

Marycrest

for Len and Sharon

Jeffrey T. Parthun, Sr. (ASCAP)

Dedication

In September of 1957, a young Italian man married his Irish sweetheart. Shortly after, the couple started their family and moved into a cozy house in the Marycrest subdivision of Joliet, Illinois. By the time I married into the family, I had heard many stories of the Marycrest neighborhood and seen firsthand what incredible parents Len and Sharon were. They became role models for my wife and me when we started our own family and are the best grandparents my kids could ever wish for.

On the 50th anniversary of their wedding, it is with great respect and gratitude that I dedicate this piece to Len and Sharon and the wonderful family they raised in Marycrest.

Program and Performance Notes

Marycrest is not programmatic in the sense that it depicts a particular scene or tells a particular story other than the grade level for which it was written. I tried to write a piece that would have been at the level that my wife might have played in band at the time that her family moved from the Marycrest area.

I wanted to work a melody around the perfect fourth interval, which is an interval that is not always drilled in the band method that I use. I found that students get quite a lot of practice reading scalar and third-based melodies but did not get the same amount of exposure to other intervals.

I have left some interpretive decisions of note length and articulation to each conductor based on his/her ensemble. For example, the eighth notes beginning at mm. 5 can be played either long or in a more separated "march style" depending on the skill level of the group. The long note release in mm. 12 can either touch count three or be held through count 3 depending on how each conductor teaches the concept to his/her students.

Percussion Performance Notes

Bells are the preferred keyboard instrument for *Marycrest* but any mallet instrument may be used or doubled on the part. If xylophone is used you might want to have the player omit 25-29 unless rubber mallets are used.

Beginning snare drummers should interpret the rolls literally, meaning that they should play eighth notes that are buzzed. It is critical that they understand that a good roll has to use a steady pulse and this piece reinforces that concept. If you have an advanced snare drummer he/she may substitute buzzed 16th notes for the 8th notes. The flams written in this piece should be played maintaining a high/low relationship between the hands to get a good quality flam. Dynamic changes can come from changing stick heights (higher is louder and lower is softer), changing playing areas on the drum (louder toward the center and softer toward the edge) or a combination of both. Good accents come from an increase in stick height at a given dynamic level.

If at all possible the bass drummer should use hand dampening as opposed to internal muffling (like on a marching bass) or draping a cloth or towel over the instrument. I like to teach my students that bass drums should be played with good technique that includes using different beating spots and hand dampening. Try to hear a difference between quarter notes and half notes! In this piece, loud passages can be played toward the middle of the head and all other passages can be played @ halfway from the center to the rim. A bass drum is not just a big loud target that anyone can hit! It takes special skills and fine musicianship to be a good bass drummer.

The cymbal part may be played using a suspended cymbal with a snare drum stick or with a pair of crash cymbals. If crash cymbals are used please make sure that the instruments are held properly for concert cymbals as opposed to marching cymbals. The main difference is that in a concert grip the hand and wrist is NOT put through the loop of the strap.

The triangle and tambourine parts are not essential to the piece but add quite a lot of color. They also offer a chance for more inexperienced players to make a meaningful contribution to the band.

If the timpani part is used, please impress on your players that beating spot and “popping” the mallet off of the head to get a big resonant tone are the most important things to worry about. I have my beginning timpani players aim their right hand to the right of the pedal and their left hand to the left of the pedal about 1/3 of the way from the rim to the center. They will soon recognize a good tone and hopefully find it on every stroke.



Jeffrey T. Parthun, Sr. lives in Lafayette, Indiana. He and his wife, Kim, have four grown children. He is a band director in the Lafayette (IN) School Corporation where he currently directs the concert and jazz bands at Lafayette Tecumseh Junior High School and is an assistant director at Lafayette Jefferson High School. During his 25+ years as a public school teacher he has taught instrumental music at every level from elementary band and orchestra through teaching applied percussion at Purdue University. Jeff holds degrees from Butler University (MM) and Northwestern University (BMEd) where he studied band arranging with John P. Paynter, Don Owens and Don Casey. He was a private percussion student of Roy C. Knapp (PAS Hall of Fame), Bob Tilles, Dr. Terry Applebaum and Tony Caselli. In addition to a busy teaching schedule he is active as a freelance percussionist and has performed and recorded with many regional jazz and concert groups including the Los Blancos Latin Jazz Band (www.losblancoslatinjazz.com). He is an experienced adjudicator/clinician/arranger for concert, jazz, marching and percussion ensembles. He is a member of the Central States Judges Association and has judged state and circuit championships in Mississippi, Ohio and Tennessee. He also adjudicates for the Indiana Percussion Association and the Indiana State School Music Association. He is an award-winning member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Percussive Arts Society and American Federation of Musicians. He can be seen (briefly!) as the band director in the Paramount movie “Blue Chips” with Shaquille O’Neil and Nick Nolte.