

In March 1995, he was honored with membership in the prestigious American Bandmasters Association, the professional association of master conductors and musicians. Membership is considered the highest honor achievable by American bandmen; it recognized outstanding achievement in the field of concert bands. In February 1996, he was inducted into the University of Northern Colorado School of Music “Hall of Honor.” This distinction was bestowed on only 18 alumni and faculty who have achieved greatness as musician, educators and humanitarians in the school’s first 100 years. He received The Catholic University of America’s 1998 Alumni Achievement Award in the field of Music. This award, which is presented annually by the Board of Governors Alumni Association, recognized his accomplishments and honored him for his life’s work. In 1999 he received the University of Northern Colorado Alumni Association Honored Alumni Award in the category of “Contributions to Music.” In 2001, he was the recipient of the Award of Distinction for Contributions to Music Education from the Illinois Music Educators Association. The two previous recipients were Sir Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Meryl J. Isaac. In 2003 he was the recipient of the Phi Beta Mu International Outstanding Bandmaster Award. In 2008, he was honored by the American School Band Directors Association with the A. Austin Harding Award for “making significant and lasting contributions to the school band movement.” In 2013 the University of Northern Colorado Graduate School honored him with the “Century of Scholars Award” in performance representing excellence and achievement in the previous 100 years of the Graduate School.

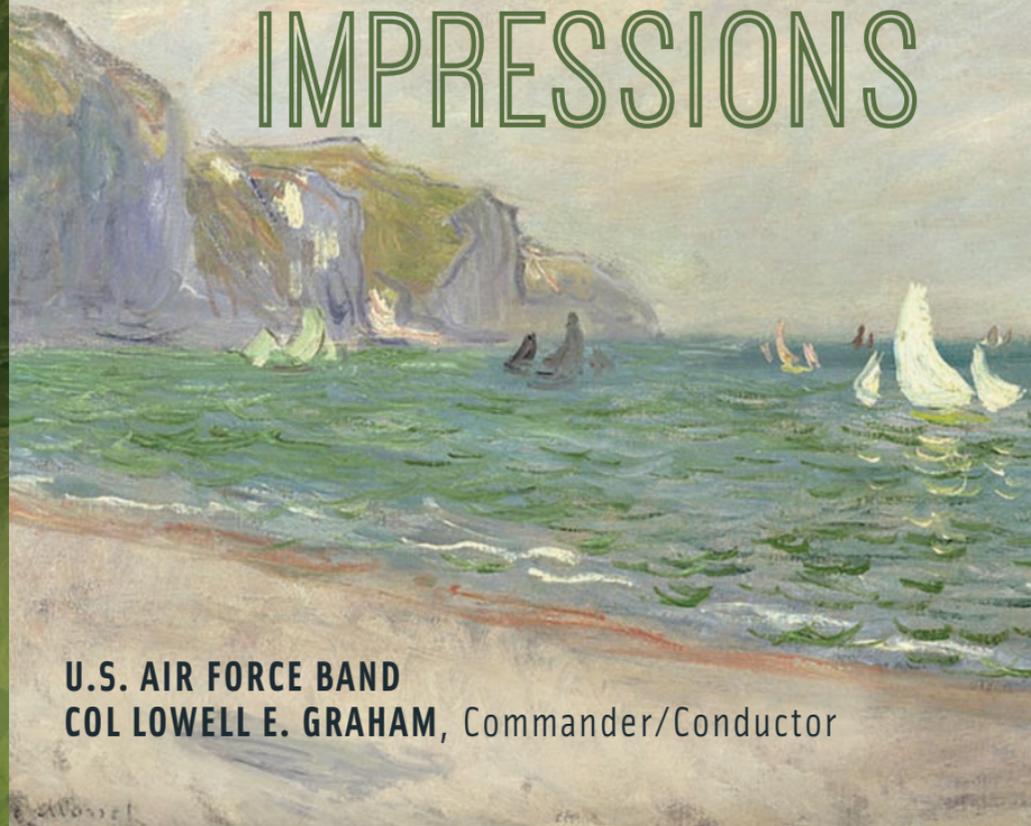
In 2005 Graham was named as the “Supervising Editor” for LudwigMasters Music Publications, Inc., a division of Edwin F. Kalmus & Co., Inc. Masters Music Publications that includes rare, out-of print, and foreign editions as well as offering one of the finest catalogs of original works and arrangements for concert band and wind ensemble available today.

Graham has released recordings on six labels – Naxos, Telarc, Klavier, Mark, Altissimo and Wilson -- that have been recognized for both their artistic and sonic excellence. These recordings have been recognized in Stereophile’s “Records to Die-For” list, The Absolute Sound’s “The Super Disc List,” as well as one having won a Grammy.



French

IMPRESSIONS



U.S. AIR FORCE BAND
COL LOWELL E. GRAHAM, Commander/Conductor

EMMANUEL CHABRIER

(1841-1894)

- 1 LE ROI MALGRE LUI
DANSE SLAVE (5:38)

JACQUES IBERT

(1890-1962)

ESCALES (14:38)

(Alphonse Leduc)

- 2 PALERMO (6:14)
3 TUNIS NEFTA (2:38)
4 VALENCIA (5:44)

EMMANUEL CHABRIER

- 5 DIX PIÈCES
PITTORESQUES
MENUET POMPEUX (6:47)

JULES MASSENET

(1842-1912)

- 6 CENDRILON
MARCHE DES PRINCESSES (4:35)

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

(1835-1921)

- 7 SAMSON ET DALILA
DANSE BACCHANALE (7:26)

MAURICE RAVEL

(1875-1937)

- 8 DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ
SUITE NO. 2 (16:03)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

(1862-1918)

LA MER (24:11)

- 9 DE L'AUBE À MIDI SUR LA MER (9:19)
10 JEUX DE VAGUES (6:45)
11 DIALOGUE DU VENT ET DE LA MER (8:06)

ALL PIECES TRANSCRIBED BY LAWRENCE ODOM
EXCEPT SAINT-SAËNS, TRANSCRIBED BY LEIGH D. STEIGER

TOTAL TIME 79:30

LOWELL E. GRAHAM

A native of Greeley, Colorado, Lowell E. Graham (ret.) is the Director of Orchestral Activities and Professor of Conducting at the University of Texas at El Paso. He is the recipient of the Abraham Chavez Professorship in Music. He enjoys a distinguished career conducting ensembles in many musical media, including the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, the Virginia Symphony, the Spokane Symphony, the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, the American Promenade Orchestra, the Greeley Philharmonic, Chamber Music Palm Beach Chamber Orchestra, the Westsächsisches Symphonieorchester, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Banda Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Paulo, Orquestra de Sopros Brasileira, Banda Sinfonica de la Provincia de Cordoba – Argentina, Banda Municipal de Musica de Bilbao – Espana, Banda Municipal de Barcelona – Espana, the National Symphonic Winds, the National Chamber Players, the Avatar Brass Ensemble and the Denver Brass. In 2006 he was named the “Director Honorifico Anual” for the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Paraguay. He has held numerous conducting positions to include that of the Commander and Conductor of the United States Air Force’s premier musical organization in Washington, DC. As a USAF Colonel, he became the senior ranking musician in the Department of Defense.

He is a graduate of the University of Northern Colorado where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education in 1970 and a Master of Arts degree in performance the following year. In 1977 he became the first person to be awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Graham has initiated many important media projects for American Public Radio and other broadcasting organizations, as well as live telecast/web cast concerts and video productions on which his credits include those of conductor, writer and musical producer. He is a frequent guest on radio talk shows and performed on NBC’s “Today Show” for five consecutive years on Independence Day.

follow the same career. The creative muse proved a stronger influence on young Claude, but throughout his life he remained fascinated by the ocean. In a letter to the conductor-composer André Messager from 1903, Debussy says “I am working on three symphonic sketches under the title *La mer: Mer belle aux Iles Sanguinaires; Jeux de vagues; and Le Vent fait danser la mer.* [The titles of the first and third movements were subsequently changed by the composer.]” Recalling experiences from his childhood years, he continues. “You perhaps do not know that I was destined for the fine life of a sailor and that it was only by chance that I was led away from it. But I still have a great passion for the sea.” Debussy was deeply moved by this project, for he speaks of the “endless memories” which it aroused. These he maintained “are worth more than reality which generally weighs down one’s thoughts too heavily.”

La Mer was first performed and published in Paris in 1905; a revised version appeared in 1910. In both published versions, the three movements are *De l’aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)*, *Jeux de vagues (Play of the Waves)* and *Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)*.

FROM NOTES BY MSGT ELIZABETH CAMPEAU

THE U.S. AIR FORCE BAND

COL LOWELL GRAHAM, Commander/Conductor

RECORDED 14-17 JUNE 2000 IN THE GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS, FAIRFAX VA

RECORDED, EDITED AND MASTERED BY BRUCE LEEK

ASSISTANT ENGINEER TSGT JEBODIAH J. EATON

PRODUCED BY COL LOWELL E. GRAHAM

CO-PRODUCERS MAJ FRANK J. GRZYCH II, 1LT KEITH H. BLAND, 1LT CHAD A. STEFFEY AND 1LT R. MICHAEL MENCH, JR.

COVER PAINTING BY CLAUDE MONET, CLIFFS AND SAILBOATS AT POURVILLE

COVER AND LAYOUT BY STACIE A. HEYEN

MICROPHONES Sennheiser MKH20, Sennheiser MKH40, Audio Technica AT4049, Beyer M160

MICROPHONE PRE-AMPS Millennia Media HV-3, FM Acoustics Class-Amps, Grace Design 801

RECORDING CONSOLE Ramsa WRS4424 (modified by John Windt)

CABLES MIT-CVT 2C/3D, MIT Z-Center Power Conditioning

SPEAKERS ATC SCM 20SLA Monitors

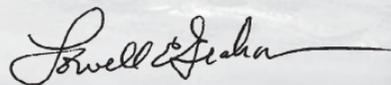
RECORDERS Tascam DA38

DAT DECKS Panasonic SV3800

PROCESSOR Prism Sound ADA-8, Prism Sound MR2024T interface

REFERENCE HEADPHONES Sony MDR V6

French Impressions was a natural evolution and continuation of other similar recording projects by the USAF Band that featured music of a specific nationality while highlighting the art of transcription by skilled masters of this craft. As with the other similar projects, *Roman Trilogy* (Klavier K 11182) and *Russian Expressions* (Klavier K 11167), these masterpieces are on full display featuring the transcribing artistry of Lawrence Odum and Leigh Steiger. As such, *French Impressions* tackles some of the most idiomatic and difficult music by Chabrier, Ibert, Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Ravel and Debussy. These transcriptions were accomplished by the intent that the listener will experience the majesty of the music being performed by arguably one of the finest bands in the world on a deeply emotional level. All the color, passion and flare are on full display while being masterfully performed by musicians who have deep respect for this music. Listening to this recording is a musical journey of involvement with great reward. Happy listening.



is an adaptation of a pastoral romance attributed to the third-century Greek author Longus. A quote attributed to Longus states that “No one has ever escaped love altogether, and no one ever will, as long as beauty exists and the eye can see.” Ravel explained that his intention was to compose “a vast musical fresco, less thoughtful of archaism than of fidelity to the Greece of my dreams, which identifies quite willingly with that imagined and depicted by late eighteenth-century French artists. The work is constructed symphonically according to a strict tonal plan, by means of a small number of motifs, whose development assures the symphonic homogeneity of the work.”

Ravel extracted two sets of “Symphonic Fragments” (as he called them) from the ballet; the *Second Suite* is the last quarter-hour of the ballet. This music begins with the famous *Lever du jour* (*Daybreak*) and includes all the music of the third and final tableau. The music of this *Suite*, one of the best-known pieces in the orchestra repertoire, manages to condense and re-state everything that has gone before in the preceding forty or so minutes. The concluding *Bacchanale* in particular is overpowering.

Claude Debussy is one of the most important composers of the twentieth century. His harmonic innovations in particular have had a profound influence on generations of composers since. His family was of Burgundian descent, but he himself was born in what is now a suburb of Paris, St. Germain-en-Laye. His father had been a professional seaman and he expected his son to

art. He who does not receive absolute pleasure from a simple series of well-constructed chords, beautiful only in their arrangement, is not really fond of music.”

Saint-Saëns wrote thirteen operas and while several of them had some success during the composer’s lifetime, only *Samson et Dalila* survives today. The opera’s early life was difficult. At the first performance of a portion of the opera in 1867, most people expressed alarm at seeing a biblical subject presented on the stage. Saint-Saëns abandoned the opera until 1872 when he took it up again. It was not finished until 1876 and its first complete performance in 1877 took place not in France but in Weimar, Germany. The opera was not performed in France until 1890. The famous *Danse bacchanale* comes from the second scene of the third act and represents the celebration of the Philistines on capturing Samson – through Dalila’s betrayal.

Maurice Ravel was one of the most original and sophisticated musicians of the early twentieth century. He was born in a Basque village of a Swiss father and a Basque mother. Although the family moved to Paris when Maurice was only three months old, he always felt close to his Basque heritage, and by extension, to Spain.

His largest, longest and, some would say, best work is the ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*, upon which he began work in 1909. The story which this ballet tells

Emmanuel Chabrier was born in a small village in the Auvergne. His family moved to Paris when he was about fifteen, by which time he had already begun to show indications of his musical gifts. He was, however, destined by family tradition for a career in law. Although he was a valued civil servant for nineteen years, he continued his musical education on his own. In 1880 he finally left his government post to devote the final fourteen years of his life to composition and other exclusively musical pursuits.

Chabrier wrote *Le Roi malgré lui (The King in Spite of Himself)*, an *opéra comique*, in 1887 for the Opéra-Comique of Paris. The plot is an elaborate set of mistaken identities centering around the King of Poland, who would far prefer to be in France rather than in Poland. The *Danse slave* comes from Act III. This popular episode displays the technical wizardry of a composer whose originality of inspiration is never in doubt.

Jacques Ibert was Parisian through and through. He was following the standard course of education for a young French composer (Paris Conservatoire), when his progress was interrupted by World War I. During the war he saw service first as a nurse and stretcher-bearer at the front, then as a naval officer stationed at Dunkirk. But after the war, in 1919, he won first prize in the Prix de Rome competition in composition and spent the next three years at the Villa Medici – not bad for someone whose studies had been suspended for four years.

During his three years at the Villa Medici Ibert traveled extensively in Italy, Spain and Tunisia. His symphonic suite *Escales (Ports of Call)*, completed in 1922, is a souvenir of his travels. Inspired by the natural beauty of Palermo, Tunisia and Valencia, Ibert created a musical travelogue that conjures vivid images of exotic ports as seen through the eyes of a young man as he begins to explore the world. *Escales* was first performed in January 1924 by the Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Its success made Ibert known to a large public both in France and abroad.

One of Chabrier's first compositions after leaving his government position in 1880 was the *Dix pièces pittoresques* for piano, which has become one of the monuments of the nineteenth-century French piano repertoire. Chabrier's colleague, the composer César Franck, said of this set of pieces that "they link their own time with that of Couperin and Rameau." Chabrier's vibrant wit has influenced several generations of French composers; about his music he himself said that "I shape my musical rhythms with my Auvergnat clogs [wooden shoes]."

Chabrier orchestrated four pieces from this set (numbers 4, 6, 7 and 10) as his Suite pastorale. The ninth piece of the set, the *Menuet pompeux*, has been arranged both for orchestra and, as recorded here, for concert band.

Jules Massenet wrote music for all media, but he is perhaps remembered

primarily for his many operas, most of which in their day were highly successful. While many of his musical contemporaries were striving for cultural and spiritual growth through art, it was the relatively simple nature of Massenet's music, particularly his operas that attracted audiences.

His opera *Cendrillon (Cinderella)* comes from relatively late in his career – billed as a *Conte de fées (Fairy tale)* in four acts, it was first performed at the Paris Opéra-Comique in May, 1899. The opera was an immediate success, receiving fifty performances before the end of that year. Ever sensitive to the tastes of his audiences, Massenet included ballet sequences to be performed during scene changes. The popular *Marche des Princesses* is one example – it functions as an entr'acte between the two scenes of the fourth act.

Camille Saint-Saëns was the son of an audit clerk for the French Ministry of the Interior, the same agency that employed Emmanuel Chabrier. With that and many other things in common, it was inevitable that Chabrier and Saint-Saëns would meet. Indeed, the two composers were both colleagues and friends. Both had been recognized as child prodigies, and during their lifetimes both men delved not only into the musical arts, but were also intensely interested in painting, poetry and literature.

Saint-Saëns stated his artistic philosophy in these words: "Music is something besides a source of sensuous pleasure and keen emotion, and this resource, precious as it is, is only a chance corner in the wide realm of musical