

Magic Valley, Scott Watson. Alfred Publications.

Recording:

Alfred demo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXZ2LIDDSAY>

Written in 2009, I missed this one till this past year as I prepared for the Des Lee Honors Band. It is marked as a grade 3. Although rhythm is mainly whole, half, quarter, eighth, it is the musical aspects of phrasing and expressive elements that ask for maturity at times. I think this is a great piece full of so many teaching moments in regards to musicality and the expressive elements of making music that we so often leave to the studio teacher. Here is a piece where we get to enjoy that aspect of teaching!

Right from the top we are given an opportunity to encourage expressive phrasing by adding a slight crescendo on the repeated notes and then stretching beat three as we encourage the “low searches for high” law of expressive playing. This continues till meas. 16. This is a hymn like original tune by Watson. He will use this simple motive as the basis for the piece.

Be sure to visit the explanation of how the composer wants the appoggiaturas (grace notes) played through out. This will add a lot of musicality to the notes are not rushed.

Brass entrance in meas. 17 should imitate the WW sensitive ideas.

Trumpet and Horn meas. 17 should stretch, lengthen beat 1, “low searches for high.”

Take your time with this short but so highly effective phrase. No more than mf.

WW imitate brass meas. 22.

Complete release in meas. 26. Take your time!

The dynamic shape in meas. 27-31 is vital.

Oboe needs to sing out in meas. 29. I have them start even softer, if possible. Enter from silence and release into silence.

Meas. 32, clar., bsn., B Cl., alto need to shadow the flute solo. Flute this is a return of the opening melodic material. Same shape and phrasing is required.

Meas. 46, balance to the horn.

Meas. 48, horn hands melody to oboe, oboe hands melody to flute, Euph adds an expressive counter in meas. 51.

Push the time in 56&57.

Hold back the time in 58. Moto allargando!!! In meas. 59. This is so wonderful! Rehearse this so that everyone is on the same page with how much you will slow down.

The eighth note on beat the end of three in meas. 60, needs to be long! (“short searches for long”)

At meas. 69 everyone needs lengthen beat three for expressive playing. BD and Timp lead crescendo in 68.

The mp in meas. 81 is critical so we have room for contrast at 87!

Meas. 86 molto allargando...hold back the time! Meas. 87, I probably rehearsed this measure 50 times that afternoon! It is so cool. I basically directed every note in meas. 87. Beat three hit in brass is wonderful. Big decrescendo in meas. 88. Hold back the time.

Meas. 90 is lento, flute, oboe, bsn., clarinets, BCl, chorale.

Meas. 93, crescendo in percussion will help hide the breath in WW.

Not too fast at 94. This is coda but the three-note motive is still there. One last opportunity for expressive playing.

Darken and balance the chords in the last three bars. I directed a complete release on beat three in meas. 101 for the brass only and then rearticulated the last chord in brass.