

MORE MUSIC FOR YOUNGER BANDS

FROM THE NATIONAL CONCERT BAND FESTIVAL REPERTOIRE LIST

This is the third installment in a series of reviews in which Brian Duguid, Carol Condliffe and Richard Jones introduce some of the repertoire at Grades One to Three from the National Concert Band Festival Repertoire List. The second in the series appeared in the Winter 1995 edition of WINDS.

PORTRAIT OF A CLOWN

Frank Ticheli
Manhattan Beach
Grade 2.5
Duration 2'45"

In ternary form with an eight bar introduction, and a coda, this piece presents the two faces of a clown. In the A section we see the happy face represented by a melody based on a Bb Lydian scale. By contrast, the middle section is flowing and melancholy, but at the same tempo. The articulation and dynamics are carefully written, with clear staccato tonguing and controlled legato. The piece can be played by a small or large band, and was scored in such a way as to permit performances by bands lacking many low instruments.

This is a worthwhile piece to have, but rather expensive for the length.

WHEN THE STARS

BEGIN TO FALL
Fred J. Allen
TRN Publishers
Grade 3
Duration 3'

A sensitively and well-crafted setting of the spiritual "My Lord, what a mourning." This piece, by an experienced school and university teacher from Texas, is ideal for developing a tight ensemble by encouraging careful listening, intonation, legato playing and phrasing. The quiet legato phrases demand good breath control; the change of atmosphere leading to the climax allows the band to build a rich forte sound; then the music fades to the end. Instrumentation offers no problems: Alto Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, and Baritone Saxophone all double the Tuba part. The percussion section requires Timpani, Vibraphone or Bells, plus the normal untuned percussion. There are good moments

for the trombones, who have the first and last statement of the theme.

This is a most successful piece to work on, and lasts about three minutes. And in case you are wondering, TRN (a publishing company from New Mexico) stands for That's Really Nice!

GINGER MARMALADE

Warren Benson
Carl Fischer
Grade 3

A great little piece from the pen of Warren Benson, who explains that the work is a double canon with composer asides and tricks. The piece requires very crisp and tight rhythmic playing, and a confidence to cope with the fragmented imitations. There is a fair amount of exposed writing, particularly for the percussionists. In the middle of the piece there is an interesting conversational interlude between the woodwinds' hand claps and the brasses' heel taps. The instrumentation includes piccolo, but only two horns; the Eb, Alto and Bass Clarinets are doubled elsewhere, and the percussion instruments are standard, including only two timpani. The piece is short and needs to be tackled in a spirited and playful way. And the title? It seems that the composer likes plenty of ginger marmalade with ricotta cheese on his pumpernickel toast every morning, washed down with lots of coffee!

FORTRESS

Frank Ticheli
Manhattan Beach
Grade 3

This piece opens with distant dramatic percussion, soon to be joined by bassoons (or clarinets if no bassoons are available) and a muted trumpet playing a call motif. The interest then passes to horns and lower brass, who establish the main rhythmic theme. The call motif undergoes development and leads to a quiet chromatic oboe theme, which in turn is developed over fragments of the rhythmic main theme to a climax, which in turn leads to the Coda. This final section reminds us of themes and atmospheres from the work. Although not programmatic, this is a dramatic

piece of descriptive writing, and was most successful with performers and audience. It is scored for a large band, including piccolo and four horns (but with lots of doubling so that you could manage with three and even two for much of the time). Some confident percussionists will lift the work (Snare and Bass Drums, Cymbals, Tambourine, Tom-Toms, Whip, Xylophone, and Glockenspiel). The Timpani part is especially important, as they play a recurring motif based on the harmonies, but the part requires four drums, which is unrealistic for school bands. However, a little careful amending of the part is possible.

New to the British Market...

FANTASY ON BARBARA ALLEN

Fred J. Allen
TRN Publishers
Grade 3+

Based on the well known folk song, this piece is a challenge in changing meter. Four bars into the work there is a solo cadenza for Clarinet, which is completed by solo piccolo. Two bars for the band and there is a further cadenza for flute and muted cornet. The introduction continues, introducing fragments of the forthcoming melody, which is heard in its entirety in the trombones, euphoniums, and tubas, legato and quiet. The phrasing and building of the line is all-important here. This gently, haunting mood continues until an interruption in 7/8 with an important percussion representation of the melody. Having settled to 7/8 beware! 5/8 is looming, and no sooner have you settled to it than there is a return to 7/8, this time subito pianissimo. Then on to a section which is reminiscent of the introduction, but with different instruments playing the cadenzas. The melody then re-emerges, lusciously scored, before it is interrupted by a final vivo sortie into 7/8 and a triumphant ending.

This is an exciting teaching piece, as well as being an interesting treatment of a well known song. On the Grade 3+ scale, it is written for standard school band with timpani, mallets, temple blocks, triangle, tom-toms, bell tree, tambourine, cymbals, and snare and bass drum.

Carol Condliffe