

PROGRAM NOTES

Highland Echoes

This piece is based on traditional 18th century Scottish folk songs. A folk song is something that is inextricable from a nation's culture. It is unique and proud, and music is something that binds people of a culture together. This piece begins with the song "Blythe, Blythe, and Merry Was She", an old bagpipe tune, and soon hands off to "Highland Dance" and "The Lass of Gowrie". The sound of "bagpipes" introduces two themes that even our culture is familiar with: "Scotland the Brave" and "Auld Lang Syne". The lyrics of Auld Lang Syne, "May auld acquaintance be forgot" can serve as an important lesson in changing our view of the world and each other. We can forget the preconceptions that have bound us, and come together and take a cup of kindness. The lyrics of the final verse speak to this:

And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good will draught,
for auld lang syne.

Variations on an African Hymnsong

African folk music is extremely unique in its use of percussive elements, a harsher singing tone than our folk songs, and rhythmic meters that are less symmetrical than what we are used to. This particular piece is based on a Nigerian hymn, and incorporates rhythms native to Nigeria. The culture is steeped in dance traditions as well, and in much of this piece can be heard a celebratory dance. Two Nigerian "polyrhythms" are present, which are two separate rhythms placed on top of each other: the first is known as Kyrem, and the second is called Osebo. Dr. Quincy Hilliard, composer of this piece, wrote it after a friend visited Nigeria and brought these rhythms back to him. Mr. Alston enjoyed speaking to him about this piece, and he is excited for Symphonic Band to be performing it!

Fandango

A Fandango is a lively couples [dance](#) from [Spain](#), usually in triple metre, traditionally accompanied by guitars and castanets or hand-clapping ("palmas" in Spanish). A type of Flamenco, Fandango can both be sung and danced. The Fandango is a dance which expresses the passion of the dancers. The two dancers often taunt each other by following their steps or by using gestures.

As it was so popular, many variations of the Fandango began to spring up. The 'Fandangos grandes' or Big Fandangos were performed by couples and often started slowly and gradually increased in speed. The 'Fandanguillos' or Little Fandangos, in comparison, were much more lively and festive.

Each region in Spain also developed their own style of the Fandango dance. It was not long before there was a Huelva, the version of the Fandango in the city of Huelva, and the Málaga, the version in the city of Malaga. The Fandango also has a counterpart in Portugal where it is considered to be one of the Portuguese's most important folk dances as well.

Special thanks to Spanish teacher Julie Pacheco-Toye for coming into Wind Ensemble to explain the Fandangos, play a traditional recording, demonstrate her castanets, and listen to our Fandango!

The Promise of Living

"The Promise of Living" comes from Aaron Copland's opera "The Tender Land", though on its own, this piece is widely recognized as powerful and compelling. The music of Aaron Copland embodies the quintessential American spirit. His harmonies evoke images of the old West, the open plains, the simple folk that reap the earth for their sustenance. He has established himself as one of the most important American composers of all time, with his music being labeled as the

“sound of Americana”. He is also known for his works Fanfare for the Common Man, Hoe Down, and Appalachian Spring. The story of The Tender Land shines a spotlight on a poor Midwestern family in the 1930s and the arrival of two drifters into town. The family’s daughter falls in love with a drifter, and ends up leaving home, something most people in that small town don’t do. It shares a “Fiddler on the Roof” theme – a young person casting off the traditions of the family. The Promise of Living occurs at the end of Act I, with the townspeople proclaiming thanks for the simple things in life: the sunshine, the rain, the fact they have strength to harvest, sharing love with their neighbors. The text to the original composition is as follows:

The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving
is born of our loving our friends and our labor.

The promise of growing with faith and with knowing
is born of our sharing our love with our neighbor.

For many a year we've known these fields and known all the work that makes them yield.
Are you ready to lend a hand? We'll bring in the harvest, the blessings of harvest.

We plant each row with seeds of grain, and Providence sends us the sun and the rain.
By lending a hand, by lending an arm, bring out from the farm,
bring out the blessings of harvest.

Give thanks there was sunshine, give thanks there was rain.
Give thanks we have hands to deliver the grain.
Come join us in thanking the Lord for his blessing.
O let us be joyful. O let us be grateful to the Lord for His blessing.

The promise of ending in right understanding
is peace in our own hearts and peace with our neighbor.

O let us sing our song, and let our song be heard.
Let's sing our song with our hearts, and find a promise in that song.
The promise of living.
The promise of growing.
The promise of ending is labor and sharing our loving.

More student thoughts:

“Where each and every one of us can help is by seeking understanding. Instead of dismissing another's beliefs of day-to-day life as “absurd” or “weird”, if we just sat down and asked them... why? And by finding the answer to that question maybe people will step out of their own world, a word of me, I, and my, and start to think about others.”

“There is no problem with a diverse community, it's our fault that it's a problem. We don't treat everyone with the same respect despite the fact that he/she is differently colored, or dresses differently. The only reason people think it's weird if someone wears different clothing than “usual” is because it's not our culture. Once we respect and fully understand, then we accept. And acceptance is what the world needs.”

“The differences that are rooted in these different cultures is what makes the world an interesting place to live in. Acknowledging other cultures for their differences is much different than respecting other cultures. Acknowledgment simply is recognizing there is a different culture. Respecting requires understanding another culture, learning more about it and know the “what” and the “why” of a culture.”