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G382
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African Folk Trilogy

Grade 1 Analytical Overview

African Folk Trilogy by Anne McGinty

Composer Information

- Born on June 29th, 1945 in Findlay, OH.
- There is not much information on her home life before college.
- Anne is one of the most prolific female composers of concert band literature.
- People find her work both musical and educational in her variety of compositions for different ensembles.



Education and/or Musical Training

- Began playing flute at a young age.
- Attended The Ohio State University, where she left OSU to pursue a career in flute performance.
- Her first job was the principal of the Tucson (Arizona) Symphony Orchestra, Tucson Pops Orchestra, and the TSO Woodwind Quartet.
- She returned to college to receive her Bachelors and Masters degrees at Duquesne University where she studied flute performance, theory, and composition.
- Teachers and mentors include: Donald McGinnis, Bernard Goldberg, and Joseph Wilcox Jenkins.

Compositions for Band

- Anne has written more than 225 pieces, where over 50 of them were commissioned in the U.S.
- Notable works include: *The Red Balloon* (Grade 2), *Atlantis* (Grade 1), *Sea Song Trilogy* (Grade 2), *All the Pretty Little Horses* (Grade 2), and many others. Mostly beginning pieces.

Awards / Honors / Positions

- Life member of the National Flute Association and served on its Board of Directors.
- Editor of a flute column for a music magazine and co-founder of the NFA Newsletter, now known as “The Flutists Quarterly.”
- Flute editor at Hansen Publications in Miami Beach, Florida.
- Member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and has received annual composition award since 1986.
- Received the Golden Rose Award from the Women Band Directors National Association and the Outstanding Service to Music Award from Tau Beta Sigma, a national honorary band sorority.
- The first woman composer commissioned to write for the United States Army Band.
- Was commissioned to write an original composition for the Bicentennial of the United States Military Academy at West Point and another for the United States Continental Army (now TRADOC) Band.

Composition

African Folk Trilogy was composed in 1998 and was published by Edmondson & McGinty, Inc. (Queenwood Publications). The Grade is not specifically classified by the composer, but most state repertoire lists classify this piece as a Grade 1. *African Folk Trilogy* features three traditional African children’s songs. The first song is from West Africa and is called “Banuwa,” which means “Don’t cry little girl.” The same melody in this song was used by Christian missionaries, and is known as “African Noel.” The second song is a South African game song called “Ditho tsa mmele.” This song teaches children the words to “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.” The third and last song, “Sansa Kroma,” is a playground game song from Ghana that, more or less, is the African version of “Duck, Duck, Goose.” The percussion will help authenticate some of the traditional African instruments, in addition to the foot stomps performed by the band.

Instrumentation

Flute	F Horn (Opt.)
Oboe	Bb Trumpet 1
Bb Clarinet 1	Bb Trumpet 2
Bb Clarinet 2	Low Brass
Eb Alto Saxophone	Bells
Bb Tenor Saxophone (Opt.)	Percussion 1 (Claves, Cabasa, Snare Drum)
Low Woodwinds	Percussion 2 (Cowbell)

Melodic / Thematic

Excluding the foot stomping at the beginning and the end, the piece opens up with a trumpet melody that continues as the main melody for the first African song. Gradually, layers of various instruments will start to add to the texture, but more importantly the percussion starts to add the more traditional feel of the piece. Once everyone is playing, there are instruments with the melody and others with a countermelody that add onto the layers. The second African song is much slower. It starts with a 1 and 3 beat with some instruments, and the melody in the flutes and oboes. Quickly, a round of the melody then starts with some sections, where they go back and forth with this melody. The third piece finishes out the overall work with a tempo matching the first song. With complicated rhythms as the melody, sections will do a call and response until the last 8 measures when the whole band plays. Here we see a melody, counter melody, and bass line all together, with a big finish at the end.

Harmony

For the first two songs the key is in Bb Major, and the last song is in Eb Major. In the first song, the trumpets start out with the melody in tutti. The clarinets come join in with the melody on thirds, followed by adding more instruments to add a chordal structure to the end of the song. The second song uses a lot of I and V, while the third song just jumps right into the key-change. Like the beginning, there are more harmonies with the melody until the end where chords form with all of the moving parts.

Rhythm

Breaking it up into sections of the songs again, the first song starts out with an easy rhythm sequence of quarter quarter half, *repeat 2x*, quarter quarter quarter quarter held to a whole note. This is basically the only rhythm of this song, until you see the clave part. The claves have a small syncopated part, so that percussionist needs to have a great sense of time. The second song consists of mostly quarter and eighth notes at a slower tempo. The third song is where the rhythm gets tricky for the band. In measure 45, immediately there is a syncopated rhythm. Then 2 measures later, it's almost the exact same rhythm, just slightly altered. This will be confusing as both rhythms are so close to one another. In the third song, other than teaching those two complicated rhythms, the rest of the piece is nothing but quarter notes and half/whole notes.

Form

Song 1 (mm. 1 - 33)

mm. 1 - 9

A

mm. 9 - 17	A'
mm. 17 - 25	A''
mm. 25 - 33	B

Song 2 (mm. 33 - 45)

mm. 33 - 37	Introduction
mm. 37 - 41	A
mm. 41 - 45	A'

Song 3 (mm. 45 - 68)

mm. 45 - 53	A
mm. 53 - 61	A
mm. 61 - 68	B

Texture / Timbre

African Folk Trilogy features sections melodies, exposed parts, melodic harmonies, two clarinet and trumpet parts, and up to three contrapuntal lines at the same time. The first and third songs have a more lively feel to it, while the second song has a more somber feel to it.

Other Considerations

African Folk Trilogy is a great piece to start introducing more cultural works. The biggest factor in playing this piece is having a great percussion section. The rhythms are hard, and they all do different things at the same time. They need to be able to count and play these rhythms, while still listening to everyone else. For the band, in general, the rhythms are fine until the third song where new rhythms will have to be introduced, talked about, and worked on extensively. The flutes and oboes do not have a difficult range, but while the clarinets do not go over the break, they get down to a low G3. The alto saxophones needs strong players in the high register, for they go up to a G5 above the staff. Your top trumpet players could have a hard time with endurance due to extensive playing in the middle to upper-middle staff. There are multiple C5's that would be at the top of most player's range. The low brass and woodwinds have a comfortable range. Tempo's can be a bit brisk for a beginning band, as well as a few exposed parts that players might not be used to. Two other big items are the tempo change into song two, and then into song three. The transition into song two has a break before starting, but the transition into song three is an immediate change that will have to be worked on extensively. There is also a key change that players might not be comfortable with, or even know it happens. Overall, there are many tricky items to being able to play this piece, but players will have fun with the rhythm and liveliness in the piece, as well as exposing students to more cultural works.

Sources

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