



Dear 2024 PMEA All-State Orchestra Member,

Congratulations on being selected to perform in the 2024 PMEA All-State Orchestra. I know that each of you have worked very hard to achieve this goal, and you are all to be congratulated. We are going to have a great time preparing for and performing this concert. I am particularly honored to serve as your conductor as I was a member of the PMEA All State Orchestra in 1983 and hosted the event in 1990 when I was a young strings teacher in Palmyra, PA. I promise to do my best to provide you with a musically enriching, challenging, and enjoyable experience. I believe we have selected an exciting program for this event and know we will all enjoy the journey toward a stellar performance together.

Our repertoire features all American music. While not my intention in selecting the program, it includes a great deal of Pennsylvania representation as well. I'm sure many of you are aware that Samuel Barber was raised in Westchester, PA and attended Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Dr Jack Stamp, composer of Iridium, was my professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania during my graduate work in the early 1990s. Finally, while Florence Price does not have strong Pennsylvania roots, she is a prolific American composer, and I am excited to introduce you to her Symphony No. 3.

As a member of the 2024 PMEA All State Orchestra, I am sure you are aware of the high musical expectations for the event. Our time together is short and I know we all want to prepare a musically clean and a dynamic, exhilarating performance! Please note that I expect you to come to the event with all music fully prepared before you arrive so that we can focus on ensemble development right out the gate. Please familiarize yourself with recordings of the repertoire linked on this page. Also, please be sure that all of your parts are numbered by measure. (If your part isn't already numbered, simply count and place a measure number at the beginning of each line.) For the strings, I have bowed the parts, but am always open to constructive changes to bowings as marked. Obviously, I anticipate a complete commitment to the highest values of ensemble music making, rehearsal decorum, and a dedication to musical excellence throughout the weekend. I can't wait to meet you and to make music together!



CONCERT PROGRAM

Overture to School for Scandal Op.5 - Samuel Barber

Samuel Barber is one of my favorite composers. Probably most of you are familiar with his epic Adagio for Strings. The Adagio was my first introduction to Barber's music. From there, I began to explore his other compositions and fell in love with all of them, particularly his string and symphonic works. Many of the full orchestra works I have gravitated towards were composed when he was quite young. Overture to School for Scandal was composed when he was a student at Curtis Institute of Music in 1931 when he was 21 years old. While not specifically written for the play, *The School for Scandal*, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1777), it was intended to reflect the spirit of the play. The play revolves around a wealthy man gathering information about his nephews so that he can decide which one to leave his fortune. It involves deceit, conflict, a love triangle, and other hijinks. This piece is challenging for many reasons. It requires a high level of rhythmic independence and specific attention to the details of articulation and ensemble blend. Please refer to the linked recording for reference.

AUDIO: [▶ Barber: Overture to "The School for Scandal", Op. 5](#)

Solos:

- Oboe (Rehearsal C) performed by principal player
- Clarinet (Rehearsal D) performed by principal player
- Flute (after Rehearsal D) performed by principal player
- English Horn (Rehearsal H) performed by principal player
- Flute and Bassoon (after Rehearsal H) performed by principal player

Iridium - Jack Stamp

From Jack Stamp: "My intention was to write a lively work which highlighted the strengths of the Johnstown (PA) Symphony while being accessible and appealing to their loyal audience members. In trying to tie something unique about Johnstown to the work, I came up with the title, Iridium, which is a term that deals with the production of metal."

This piece was published in 1997 when I was teaching in the Washington DC area at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. When I became aware that Dr. Stamp had published a piece for orchestra, I jumped at the opportunity to prepare and perform it. I think it is fair to say that he is best known for his works for wind band and has a huge reputation in Pennsylvania band circles. Another early draw for me was the dedication of the piece to Dr. Hugh Johnson, Conductor of Orchestras at IUP for many years, who passed away



while Dr. Stamp was composing this work. Dr Johnson's wife, Gloria, was my private violin instructor as a teenager, and I played under Dr Johnson for many years, through high school, college, and graduate school. He was a huge influence on me both musically and personally. Much of the way I approach rehearsal and ensemble development is strongly influenced by him.

Dr Stamp and I have joked over the years that I may be the only conductor regularly programming this piece. That is fine with me! However, that means the only available recordings are those that I have conducted. The linked recording is from a performance with the Maryland All State Orchestra in 2011. Over the years, I have done this with many All State ensembles, including Colorado earlier this spring. The work features several solos in the middle section including a brief violin and cello cadenza. These will be performed by the concertmaster and principal cellist. These solos have a particularly intense meaning to me personally which I will share with you at the event.

String section: please prepare 16th note passages carefully and slowly. They provide such a great impact when they are clean and in tune. That doesn't typically happen in rehearsal. It happens in the practice room!

Winds (particularly Brass): this piece (and our entire repertoire) can be taxing through a festival such as this. Feel free to work together with your section-mates to save chops. I am also not opposed to dropping high passages an octave (to save chops) periodically throughout the rehearsal process.

Percussion: I see you! I am hoping that you are happy with all of the selected works. They are all certainly percussion friendly. We have our work cut out for us!

AUDIO: [▶ Iridium, Jack Stamp](#)

Solos:

Violin (114) and Cello (119) solos will be performed by Concertmaster and Principal Cello, as will wind parts from 124-133.

The Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba trio at 134 will be performed by principal players. While I don't play Tuba, I am told the Tuba part in this trio is quite high. I am not opposed to octave transpositions in the name of accuracy and saving chops.



Symphony No. 3, Mvt. I- Andante-Allegro and Mvt. IV - Finale. Presto - Florence Price

Composed in 1938, Florence Price's Symphony No. 3 in C minor was commissioned by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Music Project during the height of the Great Depression. Her Symphony No. 1 was the first Symphony by a black woman to be performed by a major American Orchestra. Some compare the first movement of her Symphony No.3 to the works of Wagner and others indicate a resemblance to (or at least the influence of) the great Russian composers, such as Shostakovich. I must admit that I don't relate strongly to either of these comparisons. I find her style to be uniquely her own.

To me, Movement 1 is full of melancholy and seems to be, slowly but surely, finding its way from melancholy and sadness to acceptance and understanding. Please note the shaping of phases in the Andante sections on the recording. To me, the more whimsical themes in the movement are representative of some sort of youthful memory which evolves into something more dire each time it is presented. The tempo changes in this movement are critical. I encourage you to note each tempo change in your part before arriving at the event.

Movement 4 is all about victory over the melancholy and sadness represented in Movement 1. This is another movement where articulation will be a primary focus. I think it will be a great Finale for our concert!

Strings: this is another movement where the 16h note passages are exposed and very transparent. Please prepare them carefully and slowly.

AUDIO: [▶ Price: Symphony No. 3 in C Minor - I. Andante – Allegro](#)

[▶ Price: Symphony No. 3 in C Minor - IV. Scherzo. Finale. Allegro](#)

Solos:

Movement 1:

- Opening Andante: One on a part - principal players only
- Allegro: Tutti
- Violin Solo: Assistant concertmaster (2nd chair)
- Cello solo: Assistant Principal (2nd chair)



Some performance notes for cello section:

- Vc. - Mvmt. I m. 59 - these double stops are very difficult, and hard to tune. It is much easier to have the lower of each pair and the higher of each pair: i.e. bottom divisi plays low Ab and F, upper divisi plays B and high Ab.
- Vc. - Mvmt. I m. 134 - suggest moving divisi one beat earlier, top part switches to arco, bottom part has a rest during the 8th notes and stays on pizz for the next note.
- Vc. - mvmt. I m. 187 - confusing divis. Suggest as before: low divisi plays Eb and Ab, top plays F# and C