First Plus String Orchestra

Grade 1.5



# Ironclad

## Sean O'Loughlin

### FAS68 INSTRUMENTATION

Full Score	1	
Violin I	8	
Violin II		
Violin III (Viola T.C.)	2	
Viola	5	
Cello	5	
Bass	5	
Piano	1	

#### **Program Notes**

Ironclad is a term often used to describe hearty sailing vessels. The conflict on the high seas between sailors and pirates has been a long standing source for myth and storytelling. Normally this story is associated with the 19th century, but it even plays out in modern times off the east coast of Africa. This composition depicts this conflict with themes for both the sailors and the pirates.

The aggressive pirate theme starts the piece with a bold statement. This rhythmic passage becomes a supporting element to the sailor theme first stated in the celli and basses at m. 22. This sailor melody crosses over bar lines to expand the sense of time and meter of the piece. Throughout the development section from mm. 30-53, both themes jockey for position and dance around each other vying for superiority. A reflective statement of the sailor theme follows at m. 54 that moves to a haunting climax at m. 62. Proper swells in the dynamics are essential to making the most of the musical phrases throughout this section. The pirate theme returns to pick up the pace and build some tension. After a grand pause at m. 86, the sailor theme returns in grand fashion at m. 87. Full bows here are recommended to achieve this triumphant sound. The pirate theme has the last word as it leads the piece to an exciting conclusion.

#### **About the Composer**

Sean O'Loughlin (b.1972) is a fresh voice and a rising name in the music world. His music is characterized by vibrant rhythms, passionate melodies, and colorful scoring. Commissions from the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra highlight and showcase his diverse musical abilities. As a conductor, he has led performances with the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Houston Symphony, and the Seattle Symphony amongst others. He was the assistant conductor and arranger for a production of Sgt. Pepper Live in Las Vegas featuring the band Cheap Trick.

As an arranger and orchestrator, he has worked with such artists as Natalie Merchant, Chris Isaak, Feist, Blue Man Group, Pink Martini, Brandi Carlile, Belle and Sebastian, The Decemberists, Josh Ritter, Gloria Gaynor and others. The Los Angeles Times calls his orchestrations "...colorful" while adding "... even more dimension..." to the compositions. Daily Variety heralds Sean's writing as "most impressive ..." with a "wide range of coloring in the orchestra..." that "...adds heft and rolling energy."

Growing up in Syracuse, NY, Sean displayed a passion for music and showed musical talent at an early age. Sean benefitted from loving parents who supported his musical aspirations and challenged him to explore music as a career. During his undergraduate years at Syracuse University, Sean's musical career began to take shape with the guidance of Larry Clark. As Vice-President at Carl Fischer Music, Larry continues to be a major influence in Sean's professional career as mentor and friend.

Through his growing number of commissioned and published works, Sean is excited to continue contributing to the rich history of orchestral and wind band literature. He is a frequent guest conductor with professional orchestras and honor bands around the country. An annual ASCAP Special Awards winner, Sean was a composition fellow at the Henry Mancini Institute in Los Angeles, and holds composition degrees from New England Conservatory and Syracuse University. Sean, his wife Dena and daughter Kate reside in Los Angeles. For more information, please visit www.seanoloughlin.com



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