

## **Fortress**, Frank Ticheli, Manhattan Beach Music

### Reference:

Miles, Richard. Music Through Performance in Band, vol. 5, pages 255-259. GIA Publications. 2010.

### Recording:

[https://www.manhattanbeachmusiconline.com/manhattan\\_beach\\_music/audio/fortress-ms.mp3](https://www.manhattanbeachmusiconline.com/manhattan_beach_music/audio/fortress-ms.mp3)

There are many good recordings of this piece available. The above is the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire performing. Excellent recording!

Pages 2 & 3 of the score have great notes from the composer on performance and rehearsal ideas. It is vital that we read this. The harmony is centered around triads that are a tritone apart. This is consistent throughout. There are three main themes, 1. Main Theme, 2. Call Motif, 3. Legato theme. Frank Ticheli is a master at developing thematic material.

The tempos range is MM=126-132. I have settled on MM=128.

True to all of Frank Ticheli's music, he is very detailed in terms of articulation, dynamics and directions. Close attention to directions on the score will help realize the composer's intent.

All lines are important in capturing the character and intent. Careful attention to balance in all 160 measures!

Match articulation across the ensemble and define the length of accents there are two versions of the accent on its side and the marcato with staccato. Isolate and practice so everyone agrees on length.

Meas. 12, beat 4 of main theme is weighted and long. Agree on length.

Follow the direction of "bring out" when indicated.

Meas. 26, beat 2&4 have an accent. 1&3 do not.

Ticheli indicates that all themes should be balanced to the legato theme at all times.

I keep the articulation the same for the main theme throughout. It is not always indicated.

Several instances of call and response that should be carefully balanced.

Encourage bass drum to be very present in the hit on beat 1 of meas. 54.

Meas. 55 is the first ff of the piece. Tutti quarters with accents.

Beginning in Meas. 59 is a cool fugue on the call motive.

Meas. 69, tambourine solo. To be played the same as meas. 34 & 35.

Exaggerate the articulation in meas. 83-86 in anticipation of the marcato eighths in meas. 87.

The legato theme is handed around the ensemble. Be sure we are all interpreting it the same.

Beginning in meas. 106 the legato theme is presented in diminution. Accompaniment is marcato!

Agree on articulation and rhythm in meas. 121 so we find the release together.

Meas. 122&123 is a two measure interlude with solo alto and flute.

Meas. 124 is the coda. So, all themes are present. There is a B flat tonic pedal pretty much all the way to the end.

Horns have some fun in meas. 143, 147, 155 and 156 it says gliss but there is no note before the B natural, so it is really a "rip." This would be a lip rip. I guess the issue would be everyone starting on a different starting pitch. I sincerely believe if Frank Ticheli was concerned about the starting note he would indicate the note, he is that detailed. So have fun and "let it rip!"

Hold the time back in meas. 155-157 then atempo to the end. The trumpets set the tempo in 158 with their entrance. So, remind them to be sure and watch.

I continue to enjoy this piece every time I have a chance to play it or conduct. I hope you will enjoy as well. So many great concepts that can be taught with this piece!