

MAGNOLIA STAR

for wind band

STEVE DANYEW

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www.stevedanyew.com

MAGNOLIA STAR

Duration: ca. 6 minutes 15 seconds

Instrumentation*

1 Piccolo	2 Alto Saxophones
3 Flutes	2 Tenor Saxophones
2 Oboes	1 Baritone Saxophone
2 Bassoons	3 Bb Trumpets
3 Bb Clarinets	4 Horns in F
1 Bb Bass Clarinet	3 Trombones
	1 Euphonium
	1 Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1: Marimba, Bell Tree, Tam-Tam, Tambourine

Percussion 2: Bongos (1), Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Low Conga Drum

Percussion 3: Bass Drum, Triangle

Percussion 4: Low Tenor Drums (2), Suspended Cymbal, Whistle

Percussion 5: Crotales, Chimes, Suspended Cymbal

*The number of written parts is listed above. Various doublings of these parts is possible.

Notes

When I was playing saxophone in my middle school jazz band, we started every rehearsal the same way – with an improvisation exercise that our director created. It was a simple yet brilliant exercise for teaching beginning improvisation and allowing everyone in the band a chance to “solo.” As a warm-up at the opening of each rehearsal, the whole band played the blues scale ascending, resting for one measure, descending, and resting for another measure (see example below).



During the measures of rest, each member of the band took turns improvising a solo. Looking back, this exercise not only got the band swinging together from the start of rehearsal, but it made improvisation, a daunting musical task to many, seem within everyone’s abilities. This experience was my introduction to the blues scale, and I have long wanted to write a piece inspired by this group of pitches. In *Magnolia Star*, I explore various ways to use these pitches in harmonies, melodies, and timbres, creating a diverse set of ideas that will go beyond sounds that we typically associate with the blues scale. I didn’t want to create a “blues” piece, but rather a piece in my own musical voice that uses and pays homage to the blues scale. Nearly all of the pitches used in *Magnolia Star* fit into the concert C blues scale. It is interesting to note that embedded within the C blues scale are both a C minor triad, an Eb minor triad, and an Eb major triad. I explore the alternation of these tonal areas right from the start of the piece, and continue to employ them in different ways throughout the entire work.

When I first started improvising ideas for this piece based around the blues scale, I began to hear the influence of driving rhythms and sonorities which reminded me of trains. The railroad became a important second influence of this piece alongside the blues scale.

The American railroad not only provides some intriguing sonic ideas, but it also provides an intimate connection to the growth of jazz and blues in America. In the late 19th century, the Illinois Central Railroad constructed rail lines that stretched from New Orleans and the “Delta South” all the way north to Chicago. Many southern musicians traveled north via the railroad, bringing “delta blues” and other idioms to northern parts of the country. The railroad was also the inspiration for countless blues songs by a wide variety of artists. Simply put, the railroad was crucial to the dissemination of jazz and blues in the early 20th century. *Magnolia Star* was an Illinois Central train that ran from New Orleans to Chicago with the famous *Panama Limited* in the mid 20th century.

6

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2+3

B. Cl.

A. Sx. 1+2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2+3

Euph.

Tuba

Timp.

Bell Tree

Bongos

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

Perc. 5

Sus. Cymbal
scrape w/ beater

Crotales

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2+3

B. Cl.

A. Sx. 1+2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2+3

Euph.

Tuba

Timp.

Bell Tree

Bongos

Bass Drum

Tenor Drums

Perc. 5

Snare Drum

**Sus. Cymbal
scrape w/ beater**

17

3

Picc. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Fl. 1 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Fl. 2+3 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Ob. 1+2 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Bsn. 1+2 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

B♭ Cl. 1 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

B♭ Cl. 2+3 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

B. Cl. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

A. Sx. 1+2 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

T. Sx. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

B. Sx. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *fp*

B♭ Tpt. 2+3 *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *fp*

Hn. 1+2 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Hn. 3+4 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Tbn. 1 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Tbn. 2+3 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Euph. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Tuba *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Timp. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Perc. 1 *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Snare Drum *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *fp*

Bass Drum *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Tenor Drums *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Sus. Cymbal *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *fp*

Picc. *f*

Fl. 1 *f*

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2 *f*

B♭ Cl. 1 *f*

B♭ Cl. 2+3 *f*

B. Cl. *f*

A. Sx. 1+2 *f*

T. Sx. *f*

B. Sx. *f*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *f*

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2 *f*

Hn. 3+4 *f*

Tbn. 1 *f*

Tbn. 2+3 *f*

Euph. *f*

Tuba *f*

26

Timp. *f* *mf* *f*

Perc. 1 *p* *mf* Tambourine

Snare Drum *f*

Bass Drum *mf*

Tenor Drums *mf*

Sus. Cymbal *f*

34

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2+3

B. Cl.

A. Sx. 1+2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2+3

Euph.

Tuba

34

Timp.

Tambourine

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

Tenor Drums

Perc. 5

Crotales

f

42

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2+3

B. Cl.

A. Sx. 1+2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2+3

Euph.

Tuba

42

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Bass Drum

Tenor Drums

Perc. 5

Bass Drum

50

Bass Drum

78

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2+3

B. Cl.

A. Sx. 1+2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2+3

Euph.

Tuba

mf

f

very slight pitch bend at end

78

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

Perc. 5

Marimba (hard mallets)

mf

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2+3

Ob. 1+2

Bsn. 1+2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2+3

B. Cl.

A. Sx. 1+2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2+3

Hn. 1+2

Hn. 3+4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2+3

Euph.

Tuba

Con sord. (harmon)

Con sord. (harmon)

Timp.

Marimba

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

Perc. 5

Snare Drum

Tenor Drums

90