



The Inside Story: A Composer's Persepctive on His Music

CLINICIAN:

Robert Sheldon

DEMONSTRATION GROUP:

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Robert Sheldon – Alfred Music Publishing Company

Featuring the Claudia Taylor “Lady Bird” Johnson High School Band
Jarrett Lipman, Director

Chanteys

An original work that recalls the music of the sea and its sailors, *Chanteys* opens with a musical nod to the sound of a “bosun’s call.” The initial theme brings to mind visions of sailors and pirates on the high seas. The pensive “Andante” allows the ensemble to demonstrate expressive and lyrical playing while depicting quiet moments at sea. The piece closes with a spirited juxtaposition of thematic material. *Chanteys* was written in 2000 and commissioned by the Louisiana Band Directors Association for the High School Regional Honor Band in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Ghost Fleet

A quiet opening presents an ode to the ships of the James River Naval Reserve, nicknamed the “Ghost Fleet.” Native Americans in this region of Virginia felt strongly about “Manitou,” and the concept of all things having a spirit. As the ships sit in the cool, deep water of the river, the spirit of one of the ships awakens (represented by the vocalization of the performers) and calls it back to its former duty as a warship. The sounds of the chains being strained and broken finally culminate as the ship breaks free and races toward the ocean. Finally reaching the open waters the ship returns to its former days of glory as the piece reaches a triumphant conclusion. *Ghost Fleet* was written in 1999 and commissioned by the Virginia Band Directors Association for the Middle School Regional Honor Band in Newport News, Virginia.

In the Shining of the Stars

Judy Thomas was a much beloved music teacher at the Woodward Academy in College Park, Georgia. Knowing she was nearing the end of her life, she chose to continue teaching, and use that time to teach her students not only about music, but also about preparing for the end of life. Following her death, the students wrote letters to her expressing their feelings and appreciation for all she had done. These letters were then sent to the composer and served as the inspiration for this piece. *In the Shining of the Stars* was written in 1995 and commissioned by the Woodward Academy Performing Arts Department Upper School Bands, College Park, Georgia, Marguerite Wilder and Charlie Brody, Directors.

A Longford Legend

Inspired by stories of several 18th century Irish street ballads, and the music of Holst, Vaughan Williams and Grainger, *A Longford Legend* features three very different stories which are musically depicted in each of the three movements. “A Longford Legend” tells the story of a retired sea captain who, in an attempt to impress his neighbors, purchases a steam ship to sail on a lake near his country estate. After a day of revelry and celebration sailing around the lake he realizes that he never learned how to stop the ship resulting in endless weeks speeding across the water, resulting in the starvation and death of all aboard. This story is actually told with great humor, which is evident in the music. “Young Molly Bawn” is a tragic tale of two young lovers. As he is out hunting, she goes to find him to warn of an upcoming storm. Thinking she is a fawn, he shoots only to find he has killed his fiancé and will now spend the remainder of his life behind bars for murder. “Killyburn Brae” is an absurd ditty about a man whose wife is so mean that the devil takes her to hell, but she is so horrible he decides to return her to her husband. Set in the style of an Irish jig, tongue-in-cheek references to the “Dies Irae” and the devil’s quick trip back from hell provide energy, humor and a highly entertaining conclusion to this suite. *A Longford Legend* was written in 1996 and commissioned by the Normal Community West High School Band, Normal, Illinois, Lisa Preston, Director.

The Stormchasers

Written in the style of a circus “screamer,” *The Stormchasers* features fanfares, flourishes and tuneful melodies, all played at a very aggressive tempo. Having been raised in Florida and attending the University of Miami, the composer’s nod to “Uncle Henry” is sure to bring a smile to anyone who is a lover of those great Fillmore marches. *The Stormchasers* was written in 1993 and commissioned by the Dixon Municipal Band, Dixon, Illinois, Kent Nightlinger, Director. Upon receipt of the march, the band decided to re-name the piece “The Petunia Festival March” in honor of the town’s main annual event. After years languishing in the composer’s files, the march was updated and published under its original name in 2012.

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