

**Recital Including World Premiere of Commissioned Composition
By Joe L. Alexander**

Friday, November 3, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.
Ford Academic Center Recital Hall

Program

Yom HaShoah

- I. Yellow Candle*
- II. Hear My Prayer*
- III. March of the Living*

Alan Goldspiel

Alan Goldspiel, guitar

Pop Music Suite

- I. Pop Music*
- III. Third Pop Music*

Joe L. Alexander

Joe L. Alexander, tuba

Sipsey Sweet

- I. Moderato/Allegro*
- II. Andante*
- III. Allegro*

Joe L. Alexander

Alan Goldspiel, guitar

Program Notes:

Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, memorializes those who died in the Shoah, which means catastrophe or utter destruction in Hebrew and refers to the atrocities that were committed against the Jewish people during World War II. Here, the guitar scordatura, rhythmic figures, and melodic motives express the emotions experienced in such memories. For me, it still feels necessary to remember and remind. Jewish tradition requires the lighting of a 24 hour candle during periods of mourning. Burning a specially designed *Yellow Candle* mourns the Six Million who perished and keeps their memory alive. The music is strongly influenced by the song *Es Brent (It Burns)* by Mordechai Gebirtig. *Hear My Prayer* musically petitions us to honor and remember all the souls who died in the Holocaust. Woven into this movement is the *Sh'ma* in one of its most familiar musical representations. The major/minor mode-shifts juxtapose hope (never again) and sadness in a most fundamental way. *The March of the Living* brings students from around the world to Poland, where they explore the remnants of the Holocaust in a silent march from Auschwitz to Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration camp complex built during World War II. Set in 7/8, the music's asymmetry reflects on walking in those steps learning of such things.

The first movement of *Pop Music Suite* was composed for tuba in 2006 for a Louisiana Composers Consortium concert held in Natchitoches, LA. It explores rhythmic ideas prominent in rock music. *Pop Music Too* continues the idea of developing prominent rock rhythm. It was composed in August of 2009 and premiered later that month in Guin, Alabama. The *Third Pop Music* was written in November of 2009 and premiered later that month on a Louisiana Composers Consortium concert in Ruston, Louisiana. The piece was later arranged for bass trombone.

According to Wikipedia, the Sipsey River is a 145-mile-long swampy low-lying river in west central Alabama. The Sipsey is surrounded by some exceptional wetland habitat, and originates near Glen Allen, and discharges into the Tombigbee River near Vienna. For me, I know it as a swamp located between my home in Tuscaloosa and where I work, Columbus, MS. I wrote *Sipsey Sweet* for my dear friend, Alan Goldspiel, in the summer and fall of 2017 as my commission piece for the 2017 Mississippi Music Teachers Association conference meeting. Today marks the world premiere of the piece.