Concert Band

Grade 3



Fantasy on Early American Tunes

Kevin Mixon

CPS93 INSTRUMENTATION

Full Score	1
Flute 1/Piccolo	.5
Flute 2	4
Oboe	
Clarinet 1 in Bb	.4
Clarinet 2 in Bb	4
Clarinet 3 in Bb	4
Bass Clarinet in Bb	2
Bassoon	2
Alto Saxophone 1 in Eb	2
Alto Saxophone 2 in Eb	
Tenor Saxophone in Bb	
Baritone Saxophone in Eb	2
Trumpet 1 in Bb	
Trumpet 2 in Bb	
Trumpet 3 in Bb	
Horn 1 in F	
Horn 2 in F	
Trombone 1	3
Trombone 2	
Baritone T.C. in Bb	
Baritone B.C.	
Tuba	4
Mallet Percussion	
Bells, opt. Marimba	
Timpani	1
Percussion 1	
Snare Drum. Bass Drum	
Percussion 2	3
Triangle, Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal	•

Program Notes

Colonial American music developed without strong European influence, and many so-called common-practice rules, such as avoiding parallel fifths, were not followed. During a time when daily life was marked by austerity and hard labor, musical instruments were rare. The primary means to make music was through singing, and early music teachers, called singing masters, developed a method to teach music reading quickly through a system of shape notes and solfege that indicated pitch rather than position on the musical staff. Itinerate singing masters would travel from town to town establishing singing schools, supplementing their meager existence by creating and then selling their own music books.

The type of music that developed from these early American was called "sacred harp singing" (the sacred harp being the human voice), It is not intended for audiences, so singers sit in a square facing each other with each part on a side with the leader in the middle. The tenors are the leading voices and are given the melody, though sacred harp composers strove to give all voices equality in part-writing. Thus, to European-trained ears, the melodies often seem buried. Another convention not found in sacred harp singing is the use of dynamic contrast, as all singing is to be done in full voice and with great energy. Most of the songs have religious messages, and were written using the fiery and often violent imagery found in the Old Testament. As Americans sought refinement using European standards, shape-note notation and the unique early American music waned in the mid-1800s in favor of common practice harmony and more gentle and lyrical spiritual music. However, sacred harp singing is still enjoyed in parts of the country, particularly the rural South. The book still in use is also called The Sacred Harp, a collection of old songs notated in shape notes.

The three pieces used in this composition were taken from The Sacred Harp. William Billings was a prominent colonial composer and teacher, and his psalm tunes *Africa* and *Chester* are included. *Parting Friends* is called a spiritual song, and has its origins in the old folk melody *Wayfaring Stranger* originating in Europe.

Although I broke with some sacred harp tradition to create variety and interest to modern ears, I kept melodies and harmonies authentic as much as possible in many passages. To help you and your students better understand the unusual scoring, the melody in *Parting Friends* is stated in the clarinet 1 soli (mm.1 through 15) at the beginning, and scored for trumpets in the tune *Africa* (mm. 39 through 52). The well-known *Chester* melody is divided among all voices.

-Kevin Mixon



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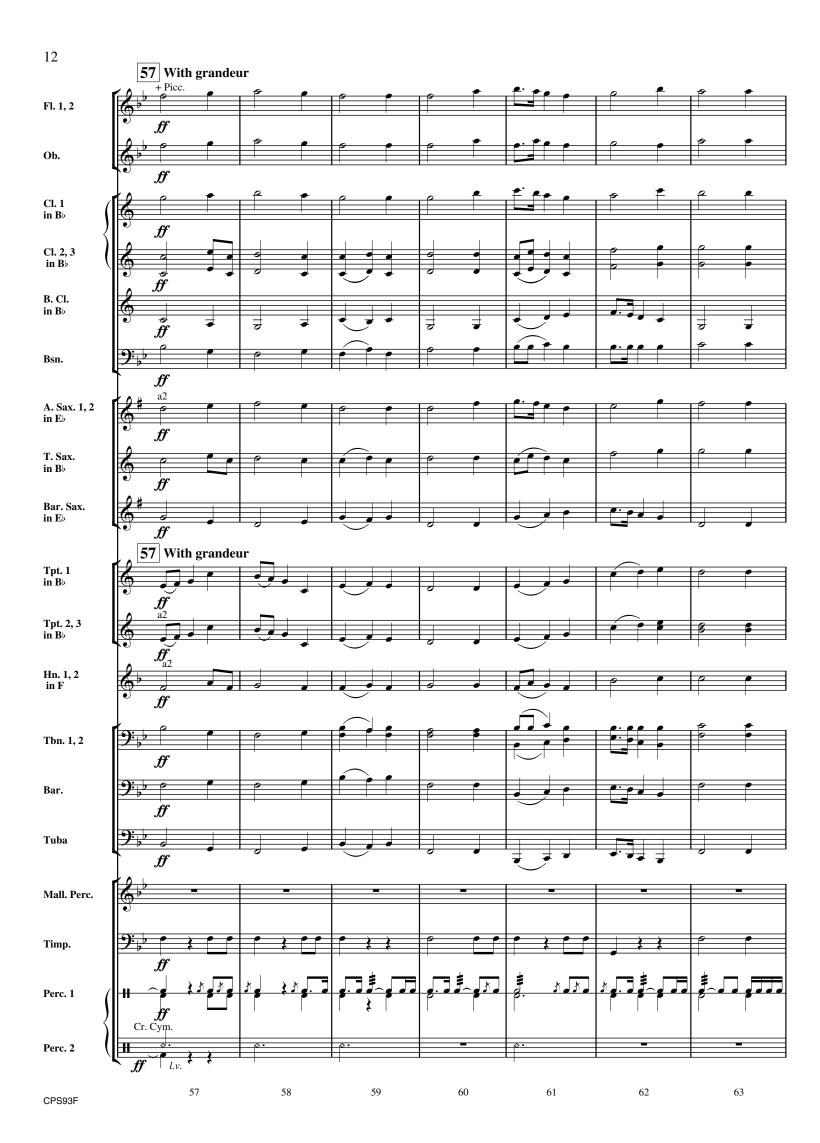






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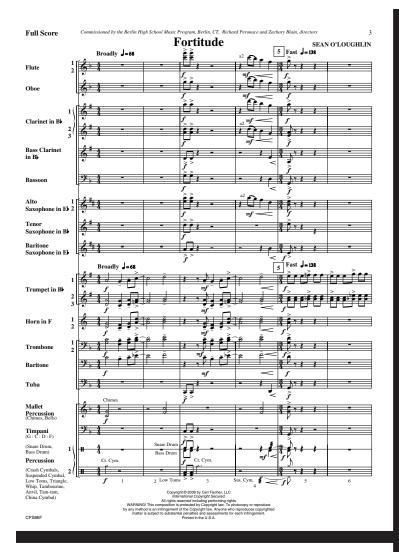






















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