

Good King Wenceslas

arr. by Kyle McKinzey

This piece is a pumped up version of a very familiar carol. The many contemporary elements in its style and voicing bring new life to this old, familiar melody. At the same time, it's not so contemporary that your students and audience will feel distant from it. It will make them tap their feet and bob their heads and, hopefully, smile.

To create the exciting feeling of this piece, you will need to focus a lot on the style and rhythms. A good example is the clarinet opening in the first two measures. They must play this light and crisp. They should emulate the mallet parts in note length and articulation.

All of the little melody snippets in 3-16 should be played teasingly. They should be heard but not so dominant that they take away from the ostinato rhythm underneath. They're meant to be samples or teasers of what's to come.

From measure 17 on, there is a lot of tossing around the melody from section to section. At measure 29, there are even added melody hints being played under the main melody. This is a great section to teach kids to listen to what's going on around them and not just focus on their part. A good way to teach this is to only have them play when they have a melody part. Listen for it to move around the band. They should be able to point out who has what part of the melody. This can be done in several sections of this piece.

Many young players equate more volume to accents. The accents in the accompaniment figures at 17 are meant to have more weight, not more volume. The same can be said for the snare patterns throughout. Don't let the accents be played with force, just a little added stick height. I tell mine that the accents can be played normal height and the non-accented notes played lower. The inside notes (non-accented) are there for feel not to be heard.

The trumpets really get to soar at measure 45. However, the variation of the same melody in the low brass needs to come out as well. This will be achieved by contrasting note length and style. The trumpets really need to ring out and let their notes touch, while the lower voices should have much more lift to them.

Measure 53 to the end is my favorite and a very exciting part. There are moments of playfulness and moments of fanfare and power. These should have as much contrast as possible.

I hope you have fun with this piece. As always, I would appreciate any comments or suggestions. Feel free to email me at kylemactx@sbcglobal.net

Merry Christmas!



Kyle McKinzey is a middle school band director at Bowie Middle School in Irving, Texas. He has been teaching since 1982 at both the middle school and the high school levels in East Texas, and the Dallas-Fort Worth area. He is a 1982 graduate of Henderson State University, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. At Henderson, he studied composition with Dr. Bill Underwood, and was also influenced by his percussion instructor, Doug DeMorrow.

Through the years, Kyle has written many arrangements for friends, as well as compositions and arrangements for marching band, concert band, jazz band, and percussion ensembles. In addition to these pieces, he has done numerous arrangements for church praise bands, orchestras and choirs. He has also orchestrated and conducted many pieces for orchestra and choir. His most recent endeavor was a benefit for Zoe Ministries where he worked with the largest mass choir production ever performed at Bass Hall in Fort Worth, Texas.

Kyle has performed with the Arkansas and South Arkansas Symphonies as a percussionist. He played piano and drums with the Greenville Big Band Jazz Orchestra. He is a charter member of the Mansfield Wind Symphony of Mansfield, Texas, and he currently plays percussion with them. He is an active member of Texas Music Educators Association, ASCAP, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. He lives in Mansfield with his wife Charlene and two wonderful children, Johnna and Brandt.