

# FOUR FACTORIES

Wind Symphony

2006

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*Commissioned by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

*Premiered in Strathmore Hall, Washington D.C. under the baton of Kevin M. Gerald.*

DURATION: 15'45"

Piccolo

6 Flutes (1 and 2 double on piccolos)

2 Oboes

English Horn

Clarinet E-flat

6 Clarinets B-flat

Bass Clarinet B-flat (with low C extension)

2 Bassoons

Contrabassoon

Soprano Saxophone B-flat

Alto Saxophone E-flat

Tenor Saxophone B-flat

Baritone Saxophone E-flat

6 Trumpets B-flat

4 Horns F

2 Tenor Trombones

Bass Trombone

2 Euphoniums

2 Tubas

Piano (w/large tam-tam)

Contrabass

Timpani

4 Percussion

Program Note:

**FOUR FACTORIES (2006)** was written for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Wind Symphony, under the direction of conductors John R. Locke and Kevin M. Gerald. The work represents the most ambitious writing to date for band by the composer.

The idea to write a piece evoking the sense of factories or large generators came a while back when I was reading *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. Coincidentally, I was reading a biography of George Antheil (composer of *Ballet Mécanique*) at the same time. It occurred to me that it might be a rewarding experience to write a symphonic work called *Man's Greatest Achievement* (or some such grandiose title) depicting three or four of the world's highest sky scrapers (a nod to the architect-hero Howard Roark from Rand's novel). At that time however, I turned to writing a single-movement orchestral scherzo about downhill skiing called *SLALOM* (which itself became a work for wind symphony later on).

The four movements of the work are not pointing to any specific structures or buildings. They are explorations in motorized color-palettes. Each movement is treated like its own canvas or grid on which sound-color is painted. There is no dramatic program that develops through time from movement to movement.

### **I. Locomotive**

The most minimal in style, this movement presents a large imaginary factory generator. Once the power finally gets revved-up and humming, the factory comes to life in a particularly bright orchestration of F major. This might be some kind of candy factory.

### **II. Gothic**

Set staunchly in a very *baroque* B minor, this obstinate motor is maintained primarily by the low winds and piano. The high winds and brass repeat melodic descants over the gurgling. Near the center of this short movement comes a very pop-influenced jam led by an explosive cowbell. The movement ends suddenly with a last shrill gasp from the trombones.

### **III. At Peace**

The engine under this *song* for band is carried by the clarinets from the very beginning. This undulating grid provides harmonic support for the soaring melodies from the flutes and oboes. A big moment of anthem-like heroism shines through, giving way to the song again. Just before the conclusion of the movement the clarinets break out of motoric submission and come joyously to the fore (7 heralding clarinets).

### **IV. Mercurial, with Great Precision**

As the tempo marking indicates, this last factory requires the utmost technical precision from the entire band. At times both bold and fleetingly articulate. Mahlerian sweeps find themselves right next to big-band swings. The coda is an all-out *scherzo brillante*, marrying the two primary motives of the movement. The most bravado is pulled out of the band here than anywhere else in the work.... before the generator returns at the end, rusting away to an abrupt silence.

\*Contact the composer for a reference recording of **FOUR FACTORIES**