

West City Concert Band

Conductor: Chad Davenport

SYMPHONY NO. IV: Bookmarks from Japan *Julie Giroux*

I. Fuji-san – “Mt. Fuji”

II. Nihonbashi – “Bridge Market”

III. The Great Wave off Kanagawa – “The Life of One Wave”

IV. Kinryu-zan Sensōji – “Thunder Gate”

V. Evening Snow at Kambara – “Light is the Touch”

VI. Hakone – “Drifting”





富嶽三十六景
凱風
快晴

北斎画

*"Fine Wind, Clear Morning" – Hokusai Katsushika
from Hokusai's collection "The 35 Views of Mt. Fuji"*

I. Mount Fuji – “Fuji-san”

Bookmarks from Japan — Julie Giroux



The sketch Fine Wind, Clear Morning (Gaifu kaisei), also known as South Wind, Clear Sky or Red Fuji, by Hokusai Katsushika is the inspiration for this movement. In early autumn when the wind is southerly and the sky is clear, the rising sun can turn Mount Fuji red. Fuji-san has many different looks depending on the viewer's vantage point, time of year, weather and even time of day. Big, bold and easily recognized yet shrouded in mystery and lore, Mount Fuji offers a multitude of inspirational facets.

This piece is based on one view of Mt. Fuji, covered in mist and low clouds which slowly burn off as the day progresses. Orchestration and composition techniques follow this scenario starting off with mysterious, unfocused scoring. As the piece progresses, the scoring gets more focused and bold with the final statement representing Fuji-san in a totally clear view.



*"Nihonbashi" – Hiroshige Ando
from "The 53 Stations of the Tokaido Highway"*

II. Nihonbashi – “Market Bridge”

Bookmarks from Japan — Julie Giroux

Hiroshige Ando (1797–1858) travelled the Tokaido from Edo to Kyoto in 1832. He sketched many of its scenes during his round trip, producing an extensive series of prints — The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido. Each print represents each of the 53 post stations along the way, with two additional prints of the start and end points. The post stations offered food, lodging and stables for travellers. This is Hiroshige’s “Leaving Edo : Nihonbashi”, “the bridge of Japan” and is the first in the series of prints.

For centuries it thrived as a shopping centre, from its early days as a fish market to the current financial district of Tokyo, this bridge spanning the Nihonbashi River is a true landmark in Tokyo.

The piece features many short appearances by different instruments and characters, capturing the bustle of a thriving marketplace.



*"The Great Wave off Kanagawa" – Hokusai Katsushika
from Hokusai's collection "The 35 Views of Mt. Fuji"*



III. The Great Wave off Kanagawa “The Life of One Wave”

Bookmarks from Japan — Julie Giroux

This artwork by Hokusai was published in the early 1830's and is well known throughout the world. In the print, you can see Mount Fuji in the background but the central focus is an enormous wave called an okinami (wave of the open sea) peaked and curling with several Japanese boats in different stages entering the perilous wave.

The piece starts in the open sea, fairly calm with sunlight refracting into thousands of tiny points of light. Depicting this are the woodwinds, before the trombones and french horns enter the mix. The trumpets add in near the end of the phrase all of which depicts the first shaping of the great wave. The piece culminates with the full rolling motion throughout the entire band, peaking and rolling through its final throes on a rocky beach.



"Kinryuzan Temple in Asakusa"
– Hiroshige Ando



IV. Kinryu-zan Sensōji “Thunder Gate”

Bookmarks from Japan — Julie Giroux

Originally built in 941 AD, Kaminarimon is the outer gate leading to the Senso-ji Temple. This large gate features 4 statues, Shinto gods Fujin and Raijin are on the front and the Buddhist god Tenryu and goddess Kinryu on the back. Raijin on the west side is the god of thunder giving the gate its nickname of “Thunder Gate.”

Displayed in the middle of the gate is a giant red lantern with a wooden carving of a dragon. The gate has been destroyed and rebuilt many times over the centuries. The current gate dates to 1960 and the new lantern was donated in 2003.

The movement is opened by the lower wind instruments, with statement attack phrases by the timpani creating an urgent rumbling throughout the piece. There are frenzied flashes from the upper winds, finishing with a grandiose display by the brass section.



"Evening Snow at Kambara" – Hiroshige Ando
from "The 53 Stations of the Tokaido Highway"



廣重



V. Evening Snow at Kambara “Light is the Touch”

Bookmarks from Japan — Julie Giroux

This movement is based on the bookmark “Evening Snow at Kambara” by Hiroshige Ando, from the series The 53 Stations of the Tokaido Highway. Hiroshige travelled there with a group who were taking horses to be offered as gifts to the Imperial Court. This is number 16 of the prints.

Evening Snow at Kambara features solos by the 1st Flute, Alto Flute and Harp, accompanied by the concert band. Their haunting melodies mimic the swirling, lonesome journey of snowflakes falling, as they eventually come to rest.

The Kambara station was traditionally an unnumbered intermediary post, where a branching road led out to the pilgrimage location of Mount Minobu. It is now a railway station.





東海道五拾
三次之内

竹根

月水庵

廣重

永年堂

"Hakone"— Hiroshige Ando
from "The 53 Stations of the Tokaido Highway"

VI. Hakone – “Drifting”

Bookmarks from Japan — Julie Giroux

The movement is the conclusion of a work which was inspired by six bookmarks given to the composer. Each paper bookmark had beautiful colour sketches of scenes by famous Japanese artists, and inspired this symphony, which took six months to compose.

Hakone-juku was the tenth of the fifty-three stations of the Tokaido. At an elevation of 725m, it is the highest post station on the entire Tokaido, with spectacular views.

Subtitled ‘Drifting’, this piece reflects the composer’s love of fast cars and drifting - the art of keeping the car in a controlled skid while travelling around curves. The music depicts the adrenaline racing, heart pumping action of cars on the Tokaido Highway through Hakone and beyond. It is fast, furious, full of odd metres and features nearly every instrument in the band at least once.

