & 2

Alto Saxophone 1 & 2

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Horns in F 1& 2

Trumpet in Bb 1 & 2

Trombone 1 & 2

Euphonium

Tuba

Tympani

*Last Tango In Pittsburgh – 1<sup>st</sup> Movement*

Tympani in E, A, e

*Tomb of the Unknown Bowler – 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement*

Tympani in B, d, e, b

*Hindemith Runs Amok in Homestead – 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement*

Tympani in G, C, d, eb

Drum Set

Percussion

Shaker

Triangle

Tambourine

Castanets

Guiro

Conga

Guitar

Bass Guitar (Optional but recommended)

## Performance Notes

It is helpful if the guitar is played through a small PA system with sound person balancing the volume of the guitar with the wind symphony and appropriate monitors for the guitarist, conductor, and drum set/percussionists. The solo guitar staff is for study or may be performed for this work. Special thanks to John Purse for his terrific transcription of Ken Karsh's guitar performance.

The drum set and conga parts are sketches with tasteful Latin fills or rhythmic variations at the discretion of the conductor.

The tympani in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement have a great deal of pedal changes and should be studied by the percussionist for effective performance. There are arrows placed in the part to help the percussionist raise or lower the drum(s) in the appropriate pitch direction.

## Background

### *Genesis:*

Bill Purse has always loved to do original musical sketches of the places and people he has met in his many years as a guitarist and composer. His composition "Rainforest" was written while deep in a rainforest on the island of Puerto Rico and published in Mel Bay Publication's "*World's Greatest Jazz Solos Volume Two*." This time, Purse's musical inspiration came from home, resulting in "Allegheny Sketches." When approached by Dr. Robert Cameron, conductor of the Duquesne University Wind Symphony, Purse expressed interest in composing a piece for the unusual combination of guitar and wind symphony. Although originally conceived as a concerto role for flamenco guitar, he took the opportunity to shift musical directions when adjunct faculty jazz guitar virtuoso Ken Karsh agreed to play the guitar at the premier.

### *About Allegheny Sketches:*

Professor Purse began a yearlong compositional odyssey starting with guitar sketches he digitally recorded into his computer. His sense of humor got the best of him and a unique Allegheny county place or event became the title of each of the three movements.

#### I. Last Tango In Pittsburgh

A Pittsburgh nod to the Brando movie, this movement has a Latin feel that opens with a simple rhythm inspired by Pete Townsend's rock opera "Tommy". It also features a flamenco style melody stated in the trumpets and later in the sax chorus. It also features opportunities for Ken Karsh to showcase his prodigious guitar improvisational skills.

#### II. Tomb of the Unknown Bowler

Inspired by the nickname given to the monument in the center of PPG Plaza by a local newspaper, this movement is a set of variations that start out with solo guitar. It then builds and expands into a tutti climax with guitar improvisations soaring over the wind symphony and percussion.

#### III. Hindemith Runs Amuck In Homestead

At a Steely Dan concert a few years ago, Walter Becker commented to the audience that the avante garde piano solo played by one of their sidemen sounded like "Hindemith runs amuck in Harlem." Purse altered this wry comment into a hometown friendly version and used it as a starting point to compose the third movement in the style of Hindemith. While it tips its hat to the blues in the rhythmic breaks sprinkled throughout the movement and the virtuoso guitar cadenza, quartal harmony and a relentless Habanera rhythm are combined to create a unique finale to "Allegheny Sketches."

## About Bill Purse:

Purse is Chair of the Music Technology and Guitar at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, PA), where he was instrumental in the development of three new majors: Music Technology, Sound Recording Technology and a new masters in Music Technology starting Fall 2003.



He has written several books for the Warner Bros., *Ultimate Beginner Tech Start Series: Home Recording Basics*, in addition to co-writing the definitive "Classroom Guitar Method" with Aaron Stang for the new Warner Expressions Series (exciting comprehensive methods for all instruments from K-12). Purse has published several guitar works with Mel Bay Publications and one of his original jazz compositions, "Rainforest," is featured in Mel Bay's "World's Greatest Jazz Solos Volume Two." Purse has produced and released several albums of original music, including Catch 22's *Reappearance*, Sly on Life, and Aergo's Free. He has toured worldwide with the synthesizer ensemble Aergo and is the producer, arranger, and guitarist/musical director for the Duquesne faculty guitar ensemble Catch 22.

## CD Review by Joe Barth for "Just Jazz Guitar" Periodical

The CD cover features the Duquesne University logo and the text "DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY MARY PAPPET SCHOOL OF MUSIC". The title "ALLEGHENY SKETCHES" is prominently displayed. Below the title, it says "Duquesne University Wind Symphony Bill Purse, composer Ken Karsh, guitarist Robert C. Cameron, conductor". A large photograph of the wind ensemble is shown, and the text "September 26, 2004 Carnegie Music Hall, Pgh." is at the bottom.

Bill Purse: Composer ALLEGHENY SKETCHES  
Ken Karsh: guitar  
Duquesne University Wind Symphony Dr. Robert Cameron: conductor  
Duquesne University Records

ALLEGHENY SKETCHES is a three movement concerto for jazz guitar and Wind Ensemble. There are works of this nature in the repertoire. For example, this writer performed the guitar part on the CONCERTO FOR JAZZ BAND AND WIND ENSEMBLE by William H. Hill in this country as well as the Montreux Jazz Festival in the mid 1970's. But, when a work of this type and quality comes along, it is a welcomed addition to the repertoire.

It is an ambitious work that is playful at times as well as haunting in others. The opening movement "Last Tango In Pittsburgh" is delightful with its trumpet and brass section tango melody that is restated and developed by the guitar and winds. Guitarist Ken Karsh flows well between composed and improvised sections mixing just the right elements of jazz and tango styles in his playing.

Movement two, "Tomb of the Unknown Bowler" begins with a contrapuntal texture with the guitar, then oboe, then woodwinds, then brass then ensemble stating and developing. The texture builds to a place where the chord changes then are under a fiery improvised guitar.

The piece concludes with "Hindemith Runs Amok In Homestead" based upon a hemiola figure in the winds followed with a bluesy guitar then developed by superimposing them on each other. The performers are as joyous and music playful as in Bernstein's "America." Ken Karsh's virtuosity is most evident in this movement especially with the cadenzas toward the end.

The Duquesne University Wind Symphony is well rehearsed and conductor Dr. Robert Cameron does a fine job of interpreting Purse's music. College and university guitar professors and band directors will find this serious composition a welcomed concert option.

CDs and manuscripts can be obtained from the composer at [maestrobpb@aol.com](mailto:maestrobpb@aol.com)