Spiritus Invictus

By JaRod Hall



Spiritus Invictus ("invincible spirit" in Latin) is a fanfare or short ceremonial piece of music characterized by bold, triumphant, and often bright, lively musical statements. Predominantly featuring brass instruments and percussion, fanfares are typically intended for special occasions or to announce something significant, such as: the arrival of a notable person, the opening of an event, or a celebration. I wrote this particular piece for Stephen Van Hooser and the Smith MS band from the Texas metropolitan area surrounding Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. *Spiritus Invictus* commemorates the grand opening of Sprague MS and their director, and my dear friend, Stetson Begin.

The piece begins with the commanding percussion section, building to announce the arrival of a big, sonorous brass flourish at measure 3. The ensuing phase is marked by the woodwinds delicately weaving a tapestry of buoyant triplet eighth notes. The soundscape then narrows to feature an exquisite melody carried by the depth of the low clarinet, alto saxophone, and horn, beginning with the pickup to measure 15. The trumpets soon intertwine with this serene melody, helping the music steadily grow. The crescendo they lead finally bursts into an effervescent middle section, once again featuring mid-voices—this time strengthened by the tenor brass. The final section converges the two main themes into a single splendid symphonic statement, called a "simultaneous recapitulation." I like to think of this term as two friends telling you their own version of a movie plot, but they're excitedly talking to you at the same time... makes you want to really go see the movie, right? *Spiritus Invictus* will give you and your audience that exact same feeling.

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NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR -

I have specifically notated two different kinds of accents—the traditional accent [>] and the marcato [A]. Of the many interpretations of the two, mine is such that the long accent [>] is performed for the full value of the note with a long taper, while the marcato [A] is performed at about half of the given note value with no taper. I also intend for these marcato accents to be much more pressurized (like a punch) as opposed to the traditional accent (more like a shove). Similarly, I also ascribe to the school of thought that the tenuto marking [-] suggests both strength and length: while all notes marked this way should touch, they should also be slightly stressed. Not much is done here with the shape or timing of the individual note; it's simply a touch louder than surrounding notes without markings. As with standard fanfare style, non-marked notes should be played with slight separation.

The ending should be played without interruption, even at tempo changes. The allargando is meant to broaden the sound, but any silence here would cut it right back down. Be sure to establish a breathing plan for the wind players so that the notes all lead right to the finish.

- JaRod Hall

Commissioned by Stephen Van Hooser and the Smith Middle School Band for the grand opening of Sprague Middle School in Cypress-Fairbainks ISD; Cypress, Texas

Spiritus Invictus

FULL SCORE

By JaRod Hall (ASCAP)





















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