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Dear PMEA All-State Concert Band Member,

My sincerest congratulations on being selected to perform in the 2022 PMEA All-State Concert Band April 7-9 in the Poconos! This achievement is an honor and I hope that you are excited to take the stage to perform a challenging and thrilling program!

My name is Dr. Jonathan Helmick and I am honored to serve as your conductor for the 2022 PMEA All-State Concert Band. I am the Director of Bands and euphonium professor at Slippery Rock University. Prior to joining the faculty at Slippery Rock University in 2015, I taught at the collegiate level and in the public schools in Mississippi and Ohio. Fun fact: I have participated in nine charity races at Walt Disney World, including three marathons!

“Music begins where the possibilities of language end” – Jean Sibelius. To bring this program to life, each member of the ensemble will have to spend a considerable amount of time with the repertoire listed below prior to the first rehearsal! To assist in your preparations, I have included some suggestions and reference recordings for each work on our program. Refer to these for style and to discover how your part fits in – do you have the melody here, are you imitating something that came before you, which instruments share your part? Set your goals to be more than accuracy in notes and rhythms.

You will be sharing the stage with some of the best and brightest artists from across the state. To perform your part well, decide on the shape of your phrases, how the interpretation of articulation markings change between pieces, etc. Also, take a moment to learn about the composers and their motivation for writing these works. One composer in particular is thrilled that you are performing his work!

Solo opportunities: With quite a few solo opportunities present on this program, I encourage you to prepare solos both accurately and musically. For those interested, I will listen to auditions for solos during our break periods throughout rehearsals. **If you are interested in a Solo, please notify Mary Lynne Peters, PMEA All-State Coordinator ([mlpeters@pmea.net](mailto:mlpeters@pmea.net)), by Monday, March 28.**

Now, on to the good stuff...

## Overview:

This repertoire is nothing short of a good time! For the best way to begin, I recommend listening to each selection in the following order while looking over your music – *Hymn to the Sun – With the Beat of Mother Earth, Magnolia Star, Of Our New Day Begun, and Pepita Greus*. Each piece is quite different and presents unique challenges across all sections. With the exception of changes to tempo that I list below, the recordings below will parallel what you can expect for our interpretation.

### **I. *Hymn to the Sun – With the Beat of Mother Earth – Satoshi Yagisawa***

#### A. Everyone:

1. Reference Recording –
  - a. <https://youtu.be/N5mLiKjtWes>
2. Tempo – Please mark the following:
  - a. M. 1 – Quarter Note = 60
  - b. M. 11 (Letter A) – Quarter Note = 63
  - c. M. 25 (Letter C) – Quarter Note = 78-80 (Faster than listed)
  - d. M. 35 (Letter D) – Quarter Note = 60
  - e. M. 51 (Letter E) – Quarter Note = 174- 176
  - f. M. 174 (Letter R) – Quarter Note = 60
  - g. M. 192 (Letter S) – Quarter Note = 66
  - h. M. 208 (Letter U) – Quarter Note = 174- 176
3. Balance/Dynamics –
  - a. All forte indications are not created equal. As you listen to the recordings, take inventory of the moving lines around you. How can you modify your dynamics to highlight your colleagues?
  - b. We will add/make minor changes to dynamics in rehearsal (adding forte pianos, in particular).
4. Technique –
  - a. Woodwinds and mallet percussion have a significant amount of technical challenge in the sections with faster tempo. Be attentive to the articulations and dynamics indicated as the fingers/hands become busy.

#### B. Sections:

1. Woodwinds –
  - a. M. 25-30: Reference the tempo above for this section. This will be slightly faster than the recording – be prepared.
  - b. Overall, the technical demands in this piece involve scalar/chromatic runs that will require advanced preparation to ensure success.
2. Clarinet I/Eb Clarinet –
  - a. M. 31-34: The slurs with a tenuto can be interpreted as a legato tongue with weight to the air.
3. Trumpet –
  - a. Bring straight mutes
4. Trombone –
  - a. Bring straight mutes
5. Horn –

- a. M. 68-75/91-107: These are musical opportunities for you to lead in the texture! Be bold!
- 6. Timpani –
  - a. M. 51-59/144-152/208-215: These are “athletic” solo passages for you.
- 7. Mallets –
  - a. This piece is the most “athletic” for you. The time spent on technique will be well worth it! In softer sections, be certain to make mallet choices that fit into the sound of the low woodwinds around you.

**II. Magnolia Star – Steve Danyew**

Note: Regarding *Magnolia Star*, we are definitely planning to perform this piece in-person at the conference in addition to all of the other repertoire listed. In the event that there is a need to move the All-State Concert Band to a virtual performance, we will perform this piece as a virtual ensemble! I have been in correspondence with the composer, Steve Danyew. He was gracious enough to prepare a ‘click-track’ recording for all of us to make an online performance a success, if we need it!

- A. Everyone:
  - 1. Reference Recording –
    - a. <https://youtu.be/Z6Spkx4hAP8>
  - 2. Tempo –
    - a. Quarter Note = 140 throughout
  - 3. Meter –
    - a. Meters change in this piece often. It is particularly challenging to transition from 7/8 to 4/4 to 6/8 to 3/8 to 3/4... but, it is FUN!
    - b. Practice Tip: Since the eighth note remains the same throughout, set your metronome to 280 (the tempo of the eighth note). Certainly, start slower and work your way up to this tempo with accuracy in your articulations. Focusing on the subdivision (eighth note) will prove helpful.
  - 4. Articulations and Style –
    - a. The articulations and rhythms are the key to unlocking this piece. Spend time on this.
    - b. The accent patterns give this piece energy and the groove. The composer is tricky, be sure not to add accents where there are none (example: beat 2 in 7/8 does not *always* have an accent).
    - c. Accents will have separation.
    - d. The last note of a slur is *usually* short/detached.
    - e. The composer does an outstanding job of placing legato lines against lines that are rhythmic and staccato. Be confident in your style indications.
  - 5. Rhythm/Technique –
    - a. Review your part carefully. While some sections look the same, the composer will sometimes modify a rhythm slightly. Be vigilant.
- B. Sections:
  - 1. Flute –
    - a. M. 93-98: As you practice this, focus on the accent placement and articulations.

- b. M. 138-152: First Flutes, though not technically challenging, this section is difficult to count precisely. It does not always feel as though it matches what is taking place around it metrically. Security in counting tied notes and dotted notes will be key. I recommend playing/singing this with the recording.
- 2. Clarinet –
  - a. M. 70-90/157-161/232-end: These are your features! The rhythm, technique, and articulation will take some preparation.
  - b. M. 165-179: This is a similar line to what you had previously, but now in 7/8. To be accurate and confident, be certain to write in your counts and practice this rhythm slowly at first before bringing it to tempo.
- 3. Alto Saxophone –
  - a. M. 75 – Have fun with those pitch bends! Your goal is to imitate the sound of a train. M. 75 is just one example.
- 4. Trumpet –
  - a. Bring harmon mutes.
  - b. M. 167-180 - The legato passages in 7/8 are challenging to count at first – particularly, placing the 16ths on the last eighth note in 7/8 and accurately leaving the tied notes. As always, write in your counts and start slowly.
- 5. Horn –
  - a. M. 30-33/M.42-57/172-180: The legato passages in 7/8 are challenging to count at first – particularly, placing the 16ths on the last eighth note in 7/8 and accurately leaving the tied notes. As always, write in your counts and start slowly.
- 6. Percussion –
  - a. The percussion section is the engine driving this piece. Confidence in both rhythm and accent patterns will be crucial.
  - b. M. 82-98: This is a perfect illustration of one of those sections where Snare Drum and Tenor Drums drive the ensemble.

### **III. Of Our New Day Begun**

#### **A. Everyone:**

- 1. Reference Recording –
  - a. Composer Website (recording at bottom of page)  
<https://www.omarthomas.com/of-our-new-day-begun>
- 2. Tempo – Please mark the following:
  - a. M. 1 – Quarter Note = 45
  - b. M. 11 – Dotted Quarter Note = 60
  - c. M. 118 – Quarter Note = 64
  - d. M. 121 – Quarter Note = 72 (Slightly faster than indicated/recorded)
  - e. M. 127 – Quarter Note = 60
  - f. M. 146 – Dotted Quarter Note = 48
- 3. Meaning/Style –
  - a. To assist in developing your interpretation, the composer writes: “Of Our New Day Begun” was written to honor nine beautiful souls who lost their lives to a callous act of hatred and domestic terrorism on the evening of

June 17, 2015 while worshipping in their beloved sanctuary, the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately referred to as “Mother Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina.”

B. Sections:

1. Piccolo –
  - a. M. 68-77: The articulation/rhythm should be crisp in this call and response between you and first trumpet.
2. Oboe –
  - a. M. 68-81: You have the melody here, but it is written in a way that does not “fit” the meter. Be sure to count accurately.
3. Bassoon –
  - a. M. 68-81: You have the melody here, but it is written in a way that does not “fit” the meter. Be sure to count accurately.
4. Trumpet –
  - a. M. 68-77 (Solo first trumpet): The articulation/rhythm should be crisp in this call and response between you and the piccolo.
  - b. M. 68-81 (Trumpet 2/3): You have the melody here, but it is written in a way that does not “fit” the meter. Be sure to count accurately.
  - c. M. 54-57: Take a moment to practice stylizing this with the plungers.
  - d. Bring plungers.
  - e. Bring straight mutes.
5. Horn –
  - a. M. 2-9: Horns 3/4 are written in bass clef, quite low, and soft.
6. Trombone –
  - a. M. 54-57: Take a moment to practice stylizing this with the plungers.
  - b. Bring plungers.

IV. **Pepita Greus**

A. Everyone:

1. Reference Recording –
  - a. <https://youtu.be/Ile4hRaqmgg>
2. Tempo –
  - a. M. 1–135 – Quarter Note = 116-118
  - b. M. 136-end – Quarter Note = 120-122
3. Articulation and Style –
  - a. This march is quickly becoming one of my favorites. It has quite a bit of charm and nuance that we will be able to work on together.
  - b. Accents – Think of these as being weighted rather than a hard “attack” or front to the note. They should sound like sudden changes in dynamic. They should also have separation.
  - c. Staccato – light and detached, for sure. The mark of a great interpretation is that the notes should sound unaccented unless otherwise notated.
4. Dynamics –
  - a. Many of the dynamic changes are subito or sudden changes. Take note of this as you listen and practice.
  - b. There is a wonderful first alto saxophone and clarinet section feature beginning at the Trio M. 59. Then, a clarinet soloist takes over from M.

91-122. As you practice, consider lowering your dynamics in these sections to allow the clarinets to shine.

B. Sections:

1. Clarinet/Alto Saxophone I –

- a. M. 59-91: This is “part one” of your moment! This should be smooth/legato with eight-bar phrases. There are sometimes accents under the legato markings which should be played with a slight breath impulse to bring out the syncopation.
- b. M. 91-122: The soloist can plan to play this no softer than mezzo forte. Please adjust your dynamic, you will be a soloist after all!

2. Bass Clarinet:

- a. M. 113: There is a mistake in your part. You should play a concert Ab on beat one.

As April approaches, please feel free to contact me via email with any questions:

[jonathan.helmick@sru.edu](mailto:jonathan.helmick@sru.edu). I look forward to meeting you in person and making music together in the Poconos!

Best,



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