

BIOGRAPHY OF DAN WELCHER

In 2012, the American Academy of Arts and Letters presented to Dan Welcher the Arts and Letters Award in Music. The citation reads, in part, “As intense as it is elegant, Dan Welcher’s music takes his listeners on a surprising yet inevitable path...Every work in his wide-ranging catalogue is written with the strongest musical signature”. That catalogue now numbers well over 100 works in every conceivable genre, including three operas, seven concertos, five symphonies; plus vocal literature, piano solos, and various kinds of chamber music. Born in 1948 in Rochester, New York, Dan Welcher is now one of the most-played composers of his generation.

Dan Welcher first trained as a pianist and bassoonist, earning degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music. He joined the Louisville Orchestra as its Principal Bassoonist in 1972, and remained there until 1978, concurrently teaching composition and theory at the University of Louisville. He joined the Artist Faculty of the Aspen Music Festival in the summer of 1976, teaching bassoon and composition, and remained there for fourteen years. He accepted a position on the faculty at the University of Texas in 1978, creating the New Music Ensemble there and serving as Assistant Conductor of the Austin Symphony Orchestra from 1980 to 1990. It was in Texas that his career as a conductor began to flourish, and he led the premieres of more than 160 new works since 1980. He held the Lee Hage Jamail Regents Professorship in Composition at the School of Music at UT/Austin, teaching Composition and serving as Director of the New Music Ensemble, until his retirement in 2019.

In 1990, Mr. Welcher was named Composer in Residence with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra through the Meet the Composer Orchestra Residencies Program. During his three-year residency, he distinguished himself with a weekly radio series entitled Knowing the Score (which had a second life on KMFA-FM in Austin, winning the 1999 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Broadcast Award); a statewide program teaching elementary school children the basics of musical composition; conducting more than thirty concerts with the Honolulu Symphony and inaugurating a series of new music concerts entitled Discoveries. He also wrote two works for the Symphony: a work for the children's concert series entitled *Haleakala: How Maui Snared the Sun* for narrator and orchestra, and an ambitious 38-minute *Symphony No. 1*. After leaving Honolulu, he returned to his position at the University of Texas, continuing to write orchestral works on commission, such as *Bright Wings: Valediction for Large Orchestra*, commissioned by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and premiered in Dallas under the baton of Music Director Andrew Litton in March, 1997, *Spumante*, a festive overture commissioned by the Boston Pops, premiered in Symphony Hall on May 6, 1998, under Keith Lockhart, and *Beyond Sight*, a tone poem for orchestra commissioned by George Mason University for its 2000 commencement celebration. Among his larger works are *Venti Di Mare: Fantasy-Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra*, commissioned by the Guggenheim Foundation for the Rochester Philharmonic and premiered in February 1999; *JFK: The Voice of Peace*, a 55-minute oratorio for chorus, orchestra, narrator, solo cello, and soloists, premiered in March 1999 by the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston; *CONCERTO for Timpani and Orchestra*, commissioned by the Utah Symphony and premiered in

October, 2004 by timpanist George Brown, with Keith Lockhart conducting, and ***Jackpot: A Celebratory Overture***, commissioned by the City of Las Vegas on the occasion of its 100th anniversary and premiered by the Las Vegas Philharmonic under the baton of Harold Leighton Weller in September of 2005. His most recent symphonic work is ***Symphony #5***, a 35 minute work commissioned for the Austin Symphony Orchestra, celebrating the opening of the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin, Texas, which premiered in May of 2009, conducted by Peter Bay.

His works for symphonic wind ensemble, notably ***Zion*** (which won the ABA/Ostwald Prize in 1996) and ***Symphony No. 3 ("Shaker Life")*** have earned him new accolades in non-orchestral venues. Newer works for the wind band include ***Perpetual Song*** (2000), commissioned by the West Point Band, ***Songs Without Words*** (2001), commissioned by the College Band Directors' National Association, ***Minstrels of the Kells*** (2002), commissioned by the bands of the Big Twelve Universities, and ***SYMPHONY #4 ("American Visionary")***, commissioned in honor of George Kozmetsky by the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas, premiered in 2005 in Austin, conducted by Jerry F. Junkin. His most recent work for wind ensemble is ***SYMPHONY #6: Three Places in the East***, a 34 minute work in three movements devoted to three national parks in the eastern USA. It premiered in 2017 at the University of Georgia, conducted by Jaclyn Hartenberger.

Welcher's first two operas form a two-part evening, collectively called ***A STAR OVER FIFTH AVENUE***, with librettos by Paul Woodruff. The first of these, ***Della's Gift***, is a 70 minute setting of O Henry's famous story "Gifts of the Magi", set on Christmas Eve in 1905 on the lower east side of Manhattan. The second, ***Holy Night***, uses the same sets and the same five principal singers, to tell a completely different Christmas story set in 2005. Welcher's third opera is ***The Yellow Wallpaper***, a chamber opera in seven unbroken scenes lasting 75 minutes, was completed in 2010 but not premiered until 2019. The libretto, written by the composer, is based on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's famous story of 1895. All three of these operas were premiered in Austin under the composer's direction.

Dan Welcher has won numerous awards and prizes from institutions such as The American Academy of Arts and Letters (an Arts and Letters Award in Music in 2012), The Guggenheim Foundation (a Fellowship in 1997), The National Endowment for the Arts, The Reader's Digest/Lila Wallace Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, The MacDowell Colony (seven residencies between 1988 and 2012), Yaddo (seven residencies between 2000 and 2013) The Bellagio Center in Bellagio, Italy, the Ligurian Study Center in Bogliasco, Italy, The Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, the American Music Center, and ASCAP. His orchestral music has been performed by more than sixty orchestras, including the Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the BBC Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Atlanta Symphony. He lives in Bastrop, Texas. For more information about Mr. Welcher, please visit his website: www.danwelcher.com, or at the Theodore Presser website, www.presser.com.