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RIDGE AND VALLEY (2011)

Program notes:

Ridge and Valley was commissioned by the Juniata College Wind Symphony, Dr. James Latten, Director, for their April 2012 Trustees' Concert. The title refers to the section of the Appalachian Mountains which stretches through the part of Central Pennsylvania where Juniata College is located. This "province" of the Appalachians is characterized by long unbroken ridges separated by long, unbroken valleys, many of which, like the nearby Kishacoquillas (or "Big") Valley, are especially picturesque. While beautiful from ground level, this geography is especially striking from the air, with the ridges described as looking like long wales of corduroy fabric. The piece honors Juniata College in two ways: first is the title, which makes oblique reference to "Mountain Day", one of Juniata's many unique and esoteric rituals, much beloved by students and faculty alike as it entails a day off from academic work. The second tribute to the college is more overt: I quote from the Juniata *Alma Mater* throughout the work. In most cases I quote only a phrase or two at a time, although by the end of the fanfare, the entire alma mater is heard (albeit in a variety of keys along the way!). Finally, if I can be allowed a melodramatic metaphor, the title, and the piece itself, with its overlapping gestures of loud and soft, marcato and legato, seems to me to encapsulate the emotional ups and downs of the college experience, a time of learning and soul-searching, and for many students, a crucially important period of self-discovery. In praise I raise my song.

Instrumentation: Concert Band

Duration: 2:30

Premiere: April 21, 2012, the Juniata College Wind Symphony, Huntingdon, PA, Jim Latten, Conductor