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Dr. Palmer

MSUE 375

Repertoire Project

Title, composer, year, publisher, difficulty

Description/history, instrumentation

Musical Rationale

references

1. Down A Country Lane – Copland, arr. Merlin Patterson

Boosey and Hawkes 1988, Difficulty Rating-3

This piece was originally written for piano by Copland in 1962 because of a commission from TIME magazine. The piece was unique because it is a rare example of one of the great composers writing for young, inexperienced performers. It was quickly set to an orchestral instrumentation in 1965, however Patterson did not finish a band arrangement of the piece until 1988. Copland says that the piece was completed before he gave it a title, implying that the title fits the mood of the piece, rather than the piece being an extension of the title.

This piece would be good for a band because it allows students to take a break from technical exercises and applications and focus on becoming more musical in their playing. This piece allows for practice of legato articulation, as well as a focus on phrasing and expressivity. It allows for the woodwinds to take a leading role in a piece without worrying about missing fingerings. This piece was also written by the well-known composer, Copland, which would be an easy gateway through which comprehensive musical learning can take place, specifically concerning his life and works.

http://www.windrep.org/Down\_a\_Country\_Lane

2. Shenandoah – Frank Ticheli

Manhattan Beach Music 1999, Difficulty Rating-3

Ticheli wrote this piece as a setting of an American folk song that was about the Shenandoah river. There is some dispute about the origin of the folk song, ranging from Pennsylvania to Kentucky. However, there is little dispute that the song originated in the 19th century. There is also debate on what the lyrics to the original song are about, but the most popular explanation is that it is about a man who is in love with a Native American woman.  
 This piece would be good for a high school band because it is a piece that ties into American history. It would be very easy to make a connection for the students between this piece and their history class, which would make it more meaningful to students. This piece also uses a lot of interesting, yet very obviously used, harmonies such as a plethora of suspensions and a very strong deceptive cadence towards the end. This piece could be used to make connections with and show a practical application of music theory.

3. \*Vesuvius – Frank Ticheli

Manhattan Beach Music 1999, Difficulty Rating-4

This piece was inspired by the volcano that erupted to destroy the ancient city of Pompei. It is a very energetic and always has a sense of drive. Ticheli says in his program notes that he originally wanted the piece to be a “wild and passionate dance.” However, as he composed, he found that the piece was taking on a feeling of unstable energy. The instrumentation of this piece is fairly standard for a concert band, but it requires a rather large percussion setup.

I think that this piece, depending on the skill level of the band, could really be used as a “growth” piece. When I call this a “growth” piece, I mean that it contains some higher level skills and knowledge to perform well. These include meter changes in the middle of phrases and an understanding of modes. However, I feel that this piece is possible and that a high school band should be able to grasp the concepts if they are taught well, but they will need to “grow” into it. This piece also has some percussion interjections that are very important, so it will give the percussionists a moment to really shine. I also think that students would think that this piece is cool enough that they would be motivated to work on it.

4. As Summer was Just Beginning – Larry Daehn

Daehn Publications 1998 Difficulty Rating-3

This piece was written as in memoriam of James Dean. James Dean’s career in film was very explosive and very brief. He recorded three films in 16 months before he died in a car crash at age 24. He has a memorial statue in Los Angeles with a Greek phrase that translates into “as summer was just beginning,” which is where the title of the piece came from. The phrase was used in Greek culture as a reference for when someone dies too young. The melody is roughly based on a British/Irish folksong, which pays homage to Dean’s ancestry.

This is a slow and melodic piece, with a beautiful melody and harmonies and uses percussion intelligently to enhance the wind sections. I feel that most “slow” pieces are very woodwind heavy, but based on the recordings I have heard, the brass seems more involved than usual taking on roles that woodwinds would normally have. This piece allows for them to grow musically and work on phrasing and dynamics in a context that usually the woodwinds only get to. However, be careful because the percussion parts are not very involved so those students will need to be engaged in another way while rehearsing this piece.

5. Dusk – Steven Bryant

Hal Leonard 2004 (revised in 2008), Difficulty Rating-3

Bryant was commissioned to write this piece by the Langley High School Wind Symphony. It was inspired by the contrasting colors at dusk between the dark that is coming and incredibly vivid reds and oranges from the sunset. It is meant to just be a short reflection on experiencing a moment like that. It is a short, chorale-like piece that requires strong emotional commitment from the entire ensemble to play well.

This piece would serve a very similar function as “As Summer was Just Beginning” in a classroom setting. It requires the students to practice expressivity in phrasing, articulation, style, etc. Once again, this piece not only focuses on the gentle timbres of the woodwinds, but also has strong brass moments that will allow them to practice playing phrases and extended musical ideas. And, also like the previous piece, there is not a lot of percussion in this piece so be careful about keeping all students involved.

6. Acrostic Song – David del Tredici

Boosey and Hawkes 1976/2006, Difficulty Rating-3

Del Tredici wrote this orchestral piece in 1976 as a part of his grand work called Final Alice, which is based on the story of Alice in Wonderland. It was put to band setting in 2006. The Acrostic song is specifically based on a poem Carroll wrote about Alice’s actual name, Alice Pleasance Liddell. Del Tredici draws the simplistic nature of the piece from the simplistic nature of the text it is based on. The band arrangement of this piece wasn’t created until del Tredici asked Mark Spede to make it.

This piece requires a degree of maturity to play due to the sensitive nature that the composer is trying to portray. It frequently has exposed moments, including trumpet solos and horn melodies. There is also an accelerando and ritardando that is not very common in more sensitive pieces. Also, because the melody is passed around so frequently, it will require the students to develop an awareness of the entire ensemble as they learn this piece.

7. \*Flourish for Wind Band – Ralph Vaughan Williams

Oxford University Press 1939/1971, Difficulty Rating-3

Vaughan Williams wrote this piece for wind band in 1939. It was lost then rediscovered in 1971 and has since become an important piece of band literature. There is also an orchestral version and a brass band version that was created after it was recovered, but none stand as prominently as the original concert band version. The instrumentation is that of a traditional military band. The most percussionists that would be needed are four (snare, bass, crash cymbals, timpani.)

This piece is very short, lasting only about two minutes. It is also written in B-flat, a very familiar key. The combination of these two facts would make it a good choice to pair with a more complex piece. It will give students more immediate gratification while they focus their practice time on another more difficult piece. This piece also has elements of a great concert opener. It goes through several styles, including a fanfare and a more lyrical middle section. It is not an inherently difficult piece, but it is still written with a sense of energy and drive that would be really good for grabbing an audience’s attention.

8. Sun Dance – Frank Ticheli

Manhattan Beach Music 1997, Difficulty Rating-4

This work was commissioned by Austin Independent School District as a celebration for 25 years of their All-City Honor Band. Ticheli himself says that the piece is written in a combination arch/sonata form. This piece was designed to elicit the emotion of “bright joy” in his listeners. With this in mind, Ticheli put much thought into the balance between elements of song and elements of dance. The energy of this piece is sure to make it a crowd pleaser.

This piece requires a good sense of time from all members of the ensemble. The main theme is based on single syncopated idea and many of the other reoccuring themes are based on similar rhythms. There are also several mixed meter passages that will require students to really engage mentally with this piece. This piece also employs several compositional techniques such as echoing, countermelody, form, texture and key changes that should provide many opportunities for growth in musical skills and knowledge.

9. First Suite in E-flat – Gustav Holst

Boosey and Hawkes 1921, Difficulty Rating-4

This piece was written in 1909. However, it wasn’t until 1920 that it was first performed and then was published the following year. It has since gained much recognition as one of the most recognizable pieces in, as well as a cornerstone of, concert band literature. The beauty of this piece is not in the technical demands that it imposes on the players, but in the way Holst was able to take simple musical ideas and craft them into an effective artistic work.

This piece provides some great learning opportunities for students. There are combinations of intense moments and exposed moments. The intense moments are not ridiculously difficult from the technical side of things, yet they are powerful. And the exposed moments are simple enough that it gives the students opportunities to experiment with phrasing and expression. Also, depending on the band, it is possible to just play an individual movement or the whole piece. Each movement is written in ways that they could be played on their own and can fill several roles in a concert cycle. That gives this piece a unique flexibility that is not very common in concert band literature.

10. Bayou Breakdown – Brant Karrick

Alfred Music Publishing 2003 Difficulty Rating-4

This piece combines original bluegrass melodies with fugal sections that are a direct influence of composer like Bach, Handel, and Mozart. It was commissioned by the University of Toledo Wind Ensemble and dedicated to the director of bands at Lousiana State University, Frank Wickes. This piece was written to be folksong-like, which is an acknowledgement of the longstanding tradition for composer to use folksong melodies in their compositions.

This piece would be a good focus piece in a concert cycle for a high school band. It would require a degree of commitment from almost every section if they want to play their parts well. There is even an important xylophone part that needs to be taken into consideration. This piece would give opportunities for students to experience playing a fugue, without the tradition harmonies and styles of baroque music that they could find “boring.”

11. \*Beyond – Wataru Hokoyama

Masters Music Publications Inc. 2001 Difficulty Rating-4

This piece combines several elements really well to create a continuous flow to the piece. These elements include sections of fanfare and a slower, more sensitive section. It is written with the influence of movie soundtracks, and it easily apparent. It is very easy to imagine a love scene, or a heroic ending to the story laid on top of this piece. It was written for an the Japan Air Self-Defense Western Air Band, so the composer was intending for this piece to create imagery of heroes in the sky.

This piece would be good for a high school band because it combines several styles of playing and presents them in a way that appeals to American Culture. The piece has a wonderful, lyrical section that is sandwiched between two lively fanfare sections. And I think that the influence of movie soundtrack music will do well to keep students’ interest in practicing this piece.

12. Heart’s Music – David Diamond.

This piece was written for Eugene Corporon. His first work for band was called Tantivy, also written for Corporon and his band. Diamond was so pleased with the final product of that piece that he decided to write another piece, which would come to be known as Heart’s Music. Diamond was active during the 20th century, when ideas like serialism and aleatoric music were very prominent in the composition world. But Diamond chose to write music that was still consonant and used traditional forms so that audiences would more likely relate to his work.

This piece, in my opinion, is a great middle ground between the experimental 20th century and the grounded tradition of consonant harmonies. This piece uses some non-traditional harmonies, yet the piece is not so inaccessible to listeners and young performers. This piece could be used as a great stepping-stone into exposing students to 20th century music, while still not making students feel confused about what they are playing.

13. Elegy for a Young American – Ronald LoPresti

Theodore Presser Co. 1964 Difficulty Rating-4

This piece was written in memoriam of President John F. Kennedy. It is meant to convey the feelings of severe loss and grief that the country was experiencing shortly after his death. The piece closes by giving listeners a sense of inner piece rather than total despair. The Indiana University of Pennsylvania Wind Ensemble premiered it in 1964.

I think that the educational value of this piece lies primarily in the history and emotion that surround it rather than the technical or theoretical knowledge required to play it. Though there are certainly skills that can be worked on that are written in the score, I think that this piece is very easily for people to connect to. I think that a piece of this caliber will expose students to the emotional power of music, and give them an incredible opportunity to connect with what they are doing and make a meaningful experience.

14. Kaddish – W. Francis McBeth

Southern Music Company 1977 Difficulty Rating-4

A Kaddish is a Jewish prayer that is recited during the mourning of a loss of a loved one that is recited every day for 11 months after the death then on the anniversaries. Howard Dunn and the Richardson High School Band of Richardson, Texas commissioned this piece. At the time, the composer was grieving over the death of on of his college professors, James Clifton Williams. This work was heavily influenced by one of the pieces written by Williams, Caccia and Chorale.

This piece requires a degree of emotional involvement from all players. It will require students to really learn how to make a huge sound on their instruments without creating bad sounds. It also gives the percussion opportunities to experience playing very strongly, while still maintain their role and balance in the band. I also think that this piece would be good for a brief multicultural lesson on Jewish traditions when someone dies. Exposure to something that not all students experience everyday like this is important to give in schools.

15. Trail of Tears – James Barnes

Southern Music Co. 1989 Difficulty Rating-4

This piece was written for the 150th anniversary of the Trail of Tears. This was a horrible act in which United States troops killed more than 4000 Native Americans, despite a treaty that was in place to protect them.

This piece would be good for a high school band because it would expose them to some non-traditional compositional techniques such as free-time, chanting, whispering and tramping of feet. I think that it will also give students the opportunity to connect with a really powerful piece of music and try to tell a story to their audience.

16. El Capitan – J. P. Sousa

Willow Blossom Music Difficulty Rating-4

This march comes from Sousa’s operetta of the same name. It has been an important part of march literature since its first performance. The themes of this march are scattered throughout the rest of the operetta, including the closing theme of the march, which ends the whole show. This particular march was important to Sousa because it was played for Admiral Dewey, who led the warship *Olympia.*

El Capitan will give students the chance to work on both 6/8 and 2/4 meters in the march style. There should be a focus on differentiating quarter and eighth note rhythm in 6/8 and the dotted eight and sixteenth note rhythm in 2/4. Also, the opportunities to practice march style in a concert band setting are always important. Exposure to Sousa is a necessity for students to be well-versed in band literature.

17. Emblem of Unity – Joseph John Richards

C. L. Barnhouse 1941 Difficulty Rating-4

Emblem of Unity is Richards’ most popular march. He wrote it when he was a band director in Sterling, Illinois. Ever since it has been on the market, it has been a favorite for music educators.

This piece allows for each section to really shine through more so than many marches. I think that if the band is strong enough, this piece provides a good opportunity for them to really take control of tempo and rhythmic unity. The scoring is transparent enough that students will be able to listen to each other easily to play together, which is an important skill set for musicians in general.

18. Florentiner March – Julius Arnost Vilém Fucik arr. Lake and Fennell

Carl Fischer 1980 Difficulty Rating-3

This march was originally meant to be called La Rosa di Toscana, as a tribute to the city of Florence, Italy. Though Fucik’s other famous march, Entry of the Gladiators, is meant for circus bands, this piece is particularly well suited for the traditional concert band. In particular, the fanfare section that is abruptly interrupted harkens back to operatic recitatives.

This piece may be a great opportunity for students to practice harmonic analysis. There is a strain with the melody in low brass with some interesting chord changes that could really demonstrate some interesting music theory concepts. In addition to this, it goes through several different changes of mood, which will allow students to practice versatility in style and approach. It is also a great opportunity for students to really refine their staccato articulation, as it is very important in this piece.

19. His Honor – Henry Fillmore ed. Foster

Carl Fischer 2000 Difficulty Rating-4

This piece is a very important work in the realm of marches. It is powerful and well written, but there is also a memorable descending chromatic line that leads new phrases. This line also illustrates the characteristic chromaticism of Fillmore’s works. However, His Honor is very chromatic even compared to Fillmore’s norm. This makes a series of melodic lines that never bore a listener.

The constant barrage of chromaticism will require students to develop a strong ear to play everything in tune, which is an important skill for all musicians to have, no matter what kind of music they are playing. The chromaticism will also create unexpected harmonies. It could also contribute to the well-roundedness of students to discuss how chords in the piece are constructed and what their purpose is, which is a lesson in music theory.

20. March of the Belgian Paratroopers – Pierre Leemans arr. Swearingen

Hal Leonard 1946 Difficulty Rating-3

Pierre Leemans was serving in the military when one of his supervising officers thought that he should write a march. So Leemans started the piece but never got around to finishing it. Then, Leemans had a dinner with a group of parachute soldiers from Belgium and was inspired by the previously written melody to write the piece. He was able to quickly generate this piece. He tells us in his own words, “Like all successful music, this tune came from my pen as water out of a fountain.”

There are not many technical demands presented by this piece. The melodies and harmonies are fairly modest in nature and purpose. However, I think that this piece can provide some immediate satisfaction for a group of players. I don’t think that this piece should be a focus piece in a concert cycle, but it is a piece that can add a pleasant contrast to the other pieces you are playing without the need to breakdown technical skills. This piece is also something that everyone involved with the music making process can enjoy, audience, players, and conductors.

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