

The Promise of Living, from “The Tender Land,” Aaron Copland, Transcribed by Kenneth Singleton. Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Reference:

Miles, Richard. *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, vol. 8, pages 490-499. GIA Publications. 2010.

Recordings:

The UNC Wind Ensemble, Evan Feldman, conductor, performs "The Promise of Living," by Aaron Copland (trans. Singleton) on October 15, 2013 at Memorial Hall, Chapel Hill, NC.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiIH-oXo0bU>

St. Louis Wind Symphony, *A Festival of Composers*, September 18, 2016. Shhh Productions.

The source is one of Aaron Copland's operas entitled *The Tender Land*. This arrangement is based on the *Orchestral Suite* of the same name. The analysis from *Teaching Music* listed above is exceptionally good. Please read this for insight into historical background.

Based on two original Copland melodies for the opera, "*The Promise of Living*" and "*The Tender Land*" and one folk song "*Zion's Walls*."

The texture begins flute, oboe and horn. The texture builds and increases to the end.

The changing meter gives the piece a very free feel with a sense of ambiguity. Rhythmic accuracy is critical. Tension is created with the 2 against 3 rhythms. There are numerous examples of duple eighth notes in the compound meter.

It is scored in F major throughout. There are no chromatic pitches. Diatonic in harmony. Variety and tension are achieved through rhythm and meter. There are many instances of simultaneous compound and simple meter.

Little percussion scoring until meas. 79.

This piece requires confident solo playing from every instrument at various times. There is prominent English Horn part that is cued in the horn.

Directions to performers are *dolce, cantabile, sostenuto, espressivo, legato*. Great piece to teach legato and the use of the air stream in sustained playing.

The score is edited very well. As I mentioned earlier the piece grows in texture and dynamics to the end. Control of the dynamics is important. Letter J is fortissimo and letter K is forte fortissimo. It ends piano.

My biggest concern was holding the ensemble back dynamically and controlling balance with the many layers of melody and counter lines. I had to prepare the score so I balanced to the new or important melodic material in each section.

There are a few opportunities for rubato, the tempos should remain fairly steady throughout.

At letter H I rehearsed the lines with the duples separately for alignment and confidence, so this line is heard. Then I rehearsed the compound lines with percussion to solidify the time so it did not rush.

The phrasing and breath marks letter J to the end seem too frequent and disjunct but I think the BCl, Bsn, TS, BS, Euph, fragments created by the breath help to project the line and create tension. The phrase structure of the *Promise of Living* melody does the same. The ensemble

breath marks in meas. 93, 94 & 95 and the short phrase fragments really create tension into letter K.

Diminuendo to the end. The third of the last chord is only in trb. 1, horn 1&2, clar. 3. Take time to balance this chord.

Whole notes, half notes, dotted half notes, quarter notes, dotted quarter notes, eighth notes make the piece look like a grade 3 but I found it much more challenging! But the rehearsal time and teaching time is well worth the final product. Great piece for students to know Aaron Copland!