

FALL 2024 BAND MUSIC

Thoughts/requests/changes from your directors.

BANDIES: Please READ this information and make changes/markings that are mentioned. It might be useful to print these pages and put them in your folder so that you have the info.

Soundfiles-BAND

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/sb5umlbxvpi6vhdrkcbwx/AG0yLwJs2OgTsmuqmhHKstuY?rlkey=ky6rivj94cmcjn2phvvjcw2r&st=jgz3qpmh&dl=0>

BLUE RIDGE REEL

Linda says,

This is an upbeat, joyful piece that never fails to get my foot tapping every time I hear it! The composer, Brian Balmages, says that the piece was inspired by a visit to Asheville, North Carolina, and the title pays homage to the Blue Ridge Mountains. He notes that “many influences in the region come from the rich cultures of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales” and that this music was influenced by the form and style of a traditional Irish reel. The piece has much interest for every section of the band, including the percussion section, who are encouraged to use traditional instruments such as a washboard and spoons!

If we play it well, it will be almost impossible to listen to it without dancing! As you look at your part, you will see that the articulations are clearly noted throughout — and it is essential to play them as written. For example, everyone at some point in their part will see something like this:



Notice the staccato markings, including the last note of the slur. No matter what, do NOT be tempted to play the last note of the slur long or, heaven forbid, to slur it into the next note. It must be played short to achieve the light, bouncy style that we want. MARK reminders in your music.

And — please notice the syncopation and tied notes — if tied notes are difficult for you, at first play them without the tie and then gradually work to play them as written, perhaps at first putting a little breath accent on the tied note to help you keep your place.

We did play this piece several years ago (2016), so some of you may know it. If you do, I hope you love it as much as I do and will look forward to playing it again (maybe taking a different part this time or just enjoying how much you have improved since 2016!). I think we’ll have a lot of fun with it!

SOUNDFILE: (MUCH slower than the publisher’s demo!!!)

Our practice soundfiles are available in the Dropbox folder, “Soundfiles-BAND” – link above.

YORKSHIRE BALLAD

John says,

James Barnes' most widely performed piece is called *Yorkshire Ballad* and, as the name might suggest, it was inspired by a month-long visit to the hills of Yorkshire, England. Although composed in only two days, it is replete with musical nuance and devoid of technical demands. The opening melody is intended to evoke the Percy Grainger-like scoring of an English folksong but is, in fact, an original melody to Barnes. This is then paired with an incredibly compelling countermelody somewhat echoing the rhythm of the primary melody much in the way that Percy Grainger does in many of the folksong settings he produced. Mr. Barnes has this to add:

“Yorkshire Ballad is not a folksong, but it is written in that style. I composed this little piece so that non-professional players would have an opportunity to play a piece that is more or less in the style of [Percy Aldridge Grainger's Irish Tune from County Derry](#).. Even Grainger's easier works are too difficult for most players to do them musical justice, so I thought I would write a little piece that might emote some of the feelings and colors of Grainger's wonderful music, but, at the same time, was technically much more accessible to the intermediate player. I was thinking of the beautiful, green Yorkshire dales of Northern England; the rolling hills and endless stretch of beautiful pasturelands that my wife and I loved so much when, a year before, we had driven through this most marvelous spot in the world.”

Technically, this piece will be well within the wheelhouse of all of us but our task will be to bring out the music, presenting the painting of the “dales of Northern England” to our audience. This will be a total joy to work on for all, even for the percussion who generally don't have a whole lot to say in the piece but rightfully will have the final word (listen to the ending).

SOUNDFILE:

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HOPAK!


Diane says,

A Hopak is an Eastern European dance that was developed in the 16th century by the Cossacks in the area now known as Ukraine. Originally it was a dance done by men in male settings. It is a very strenuous dance and although there are no set patterns that must be followed, it is characterized by leaps and squat movements, and is an improvisational dance. The term “Hopak” means to hop or jump. Later in history it was danced by both men and women.

Wikipedia has a wonderful short movie of a concert performance of the dance from 1931. The sound breaks up sometimes, but it is interesting to watch! The first part is very active (how can they dance so long in squat positions????) and danced mostly by the men. The middle section opens with a bass clarinet theme and is mostly women. It is shot from above the dancers so you see an opening flower effect as they move out of their circle. The third part is again very vigorous and danced men and women together.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopak> scroll down to the “Concert Dance” section and the movie is on the right side.

On the Danceus.org site there is a more comprehensive description of the history, traditions, costumes, regional differences, techniques etc. and includes a video of a modern version of the dance in concert form. <https://www.danceus.org/style/hopak-dance-ukraine/>

→ Watch out for all of the ads... some of them look like they are part of the text – the ads are all in boxes and have a little symbol in the upper right corner that looks like this: 

Hopaks were used in many classical compositions by Russian composers such as Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky. My first introduction to the Hopak dance was in “Fiddler On the Roof”!

Mr. Owens’s composition was recommended to us and I fell in love with it immediately, AND, it fits right in with the work we did in the 2022-23 season in our After-rehearsal Rehearsal, “Klezmer Explorations”, as it is music from the same area and in the same modal (scale) style. (I haven’t analyzed it yet, but I would not be surprised if it is an Ahava Raba mode!) There is a very cool trombone solo in the slower middle section – very much Klezmer style!

Practice your simplification skills by starting out playing only the first note of any group of notes that includes sixteenth notes.

Dance on!! (Perhaps starting a bit slower than the recording of our piece!).

SOUNDFILE: (Slower than the publisher’s demo)

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FANTASY ON AMERICAN SAILING SONGS

SOUNDFILE:

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Diane says,

First of all, these comments are long, but you can stop at the “+++++” and jump to the **ERRATA** at the bottom - **do check the errors** and if any pertain to you, mark them in your parts. (This list has been added to since the original one in May of 2024)

This is our challenger, but is pretty easily simplified. FYI, this is a grade 3 and the Holst was grade 4. FLUTES, do not panic when you look at your parts! I will help you simplify (like bringing notes down an octave!)

Mr. Grundman was a very prolific and respected composer for bands during the mid- to late-20th century. This composition is one of my favorites!! I love the rollicking feel of the ships on the ocean, especially in the introduction. (SV old-timers, we did it back in 2011. If you remember the piece, it should be fun to see how much you have improved.)

Remember what Linda said about a type of music called a “Fantasy”? It takes an idea and weaves it around, changing, adapting, floating. There are 4 sections of sea songs in this piece and rather elaborate transitions (fantasies) in between.

The term “Sailing Songs” include both songs about the sea and shanties. Shanties are work songs, sung during hard labor to both keep the sailors working together (rhythmically) and also to help keep up their spirits and strength. Shanties were ONLY sung when at work and never for leisure. There were two basic types of shanties, the “Hauling” songs for intermittent actions of short pulling, and the “Heaving” songs for more continuous work like tramping around the capstan. Modern day performances of these traditional work songs are often sung at a much faster tempo than they would have been sung while doing hard labor.

+++++

(If you are short on time, most of the next section is just interesting information, but do check the Errata at the very end, and review 6/8!)

The standard form of shanty singing was that a “Shantyman” (lead singer) sang a verse and then the sailors sang the chorus. The verses were often improvised about things going on aboard ship or their lives. Take “What Shall We do with a Drunken Sailor” for example – the answers varied according to which sailors were singing and how mean they were feeling! The answer could be several of the following:

Beat 'im o'r wi' a cat-o-nine-tails.

Shave his belly with a rusty razor.

Put him in the bilge and make him drink it.

Or a modern day thought from the group Schooner Fare, “Lock him in a room with disco music”










After the introduction there is a bit of “Blow the Man Down” at letter A, not much, just a snippet. Letter B goes into a story about the battle of the ships USS Hornet and the HMS Peacock in the 1812 War with the song, “Hornet and the Peacock”.

Letter G is the heaving chanty “Lowlands”. The Lomaxs (father John and son Alan) said, “The most miserable hard work on a sailing vessel was the job of pumping ship. The wooden vessel always drank water through their seams and there had to be a regular daily turn at the pumps. ... It was heartbreaking, back-splitting labor. The wooden windlass pumps squeaked and groaned a mournful song of their own. The shanties that accompanied the groan of the pumps were mournful as well.” Lowlands is derived from a British ballad, “Edwin in the Lowlands Low”. Story? The parents murder their daughter’s sweetheart for his gold and send his body floating on the “lowlands low.” (nice, eh??)

Letter K brings us to “What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor”. This was a yard-hauling chanty. The yard was the heavy wooden spar on which the sail was hung; the sail and yard needed to be hoisted up the mast. The shantyman would sing a verse, often improvised on the spot and the sailors would grab the sheet (rope) that was attached to the yard and run down the deck pulling the sail part way up the mast while singing the chorus. It usually was a pretty quick job, just a few verses and choruses and it was up. This type of shanty was also called a “Stamp and Go”.

Letter N (“Rio Grande”) is in 12/8!! Remember how to play 6/8 in two? This is the same only doubled – 12/8 counts 4 beats in a measure and each beat has 3 subdivisions: 1 ta ti 2 ta ti 3 ta ti 4 ta ti . We will go over this in the first rehearsal!!!! I believe that “Rio Grande” (also called “Bound for the Rio Grande”) was a capstan shanty, but I’m not sure.

ERRATA (these errors are what I have found in past work with this piece – there may be more, so don’t hesitate to question a note) MARK these parts so you don’t make the mistake:

-  **Everyone** – measure before J, should decrescendo beats 3 & 4 into J (some parts have this marked. Check yours)
-  **Flute** – 7 after H, your dotted half note D should be Db.
-  **Bassoon** 1 – 4th measure, missing dot on quarter note.
-  **Alto Sax** 1, 5 after T, your Ex (E double sharp) should be an E# (pew!!!)
-  **Tenor Sax** and **Bari Sax** – in the measure before I you have 2 half notes – it should be a half note and then a quarter note (3/4 time!)
-  **Cornet 1** – 3rd measure of M, cross of the “p” and put a cresc. starting on beat 2.
-  **Trumpet 1** –5 after N, your half note should be a dotted half.
-  **Euph TC** – 8 after A, the Cb should be C natural
-  **Tuba** – 2 measures before C the two quarter notes should be 2 eighth notes (add a beam)