

2009

Spirit Camps Staff
Development

Dr. Andrew F Poor

Score

Written for the Rising Starr Middle School Symphonic Band, Steve Tyndall, director,
in honor of their performance at the 2008 Midwest Clinic

Acceptance

ANDREW F. POOR

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THE PROCESS OF COMPOSING "ACCEPTANCE"

The Process of Composing *Acceptance*

by Andrew F. Poor

The initial inspiration

- A Nexus of events
 - Invitation to perform at 2008 Midwest Clinic
 - A warm-up chorale I had previously arranged on *It is well with my soul*
 - The passing of my mother on 5/23/07
 - My daughter was the 1st horn player in the RSMS Band for the Midwest

My creative process

- I am not Mozart!
- Best described as slow and labored.
- I need for the ideas to rattle around in my head for a while.
- Maybe experiment/improvise at the piano some.
- I re-write a great deal
- Lots of trial and error
- A vision of the form of the work is essential
- I experiment with possible keys
- I plan out the probable number of measures I have available.
- I work from a full score.

Some other factors

- Midwest Clinic repertoire restrictions
 - Grade level of music
 - Publishers
 - Manuscript limitations
 - Time limits on the performance
 - Deadlines for submission

Where to begin?

- I decided that I wanted to use the hymn *It is well with my soul* by Philip Bliss.
- I quickly decided that this would not rise to the honor of the occasion
- Then I decided to try to blend some original material
- The original material began as an experiment on the scale degrees 5-2-3
- The form of the work almost immediately took shape for me.
- With this initial sketch I was at 3'00" to 3'30" in time.
- Picked the key of B-flat because I wanted to feature the horns on the original material.

- The harmonization, varying orchestration, transitions and the counterpoint took the most time.
- The trumpet solo on *It is well* is symbolic of myself-a former trumpet player.

The primary melodic material

- This the first statement of the original melody played by the horns in B-flat



- The first full statement of *It is well* is played by the trumpets



- Other variations on the primary melodic material are listed below

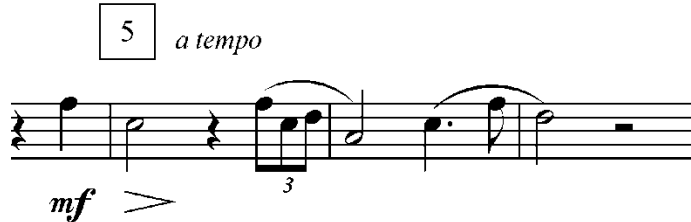


Figure 1 Played by the Oboes and Flutes

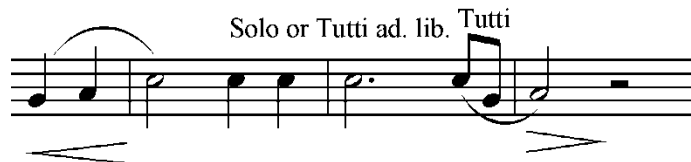


Figure 2 Played by the Horns

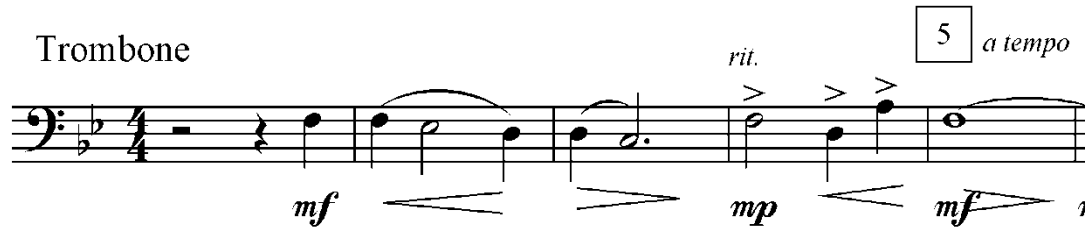


Figure 3 Introduction played by trombones

The title

- The title is a double entendre
- One in recognition of the honor of being “Accepted” to play at the 2008 Midwest Clinic.
- Also from the Serenity Prayer and this was supported by the text of the hymn.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to ACCEPT the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.
Amen.
--Reinhold Niebuhr

Some facts about the hymn

- Written by a Presbyterian lawyer Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888) and composed by Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876)
- The scripture reference is Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

- Spafford was a successful lawyer in Chicago who was devastated financially by the Great Chicago Fire. Before the fire, Spafford also experienced the loss of his son.
- Two years after the fire, Spafford planned a trip to Europe for him and his family. Because of business he did not travel with his family.
- He still sent his wife and four daughters to travel as scheduled expecting to follow in a few days. On November 22, the ship laden with his wife and daughters was struck by the *Lockhearn*, an English vessel, and sank in a few minutes. His wife survived but his four daughters drowned.

Some other tidbits

- After about a month of experimenting with the chorale, I began to write the original material on 5/11/08, (Mother's Day) and sketch the larger work.
- The work was completed in its first full form on 6/1/08, my mother's birthday
- I was notified by my publisher that the work would be in the large JW Pepper catalog on 5/23/09, the two-year anniversary of my mother's passing.
- I was rejected by my first effort to be published
- I was eventually published by Northeastern Music.
- The work was premiered by the RSMS Band at the Midwest Clinic in 2008 and can be seen on the Midwest website.
- CSU Wind Ensemble, Dr. Robert Rumbelow conducting, recorded the piece for my publisher. I hope you enjoy the performance.

Notes: