Kjos String Orchestra Grade 3 Full Conductor Score SO181F \$5.00

## Shirl Jae Atwell

## American Gaelic



Neil A. Kjos Music Company • Publisher



#### The Composer

Shirl Jae Atwell earned a bachelor of music education degree from Kansas State Teachers College and a master of music theory/composition degree at the University of Louisville and completed four years of post-graduate work in composition at the University of South Carolina.

In 1984 she won the Clifford Shaw Memorial Award for Kentucky composers and this followed with a number of critically acclaimed commissions and performances of operas, choral works, and string orchestra compositions for organizations around the country. In 1993 six Shirl Jae Atwell scores were placed in the permanent collection of the Paris Biblioteque Internationale de Musique Contemporaine at the invitation of Music International Information Service.

Ms. Atwell was named the 1996 winner of the National School Orchestra Association composition contest with her string orchestra piece *Modus a 4* and was winner of the Texas Orchestra Directors Association Composition Contest in 1997 with her string orchestra work entitled *Drifen*.

Most recently, *Lucy*, with music by Ms. Atwell and choreography by Alun Jones, was premiered by the Louisville Ballet in January 1999. *Lucy*, which was inspired by the discovery of a 3.2 million-year old skeleton, was the subject of a Kentucky Education Television documentary that was aired in November 1999. In June 2000, the televised production of *Lucy* was awarded the Arts & Culture Emmy by the Ohio Valley Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. In July, a Certificate of Merit was awarded to *Lucy* by Unda-USA, the National Catholic Association for Communicators.

An active composer with many commissions and publications to her credit, Ms. Atwell is also a full-time string orchestra educator with the Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky. She maintains active membership in ASTA with NSOA, Music Educators National Conference, Texas Orchestra Directors Association, Kentucky Music Educators Association, and ASCAP.

#### Instrumentation List (Set C)

- 8 1st Violin
- 8 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin
- 5 Viola
- 5 Cello
- 5 String Bass
- 1 Full Conductor Score

Additional scores and parts are available.

#### The Composition

Unique to the southeastern United States is a style of singing known as "shape-note hymnody." It is a method of learning how to sing using different shapes for each pitch. The system most widely used was first developed by William Little and William Smith in 1801, in Philadelphia. As the southeastern United States opened to emigration, it became the method by which traveling singing masters would teach their pupils. In order for the learning singers to master the art, shape-note tunes were compiled into tunebooks and sold by the singing masters in each singing school they established.

"Star of Columbia," the tune upon which *American Gaelic* is based, was one of the many English, Irish, Scottish, and American folk tunes compiled in the various shape-note tunebooks used. It first appeared in *The Kentucky Harmony*, 1816, compiled by Ananias Davisson, and continued to be quite popular among succeeding compilers. According to George Pullen Jackson in his book, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, "Star of Columbia" was originally an Irish fiddle tune that had been brought to the United States by Irish immigrants and subsequently absorbed into our folk culture.

Many of the religious songs that are considered American favorites are in fact shape-note folk hymns, tunes that are secular in nature but religious in text. The influence that 19<sup>th</sup> century shape-note hymnody had in the development of 20<sup>th</sup> century protestant hymnals in the United States cannot be underestimated. It is a phenomenon that makes our musical heritage unique and interesting.

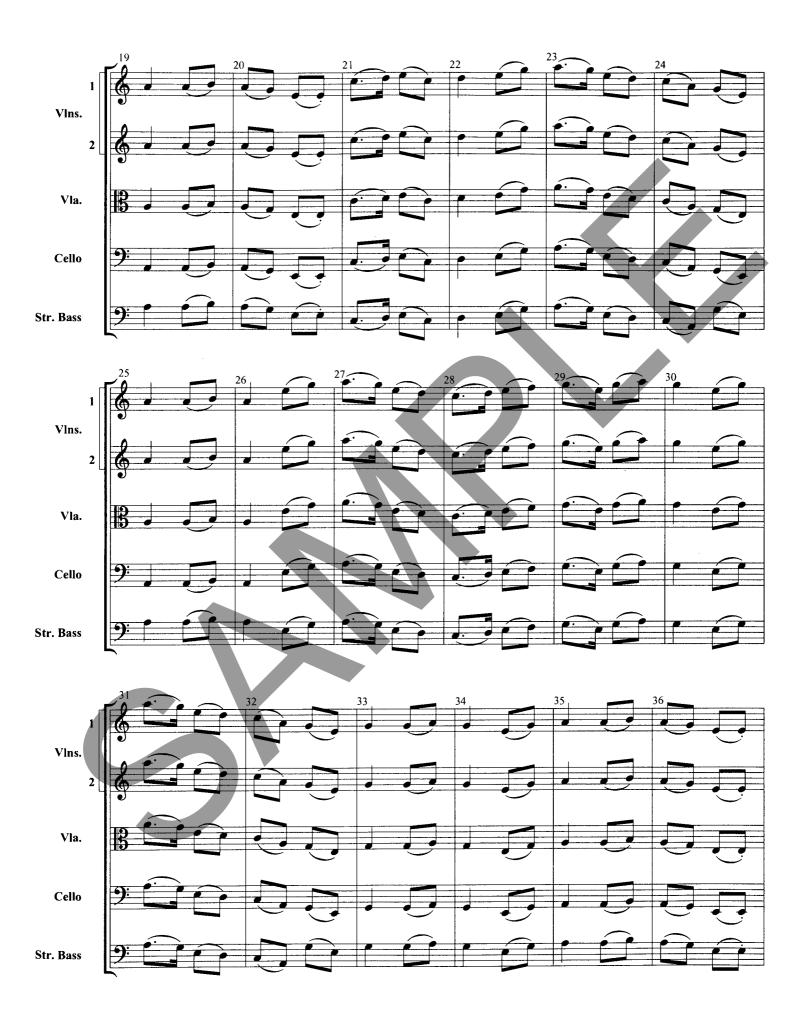
### American Gaelic

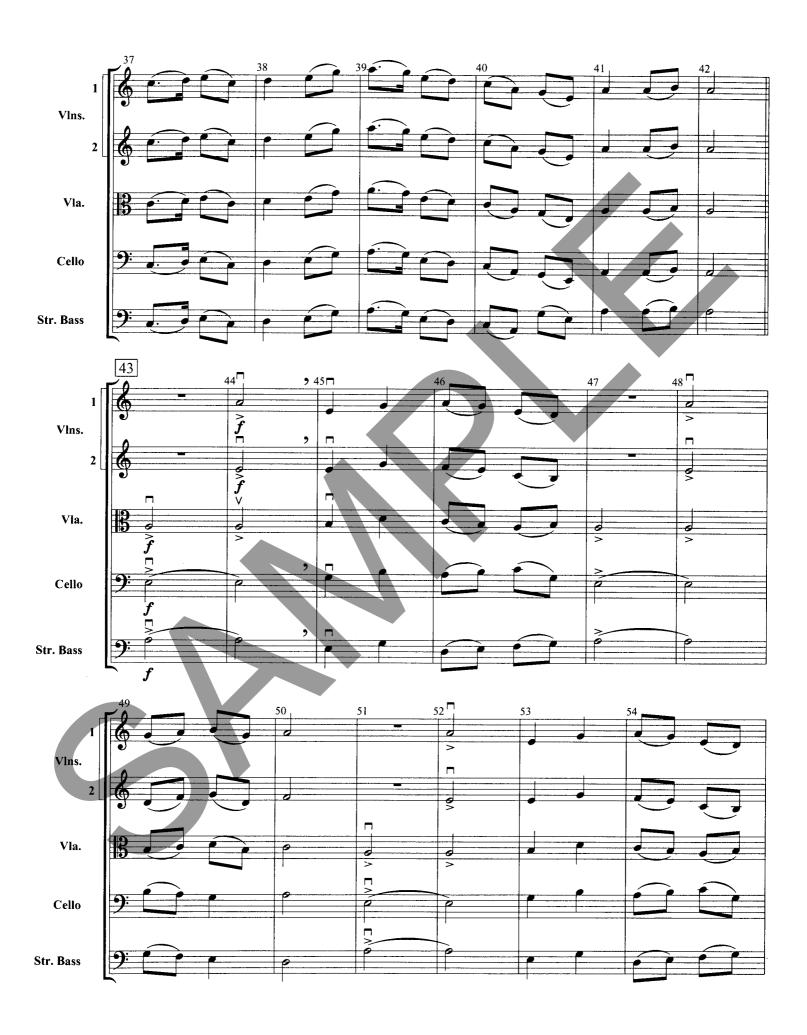
Full Conductor Score Shirl Jae Atwell Approx. time -3:30**J** = 116 Violins Viola Cello **String Bass** Vlns. Vla. Cello Str. Bass Vla. Cello Str. Bass

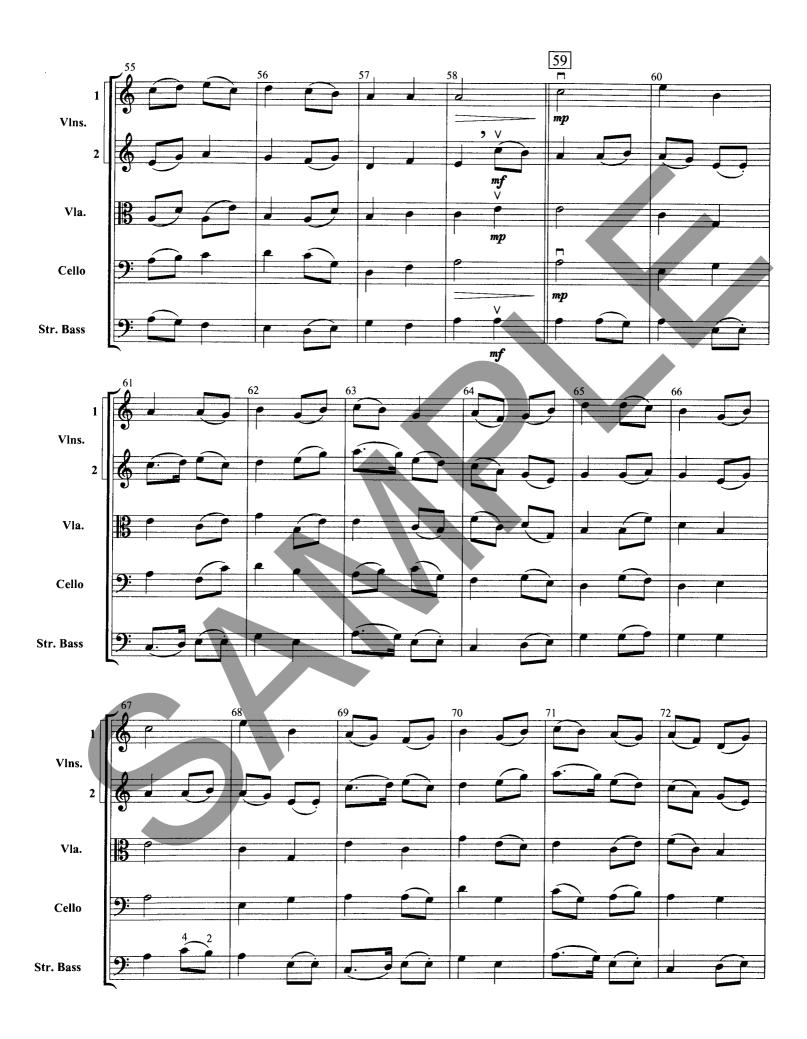
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