Carl Holmquist

From the Banks to the Blue Ridge

Grade 4

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Bandworks
Artistry without compromise
THE COMPOSITION

For those who have not traveled to North Carolina, two of the state’s most breathtaking natural features are the Outer Banks and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The piece attempts to express the beauty of these places through styles of music that are rooted in the rich culture and history of North Carolina - Appalachian folk songs, African American work songs, and hymn singing.

The journey begins on the Outer Banks, which are beaches that stretch for miles along the Atlantic coastline. A succession of waves crashes ashore, gaining momentum as each new instrument enters the texture. The succession climaxes in one large wave that propels the music "inland," where we hear the main melodic theme delivered in the solo trumpet. This soulful tune emulates the sounds of an Appalachian fiddler.

After the band delivers this theme, the journey turns to a darker chapter of this region’s history. Between the Outer Banks and the Blue Ridge Mountains lies fertile farmland that was once cultivated by African slave labor. The music depicts this labor through a work song, which contains syncopated rhythms, blues scales, and call and response - all elements of music brought to America from Africa. Real chains are used in the percussion to emphasize the great struggle that the work song represents.

As we continue westward, we begin our ascent of the magnificent Blue Ridge with a restatement of the first theme. As the band reaches its summit, the Appalachian tune is heard for the final time along with two familiar hymns, How Firm a Foundation and The Battle Hymn of the Republic, soaring gloriously over the great peaks and valleys of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

THE COMPOSER

Carl Holmquist is a composer, conductor, and music teacher living in Falls Church, Virginia. He is the director of bands at the H-B Woodlawn Secondary Program in Arlington, VA, where he teaches concert bands, jazz band, music theory, and guitar. He earned a BM in Music Education from St. Olaf College, where he studied conducting and composition with Timothy Mahr and Steven Amundson. He also earned a MM in Instrumental Conducting from George Mason University, where he studied with Mark Camphouse and Anthony Maiello.

As a composer, he has written numerous works for concert band, chamber ensembles, and vocal ensembles, and has been commissioned by middle school, high school, and community ensembles across the country. His works for band have been published by Alfred Publishing, C. Alan Publications and Bandworks Publications. Holmquist contributed a chapter to Volume 4 of the Composers on Composing for Band series, edited by Mark Camphouse and published by GIA Publications. He was also named a finalist in the 2009 Frank Ticheli Composition Contest for his piece, Salaam. He was one of three composers to participate in the 2008 Young Composer Mentor Project, sponsored by the National Band Association. Holmquist also received first prize in the 2006 Claude T. Smith Memorial Composition Contest for his work, Play!

Carl lives in Falls Church, VA with his wife, Elizabeth, and two sons, William and Nathan.

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PICC

FL

OB

EH

B♭ CL

BS CL

CBS CL

BSSN

S

S A

S A T

B

B♭ TPT

F HN

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TIMP

PERC 1

PERC 2

PERC 3

PERC 4

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(Take large metal chain)
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