

More About SYMPHONIC SUITE

This is one of those pieces of mine that has had a long history with multiple incarnations before settling into its present--and final--form.

The original version was written in 1972 as my Master of Music thesis at Florida State University. Its original title, **Divertimento for Winds**, was sort of a misnomer, as this is not a light piece of entertainment music, which is the definition of a divertimento. That title actually represented a combination of references to its influences. I wrote it as a sort of homage to the composer who I have always looked to the most for inspiration, Vincent Persichetti, so I took part of the title from his best-known band composition, **Divertimento for Band**. One of my teachers that I was working with at the time was Charles Carter, whose most popular composition is **Overture for Winds**, so I combined those two titles into mine. Clever perhaps, but not appropriate for the music.

I ultimately was not happy with either that title, or how the work had turned out musically, and over the years, I tinkered with it and renamed it a couple times. But I was still never satisfied and put the piece back into the drawer each time.

Finally, in 2010-11, I made a really serious effort to revive it and turn it into a worthwhile piece of work. I went back to Persichetti for my final title. The composition of his that I had looked to most for inspiration while writing this was not the Divertimento, but his **Symphony for Band**, and I actually worked a couple of very obvious nods to it into this piece. I won't say what they are, but listeners who are familiar with that work will surely hear them. I also did a great deal of symphonic development of the short motto motif that begins the composition, so **Symphonic Suite** seemed a good choice for its permanent title.

I dedicated the final revision of this work *in memorium* to Persichetti, who passed away in 1986, also renaming the keystone center movement "Elegy" in his honor.

An interesting sidelight is that the first and last versions of this music are the only ones to have been publicly performed, and they were both first heard--forty years apart--in the very same auditorium on the campus of my undergraduate alma mater, Central College, in Pella, Iowa: **Divertimento for Winds** in 1975, conducted by Tom Cook, and **Symphonic Suite** in 2015, conducted by Mitchell Lutch. That composition really has come around full circle!

This composition is a serious piece of work and a significant undertaking for any band that performs it, but if the work is put in, it will prove to be worth the effort.