

# PREPARING YOUR ENSEMBLE FOR EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

Robert Sheldon

*Composer-Conductor-Clinician-Educator*

## **1) Expression is the key!**

- ♪ Tension and Release
- ♪ Pacing, Color, Vibrato, Dynamics
- ♪ Cause and Effect
- ♪ Tone and Presence

## **2) Music Selection**

- ♪ The most important element of programming
- ♪ Expressive statement you want to make
- ♪ Difficulty level, Concepts you want to teach, Craftsmanship
- ♪ Selection process

## **3) Learning Packets**

- ♪ Sequential teaching
- ♪ Booklet for each student covering all musical elements studied
- ♪ Student Conducting and Composing

## **4) Rehearsal Planning**

- ♪ Six-week cycle
- ♪ Sight-reading, Conducting, Arranging, Theory, Sight-singing
- ♪ Rehearsal Schedule for students

## **5) Cleaning the Music**

- ♪ Divide and Conquer
- ♪ Balance and Phrasing
- ♪ Great recordings for students

## **6) Assessment**

- ♪ Evaluate continuously, Record rehearsals
- ♪ Video tape group and study YOUR gestures
- ♪ Compare interpretations
- ♪ BECOME the music!

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# THREE GEORGIAN VIGNETTES

## LEARNING PACKET

*About the piece:*

***Three Georgian Vignettes*** was commissioned by the University of Georgia Band, Athens, Georgia, F. David Romines, Associate Director, for the 2006 MidFest Middle School Honor Band. The composition is a three-movement suite in which each movement provides a musical depiction of a fable drawn from Georgian folklore.

The first movement, *The Heron and the Hummingbird*, is a tale in which the two birds argue over who shall have the fish in the river to eat, and decide to have a race in which the winner gets all the fish. The hummingbird gets so far ahead that he stops to rest and enjoy the nectar of the flowers along the way, while the heron never stops his ponderous flight and eventually reaches the finish of the race first – explaining why to this day the herons eat the fish and the hummingbirds drink the nectar.

*Crows in the Corn* is a typical way that folks in Georgia say that it is time to wake up. The fable tells of a farmer and his wife who decided to sleep late, ignoring the warnings of the creatures in the barnyard that the *crows are in the corn!* By the time they eventually rolled out of bed all the corn was gone...

The final movement depicts the story of *Brer Rabbit Falls Down the Well*. Brer Rabbit and some of his other friends were working in the garden when he decided to fake getting a thorn in his paw so the others would suggest he go wash it in the well, but instead of washing his paw, he crawled into the bucket to take a nap and leave the others to do the work. But the bucket suddenly plunged to the bottom of the well and the bucket of water in the bottom just as quickly flew to the top! Brer Fox was suspicious of Brer Rabbit and followed him to the well, watching him disappear. When the rabbit didn't return he called down the well to see what the rascal was up to. The rabbit decided to play a trick on the fox by telling him of the huge quantities of fish at the bottom of the well, and asked him to come down to help him carry them out. When the fox plummeted to the bottom of the well in the bucket, the rabbit just as quickly rose to the top and ran off laughing, leaving the fox to wait for the hunter to stop by for a drink in order to escape, providing he was fast enough to get away before the hunter could reach his gun!



Why do you think these stories were chosen by the composer to be used in this piece?

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*About the composer:*

**Robert Sheldon** (b. Feb 3, 1954) taught instrumental music in the Florida and Illinois public schools, and served on the faculty at Florida State University where he taught conducting and instrumental music education classes, and directed the university bands. As Concert Band Editor for the Alfred Publishing Company, he maintains an active composition and conducting schedule, regularly accepting commissions for new works. Sheldon received the Bachelor of Music from the University of Miami and the Master of Fine Arts in Instrumental Conducting from the University of Florida.

An internationally recognized clinician, Sheldon has conducted numerous Regional and All-State Honor Bands throughout the United States and abroad, is Conductor of the Prairie Wind Ensemble in residence at Illinois Central College, and teaches Composition at Bradley University. He holds membership in several organizations that promote music and music education. The American School Band Directors Association has honored him with the *Volkwein Award* for composition and the *Stanbury Award* for teaching, and the International Assembly of Phi Beta Mu honored him with the International Outstanding Bandmaster Award. He has also been a twenty-two-time recipient of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publisher's *Standard Award* for his compositions in the concert band repertoire. His compositions have been recorded and released on compact discs including, **Images: The Music of Robert Sheldon**, and **Infinite Horizons: The Music of Robert Sheldon**, as well as numerous other recordings. Mr. Sheldon has been the topic of articles published in *The Instrumentalist*, *Teaching Music* and *School Band and Orchestra Magazine*, and is one of eleven American wind band composers featured in Volume I of *Composers on Composing Music for Band*.

Visit his website to see other pieces we have played or that you have heard performed by other bands that might be familiar to you: [www.robertsheldonmusic.com](http://www.robertsheldonmusic.com)

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*Form and analysis of*

*Three Georgian Vignettes, Mvt. III – Brer Rabbit Falls Down the Well:*

- |              |     |         |   |
|--------------|-----|---------|---|
| Introduction | 6/8 | F major | Playful rhythms and shifting harmonies set the mood for this movement, leading down chromatically into the main theme.  |
| M5-13        |     |         | The trumpet begins the melody then hands it off to the flute and oboe, then to the alto saxophones, horns and euphonium. Harmonies continue to shift by raising the 4 <sup>th</sup> degree of the scale on the cadence, adding edge and a playful character to the music, depicting the animals as they suggest the rabbit go wash his “injured” paw in the well. |
| M13-17       |     |         | Interlude that recalls the introduction, altered slightly by leading up to the melody chromatically.  |

M17-20		A repeat of the main theme is presented with the full band representing the rabbit gleefully leaving his working "brers" and going to the well.
M21-24		Development of the two-measure raised 4 <sup>th</sup> cadence motive, down a step in the key of E-flat, then down again to the key of D-flat. This represents the rabbit's curiosity as he peers down the well.
M25-29	C minor	The octave C gives the feeling of C minor as the rabbit jumps in the bucket, then is repeated with dissonant chords as he realizes he is going to tumble down the well.
M29-37		Descending chromatic scales depict the rabbit as he and the bucket fall deep into the bottom of the well.
M37-45	C Hungarian minor	The fox is represented with this minor-key and highly chromatic theme showing his distrustful nature as he tries to figure out why the rabbit went down the well.
M45-51		Full band playing the consequent phrase as the rabbit convinces the fox to join him in the well.
M51-55		Chromatic scales move in opposite directions depicting the fox falling to the bottom of the well as the rabbit rises to the top.
M55-57		The brief transition represents the rabbit escaping from the well in a flurry of woodwind trills.
M57-71	F major	The main theme is heard once again as the rabbit joyfully struts about after his brief entrapment in the well.
M71-74		The main theme is heard in a triumphant manner depicting the arrival of the hunter. The pedal C repeated in the bass reminds us that the fox is still in the well and provides a sense of anticipation.
M74-76	A-flat	The main theme is heard in a different key over the pedal depicting a sense of rising concern.
M76		The chord changes on beat 2 as the fox is surprised by the realization he is being lifted out of the well.

M77-81	A major	The main theme is heard in still another key showing greater anticipation.
81-85	F major	The playful consequent phrase is heard as the hunter begins to get a drink from the bucket.
M85-87		A flurry of motion occurs as the hunter is surprised by the discovery of the fox in the bucket.
M87-end		The tempo increases dramatically as the fox leaps from the bucket and escapes before the hunter can reach for his gun!

**?** How does the form and way the themes are used contribute to the story behind the music?

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*Articulations found in Three Georgian Vignettes:*

Accent	(>) To emphasize by playing with more air and separation
Marcato	(^) To be played with a shorter and heavier accent
Slur	A curved line over or under notes of differing pitches that indicate they are to be played without using the tongue to separate the notes
Staccato	(.) To be played lightly with separation

**?** Can you find examples of these articulations in your part? (Not every player has all of these on their music!)

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*Terminology found in Three Georgian Vignettes:*

Allegro	Fast tempo
<i>ff</i>	Fortissimo, played very loud and strong
<i>f</i>	Forte, played loud and strong
<i>mf</i>	Mezzo-forte, played medium loud
Crescendo	To get increasingly louder, often indicated as a long horizontal wedge that opens
Op. 121	Opus 114, this piece is the 114 <sup>th</sup> original piece written by this composer
Trill	Rapidly play the written note alternating with the note a step higher within the key signature. If the trill indicates trill #, play the upper note sharp. If it indicates trill flat or natural, adjust the trilled note accordingly.

<i>fp</i>	Play the note forte then immediately drop to piano to sustain the note
<i>mp</i>	Mezzo-piano, played medium soft
Decrescendo	To get increasingly quieter, often indicated as a long horizontal wedge that closes
<i>p</i>	Piano, played quietly
<i>pp</i>	Pianissimo, played very quietly
Cup Mute	Insert a cup mute into the bell of your instrument and play. Cup mutes are one of the primary mutes that trumpet and trombone players use. It differs in appearance from a straight mute due to the "cup" attached to the end of the mute
Tutti	Everyone plays, usually indicates the end of a solo
Final barline	A double bar with the last barline bolder than the first, indicating the end of a piece
Rehearsal number	Large numbers in boxes over specific measures which help mark logical places to start and stop in rehearsal
Accidental	A sharp, flat or natural that alters a pitch from the given key signature
Courtesy accidental	A sharp, flat or natural used as a reminder to return to the key signature following the use of a recent accidental that altered the pitch, and sometimes used following a key change
Open	Occurs in the trumpet part indicating to remove a mute that was required earlier in the music
Tie	A curved line between notes of the same pitch which indicate combining the duration of both notes into one longer note
Opt.	Optional, an instruction that the part can be played as a solo or with additional players
Solo	Played by one player alone
Let ring	Occurs in the mallet percussion and auxiliary percussion as a tie after a note leading to a rest indicating that the sound should continue and not be dampened or stopped
Lazily	Played to evoke a feeling of sluggishness
Poco rit.	A little slower
A tempo	Return to the tempo prior to the most recent tempo fluctuation
Fermata	The curved line with a dot under it that means to hold the note until released
Playfully	Played to represent a feeling of humor and frolic
Accelerando	Gradually increase the tempo
Presto	Very fast tempo
<i>sfz</i>	Sforzando, heavily accented and quite loud
Div.	Divide the part with one player or group on the top note and the second player or group on the bottom note



*Can you find examples of these terms in your part? (Not every player has all of these on their music!)*

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## LEARNING PACKETS FOR EACH INSTRUMENT SHOULD CONTAIN:

### IMPORTANT THEMES AND MELODIES

Primary and secondary themes can be written out for each instrument in order that everyone in the ensemble can play the melody and counter melodic parts. This allows each player to better understand the meaning, contour and inherent rhythmic significance of each melodic motive.

### IMPORTANT OR CHALLENGING RHYTHMS:

Rhythms of any importance should also be included and can be used in warm up exercises. Even though not everyone will play the rhythms during performance, it is easier to hear and play along with the ensemble after having a better understanding of what other parts are playing.

### SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS:

Each of the keys or modes included in the composition should have their corresponding scales and arpeggios written in ascending and descending forms to assist in the technical development of each student.

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### *Conducting patterns found in Three Georgian Vignettes:*

Try your hand at conducting. Put your arms down by your side, then bend your elbows until your hands are pointing away from you. Turn your wrists so that the palms of the hands are facing each other. Hands should be in a relaxed "handshake" position. Start the patterns by bringing your hands up slightly (in tempo) before giving the downbeat:

4/4 pattern

Bring DOWN for beat 1  
Move hands TOGETHER without touching for beat 2  
Move hands APART just past beat 1 position for beat 3  
Move hands UP and a little closer for beat 4  
>rebound up slightly after each beat

3/4 pattern

Bring hands DOWN for beat 1  
Move hands APART just past beat 1 position for beat 2  
Move hands UP and a little closer for beat 3  
>rebound up slightly after each beat

6/8 pattern

Bring hands DOWN and slightly apart for beat 1  
Move hands UP and a little closer for beat 2  
>rebound up slightly after each beat

?

Try conducting your friends while they play their parts. Can you conduct without counting out loud? Conduct larger patterns when the music is loud and smaller patterns with the music is quiet.

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Now you are ready to play Three Georgian Vignettes!

*East Peoria High School - Symphonic Band*  
Rehearsal Schedule  
January 18-March 13, 2007

*\*Each rehearsal will begin four minutes after the tardy bell rings. Tuners will be circulated around the band room. You must be seated, tuned, silent, have your instrument, pencil, music and rehearsal schedule. Each rehearsal will begin with a warm up on the scales indicated and sight-reading. It is your responsibility to have the music indicated completely and thoroughly prepared prior to each rehearsal!*

JANUARY

W18 Ab Major/F minor scales, Sousa 1-4, Grainger to 28, Private Lesson Scholarship Auditions after school

R19 Ab Major/F minor scales, Sousa to 4-6, Whitacre to 24, Private Lesson Scholarship Auditions after school

F20 Ab Major/F minor scales, Grainger to 28-42, Whitacre to 24-51, Private Lesson Scholarship Auditions after school

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M23 Db Major/Bb minor scales, Sousa 6-8, Gorb I to 36

T24 Db Major/Bb minor scales, Grainger 42-66, Gorb I 36-52

W25 Db Major/Bb minor scales, Sousa 6-8, Whitacre 24-51, Gorb I 52-72

R26 Db Major/Bb minor scales, Grainger 66-94, Whitacre 51-80

F27 Student Conductors Rehearse Holsinger

S28 Dallas Brass Clinic 3:00-5:00 in Auditorium

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M30 Gb Major/Eb minor scales, Review all music and play through complete pieces

T31 STUDENT CONDUCTOR AUDITIONS, Sign up for Challenges

FEBRUARY

W1 Gb Major/Eb minor scales, Sousa 8-11, Whitacre 80-111, Newsletter distributed, PIZZA SALE BEGINS

R2 Gb Major/Eb minor scales, Gorb I 72-end, Grainger 94-132, CHALLENGES AFTER SCHOOL

F3 Gb Major/Eb minor scales, Sousa 11-13, Whitacre 111-134, Holsinger

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M6 Cb Major/Ab minor scales, Gorb I review, Gorb II to 28, Grainger review, BAND BOOSTER MEETING 7:30 TONIGHT!

T7 SUPERINTENDENT'S HONORS FESTIVALS - ALL COUNTY BAND REHEARSAL  
Student Conductors review all music

W8 Cb Major/Ab minor scales, Sousa review, Whitacre review

R9 Cb Major/Ab minor scales, Gorb II 28-52, Grainger 132-160

F10 Cb Major/Ab minor scales, Sousa 13-15, Whitacre 134-end, PIZZA ORDER FORMS DUE MONDAY!



- M13 E Major/C# minor scales, Gorb I, Gorb II 52-end, Grainger 132-160, PIZZA ORDERS DUE TODAY
- T14 E Major/C# minor scales, Sousa 15-end, Whitacre
- W15 E Major/C# minor scales, Gorb II, Gorb III to 34, Grainger 160-end
- R16 E Major/C# minor scales, Sousa, Whitacre, Holsinger
- F17 E Major/C# minor scales, Gorb III 34-76, Grainger
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- M20 A Major/F# minor scales, Sousa, Whitacre, UNIFORMS READY FOR PICTURES THIS WEEK!
- T21 A Major/F# minor scales, Gorb I, II, III 76-end, Grainger
- W22 PICTURES ALL DAY  
 Marching Band - 1<sup>st</sup> period GYM - UNIFORMS  
 Symphonic Band - 2<sup>nd</sup> period AUDITORIUM - CONCERT DRESS  
 Wind Ensemble - 4<sup>th</sup> period AUDITORIUM - CONCERT DRESS  
 Jazz Band - 6<sup>th</sup> period - ROOFTOP OF BAND BUILDING - "JAZZwear"  
 Concert Band - 7<sup>th</sup> period - AUDITORIUM - UNIFORMS
- R23 A Major/F# minor scales, Sousa, Whitacre, Holsinger
- F24 A Major/F# minor scales, Gorb, Grainger. JAZZ FESTIVAL TONIGHT - SOLO AND ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL TOMORROW - GOOD LUCK!!!
- S25 SOLO AND ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL - ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE
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- M27 Review entire program for concert tomorrow night
- T28 PRE-FESTIVAL CONCERT 7PM Auditorium
- MARCH
- W1 Listen to recording of Sousa and rehearse, play through program, PIZZA DELIVERY AFTER SCHOOL
- R2 Listen to recording of Grainger and rehearse, play through program
- F3 Listen to recording of Whitacre and rehearse, play through program
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- M6 Listen to recording of Gorb and rehearse, play through program, BAND BOOSTER MEETING 7:30 TONIGHT
- T7 Complete Program
- W8 Complete Program
- R9 Complete Program
- F10 CONCERT FESTIVAL IS TONIGHT @ Pekin High School! Meet in Band Room at 4:45PM - Return 11PM
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- M13 Listen to adjudication comment tapes
- T14 Return all music, new music distributed with new REHEARSAL SCHEDULE!