## SIXTY-SIX

 ROBERT SHELDON


THE COMPOSER

With over three million copies of his compositions and books sold, Robert Sheldon is one of the most performed composers of concert band in the world. Following seventeen years as Director of Concert Band Publications for Alfred Music, he now maintains an active composition and conducting schedule, regularly accepting commissions for new works. Sheldon received the Bachelor of Music in Music Education from the University of Miami and the Master of Fine Arts in Instrumental Conducting from the University of Florida. In 2020, VanderCook College of Music presented him with an honorary Doctorate in Music Education.

An internationally recognized clinician, Sheldon has conducted around the world and frequently appears on many international concert and contest lists. He has conducted Regional and All-State Honor Bands throughout the United States and abroad.

The American School Band Directors Association has honored him with the Volkwein Award for composition and the Stanbury Award for teaching, the International Assembly of Phi Beta Mu honored him with the International Outstanding Bandmaster Award, and he has been awarded membership in the American Bandmasters Association.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

Sixty-Six was commissioned by Peter J. Poletti for the Saint Louis Wind Symphony in St. Louis, Missouri (Thomas Poshak, Music Director; Gary Brandes, Associate Conductor), and dedicated to Dan Presgrave and Faye Siegel, friends of Mr. Poletti with whom he has shared "many notes." The inspiration for the piece is the legendary Route 66, also known as "The Main Street of America," "The Will Rogers Highway," and "The Mother Road." This storied highway opened in 1926, beginning in Chicago, Illinois and traversing Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and ending in California at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica. Covering 2,448 miles, this most beloved of America's highways is steeped in nostalgia and history as an icon of the golden age of road travel. Serving as a major corridor for those migrating west during the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, the road underwent many improvements as it grew in popularity through the years. "Mom-and-pop" businesses such as the many restaurants, motels, and service stations became a feature of a trip on Route 66, and as Americans took to the road, the neon signs and numerous "quirky" attractions along the way made for an unforgettablejourney, celebrating the excitement and freedom of the highway.

When the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 brought about a new system of limited access highways, smaller and more indirect roads became less traveled, leading to the decommissioning of Route 66 in 1985. This caused the demise of many businesses and roadside attractions, leaving some of the towns merely a shadow of their former selves. But the popularity of this road has led to a resurgence of interest, and many people attempt to retrace much of the original highway in a search for adventure and nostalgia as they take a trip back in time on this concrete piece of American history.

Sixty-Six is a musical depiction of a trip on this highway and is presented in five interconnected sections. The piece is intended to be accompanied by a video presentation of many iconic scenes one would experience on their way west, but (hopefully) the audience will enjoy the music with or without photographic references as the piece takes them on this journey. There are also some inside jokes intended to entertain the conductor and performing musicians as they make their way through the notation (explained on the following page).
"Road Trip - The Journey Begins" starts with a fanfare-type opening that is based on two intervals of a 6th, and also uses two measures of $6 / 4$ time alluding to the number " 66 ." The mood is joyful and carefree as we drive along. A reference to Chicago in the early days of the highway can be heard in the syncopation and trombone glissando, along with a frenetic feeling as if negotiating heavy traffic as we leave the city.
"Neon Nights - Signs of the Times" is a musical throwback to the early years of this highway, when jazz was popular, and the sound of Glenn Miller's Orchestra was on everyone's car radio. One can envision the numerous diners, drive-ins, and motels with their animated neon signs, creating a happy and fun-filled atmosphere along the way.
"Old Towns - Memories of Yesteryear" is a lyrical and nostalgic departure from the rest of the piece. Both intimate and sentimental, the music seems to yearn for a return to one's home, recalling sweet memories from the past. Since much of Route 66 was in the southwestern part of the country, an acoustic guitar seemed an appropriate instrument to play an important role in the melody as well as providing arpeggiated) harp-like accompaniments.
"Attractions - The Weird, Wonderful and the Wacky" is a musical homage to the unusual and quirky places seen along the way. The list of attractions is too long to mention, but one unifying descriptor is that most of them are a bit "off-beat" in some way. The tempo returns to the original fast pace in the opening of the piece, but includes a tempo marking of Allegro pazzo, which translates to "fast and insane." The conductor and musicians will find that in addition to depicting "off-beat" attractions, the music is literally OFF BEAT as it seems to change tempo and meter, but it actually does not, causing some of the downbeats to be displaced, which makes this section of the piece even wackier. A number of brief tableaus are visited: fast and bustling, old-time carnival, ragtime, cowboys and Native Americans, and some seriously silly music depicting the many oddities and items found in the numerous gift shops. This section ends with a trip to an old-fashioned filling station and the sound of a gas station pump bell.

Once the car is re-fueled, we are off to the final section, "Golden State Arrival - The End of the Journey." A brief fanfare includes a reference to California, Here I Come, and following the excitement of finally making it to the last state on our road trip, we settle into a pleasant ride that uses our original thematic material, building in anticipation of reaching the end of the road and culminating in a joyous conclusion.


## SIXTY-SIX

Presto ( $\mathrm{d}=144$ )
dedicated to Dan Presgrave and Faye Siegel
Road Trip - The Journey Begins














48


B. Cl.





57 Up-tempo swing ( $J=92$ )


Perc. 2

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BS. 2





Hns.
146 Più mosso (.$=84$ )






Cls.


Gtr.


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Cls.
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Perc. 1

Perc. 2

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Cls.




213 Tempo primo (L'istesso)
Golden State Arrival - The End of the Journey














Gtr.



