

**2024 Pennsylvania All-State Band
Conductor's Notes
Alfred L. Watkins, conductor
Lassiter HS Band (ret.) 1982-2013 (GA)**

**Founder and Musical Director
Cobb Wind Symphony, 1999
An all-adult community band**

Dear All-State Band,

Congratulations on being accepted as a member of the PA All-State Band. I recognize it as a huge honor and it is my honor to be selected to serve as your conductor. I look forward to coming to Erie in a couple of months and working with you.

Having taught high school band for 37 years and had hundreds of students in the GA All-State Band, I fully understand the challenging process each of you went through to make the band.

I applaud your effort and have planned an exciting and challenging program for you. It is imperative that you have all of your parts worked out well in advance of the event.

Keep your eyes out for notes and audio/video clips as the weeks go by.

Alfred Watkins

Percussion – Please bring at least three sets of mallets for each instrument (tympani, concert snare, xylo, vibraphone, marimba) along with an assortment of triangle beaters.

Trumpets/Trombones/Horns – Please bring an assortment of mutes in case we need to change the sound of the section due to several factors.

Horns – don't forget to bring your stopped horn mutes

Ceremonial Flourishes – James Curnow 5:00

This is a great concert opener with fanfares in the trumpets, trombones and horns with flourishes in euph/tuba and woodwinds.

Tempo: mm = 126 throughout

Style: -Fanfare - marcato articulations are firm and detached; think of playing in somewhat of a march style.

-Flourishes – lots of fun sixteenth notes should be worked out before the first downbeat. Otherwise, you may be chasing notes all weekend, minimizing artistic fun.

-DO NOT ACCENT NON-ACCENTED TONES

Technical issues: Range in 1st trumpet goes up to a High C and D in first few measures. Rehearse this section at ff but don't play too heavy.

Dynamics: I am a stickler for observations of dynamic markings. I tend to create a broad range between pp and ff. As you prepare your parts, always practice your dynamics and expression markings. If you often play with a metronome, please be aware that it doesn't change volumes and only assist with clarity of rhythm and not expression, dynamics, etc.

Articulations – Please become aware of the musical style each composer is asking of you. Legato, marcato, cantabile, dolce, et al are critical to your preparation.

Special Notes – the section between meas 39-50 is tricky to put together. It is a transitional moment between primary and secondary themes. Work this section out with a metronome and be very conscious of articulation (find the accents), tempo and volume.

Meas 58-50 Euphonium – tough part

Meas 54-56 Low winds – tough part to play cleanly

Meas 74-80 High WW's, horns, euphs – Tricky spot

Cobb Wind Symphony – Midwest Clinic 2011

Alfred Watkins, conducting

https://youtu.be/vv4_vwNQA2Y?si=zwjhc21IJtkLEe_w

Sound and Smoke (2011) – Dr. Viet Cuong

Mvt 1. Feudal Castle Lights 6:15

Walter Beeler Memorial Prize from Ithaca College, winner, 2012

Both the title and concept of “Sound and Smoke” were derived from a line from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play Faust, when Faust equates words to “mere sound and smoke” and

declares that “feeling is everything.” Each of the two movements has been given an abstract, parenthetical title to further incorporate Goethe’s conjecture that words will never be able to fully express what feelings and, in this case, music can. Therefore, these titles serve merely as starting points for personal interpretation and should not interfere with the music itself.

The first movement, (feudal castle lights), blurs the many different timbres of the ensemble to create a resonant and slowly “smoldering” effect. Because reverb is essentially built into the orchestration, harmonies must shift using common tones and are always built upon the notes preceding them.

The original concept of “sound and smoke” unifies these two otherwise dissimilar movements; oftentimes ideas are presented and then promptly left behind or transformed. Musical events therefore appear and dissipate as quickly as sound and smoke. - Program Note by composer

This is a very inventive work by a brilliant young composer, Dr. Viet Cuong. Viet was a former student of mine at Lassiter HS (GA). He is a percussionist/pianist and also played the clarinet his senior year in high school. He made the All-State Band on both instruments. I know!!

Tempi: Self-explanatory – just follow his suggestions for tempi and what type of note has the beat.

NOTES: Viet uses cascading 8th note triplets all over the place. They are often staggered within a part by 1/2 to 1-beat creating an interesting echo effect. Prepare these parts with great care particularly in the ww’s and keyboard percussion. Our success will rely on your handling of these parts. I remind you that 1st, 2nd, 3rd parts do not play at the same time. Entrances are usually staggered by 1/2 - 1 full beat. Many are written with a decrescendo. Please prepare with lots of nuance. Trust me on this one.

Section 98: Solo trumpet part is in two parts and in echo. It’s just you and flute/oboe bell tones so this will need to be expertly prepared. Please prepare close to forte.

Perc: I cannot emphasize to you the importance of working out these parts as soon as you are assigned them. There won’t be enough time to learn the parts once we arrive in Erie. A metronome will work wonders on this piece. Don’t forget to follow his dynamic markings.

University of North Texas

<https://youtu.be/f7MNHVzZ2h8?si=oLGHJ6fgQFPoA-NN>

World Premiere – Peabody Wind Ensemble – Viet’s undergraduate school. He coached them through the piece. (2011)

https://youtu.be/K6BOU8YcDDc?si=jG2_-sVWVhXk0si5

THE GOVERNOR’S OWN MARCH – Alton Adams

Classic American Quickstep March from the Golden Age of the March, 1921

Tempo mm = 126, not 120

Based on the bugle call to attention, the trumpets’ snappy opening four-note motif announces the beginning of The Governor’s Own march and serves to call listeners in preparation for the arrival of the Virgin Islands’ governor. The principal theme of the march was inspired by its original dedicatee, Admiral Joseph Wallace Oman, naval governor of the Virgin Islands from 1919 to 1921. The melody seems to depict the governor who Adams described as a “short, jaunty, snappy sort of fellow” while it similarly echoes the energetic themes of Sousa’s King Cotton or Manhattan Beach marches. Adams felt that Sousa’s music perfectly captured the “spirit of militant vigor and courage” emblematic of the march.

As a boy, Adams had imagined himself conducting Sousa’s band while listening secretly to phonograph records outside a neighbor’s home. He studied composition and orchestration in part by copying the individual parts to Sousa’s marches into full score.

Alton Adams was the first black bandmaster in the United States Navy... and perhaps the most popular. His bands were celebrated across the United States during his service years. He eventually rose to political prominence in the U. S. Virgin Islands.

Notes: -Unless slurred, all notes in a march are intended to be played detached
-Accents in winds and percussion must be strictly adhered to
-Percussion – due to the repetitive nature of march writing, you may find it useful to circle the accented notes and their volumes. I have found that this practice saves hours of rehearsal time.

US Marine Band, Col. Jason Fettig, conductor

<https://youtu.be/-lUe-lFHV2g?si=sTPxYhShvY3sogsc>

Performance conducted by the arranger of our version, Loras Schissel
Some nuances are different. He will play these nuances but at a quicker tempo
<https://youtu.be/kqIbYr9vUik?si=8nLh-a6hqfIoC3gH>

PORTRAIT OF A CITY – Philip Sparke
Mvt. 1 – Skyline

London, a vibrant city full of vitality and spirit, is the essence of this three-movement work for band. As a Londoner himself, Sparke relays in each movement some of the city's most beloved and fascinating elements. Skyline offers angular motives and a multitude of ideas that coincide well together.

Meas 1-21 mm = 144

Notes: Skyline is really influenced by the rhythms and feel of American jazz.

- Separate Accents
- Do not accent non-accented tones
- Practice this one with a metronome, record yourself and listen to it. You are responsible for preparing your parts, not your band director.
- Dynamic contrast is critical in this one as the pace maintains itself for the entire work.

https://youtu.be/Gk8_KHme2Gw?si=KSM7JZ1qMDdGsIJm

ONLY LIGHT, ONLY LOVE – Leslie Gilreath

Only Light, Only Love is based on a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness

Only light can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate.

Only love can do that.

This piece is an affirmation of an undying belief in light and love and the overwhelming need for both in our world today. It highlights beauty in the midst of struggle, with the realization that love is ultimately the key to a sense of overcoming in the face of darkness and hatred.

Only Light, Only Love was commissioned by James Barnes and the Blythewood High School Wind Symphony and dedicated to Alfred Watkins. Notes from the composer.

This one has many opportunities for expressive playing for us. All solo should be expertly prepared. If the composer asks for one player per part, the upper chair on that part is automatically assigned to the part. It is not polite to ask another player if I may play a part. If the assigned person wishes to part the part along, please allow for them to have that courtesy. Solos and one per part should assume you are playing in a duet or trio and play one dynamic louder than marked.

Meas 1-21 mm = 60

Meas 22 hn = 64

Don't be alarmed with changing meters in 2/2 and 3/2. Rehearse this section to get prepared for the silence.

Meas 45 qn = 64

Meas 70 Rubato - Very transparent in ww's

Meas 76 qn = 73. Lots of keyboard percussion here to end

Meas 83 4/4 qn = 88

In short, work out all your parts before you arrive. It looks easier than it is.

Piano and keyboard percussion are essential in this particular work. Work your parts out with a metronome for evenness before you come to All-State. We'll need to work through several mallet changes on this piece.

Cobb Wind Symphony Midwest 2018

<https://youtu.be/PhAR8WT58dA?si=bfEQzo0AEceLXFS>