



BY KEH LUKE

The Peabody Wind Ensemble conducted by Harlan Parker, with Ambassador Haron Amin as narrator, performs the tribute, "The Lion of Panjshir."

## PERFORMING ARTS

### Peabody Wind Ensemble

Two and a half years ago, an Ashburn composer began writing his second symphony after being inspired by an Afghan resistance leader's life. On Wednesday evening, the Peabody Wind Ensemble presented the premiere of David Gaines's "The Lion of Panjshir" at Friedberg Concert Hall in Baltimore. It was a stirring tribute to Ahmed Shah Massoud, who battled the Soviet Red Army during the 1980s and later united and led the Northern Alliance against the Taliban until his assassination in 2001.

By incorporating a narrator into his symphony as Aaron Copland did in "A Lincoln Portrait," Gaines brings Massoud to life in the 20-minute piece. "Lion" has a distinctive Middle Eastern tonality. Mixed meters, ethnic rhythms and melodic passages are carefully crafted to flow seamlessly with the narration.

Under the direction of Harlan Parker, 40 members of the wind ensemble gave "Lion" a captivating performance. Afghanistan's ambassador to Japan, Haron Amin—a onetime spokesman for Massoud—was the narrator, and photos of Massoud were projected on a screen above the stage.

Audience members wept after a chilling account of Massoud's death in the third movement, punctuated by explosive chords and a shocking silence. As a few bars of Afghanistan's national anthem filled the hall at the symphony's conclusion, a feeling of hope prevailed.

Gaines has achieved a milestone in the canon of symphonic band literature with a substantial work that transcends cultural barriers.

—Grace Jean