

SAMPLE SCORE - NOT FOR PERFORMANCE - NOT A PURCHASED COPY



## MICHAEL MARKOWSKI

#### INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo
Flute 1 & 2
Oboe
Bb Clarinet 1 - 4
Bb Bass Clarinet 1 & 2
Bb Contrabass Clarinet
Bassoon 1 & 2

Eb Alto Saxophone 1 & 2 Bb Tenor Saxophone Eb Baritone Saxophone

Bb Trumpets 1 - 4
F Horns 1 - 4
Trombone 1 - 3
Bass Trombone
Euphonium T.C./B.C.
Tuba
String Bass

Harp (optional)

Timpani

Percussion 1: crotales, chimes
Percussion 2: vibraphone, suspended cymbal, snare drum
Percussion 3: marimba
Percussion 4: tam-tam, crash cymbal
Percussion 5: snare drum
Percussion 6: bass drum

#### **DURATION**

6:15

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ORIGINAL COVER ARTWORK BY JESSICA TANG

In the Spring of 2014, I visited a high school band in Virginia that was rehearsing *Remember The Molecules* for a concert. A few months later, thanks to the wonders of the Internet, I discovered that a few students had gifted their director with an amazing piece of original art inspired by Frank Ticheli's *Blue Shades*, which they had played earlier in the year. Their work was a remarkable juxtaposition of several major city skylines layered on top of

one another, each meticulously cut out in different shades of blue, black, and white construction paper. I was so moved by this that I immediately asked one of the students who had created it to create something similar for *City Trees*. Jessica's work adds a remarkable, stunningly beautiful visual element to this piece, and I'm honored to be able to share it as the cover art to this score.

# CITY TREES

Commissioned by the Lesbian and Gay Band Association to commemorate 30 years of Music, Visibility and Pride Premiering in Dallas, Texas, on September 15, 2012

LGBA extends a special thanks to the donors who made this commissioned work a reality. We applaud you.

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(\$250 and above)

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## **CITY TREES** (1921)

Edna St. Vincent Millay

The trees along this city street, Save for the traffic and the trains, Would make a sound as thin and sweet As trees in country lanes.

And people standing in their shade Out of a shower, undoubtedly Would hear such music as is made Upon a country tree.

Oh, little leaves that are so dumb Against the shricking city air, I watch you when the wind has come,— I know what sound is there.

# **ABOUT 'CITY TREES'**

I had just moved from Arizona to New York City when I began sketching the first fragments of City Trees. After being born, growing up, and living in the desert for 25 years of my life, moving to New York so suddenly was and continues to be one of the most challenging things I've ever done. I think it has also been one of the bravest. I left my friends, my family, and my ridiculously cheap rent all without much planning.

Every time I walk down a street in New York, I notice the trees shackled by the sidewalk. Some have little fences around them, many have trash nestled up next to their exposed roots, and others have grown so big and become so strong that they have broken right through the concrete pavement. As I pass beneath them, they all seem to wave their leafy pom-poms in the wind, a thousand leaves applauding, cheering me on as if I had just returned from the moon.

These trees have learned how to brave the concrete jungle, and it gave me solace knowing that they had flourished in such a challenging environment. Over time, the impossibilities of the

city have become familiar, and although I continue to learn new lessons everyday, I've slowly begun to assimilate, finding my way around, discovering new places, and making friends while still keeping close with those who aren't close by. The music in *City Trees* began to take on a growing sense of perseverance, embodied by the expansive melodies that sweep over the pensive, rhythmic undercurrent.

For me, *City Trees* is a reflection of the bravery that it often takes to venture into new worlds, embrace other cultures, and lovingly encourage new ideas. I am deeply honored to dedicate this piece to the Lesbian and Gay Band Association. Although I may never completely understand the unique challenges my friends have faced and had to overcome, I am inspired by the overwhelming courage that has been so firmly planted for 30 years and that continues to grow, perhaps slowly, but always stronger.

Michael Markowski August 26, 2012 Astoria, New York

#### WORLD PREMIERE

The Lesbian and Gay Band Association 30th Anniversary Band premiered *City Trees* on September 15, 2012 in Dallas, Texas, conducted by Jadine Louie.



Above: view from Astoria, Queens overlooking Manhattan's Upper East Side skyline.

"In much of Arizona, you can stand on the ground and look out as far as the eye can see. In most of New York City, you can't look out very far at all... so you look up."

nner strength. The opening motive of *City Trees* is shy and quiet, but there is also a sense of urgency and resolve about it. A simple eighth note *ostinato* is set in Bb minor, in the low register of the clarinets and doubled in the marimba, evoking curiosity and expectation [ex. 1].

In m. 5, the lower woodwinds and conical brass enter, adding to the scurrying eighth note *ostinato* the stately assurance of broad, majestic, widely voiced *piano* chords, moving slowly and gently from Bb minor to Db Major, to Gb13, and then moving back to a dark Bb minor chord [ex. 2].

Imagine a young man from the Southwest, 25 years old, living his first days in his new home, New York City. Eyes, ears, nose, and heart open to new experiences in a new place. In much of Arizona, you can stand on the ground and look out as far as the eye can see. In most of New York City, you can't look out very far at all... so you look up.

Up is where *City Trees* goes, little by little, as if our eyes are scanning slowly up the trunk of a tree we have stumbled upon in the middle of a city sidewalk.

Each of the four phrases of the "A" section (mm. 5, 14, 23, 33) is unique in its own way, yet there is comfort in their similarity; it is the conductor's task to bring out the uniqueness of each while maintaining the integrity of the flow from one to the next, as our eyes ascend from branch to branch.

In the first phrase, beginning at m. 5, the gaze upward begins with the slightest *ostinato* ascension in the clarinet in m. 8, and more so in m. 15 as we move into the second phrase. The *ostinato* morphs into a full-on ascending scale in the woodwinds at the beginning of the third phrase (m. 24), in a 3/2 bar that stretches our neck as our eyes wander higher. Here, now familiar events are stacked more closely together. Time is filled more with broad, majestic chords and less with silence. (Silence in the broad, majestic phrases, even as time marches on in the ever present *ostinato*.)

The first trumpet and horns 1 and 3, supported by the clarinets, heighten our sensations magnificently beginning at m. 27. The foliage thickens, as the *ostinato* disappears in the fourth phrase, revealing the crown

#### Example 1: ostinato

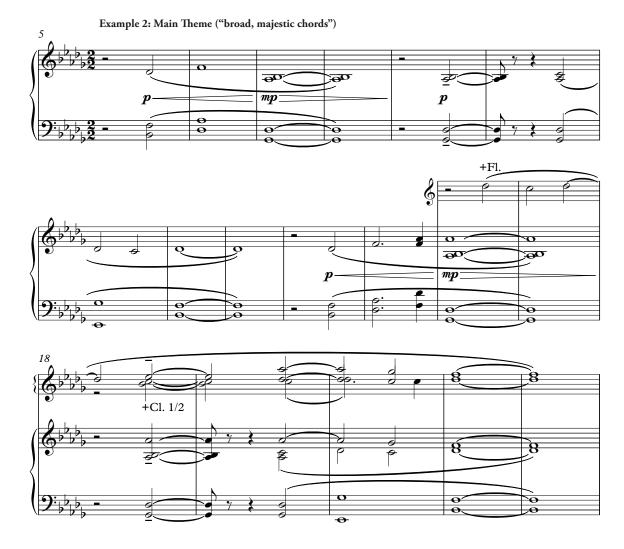


of the tree in our upward gaze, and also exposing some fundamental counterpoint that requires careful balancing: saxophones and horns beginning in m. 36, and the quarter notes versus half note woodwind triplets in m. 41. At m. 42, the various contrapuntal elements dissolve into a heavily descending F minor scale that, for the first time, finally pulls our outlook back to street level. A strident Gb rattles through this sonority, but ultimately a unison F pitch wins out, and provides a bridge to a new version of the 'A' section, beginning at m. 47.

Before we move on to the second iteration of the 'A' section however, let's delve a little more deeply into interpretation. First off, note a few more subtleties of this expository section of *City Trees*, especially in the percussion parts: the crotale strike in m. 12, 21, and 31, and the soft rumbling of the bass drum in m. 15, 20, and 30. Note the dissonance in the

trumpet parts in m. 34; be sure that both Tpt. 1 and Tpt. 2 play out bravely, one against the other here. Throughout this opening section, be sure that the *ostinato* is always audible as it moves throughout the instrumentation. Finally, during the transition in mm. 44-47, note the *diminuendo* in all of the instruments except the muted trumpet, which will yield a significant change in timbre and volume in what Markowski calls a "subtle morphing effect." Take your time here, and when it is time to move on give a nice prep beat to re-set the tempo at m. 47.

Now let's take a look at the gesture in m. 9 and m. 18, which requires some special care. Markowski has marked these with a *tenuto* mark, and it is important to think about that *tenuto* mark within the context of the phrase. And not to be a spoiler, but this gesture becomes more predominant later in the piece, so it is important to give it its due here. Your



wind players must give the beginning of the note a little extra weight with their breath, not an accent, but just a little extra stress. You could practice this with your students by having them press into their music stands or their thighs with one hand—not hitting or slapping, but pressing in a bit and releasing, just as they will do with their breath stream. Next have them do this by pressing with their hands into air, as a conducting gesture. And then have them use a light tongue and press a bit on the note with their air stream, as written.

That takes care of the beginning of the note; the end of the note must be distinct, so as to account for the silence that follows. But the music doesn't really stop; the silence is part of the music. These anacruses must be played with a bit of weight at the beginning, and then released cleanly on time,

but with a sense of going on, interpreted by your players with the knowledge that these are pick-up notes that must create a sense of connection in City Trees is tempo. Seemingly to the rest of the phrase in spite of the rests that follow them. The bigger point is that each of the phrases beginning

at m. 5, 14, 23, and 33 must be performed as phrases, and incorporating the silences into the phrases. The piece needs to move forward, and not become halting because of these rests.

A crucial point in regard to keeping a sense of forward motion in City Trees is tempo. Seemingly calm gestures need to have just a little bit of urban frenzy. That comes from taking Markowski's marked tempo, or something very close to it. This is not an aimless walk in the park, this music is going somewhere, and the proper tempo propels the piece toward that end.

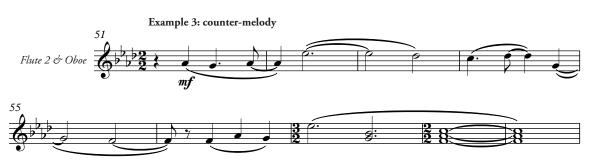
The material of the 'A' section is reworked beginning at m. 47, now in the key of F minor. The ostinato and the broad, majestic phrases are back, and they lull us into a sense of familiarity. But the original 'A' section is consolidated here, as Markowski is wont to do in his formal schemes. And a new element appears, beginning in the oboe and second flute in m. 51, a counter-melody [ex. 3] that comes and goes and moves about in a most relaxed, meandering way (contrary perhaps to how the rhythms appear). By m. 65 or so, these three elements are blended together convincingly and satisfyingly, and the ascending line in the first trumpet at m. 70, this time in tandem with the first trombone, builds toward the climax of the section (as at m. 27, but with a little tetrachord manipulation).

A bit of triumphant chaos ensues at m. 72, as the ostinato is confronted with a clone of itself in triplet augmentation, all in the clarinets, while the lower reeds and conical brass decide whether or not to join forces with the cylindrical brass and flutes. A second-

> ary climax takes place, leading to a glorious sequence of softening and slowing descending suspensions in mm. 81-89. These suspensions are foreshadowed in that strident trumpet duo back in m. 34, and developed a bit further in mm. 40-41. Be sure your

players do not shy away from the dissonance embedded in the suspensions.

As the descending suspensions reach their nadir, a brief, subtle ascending line in the euphonium and harp moves in contrary motion in m. 88, unafraid to be a little different, bringing us to a development section. Marked at 60 beats per minute, and indicating a change of key, Markowski settles in on a warmly vibrant Gb9 chord as a lovely flute solo uses material first heard in mm. 16 and 51 to allow us a brief sit on a bench in Central Park. The clarinets reply wistfully in m. 95, soon followed by saxophones and horns, and then trumpets, who urge us up and onward, as the harmony shifts from Bb minor to an open F and C at m. 99.



"A crucial point in regard to

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Example 4: the "anthem" theme climax



From this Coplandesque point of repose, Markowski continues to develop the ideas from the flute in m. 16/m. 51/m. 90, beginning in just the first clarinet at m. 102, and then fortifying the line at m. 108 with flute in unison, and oboe, clarinet 2, and alto saxophones in the octave below. Meanwhile, the broad, majestic *City Trees* gestures are back, but in an entirely different role. We are no longer called to focus on these sumptuous chords as individual trees as we were in the exposition; instead, the woodwind line creates the shape of a landscape that now emerges before our eyes (and ears).

Now is a good time to look at the photograph at the top of this article—that is where we are going! As we get there, take note: the broad, majestic chords, now in the background, need just as much attention here as in the beginning, *tenuto* marks and all. And note the several places in the woodwind line that carry through when the chords are halting (mm. 104, 108, and 111). It would be wonderful to have your players not breathe in these places; sustain this line through, staggering breathing if necessary. (The first clarinet should breathe after the dotted half note in mm. 102 as should the flutes and clarinets 1 and 2 at 110.) The tubas at m. 108 and trombones at m. 109 should enter imperceptibly.

An ascending line in unison and then thirds at m. 115 crescendos mightily to a measure marked ritard with tenuto marks on each quarter note. And at m. 118 we are in a very direct, no nonsense, no ninth or eleventh chords here, starkly taut Bb Major [ex. 4]. Take your time here! It seems as if we've been peering through one of those coin operated scenic viewing telescopes, and we have just zoomed out to the stunning panorama of the photograph above. And our song has become an anthem! Enjoy this section,



dig in, make some broad strokes. As you get to m. 123, the *tenutos* can be even a little bit broader than at m. 117 (and to make sure you do, Markowski has thrown in an extra beat to dwell on!).

A transition to the recapitulation of City Trees begins at m. 124. The climactic point at m. 124 devolves into suspensions descending gradually, as at m. 85. But unlike m. 89, the suspensions meet at m. 128 to form a unified front of flute, clarinet, and bassoon in octaves. Keep mm. 124-125 forte, including the percussion, and make the subsequent diminuendo truly gradual. Measures 130-131 is one of the points in City Trees that will make you want to include the harp part in performing this piece. The open fifth at m. 132 is reminiscent of the one in m. 99, and allows for a similar point of repose. Although there is no ritard marked at m. 136, the three quarter notes leading into m. 137 have tenuto marks. In these three quarter notes (from mm. 108-9, 123, 128) are the exuberant strength of the former anthem, restated in one still, small voice of calm. You'll likely want to conduct four beats in this measure, and then lead your ensemble into the tempo change at m. 137.

As Markowski is not one for too literal a recapitulation, the materials of the exposition seem quite familiar upon their return to the original tempo, but the *ostinato* this time is framed in BbMaj7 rather

# "City Trees is a remarkable paean to the inner strength and that 'still, small voice of calm' that allows space for each of us to make our own way, whoever and wherever we are."

than Bb minor. The broad, majestic chords return as well, and a climactic point comes much sooner than in the exposition. If the 3/2 measure in long ago m. 24 stretched our neck to see higher up the tree, the 3/2 measure at m. 155 swirls around us, urging our eyes to open wide to the great urban forest. This is exhilarating music, reflecting the city's energy, the landscape lit up. Bring out the counter-line in the alto saxophones and horns at m. 158, especially the suspension on beat one of m. 161. Also, emphasize the descending bass line at m. 166. Be sure to voice the trumpet section carefully in the Bb9 chords in mm. 158 and 166. These chords, balanced properly, are brilliante. And the cityscape is illuminated even more brightly by the skyrocketing fanfare figures in the trumpets in mm. 161-163.

From branch to crown, from tree to landscape, our familiarity with these themes causes us to own them now, and they own us as well. You will find your own way in incorporating the *ritard* Markowski marks at m. 170. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to set a steady tempo at m. 174, for and with the snare drummers, in this larger-than-life presentation of the anthem. Take as much care to play cleanly and precisely at m. 174 as the first time the broad, majestic chords appeared in m. 5.

Note that, in spite of the ritard to 60 bpm, this entire section remains forte. A penultimate rallentando begins in m. 178, which should be carried out so as to deftly accommodate the dotted rhythm in the third beat. In the now signature m. 179, Markowski adds yet again one additional beat, literally building anticipation of what is to come, and also bravely adding accents to the quarter note tenutos this time. From m. 180, picking the tempo up just a bit now, be sure to attain and maintain for a bit a very full forte sonority before beginning the decrescendo to piano in just four fluid measures. The suspensions at m. 180 are in augmentation in this final hearing, lending an unexpected sense of nostalgia. The colorful crescendo in m. 183 yields to an entirely different palette in m. 184. Note the unity afforded by the open fifths in clarinets and tympani throughout. We have gone from grand tutti to sotto voce very quickly.

The still, small voice of calm returns in the form of a lingering solo clarinet passage in m. 186 that quotes both earlier melodic material, and also the yearning of the *tenuto* from the broad, majestic chords. This solo is answered with similar material by all of the first flutes and first clarinets. The piece then concludes most simply and satisfyingly, on two tarrying, differently voiced F Major chords, the latter followed by one last *tenuto* quarter note in the same voicing.

City trees become urban forests; people plant themselves in the city as lonely individuals but come to find they are anything but alone. *City Trees* is a remarkable paean to the inner strength and that "still, small voice of calm" that allows space for each of us to make our own way, whoever and wherever we are.

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DR. MARC R. DICKEY is Chair of the Music Department and oversees the instrumental music teacher program at California State University, Fullerton, where he has taught since 1988. He has conducted the CSU Fullerton Symphonic Winds for more than ten years. His research has been published in the Journal of Research in Music Education and the Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education. He has served as a member of a Music Subject Advisory Panel to the Commission of Teacher Credentialing of the State of California, and has adjudicated bands throughout the U.S. and Canada. He was one of the youngest conductors to be awarded the NBA's Citation of Excellence.



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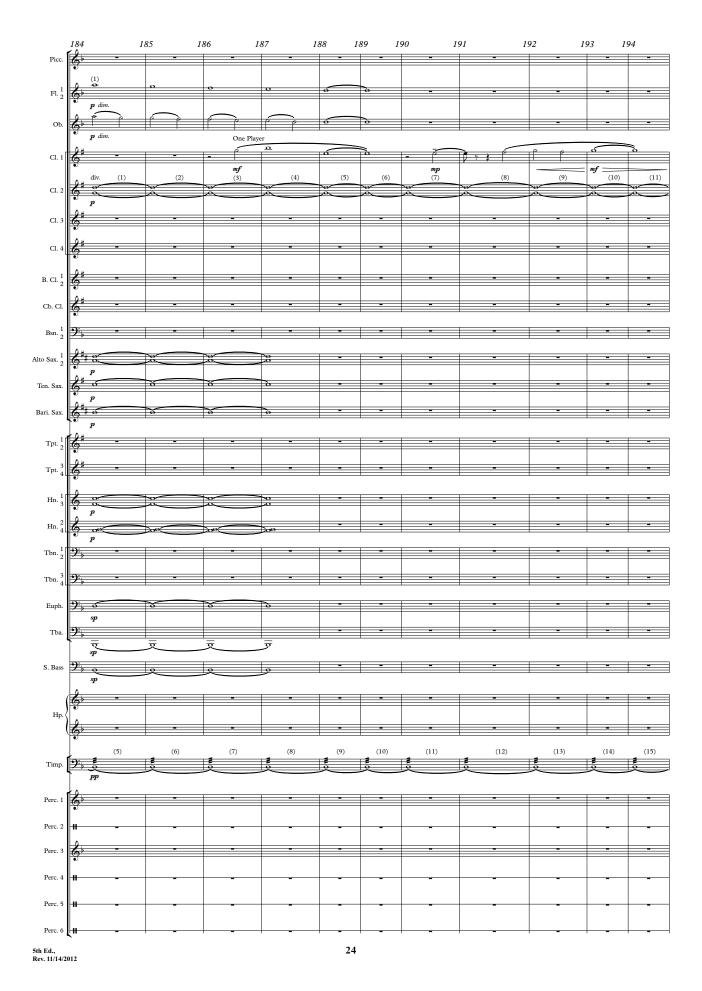
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