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### A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF REPERTOIRE CONDUCTED ON CONCERTS

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A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF REPERTOIRE  
CONDUCTED ON CONCERTS

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Music

Gae Phillips

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 2017

A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF REPERTOIRE  
CONDUCTED ON CONCERTS

Gae Phillips

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My parents—thanks for all the years of lessons and attending concerts.

Dr. Russell Jones

Dr. Robert Schott

# A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF REPERTOIRE CONDUCTED ON CONCERTS

An Abstract of the Thesis by  
Gae Phillips

The purpose of this thesis project was to analyze and review six pieces of repertoire for the wind band. The works reviewed were rehearsed and conducted by the author on various concerts throughout a two-year period. During this time, the author focused on the effect conducting actually has on the ensemble's overall performance.

All of the literature conducted is attainable by a middle or high school level band and varies in difficulty from a grade level 2 through grade level 5. Each chapter contains information pertinent to rehearsing and conducting the work.

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## **CHAPTER I**

**... *GO***

**by Samuel R. Hazo**

### **Composer**

Samuel R. Hazo, born in 1966, resides in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was the winner of two composition contests sponsored by the National Band Association—the William D. Revelli in 2003 and the Merrill Jones in 2001. Mr. Hazo composes literature for all levels from public school to television, radio and stage scoring. He has written compositions for performances with actors including Brooke Shields, James Earl Jones, David Conrad and Richard Kiley as well as arrangements for three-time Grammy Award winning singer/songwriter Lucinda Williams. His compositions have been recorded and performed by prominent ensembles such as the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, the Birmingham Symphonic Winds and the Klavier Wind Project's recordings with Eugene Migliaro Corporon. National Association for Music Education, Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, National Band Association/Texas Bandmasters Convention, College Band Directors' National Association Convention and numerous all-state honors

ensembles have premiered works by Samuel Hazo. The GIA series *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* have featured many of Hazo's compositions.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Hazo is a teacher as well a composer. He has taught at every level from kindergarten through college. He received bachelor's and master's degrees from Duquesne University.<sup>2</sup> The composer's affiliation with such a broad range of grade levels makes his compositions available in many levels of difficulty.

### **Composition**

"...*GO* puts the hall on notice that a concert has just begun,"<sup>3</sup> writes composer Samuel R. Hazo. "Dynamic brass hits, woodwind runs, shimmering chorales and percussion breaks keep both the player and the listener on seat's edge during this tour-de-force overture."<sup>4</sup> The composition is listed as a grade 5+ in difficulty, is three and one-half minutes in length and serves as a great concert opener. This piece is powerful and definitely will slap the audience in the face. Hazo indicates that "...*GO* is a tribute to many composers whom I hold in high regard."<sup>5</sup> Hazo acknowledges that ...*GO* contains influences of the works of Ravel, Hindemith, Rodrigo, Holst and Vaughan Williams.<sup>6</sup> Upon performing and conducting many of Samuel Hazo's compositions, I have found

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel R., Hazo. ...*GO*, (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel R. Hazo, "...GO", [www.samuelrhazo.com/grade-5.html](http://www.samuelrhazo.com/grade-5.html) (accessed February 12, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Hazo.

<sup>6</sup> Hazo.

that his literature contains a true educational value and students enjoy and look forward to playing his works.

### **Background**

...*GO* was written as a commission by Carol Lynn Mizell to commemorate her 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as conductor of the Denton Community Band. Hazo proclaims that “there are many great pieces that, when placed in the overture slot, just come up short. This is why I set out to write ...*GO*. I wanted to offer the wind band world an obvious lead-off hitter with power.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Technical Considerations**

Although the piece is a grade 5 plus, it is playable by the advanced high school ensemble. Much of the piece is written in block scoring format, making it easy to rehearse, but the implications for matching articulations and precision are extremely challenging. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩}=138$  and has frequent meter changes throughout. The piece shifts frequently between duple and triple, making it challenging. At times Hazo has scored duples against triplets. Musicians must be able to execute their parts independently.

The range of the piece is remarkably high for brass players. Trumpet players play G5 up to C6 and stay in this range throughout. The piece is intense throughout the entire three minutes; therefore brass players must be capable of executing energy and power throughout the duration. Woodwinds have many flourishes of sixteenth and triplet patterns that are written in *tutti* passages and must be executed with great precision. The

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<sup>7</sup> Hazo.

piece requires seven percussionists. The percussion parts need to be powerful and almost marching band like at times.

### **Stylistic Considerations**

The style of ...*GO* is driving and accented throughout the duration. Most of the dynamic levels are *forte* and therefore the ensemble must be able to execute their parts with control. Care must be taken to maintain an intense sound but still keep a balanced, controlled and blended ensemble sound.

Matching articulations across the ensemble is another factor that is likely to be a challenge. Meter changes occur within sections of the piece every measure. Therefore, musicians must articulate the accents with considerable precision to ensure that the effect is delivered with the proper intent of the composer.

### **Rehearsal and Conducting Considerations**

Hazo introduces theme A in the opening four measures. It is important that the ensemble execute all accents with precision. Ample space between the notes also must be demonstrated as an ensemble. The triplet patterns in measures 2 and 6 must be evenly spaced. The B theme is introduced under theme A at measure 5. The ensemble must be aware that this theme is to be played rigid and with much accent and separation. The feeling of forward driving intensity must be conveyed throughout. The percussion interjections on beat 1 at measures 15 and 19 are extremely vital and must be brought out with vigor and force. The china and suspended cymbals also play a significant role in thrusting the piece forward.

At measure 28 the tension is finally released and the dynamic level is brought from a *fff* to *mezzo piano*. Consideration must be given by the woodwind players with the triplet passages not to overplay the theme played by the bassoon and bass clarinet.

The composer created a key change at measure 36 and re-states the opening theme in a hushed and soft manner. Woodwinds again state the D theme above the A theme. Woodwinds must be careful not to rush the triplets and trills. The entire beat should be used to execute the triplets and trills.

The percussion section must play measures 44 and 45 with confidence. These two measures must be bombastic and in a marching band style. Measures 46 through 55 all contain a different meter played in block style and care must be given to play all accents with matched length. All quarter notes must be brought out. The conductor should make sure that the ensemble executes a clean release on the eighth notes in measures 51 and 53.

Measures 59 through 74 can be difficult to denote what voice or section should be dominant. The alto and tenor saxophones, trumpet three, and the horn section should lead the ensemble throughout this section. The upper woodwinds entering with a counter-melody at measure 62 should be careful not to dominate the melody throughout this passage. This entire section should be played with energy and forward motion and should gradually build to a climax at measure 66.

The piece returns to the original style of the initial theme that was introduced in measure 28. This theme serves as a bridge to develop or shift the piece into a new theme at measure 91. The original theme B that was stated in measures 5-13 is restated at measure 84. This theme drives the piece into theme H at measure 91 and as noted on the

score measure 91 should be “blossoming with sound.”<sup>8</sup> Because of the intense range of the trumpets in measures 84 through 90, caution should be taken to not let the trumpet section overplay and thus climax before measure 91. The high point should occur at measure 91 where the key also changes to concert F.

Measure 110 introduces yet another new theme that releases the culmination and tension of measures 91 through 109. At measure 110 and 111 the timpani and bass drum parts should prevail under the B-flat major chord. These parts should be defining and heard as crisp.

The pinnacle of the entire piece occurs at measure 120. The final theme is introduced and the piece abruptly soars into a triple *forte* with block chords. Bombastic percussion and woodwind flourishes add to the climactic and rousing finish.

### **Suggested Listening**

As noted previously, Hazo suggests that ...*GO* is a tribute to many composers that he holds in high regard. He reflects the idea that the piece holds similarities of Ravel, Hindemith and Rodrigo.<sup>9</sup> An excellent listening model would be *Symphony in B-flat* by Paul Hindemith—this piece is a mainstay of the wind band repertoire. The use of dissonance and continually developing themes intertwined with developing tension is an excellent example of the creativity Hazo portrays in ...*GO*.

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<sup>8</sup> Hazo.

<sup>9</sup> Hazo.

## **Conclusion**

...*GO* is a powerful and exhilarating concert opener. This composition will definitely capture the audience's attention. The piece is invigorating and leaves one feeling inspired and awestruck. The range is extremely strenuous and demanding for the brass. The upper woodwinds must be able to execute flourishes with precision. The piece will be a challenge to any high school ensemble. The Columbus Unified High School Titan Band performed this piece on February 16, 2017 in a joint concert with the Pittsburg State University Wind Ensemble and at the Kansas Music Educators conference on February 24, 2017.

## CHAPTER II

### *Tricycle*

by Andrew Boysen, Jr.

### Composer

Andrew Boysen, Jr. currently is a professor at the University of New Hampshire. Previously, he taught at Indiana State University and Cary-Grove High School in Illinois.<sup>10</sup> Boysen is highly sought after as a guest conductor and clinician. He actively works with high school and university ensembles and state honor ensembles throughout the United States, Great Britain and Australia.<sup>11</sup>

Boysen received a Doctorate of Musical Arts in wind conducting from the Eastman School of Music, where he served as conductor of the Eastman Wind Orchestra and assistant conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble. In 1993, he received his master's degree in wind conducting from Northwestern University. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in music education and music composition from the University of Iowa.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Boysen Jr., "Andrew Boysen Jr.", [www.andrewboysenjr.com](http://www.andrewboysenjr.com) (accessed March 07, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



Andrew Boysen is an active composer who frequently receives commissions from festival, high school and university bands from across the United States. Boysen's compositions are to some extent unique compared to the typical repertoire for the wind band. The peculiarity and distinct nature of his writing has granted him merit and high distinction. "Boysen won the International Horn Society Composition Contest in 2000, the University of Iowa Honors Composition Prize in 1991 and has twice won the Claude T. Smith Memorial Band Composition Contest, in 1991 and 1994."<sup>13</sup> Neil A. Kjos Music Company, Wingert-Jones Music, Alfred Music, Masters Music, and C. Alan Publications all publish Boysen's works.<sup>14</sup>

### **Composition**

*Tricycle* is light-hearted, fun and playful—resembling the whimsical innocence of a child riding a tricycle. The piece is listed as a grade 3, but because the meter is in 5/4, it will definitely challenge middle level students. This work contains an abundance of teaching material. The work incorporates singing, hemiola, and ostinato patterns. Due to the fact that the composition contains many musical elements that are not common in this grade of a piece, it will require some extra groundwork to properly prepare the piece. The benefits that the students will receive by being exposed to the challenging components presented in *Tricycle* will be worth the extra rehearsal time. After conducting and performing several of Boysen's compositions, I find this one to be a personal favorite.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## Background

“*Tricycle* was commissioned by the Northshore Schools, District 112 (IL) for the inaugural All-City Band Festival.”<sup>15</sup> “The title of the work refers to both the structure of the piece and the event for which it was commissioned.”<sup>16</sup> The piece was written for the All-City Band Festival that involved three schools which required that they perform and work together as one—much resembling the manner in which the wheels of a tricycle must work together to move forward.<sup>17</sup> Boysen replicates this notion by introducing three separate themes and then combining them to work together as one musical entity.<sup>18</sup>

## Technical Considerations

*Tricycle* is listed as a grade 3 and is playable by a middle school level band. Although the work doesn’t contain a key signature it centers most of the time in C major. The piece contains no issues concerning ranges as the trumpet reaches D4 and the trombone to E3.

The primary demand of this composition falls within the aspect of the rhythms, 5/4 meter, and tempo. The tempo is marked at a brisk ♩=208. The ensemble will benefit from rehearsing with a click track as the ostinato parts are lengthy and attention must be given to keep the tempo steady. It is essential that articulations are played crisply and matched. The piece should be rehearsed at a slower tempo until the groove is established. Many entrances occur on beats other than beat one, which will pose a challenge.

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Boysen, Jr., *Tricycle*, (San Diego, CA: Neil A. Kjos Music Company, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## Stylistic Considerations

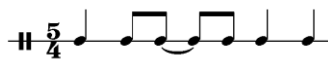

The momentum of this composition is dependent on the ostinato patterns establishing a steady groove that is well articulated. The work is light and brisk throughout and the ensemble will need to play with the feeling of forward or continual motion. It is essential that articulations are played light and detached as all ostinato are written in block format.

The percussion plays a significant role in establishing the groove and motion of the piece. It is imperative that the percussion maintains a steady tempo with a light style. Attention to dynamics is also pertinent to establishing the overall playful and lighthearted effect of the composition.

## Rehearsal and Conducting Considerations

The composition is based on three distinct themes and there are two significant or recurring ostinato patterns that prevail throughout the work. The block writing of each of the ostinato makes the piece fairly easy to rehearse. The two main ostinato patterns are passed to many different sections of the ensemble (see Figure 1) and therefore it is beneficial to rehearse the rhythms of the themes on a concert C. Using a click track and practicing the rhythms at a slower tempo will help students establish confidence with the 5/4 meter.

Figure 1.

<i>Ostinato 1</i>	
<i>Ostinato 2</i>	

The piece opens with the first ostinato played by the French horn and baritone on a concert C with sand paper blocks. The *piano* dynamic level in the opening can pose a challenge to maintaining a well-defined and controlled articulation. The marimba adds resonance to the opening by rolling on a concert C. This ostinato pattern is heard throughout the piece and really establishes the groove or motion of the entire composition. To ensure the ostinato is played smoothly, the conductor could conduct the opening in a four pattern (dotted quarter/dotted quarter/quarter/quarter).

The piece builds to a *mezzo forte* at measure 5 when the saxophone, bass clarinet, bassoon and trombone enter on a C major chord. The long chords that occur at measures 5-6, 8-9, 10-11 and so forth should be played legato and a slight swell added to the motion. Measure 12-13 contains a hemiola. Conducting each note of the hemiola in a 5/4 pattern will assure that the rhythm is executed with precision. The entrance on beat two of measure 14 by low brass and low woodwinds is a definite challenge.

The conductor must give a distinct and pronounced cue at measure 14 and might consider conducting measure 15 in a four pattern of asymmetrical beat lengths. A slight ritardando occurs at measure 16; therefore, measures 15 and 16 should be conducted in a 5/4 pattern as shown in Figure 2.

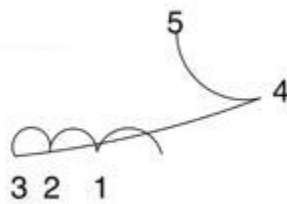


Figure 2.

The first theme is introduced at measure 17 in the upper woodwinds, marimba and trumpets. This theme should be played light and detached. While the quarter notes in this theme should be light, care should be taken not to be choppy or too heavy. I conducted this section in the typical 5/4 pattern as shown in Figure 2. Up to this point, the articulations in the piece have all been connected. Changing the conducting pattern to show the quarter notes in the 5/4 meter helps render the detached feeling that needs to occur at this moment in the piece.

The second ostinato pattern occurs at measure 17 in the baritone, horns, tenor sax and bass clarinet. This ostinato is somewhat of a counter-melody throughout this section. The first or main ostinato is played in this section by the snare drum, trombones and alto saxophones on concert C; these sections should be deliberate not to dominate. Measures 17 through 25 should sound full and maintain motion.

Measures 25 through 30 are a transition. At measure 25, I changed my conducting pattern from the one mentioned in Figure 2 to a four beat pattern of unequal lengths (dotted quarter/dotted quarter/quarter/quarter). This helps set up the cue for the transitional melody that is presented by the low brass and woodwinds occurring on beat 5 of measure 26. I switched back to conducting 5/4 at measure 30 in order to cue the C major concert runs that occur in upper woodwinds. Measure 30 will pose a definite challenge, as the entrance is awkward—falling on beat two. Theme 1 is restated in measures 31 through 39 and returns to a feeling of fullness and motion.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Larry Blocher, et al., *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, ed. Richard Miles, Vol. 4, (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2002), 236.

The development of Theme 1 occurs at measure 39. Boysen alternates the melody between F major and B-flat major—ultimately returning to the key of C major.<sup>20</sup> The trumpets alternate the melody with the saxes, horns, and low brass sections—in sort of a call and response fashion. The triangle is introduced in this section and must be dampened by the hand as marked.

A major transition occurs at measure 52 as the composition changes meter to 4/4. The piece culminates to this transition as the C major triad at measure 52 is marked *ff*. The snare drum continues a variation of the original or main ostinato played with brushes. The hemiola that occurs in the bass drum part can be difficult to master. This part must be played against the ostinato in the snare drum and the wood block, horn and alto sax quarter note pattern on concert C. This eight bar transition should gradually taper in volume and create the feeling of dying away.

Theme 2 is presented in measure 62 with the trumpet solo playing under the entire band singing a concert C.<sup>21</sup> The trumpet soloist must be able to play the section with good phrasing and tone. This section should remain brisk but give the feeling of quiet anticipation.

Theme 3 is introduced in low woodwinds at measure 82. This entrance can be problematic as it comes in on beat three. This theme should be played legato and with alternated breathing, as the phrase should not be broken throughout the section. A

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

development of Themes 3 and 1 occurs at measure 89 with modified statements of Theme 1.<sup>22</sup>

The piece returns to 5/4 at measure 106 and all three themes are presented in succession. I conducted the piece in this section in a four pattern of uneven beats (dotted quarter/dotted quarter/quarter/quarter). Substantial motion is going on during this section and thought must be given to what sections should be predominant as the melody or themes are passed around. In measure 110 Theme 1 should be prevalent in the upper woodwinds, horn and marimba. In measure 115 Theme 3 is presented by the low brass and should definitely be dominant. At measure 118, Theme 2 is restated again in the trumpet section and should take precedence. At this point, all three themes are being played simultaneously.<sup>23</sup> The climax of the piece occurs at measure 126. Attention must be given to play the articulations with precision.

Boysen abruptly diminishes the climax of the piece at measure 130. The coda of the composition returns to material that was presented in the introduction. The ending of the piece should again remain energetic but at the same time give the feeling of dying away. The dynamics fade but the tempo does not slow down. Boysen projects the evanescent feeling of the composition by decreasing the scoring. The final four measures of the piece are played by one French horn, baritone and sand paper blocks.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

### **Suggested Listening**

Boysen's compositions tend to contain block style writing and an abundance of ostinato and rhythmic articulations. *Kirkpatrick Fanfare* is another one of his compositions that contains similarity of articulation, ostinato and block writing.

### **Conclusion**

Boysen develops and shapes most of the composition with a simple C major chord. Many times during the piece a C pedal is the impetus of the composition. Sudden splashes of auxiliary percussion instruments add color and interest to the composition. Boysen's style of writing is a definite break from the norm within the concert band repertoire. It is fascinating how Boysen's writing in *Tricycle* really does emit the perception of riding a tricycle. His compositions embrace a straightforward feeling of innocence.

The Columbus Unified Junior High School Band performed this piece in concert on March 8, 2016 and at the Mid-America Music Festival at Pittsburg State University on April 16, 2016.



## CHAPTER III

### *Sheltering Sky*

by John Mackey

#### Composer

John Mackey was born October 1, 1973, in Philadelphia, Ohio. He received a Master of Music degree from The Julliard School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Cleveland Institute of Music.<sup>24</sup> “Mr. Mackey particularly enjoys writing music for dance and for symphonic winds, and he has focused on those mediums for the past few years.”<sup>25</sup> His works have been performed throughout the United States and internationally. He has received numerous commissions—writing works for the American Bandmasters Association, the Dallas Wind Symphony, and a concerto for the New York Philharmonic Principal Trombonist Joseph Alessi.<sup>26</sup>

“John has been recognized with numerous grants and awards from organizations including ASCAP (Concert Music Awards, 1999 through 2008; Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, 2002 and 2003).”<sup>27</sup> The Brooklyn Philharmonic premiered Mackey’s

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<sup>24</sup> John Mackey, Osti Music: “Bio,” [www.ostimusic.com/Bio.php](http://www.ostimusic.com/Bio.php), (accessed March 11, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

composition *Redline Tango* in February 2003. The Dallas Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the Bergen Philharmonic of Norway also performed the work.<sup>28</sup> In 2004, Mackey transcribed a version of the work for wind band. This was Mackey's first work for the wind band medium. That version has received over 250 performances worldwide. "The wind version won the 2004 Walter Beeler Memorial Composition Prize, and in 2005, the ABA/Ostwald Award from the American Bandmaster's Association, making John the youngest composer to receive the honor."<sup>29</sup> In 2009, he again received the ABA/Ostwald Award and the National Band Association's William D. Revelli Award for *Aurora Awakes*.<sup>30</sup>

### Composition

*Sheltering Sky* was written in 2012 and is 6 minutes in length. The Thompson Junior High School and Traugher Junior High School in Oswego, Illinois commissioned the work to be premiered by the school district's honor band in April 2012.<sup>31</sup> The piece is entirely lyrical. As program notes in the score by Jake Wallace read:

The work unfolds in a sweeping arch structure, with cascading phrases that elide effortlessly. The introduction presents softly articulated harmonies stacking through a surrounding placidity. From there emerge statements of each of the two folksong-like melodies – the call as a sighing descent in solo oboe, and its answer as a hopeful rising line in trumpet. Though the composer's trademark virtuosity is absent, his harmonic language remains. Mackey avoids traditional triadic sonorities almost exclusively, instead choosing more indistinct chords with diatonic extensions (particularly seventh and ninth chords) that facilitate the hazy

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Larry Blocher, et. al, *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, ed. Richard Miles, vol. 9, (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2013), 239-240.

sonic world that the piece inhabits. Near cadences, chromatic dissonances fill the narrow spaces in these harmonies, creating an even greater pull toward wistful nostalgia.<sup>32</sup>

### **Background**

Although the work contains much dissonance, it also has a folk song like quality.

As the program note by Jake Wallace in the score reads:

Mackey takes a play from Percy Grainger. Grainger's *Colonial Song* seemingly sets a beautiful folksong melody in an enchanting way (so enchanting, in fact, that he reworked the tune into two other pieces: *Australian Up-Country Tune* and *The Gum-Suckers March*). In reality, however, Grainger's melody was entirely original – his own concoction to express how he felt about his native Australia.<sup>33</sup>

The melodies of *Sheltering Sky* seem to have a familiar quality. As noted in the score, “hints of the contours and colors of *Danny Boy* and *Shenandoah* are perceptible.”<sup>34</sup>

Despite the similarities of the folk songs mentioned, the melodies of *Sheltering Sky* are all original.

### **Technical Considerations**

*Sheltering Sky* is scored in concert E-flat. The work is listed as a grade 3 and is accessible by most high school bands. The composition does not pose any real technical challenges concerning rhythm or range.

Mackey's writing does not fall within the standard harmonic language. The piece employs the use of dissonance and suspensions. Mackey particularly uses fourths, sevenths, and ninths. The real demand of the piece is within the harmonic structure of

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<sup>32</sup> John Mackey. *Sheltering Sky*, (Osti Music, Inc., 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

*Sheltering Sky*. It will be essential that the conductor analyze the chord structure of the piece in order to make informed decisions of which notes of the chord should be brought out. Intonation will be difficult to master as some of the cadences do not resolve and Mackey makes use of extended harmonies that can be difficult to grasp.<sup>35</sup>

### **Stylistic Considerations**

The work is extremely legato and connected. Although the rhythms are not difficult, the extreme listlessness of the tempo makes the composition very difficult to execute. The phrasing places a high demand on the performer. Meter changes occur almost every measure throughout the first sixteen measures of the piece. The tempo is subject to taking great freedom; therefore, the musicians must be able to interpret what the conductor is communicating.

The scoring is very sparse in the opening and requires musicians to play with few or one per part. It is essential that the players are able to demonstrate a good characteristic tone on their instruments and be capable of playing with good intonation. Mastery of this composition will require a level of advanced musicianship, as good listening skills are crucial to accomplish a polished product.

### **Rehearsal and Conducting Considerations**

The first eight measures of *Sheltering Sky* serve as an introduction that establishes the harmonic texture of the piece. The opening is very dissonant and thought provoking—emitting a sense of contemplative meditation. The first six measures open with a concert E-flat pedal sustained by marimba and clarinet. Breathing should be

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<sup>35</sup> Blocher, 240.

staggered, as the pedal E-flat should sound continuous. The solo alto sax enters on beat three of measure one, playing a major second against the concert E-flat. The tension is released on beat two of measure 2 as Mackey resolves the major second to a major third. The composer creates color and texture in measure 3 by incorporating fourths and sixths into the harmonic structure. Care should be taken to first tune the third of the pedal E-flat throughout the introduction.

The introduction is marked *pianissimo* and should be played with expression. The conductor should take liberty with the tempo and dynamics, letting the harmonic textures expand and contract. The French horn has a jump of a major sixth in measure 6, making the entrance extremely difficult to play controlled and soft. The harmonic structure of the whole note at measure 7 is extremely difficult to tune as it consists of major seconds and fourths against the pedal E-flat. Make sure students are aware of where their note falls within the structure of the chord. It is also helpful to inform students to bring out the concert E-flat, G, and B-flat in this texture. The entrance of the euphonium and tenor sax at measure 8 can be problematic as concert B natural is a difficult note to tune on both instruments.

The introduction illustrates the feeling of holding back and/or anticipation. Mackey finally releases this tension by revealing the first theme in measure 10 played by the oboe. At this point the composition should exude motion. The oboe soloist should take freedom to express the melodic line. Although a tenuto marking is not indicated in the score, the melody should have a slight lean on the downbeat in measures 10 and 13 (see Figure 3).



Figure 3.

The frequent meter changes in measures 11 through 16 are difficult to perform. The conductor will need to give clear beat patterns but also exemplify expression and movement. The conductor should subdivide the beat pattern on beat three of measure 15 to help the performers play the marked *ritardano* with precision.

Mackey introduces the second theme in measure 16. This melody is played by the flute and trumpet. The euphonium has a counter-melody that should be brought out in this section. The supporting harmonic structure throughout this section lies within the lower woodwinds and trombone section as tuba and string bass are not scored through this section.

Theme 1 returns at measure 25 with a call and response treatment of the melody between the flute/clarinet and oboe/alto sax/horn. Mackey develops a variation of Theme 1 in measure 32 and indicates more motion to be played through the section. Mackey increases the texture of the harmony in measures 36 through 39, making this the first evidence in the piece that the entire ensemble is playing. The dotted eighth/sixteenth note pattern on beat three of measure 36 should be brought out.

Theme 2 returns at measure 40 with thick scoring for the entire ensemble. The piece should be stately at this point with a controlled, balanced *forte* sound. Rich harmonies prevail throughout this elegant section. Mackey's treatment of chromaticism and dissonance in measure 42 is beautiful and compelling—the first trombone and

euphonium should soar in this section. The climax of the entire piece occurs at measure 46. This section will captivate the audience with the stimulating texture of the harmonies. In this section, the basses and low woodwinds should dominate followed by the dissonant notes—this will result in a pleasing balance of the ensemble.

After the climax, the composition recedes and Theme 1 returns with the melody in the solo oboe. Mackey concludes the piece with the return of the introduction. Although, the introduction and coda are sparsely scored it is interesting to note that Mackey closes the final two measures of the piece with full band scoring—suspending the fourth until it resolves on the final measure.

### **Suggested Listening**

John Mackey's compositions for the wind band are of worth and merit. His works are sure to be recognized as standard wind band repertoire. Other works by Mackey of noted excellence are: *Strange Humors*, *Aurora Awakes*, *Redline Tango*, *Lightning Field* and *Foundry*.

### **Conclusion**

The writing in this piece is simply exquisite. The haunting dissonances and the rich chord structure give the piece an array of pomp and grandeur. The treatment of the bowed vibraphone and the two marimba parts also add great luster to the composition. *Sheltering Sky* will leave the audience breathless. As discussed in the program notes in the score:

Each new phrase begins over the resolution of the previous one, creating a sense of motion that never completely stops. The melodies themselves unfold and

eventually dissipate until at last the serene introductory material returns – the opening chords finally coming to a rest.<sup>36</sup>

The Columbus Unified High School Band performed *Sheltering Sky* on March 8, 2016 at Columbus Unified High School and March 14, 2016 at the Kansas State Large Group Festival, Bicknell Center for Performing Arts, Pittsburg State University.

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<sup>36</sup> Mackey.



## CHAPTER IV

### *In Heaven's Air*

by Samuel R. Hazo

#### Composition

*In Heaven's Air* was commissioned by Dr. Robert Cameron, Director of Bands at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After experiencing the sudden death of his mother, Dr. Cameron requested the piece be written to grant closure and help him through the grieving process.<sup>37</sup> According to Hazo, “the work is about the letting go of a loved one from your hands into the hands of God, as well as the glorious transformation of the soul to heaven.”<sup>38</sup> The title of the piece is taken from William Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 21*:

And then believe me, my love is as fair  
As any Mother’s child, though not so bright  
As those gold candles fixed in Heaven’s air.<sup>39</sup>

The work is a lyrical piece that states a chorale-like melody three times. The piece is somewhat in rondo form in that the piece is connected by different transitional

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<sup>37</sup> Samuel R. Hazo, *In Heaven's Air*, (FJH Music Company Inc., 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

material.<sup>40</sup> “The opening section of the piece represents love on earth followed by the letting go of a loved one and the transformation of the soul to heaven, then God’s love, and finally the soul’s arrival in heaven.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Background**

The Duquesne University Wind Symphony, conducted by Robert Cameron, premiered *In Heaven’s Air* on March 3, 2001 at the Music Educator’s National Conference.<sup>42</sup> This is one of Hazo’s earlier compositions for band. “Many of Hazo’s works are programmatic in that they are inspired by or representative of ideas, events, or people. *In Heaven’s Air* is a piece that is dedicated to a lost loved one and also represents the idea of the soul’s transmigration.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Technical Considerations**

The work is approximately four minutes in length and is very lyrical. The work is a grade three and could be played by advanced middle level bands. Although the piece would not pose a challenge to high school level groups, the beauty of the piece would be musically gratifying for any level of group.

The piece poses no challenge with regard to rhythms. The piece is scored in A-flat major with a modulation to B-flat major. The range of the piece is the most prevalent technical concern: B-flat 6 for flute, E-flat 6 for clarinet, B-flat 5 for trumpet, G 5 for

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<sup>40</sup> Larry Blocher, et al, *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, ed. Richard Miles, vol. 5, (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2004), 181.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 181-182.

horn and F 4 for trombone. Brass players need to maintain connected and lyrical lines while not dominating the balance of the ensemble. The demands of the range makes sustaining the expressive elements of the piece difficult.

### **Stylistic Considerations**

This composition demands that all musicians play legato and expressively throughout. All notes must be connected and there must be no breaks in the phrases. Students must be able to play with emotion, as great freedom should be taken by the conductor with regard to tempo. In order for the full meaning of the piece to be conveyed, the piece must be performed with great dynamic contrast and control.

### **Rehearsal and Conducting Considerations**

The opening of the piece should be soft and rubato—a feeling of expanding and contracting. The first seven measures should be played without any breaks. A breath should be taken between measures seven and eight with a slight rubato at measures eight and nine. Measure ten concludes the introduction with the dissonance added to an E-flat seven chord. Care should be taken to balance this chord—making sure the dissonant notes are brought out.

A brass choir states the main chorale-like melody in measure 11 through 20. Hazo suggests that the material in this section represents love on earth.<sup>44</sup> It is interesting how Hazo creates a splash of color by adding the oboe and flute for three measures. The composer creates much harmonic texture and because of the long-drawn-out sense of tempo, players will have to be cognizant of dotted notes and ties throughout. Frequent

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<sup>44</sup> Hazo.

meter changes also occur through this section as well. Brass players will need to be mindful to play legato and connected—somewhat difficult to attain considering the range of this section.

Transitional material in the key of E-flat, similar to the introduction, is presented at measure 21 through 28. A counter-melody occurs and should be brought out by the oboe, alto saxophone 2, trumpet 1, horn 3 and 4, euphonium and bells. The use of a suspended cymbal adds a feeling of expansion to the section. A short break should be conducted between measures 26 and 27. Measures 28 and 29 should contain no break.

The main melody is re-stated for full ensemble in measures 29-38. The entire ensemble should give a slight push on the dotted half note in measure 28 into measure 29. This section returns to the key of A-flat and as noted by Hazo in the score, the sound should be fuller than the previous passage.<sup>45</sup> The melody is stated here in piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet 1, tenor saxophone, trumpet 1, euphonium and chimes.

A second transition occurs at measures 39 through 49, once again in the key of E-flat. This passage should be hushed, sweet and lush. The timbre of the woodwinds offers an innocent feeling of simplicity in the opening of this section. Measures 39 through 42 are sort of a call and response—the euphonium, tenor saxophone and first clarinet respond to the woodwinds opening statement in measures 41-42 with a stately antiphonal-like response. It is essential that the eighth notes in measures 45-46 are brought out to create an expansion. The passage suddenly builds momentum in measures

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<sup>45</sup> Hazo.

47 through 49. Hazo indicates in the score, “At measure 49, there must be tension in the chord because it symbolizes the grief and human resistance toward losing a loved one.”<sup>46</sup>

“At measure 50, the music depicts God’s love and care for the soul and should be performed with a gentle nature.”<sup>47</sup> This passage is abruptly tender, soft and quiet and should be played with great liberty and rubato. The music should depict the feeling of “letting go.” Measures 56 through 59 should build and, according to Hazo, these represent the soul’s transformation into heaven.<sup>48</sup> “It should be played powerfully and with a representative level of grandeur.”<sup>49</sup>

The main melody is presented a third time in measures 60 through 69. Hazo presents the main melody this time in the key of B-flat. The section should be played with pomp and portray a feeling of majesty and splendor. A full balanced, rich and dark ensemble sound should occur. Considering the range of the upper woodwinds and first trumpet, effort must be expended to keep the sound dark and smooth.

### **Suggested Listening**

According to Hazo, “there are four creative elements of music from which you can begin: melody, harmony, rhythm and texture/timbre.”<sup>50</sup> Hazo suggests that in order for composers to create their own musical style they must find their strength within the

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<sup>46</sup> Hazo.

<sup>47</sup> Hazo.

<sup>48</sup> Hazo.

<sup>49</sup> Hazo.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel R. Hazo, “Samuel R. Hazo,” <http://www.samuelrhazo.com/faq.html> (accessed March 24, 2017).

four creative elements. According, to Hazo his strength is melody. This is evident in the tremendously beautiful melody that transpires in Hazo's compositions.

Other works by this composer in this style are: *Our Yesterday's Lengthen Like Shadows, Psalm 42* and *Echoes*.

### **Conclusion**

The works of Samuel Hazo are of merit and lasting value within the wind ensemble medium. *In Heaven's Air* has a beautiful, haunting melody with rich harmonic texture. Hazo conveys the following:

Quality music may be hard to find, but it's easy to identify. It stirs us. It immediately hits us deeper and initiates true contemplation. A great musical work presents itself as the precise answer to a question we didn't think to ask. Or, in the words of my own teenagers: It gives you "the feels."<sup>51</sup>

The Columbus Unified Junior High School Band performed *In Heaven's Air* on March 14, 2017 at the Music In Our Schools Month Concert. The group also performed the work at the Mid-America Music Festival on April 22, 2017 at Pittsburg State University.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER V**

### ***Rest***

**by Frank Ticheli**

### **Composer**

Frank Ticheli was born in 1958, and resides in Los Angeles, California, where he is Professor of Music at the University of Southern California. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Southern Methodist University in Texas and master's and doctoral degrees in composition from the University of Michigan. In 1991 he joined the faculty of the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. Ticheli was composer-in-residence of the Pacific Symphony from 1991 to 1998.<sup>52</sup>

### **Composition**

*Rest* was originally written in 1999, as a choral piece titled *There Will Be Rest*, as a commission by the Pacific Chorale conducted by John Alexander. The concert band version, titled *Rest*, was created in 2010 as a commission by Russel Mikkelsen in

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<sup>52</sup> Larry R. Blocher, et. al., *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, vol. 9, ed. Richard Miles (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2013), 396.

memory of his father, Elling Mikkelsen.<sup>53</sup> “In making this version, I preserved almost everything from the original registration.”<sup>54</sup>

*Rest* is a grade 4 to 4.5 work that is approximately eight minutes in length. The choral-like nature of the work makes it extremely demanding for the wind band setting. The work is ingenious and simply beautiful. From the quiet and solemn feeling that the opening of the piece exudes to the awe-inspiring climax, the piece will leave you breathless. Dissonances, rich harmonic textures, tone clusters and occasional counterpoint make the composition a unique work of ingenuity.

### **Background**

The original choral version of the work, *There Will Be Rest*, was dedicated to the memory of Cole Carsan St. Clair, the son of a close friend of Ticheli who drowned in a tragic accident.<sup>55</sup> Ticheli based the original work on a poem by the American poet Sara Teasdale (1884-1930):

There will be rest, and sure stars shining  
Over the roof-tops crowned with snow,  
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,  
The music of stillness holy and low.

I will make this world of my devising  
Out of a dream in my lonely mind.  
I shall find the crystal of peace, -- above me  
Stars I shall find.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Frank Ticheli, *Rest*, (New York: Manhattan Beach Music, 2000).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Blocher, 396.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 397.



As indicated by Ticheli, concerning the adaptation for band, “I also endeavored to preserve carefully the fragile beauty and quiet dignity suggested by Sara Teasdale’s words.”<sup>57</sup> “Both versions are intimately tied and yet independent of one another, each possessing its own strengths and unique qualities.”<sup>58</sup>

### **Technical Considerations**

According to Ticheli, the work is “of deeply felt lyricism and melodic warmth” and “is expressively challenging and will be most successful when performed by those who place ‘ensemble sound’ at the forefront.”<sup>59</sup> The choral-like aspect of the work, the rubato style tempo, dissonances, and extreme legato style makes the work especially difficult. Extreme focus and control must be executed throughout the duration of the piece. This is definitely a work for the advanced ensemble.

Students must be able to demonstrate independent playing as many of the sections are sparsely scored and some counterpoint makes counting especially difficult. The ensemble must play with a focused pitch and excellent tone quality.

### **Stylistic Considerations**

The work relies on the ensemble’s ability to emulate the vocal-like characteristic of the original work from which the composition derived. Listening to the choral work *There Will Be Rest* is of great benefit. Examining the text of the poem from which the work is based would also be helpful. Recognizing where the words of the text fall within

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<sup>57</sup> Ticheli.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

the pitches in certain places within the composition will help maintain the chorale-like aspect.

Notes of the piece should be played legato throughout with rubato style and with much fluctuation of tempo. Ticheli instructs, “slight tempo fluctuations are indicated, lending a subtle elasticity and freedom so crucial to the work’s character.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Rehearsal and Conducting Considerations**

Considering the chorale-like essence of the composition, I chose to conduct the piece without a baton. Attention should be given to conduct with considerable expression and legato pattern. The confidence and expression that the conductor exudes is crucial to prompting the ensemble to play in the choral-like fashion.

The A section of the piece is presented in measures 1 through 21. The first four notes of the piece emulate the text “there will be rest.” It is especially difficult to master the opening pitch of concert A-flat. The chords at measures 2, 4 and 6 are difficult to tune and balance, as they are tone clusters that contain dissonant pitches. The concert A-flat should take dominance in the harmony in these passages and must be in tune. The clarinet section including bass clarinet is playing major seconds throughout this section. It is essential to the harmonic texture that all four parts are equally heard. Entrances and releases will be of extreme importance throughout this section.

Ticheli restates the A section again at measure 22 but with increased harmonic texture. The counter-melody scored for trombone 1, horn 3, tenor saxophone and clarinet 3 should be brought out. The flute and trumpet 1 entrance at measure 28 will be challenging to play in tune. Ticheli’s treatment of the harmony at measure 48 is

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

especially difficult to balance and tune. The absence of the third in the chord structure with the addition of a perfect fourth and major sixth adds tension to the sound, but makes it difficult to determine the center of the pitch.

It is interesting how Ticheli implements a distinct change in the style of the piece in the B section. Measures 49 through 74 provide an outstanding example of counterpoint. Ticheli incorporates two and three part polyphony and homophony in this passage as shown in Figures 4 and 5 below.<sup>61</sup>

*Example of 3 part polyphony measures 49-53*



Figure 4.

*Example of two part polyphony measures 53-56*



Figure 5.

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<sup>61</sup>Blocher, 400.

The section at measures 49 through 55 must maintain forward motion but still preserve an extremely legato style. The conductor must accelerate the tempo at measures 54 and 55—almost energetic or a sort of driving tension. The long tones marked *fp* at measure 56 should be played like bell-tones and should emulate the original choral work, which incorporates in the text “dream.”

The tension is finally released at measure 59 and Ticheli establishes a homophonic texture as shown in Figure 6.

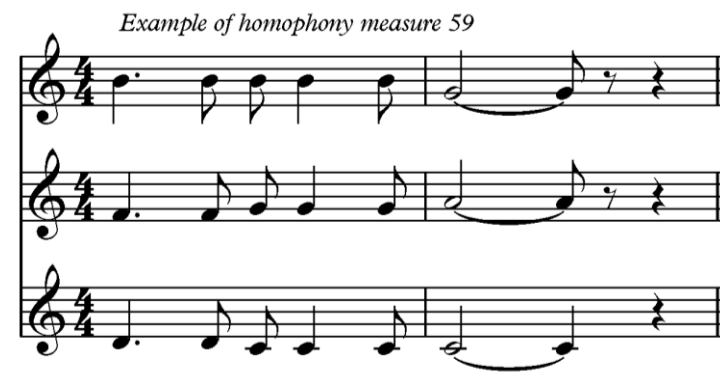


Figure 6.

This is the first occurrence in the piece in which the harmonic structure does not contain dissonance. As the text indicates “I shall find a crystal of peace,” Ticheli musically demonstrates peace within the harmonic structure of the A-flat chord scored in the woodwinds. This section is repeated three times, each building momentum and texture by adding instruments.

Measures 65 through 74 are an excellent example of melodic canon. Entrances are extremely important through this passage, as there are entrances on beats 2 and 4 throughout the section. This section should gradually build intensity and volume.

The climax of the composition occurs at measures 75 and measure 80. The A section is repeated and should be played with dramatic grandeur. Although the melody should be dominated at measure 80 by the clarinet 2 and 3, alto saxophone 1 and 2 and trumpet 1 and 2, the counter-melody scored for bassoon, tenor saxophone, bari-saxophone, trombone and euphonium should also be heard in the tapestry of color. The accents in measure 90 scored for clarinet 2, alto saxophone 2 and tenor saxophone should be played like bell tones and should also be brought out. The conductor must give a precise beat pattern at measures 92 and 93 as clarinet 2, bass clarinet and tenor saxophone have up beats that occur differently and are especially difficult to execute.

A brief pause should be taken after the release of the fermata on measure 93. Ticheli modulates the coda to the key of G major. The piece ends with an impression of quiet contemplation. Ticheli states, “I imagine a bowing of the head, a moment of reflection, a turning inward into prayer or meditation.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Suggested Listening**

Listening to the choral work, *There Will Be Rest*, by Frank Ticheli would be of tremendous value toward rendering the choral-like elements of the composition. Other noteworthy works of similar style would be *Sleep* by Eric Whitacre and *O Magnum Mysterium* by Morten Lauridsen.

### **Conclusion**

Both the choral and band version of *Rest* are of significant worth within the choral and wind band repertoire. “Frank Ticheli’s music has been described as being “optimistic

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<sup>62</sup> Ticheli

and thoughtful” (*Los Angeles Times*), “lean and muscular” (*The New York Times*), “brilliantly effective” (*Miami Herald*) and “powerful, deeply felt crafted with impressive flair and an ear for striking instrumental colors” (*South Florida Sun-Sentinel*).<sup>63</sup>

The Columbus Unified High School Titan Band performed *Rest* on February 16, 2017 in a joint concert with the Pittsburg State University Wind Ensemble at the Bicknell Performing Arts Center, Pittsburg State University. The Columbus Titan Band also performed the work at the Kansas Music Educators Association on February 24, 2017 at the Century II Concert Hall, Wichita, Kansas.

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<sup>63</sup> USC Thornton School of Music, “Faculty,” <https://music.usc.edu/frank-ticheli/> (accessed March 24, 2017).

## CHAPTER VI

### *Fusion*

#### **Movement 1**

**by Brian Balmages**

#### **Composer**

“Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an award-winning composer, conductor, producer and performer.”<sup>64</sup> He received his bachelor’s degree from James Madison University and his master’s degree from the University of Miami in Florida. Balmages has written for a range of groups—from elementary band to professional ensembles. The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Miami Symphony Orchestra, the University of Miami Wind Ensemble, Boston Brass, Off Bass Brass, and the Dominion Brass Ensemble have premiered his compositions and commissions.<sup>65</sup> “His music has been performed by members of leading orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony and others.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Brian Balmages, “Biography,” [www.brianbalmages.com](http://www.brianbalmages.com) (accessed April 2, 2017).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Mr. Balmages is active as a guest clinician and conductor, frequently appearing at all-state and regional band conventions. He has appeared as guest conductor at the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, College Band Directors Association National Conference and others. He was an adjunct professor of instrumental conducting and director of the symphonic band at Towson University in Maryland.<sup>67</sup> Balmages currently is Director of Instrumental Publications for the FJH Music Company Inc., Fort Lauderdale, Florida.<sup>68</sup>

### **Composition**

*Fusion* is a three movement work. The first movement of the composition is quite demanding rhythmically. The work is in a compound quadruple meter of 12/8. It contains many instances of hemiola, articulated ostinato patterns and dynamic contrast. This movement is extremely energetic and driving and will capture the listener's immediate attention.

### **Background**

The composition was commissioned for the retirement concert of Eric Haenfler, band director at Highland High School in Gilbert, Arizona.<sup>69</sup> "The work consists of three movements, all of which draw from various types of pop music and dance forms set within a contemporary framework."<sup>70</sup> The *Overture*, the first movement of the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Brian Balmages, *Fusion*, (FJH Music Company, Inc., 2007).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



composition, “is a short fanfare based loosely on Irish dance rhythms and melodies.”<sup>71</sup> According to Balmages, there are no references to any specific folk songs in the composition. However, the style that is often heard in the typical genre of an Irish jig is prevalent in the first movement of the work.

### **Technical Considerations**

The first movement of *Fusion* is definitely challenging. The piece is articulated throughout. Attention must be given to match the articulations as most passages are scored in block format. Sections that contain hemiola are especially difficult to match and space the articulations.

The piece contains many instances of dissonance and call and response like sections. Students must be aware of their role within the melodic structure of the piece. At times, the accompaniment sections are dissonant and almost percussive-like.

The first movement is scored for five percussionists and it will take a minimum of seven players to execute all the parts. The mallet percussion parts play a significant role.

The range of the piece is quite challenging for brass players. Trumpets ascend to a B-flat 5, trombone to G 4 and horn players to F 5. The horn part has significant horn calls that will need to soar over the texture at times. Clarinet players will need to be comfortable playing a D 6. Woodwind parts are mostly repeating patterns and the piece contains very few flourishes.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

### **Stylistic Considerations**

The first movement of *Fusion* must be energetic and driving. It is difficult to execute the feeling of forward motion while maintaining the “lilt” of the compound meter. Definite attention must be given to avoid rushing the piece. Rehearsing with the metronome will be essential to master and lock in the pulse of the piece. Maintaining the pulse of the triplet eighth notes will be challenging.

### **Rehearsal and Conducting Considerations**

The opening theme is stated in the first sixteen measures with trumpet and clarinet sections in measure 1 and joined by the horn section in measure 3. Attention must be given to the eighth rest on beat one—do not rush or compress the two eighth notes after (see Figure 7).



Figure 7.

I conducted the hemiola in measure 4 in a three plus two pattern. The ensemble should be accurate in playing the quarter notes in measure 4 with strict precision and matched space.

The main melodic material is re-stated again in measures 9 through 12, by the piccolo, flute, clarinet 1 and marimba. Measure 10 contains a quarter note hemiola that can be conducted in three. The quarter notes must be played evenly. This can be challenging, as there are two percussive-like ostinato patterns that are occurring underneath the main melodic material. This ostinato pattern must be accurate and

articulated with precision—the line must give the perception of being felt and not heard. Both of the ostinato patterns, shown in Figures 8 and 9, occur throughout the movement of the piece.



Figure 8. Ostinato Pattern 1



Figure 9. Ostinato Pattern 2

In measure 13, Balmages introduces a variation of the main melodic material scored for the horn and euphonium sections. The material is then treated as a canon in measures 15 and 16. The timpani are of particular importance in measure 16.

The piece builds momentum and should climax at measure 17 with new melodic material being introduced. The brass sections contain long notes within this section. This melodic material should soar above the ostinato, remaining stately but also intense—being deliberate to play through the notes. The timpani must be brought out at measure 22. Although it isn't marked in the score, a slight crescendo should be executed on all of the dotted whole notes throughout this section. An abrupt change of dynamics occurs at measure 25. This is easily executed, as the trumpet section is the only section scored for beat 1 of this measure. A horn call is scored on beat 2 and should dominate the texture, pushing the ensemble to another climax on beat 1 of measure 27.

Measure 27 is scored unison for tenor saxophone, horn and marimba and should gradually taper in sound. In measure 31, the melody is scored for flute and piccolo with a unison ostinato under played by vibraphone, clarinets and alto saxophone. This ostinato

must be articulate, crisp and precise. The melodic material must be hushed but also maintain energy and intensity.

Measure 40 contains a grace note entrance to a concert F drone. Emphasis should be given to the grace note—this should emulate a bagpipe. The low tom and marimba in the percussion will add flare to this section. This section is soft, hushed and relaxed. A trombone trio contains the melodic interest in this section with the horn and tenor saxophone playing snippets of the main melodic material. Measures 40 through 55 are a development to the final section of the composition. Balmages creates interest through ostinato and distribution of the melody to various sections.

The trombone section should dominate the texture of the ensemble at measures 54 and 55. The quarter notes should be played with extreme precision and in strict tempo. The horn glissando should thrust the ensemble into the final section of the piece. Balmages creates a feeling of intensity and movement through the canon-like scoring of the melodic material in measures 56 to the end of the composition. Entrances are very important in this section and it is important the full ensemble feel the triplet eighth note pulse. The low brass section should provide a foundation for this section to make sure that it is heard through the busy and chaotic texture that is occurring within the upper woodwind, trumpet, horn and percussion sections. Ensure the ensemble adheres to the crescendo marked in measure 62—this is pertinent to achieve the desired effect of the ending. Measures 64 and 65 contain the downward scale-like flourish that is handed off every two beats. It is essential that the articulation is clean and matched.

### **Suggested Listening**

The music of Brian Balmages is viable and of great merit within the wind band repertoire. His compositions contain great variation in rhythms, ostinato and the use of numerous percussion instruments. Because the first movement of this work is written in the style of the Irish jig, it would be of worth listening to some traditional Irish music from groups such as the Chieftains and the Dubliners. Several of the ostinato patterns found in the *Overture* of this piece mimic the sounds of the Irish bodhran, uilleann pipes and penny whistle.

Other compositions of note by Balmages are: *Blue Ridge Reel*, *Reverberations* and *Groove Music*.

### **Conclusion**

The music of Brian Balmages is of considerable value in the wind repertoire. The first movement of *Fusion* is a great fanfare-like concert opener. The modern twist on a traditional folk genre is a work of genius. This work is original, authentic and captivating.

The Columbus Unified High School Concert Band performed the first movement of *Fusion* at the Kansas State High School Activities Association large group festival on April 14, 2016 at the Bicknell Performing Arts Center, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

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