

Commissioned by and dedicated to the Park falls (WI) High School Band, Mr. John Hinkley, Conductor

NORTHWOODS: OF MIGHT AND METTLE

ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

- I Conductor
- I C Piccolo
- 6 C Flute
- 2 Oboe
- 3 Ist B♭ Clarinet
- 3 2nd B Clarinet
- 3 3rd B Clarinet
- 2 B Bass Clarinet
- I E Contrabass Clarinet
- 2 Bassoon
- 2 El Alto Saxophone/ Bl Soprano Saxophone
- I By Tenor Saxophone
- I E Baritone Saxophone
- 3 Ist B Trumpet
- 3 2nd B Trumpet
- 3 3rd B Trumpet
- 2 Ist & 2nd Horn in F
- 2 3rd & 4th Horn in
- 2 Ist Trombone
- 2 2nd Trombone
- 2 3rd Trombone

- 2 Baritone
- I Baritone Treble Clef
- 4 Tuba
- I Piano/Synthesizer with Harp Patch
- Mallet Percussion (Bells, Marimba)
- Timpani
- 4 Percussion I (Wind Chimes, Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Triangle, Wood Boxes, Large Toms)
- 3 Percussion II (2 Suspended Cymbals, Sandpaper Blocks, Large Beaded Gourd)
- 4 Percussion III (Large Bell with Steel Hammer, Guiros, Bowed Saws, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals)

Please note: Our band and orchestra music is now being collated by an automatic high-speed system. The enclosed parts are now sorted by page count, rather than score order. We hope this will not present any difficulty for you in distributing the parts. Thank you for your understanding.



PROGRAM NOTES

Northwoods: Of Might and Mettle was commissioned by the Park Falls High School Band, which is located in the Northwoods region of Wisconsin. This historic area traces its roots to the great logging drives of the late 1800s, from which many a tale of the great lumberjacks sprang forth.

"Daylight in the Swamp" was the call that signaled the beginning of the day for the lumberjack even before the first rays of light crept through the dense forest. At 6 a.m., the stamping hammer (a large hammer with the logging company's brand on the face) struck a large steel bell, signaling the race to the cook-shack.

The jacks were in the cuttings before actual daylight and waited for the first light for the heavy work to begin. Sawyers felled the trees, swampers trimmed the branches, and skidders with teams of horses or oxen pulled the massive logs from the woods to the landing. Jammers loaded the logs on sleighs. Rutters cut grooves in the icy roads that carried the logs to the rollway (a deck of logs) on the bank of the river or stream. From there, the wait for the spring breakup of the ice served as the calm before the thrilling journey downriver to the sawmill.

The river drive was most certainly one of the most dangerous occupations in the history of the United States. Many river drivers, or river rats, drowned during the journey. Many more had broken limbs or bodies. A driver who met his untimely fate was buried on the bank and often had no stone to mark his grave.

Throughout the duration of the drive, the drivers were wet the entire time. Often, they rode the logs on the drive, which could last several weeks. This dangerous yet thrilling journey ended at the sorting gaps of the mill where the logs were sorted according to the mark made by the company's stamping hammer.

There will never be another sleigh haul or log drive in Wisconsin. However, the memory of this group of hearty and brave men will never be forgotten. They are part of the story of the building of the Great Midwest in the United States of America.

Northwoods: Of Might and Mettle was premiered by the Park Falls High School Band at the 2002 Wisconsin Music Educator's Association Conference. This talented ensemble is under the direction of Mr. John Hinkley, a caring and gifted teacher and conductor.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

The opening phrases should be as mysterious as possible. I chose the dark sound of the wooden clarinets as the timbral environment for the introduction. Please note that the bells, piano, and wind chimes should "sparkle" against the much darker clarinet timbre, creating the musical metaphor of the dark night under the twinkling of the stars. The soprano saxophone should be interpreted as freely as possible. The bowed metallic effects in the percussion should provide an eerie atmospheric effect through which the sax solo should emerge.

"Waking the Camp" begins with a sudden burst of energy from the soloist. Each subsequent entrance should thicken the texture and support the bright and energetic mood established by the soloist. Please pay particular attention to the accentuations established by the note groupings throughout this section of the piece.

The wooden boxes used in "Falling the Trees" should be staged around the band and perhaps throughout the hall depending on the performance venue. The percussionists should use a large wooden mallet on a wooden box to simulate the sound of an ax hitting a tree. It is imperative to note the tonal relationship of the boxes. Boxes should be constructed so that each has its own unique pitch. I suggest cutting a hole to port the sound from the box for maximum effect in the concert hall environment. Beginning in measure 51, the initial strike of the "ax" signals the beginning of the cutting in the forest. Rhythmic accuracy is crucial at this point. By measure 63, a "groove" will surface from the apparent random strikes. The guiros should be played with a saw-like motion. If personnel allows, you may wish to stage two percussionists to simulate visually the sawing of a log for maximum communication with the audience.

"On the River" should be very gentle and calm before the coming intensity of the ride down the river. Balance is crucial between the harp and flute soloist. Please experiment with the bowed saw effects to create a gentle yet mysterious portamento effect in the background. I suggest staging the saws around the band for heightened awareness and interest.

The full ensemble statement beginning in measure 108 should be as expressive as possible. Feel free to interpret as rubato as possible; I suggest a broadening of the tempo in measures 112 and 113, leading to the resolution of the phrase. Please note that the last saw effect in measure 120 should be allowed to dissipate completely in the hall following the release of the winds and before beginning the ice effect in measure 121.

Please experiment with the ice-breaking effect to create the most realistic sound possible. Cellophane will provide the cracking sound needed. Cue randomly throughout the band to give the effect of ice breaking all around the listener. The build is crucial in cue 4. The percussion should crescendo enough to allow the winds ample opportunity to retrieve the instruments without breaking the crescendo effect.

Measure 126 should be as intense as possible. The large toms in measure 134 must be very large drums. The intensity of the moment will be lost if the drums are tuned too high!

I suggest conducting in one during the musical section beginning in measure 158. Please pay particular attention to the dynamic shaping in order for the woodwind lines to be balanced properly in context.

I suggest again conducting in one beginning in measure 190. You may wish to add a rallentando in the four measures leading to the final statement in measure 198.

I hope you and your ensemble find Northwoods: Of Might and Mettle to be a musically rewarding experience. Best wishes for a wonderful performance!





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NOTE: Wood Boxes should be staged "around" the band and throughout the hall if the setting permits. The desired effect is for the audience to feel as if they are in the woods and hearing lumberjacks working throughout the forest. The tempo remains consistent throughout this section. As each Wood Box enters, the "groove" will be more apparent to the listener. The Guiro part should simulate the sound of a saw amidst the multiple "axes" throughout. If personnel permits, two players using a sawing motion with the Guiros will enhance the effect.



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120

119

Perc. III

115

116

117

118

Cues #1 & #2: Using cellophane sheets in the hands of each wind player, randomly cue throughout the band to create the sound of ice beginning to crack. Cue #3: Sweep the crumpling of the cellophane across the band in a crescendo as the ice breaking becomes imminent. Cue #4: Crescendo the ice breaking effect. Cue #5: Winds should prepare for the next entrance while percussion build the roll to the downbeat of bar 118. Experiment with each performance environment to create the most realistic sound effect possible.











Perc. II

Perc. III

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150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157















