A Conductor's Interpretive Analysis of Michael Markowski's "All My Heart"

By Marc R. Dickey, Ph.D.
California State University, Fullerton School of Music

One way to write a beautiful piece of music is to start with a beautiful melody. Markowski has composed such a melody, inspired by the Irish air "With Her Dog and Her Gun." Also known as "The Golden Glove" and "The Squire of Tamworth," the earliest notated version of the folk song found so far dates from the 1770's.

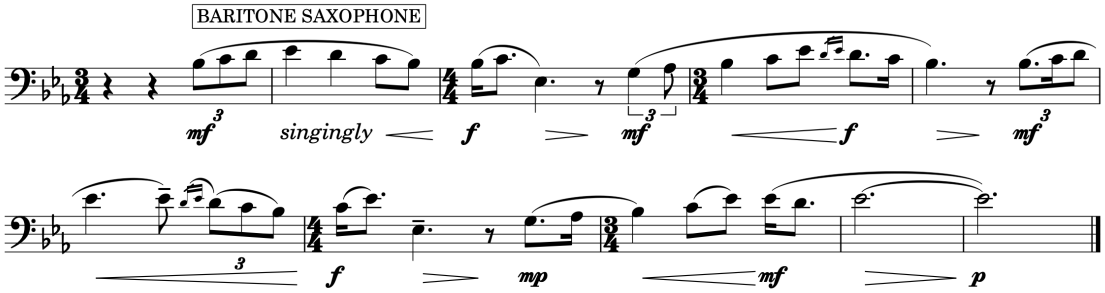
All My Heart begins with a ***mp*** drone of E♭ and B♭ in the vibraphone and marimba, with everyone else humming an E♭. This drone transports us to a foggy, dewy glen for a few seconds, and then a melody immerges. This melody is not a replica of the Irish air, but its general shape and character are derived from the original [Ex. 1A and 1B, original Irish tune and Markowski's derivation (mm. 3-10) side-by-side].

The melodies in this piece very often contain triplet figures, frequently as pickup notes. Some of them consist of three even notes, others make up a dotted rhythm (see Ex. 1B). Encourage your players to take their time with the three even notes, to stretch them out and show them some love. When it comes to the dotted rhythms, insist on players giving them some character, and a bit of spice as well!

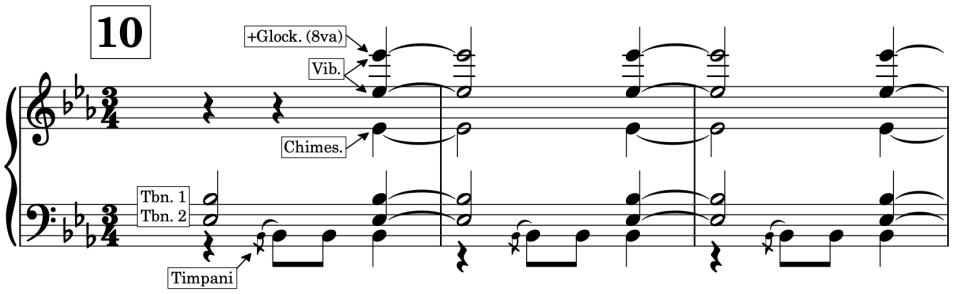
Markowski chose the baritone saxophone to play the role of folk tune singer when the melody is first heard. Why you may ask? After some speculation on my part, I decided to ask Markowski himself. He replied that, "Honestly, I just love the smooth quality of the baritone sax in its upper register. It sings so beautifully. And yes, I am a bit biased as a sax player myself! I also think a lower-voiced instrument calls to mind a wiser/older/raspier narrator figure versus, say, a flute, which has a purer and more youthful tone quality." Markowski does provide for alternatives, as this melody is cued in the bassoon and euphonium parts. Encourage your soloist to take their time, "freely, easily," and to play from their heart. That drone isn't going anywhere!

Ex. 1A, original Irish tune from *The Complete Collection of Irish Music* as noted by George Petrie. Edited, from the original manuscripts, by Charles Villiers Stanford.

Ex. 1B, mm. 3-10, Markowski's derivation of the original tune.



Ex. 2, mm. 10-12, "the drone accompaniment."



Well... actually the drone does go somewhere. The clarinets stop humming and come in at m. 6 playing a long, very soft chalumeau B♭, and then some gently moving conjunct quarter notes. The trombones and tuba enter in the beat before m. 9, expanding the drone into an E♭ Major chord.

The baritone saxophone fades out as the melody is passed on to the oboe, bass and contrabass clarinets, and 1st alto saxophone and tenor saxophones (m. 11). The drone accompaniment now consists of the tympani in alternation with trombones, mallet instruments, and sleigh bells [Ex. 2, m. 10-12]. Be sure these players are sensitive to what each other are doing in these most subtle of "boom-chicks." The sleigh bells should be held vertically by the handle in the non-dominant hand, using the palm of the dominant hand to play the quarter notes in the part.

We hear echoes from the foggy, dewy glen (mm. 14-15), clarinets imitating the melody's dotted eighth triplet from m. 10, and muted horns echoing the clarinets. The melody that begins on the fourth beat of m. 10 is repeated at m. 15, with subtle variation, and accompanied by five ascending quarter notes in the 1st clarinet, 2nd alto saxophone, and euphonium. (These ascending quarter notes become a significant unifying device throughout the piece.) Encourage the players with the half note on beats two and three of m. 17 to hold it out in support of the moving quarter notes within the texture.

In mm. 18-19 Markowski uses suspensions, and now six ascending melodic quarter notes in mm. 19-20, to lead us into a return of the gentle, stirring melody from m. 3, again with subtle variation (mm. 20-28). The harmonic accompaniment is nearly as gentle as the drone at the beginning. Exploring further timbral possibilities for the wind band, Markowski spreads the melody around further: to the 2nd and 3rd clarinets, tenor saxophone, 1st horn, euphonium, and mallet percussion. A countermelody, marked "soaring forward!," enters in the pickup to m. 25, in the 1st clarinet, 1st alto saxophone, and 1st trumpet. This piece—at this point in particular, and throughout—is an excellent opportunity to teach wind players that notes of duration always need to be "going somewhere," that phrases require implied increases and decreases in intensity including and beyond what composers notate.

Markowski creates a brief point of repose by reconfiguring the six ascending quarter notes from mm. 19-20: instead of six of them soaring ever upward, the three in m. 28 simply repeat in m. 29 and then propel forward to a nearly identical return of the melody from m. 20. Here the tune is in the 1st flute, 1st alto saxophone, 1st trumpet, and vibraphone. And

"...sleigh bells should be held vertically by the handle in the non-dominant hand, using the palm of the dominant hand to play the quarter notes in the part..."

this time it is *forte* ("to the fore")! There is some lush counterpoint in the inner parts here [Ex. 3, mm. 30-33], marked ***mf***, but do bring all of these moving parts out to complement the melody in a new way!

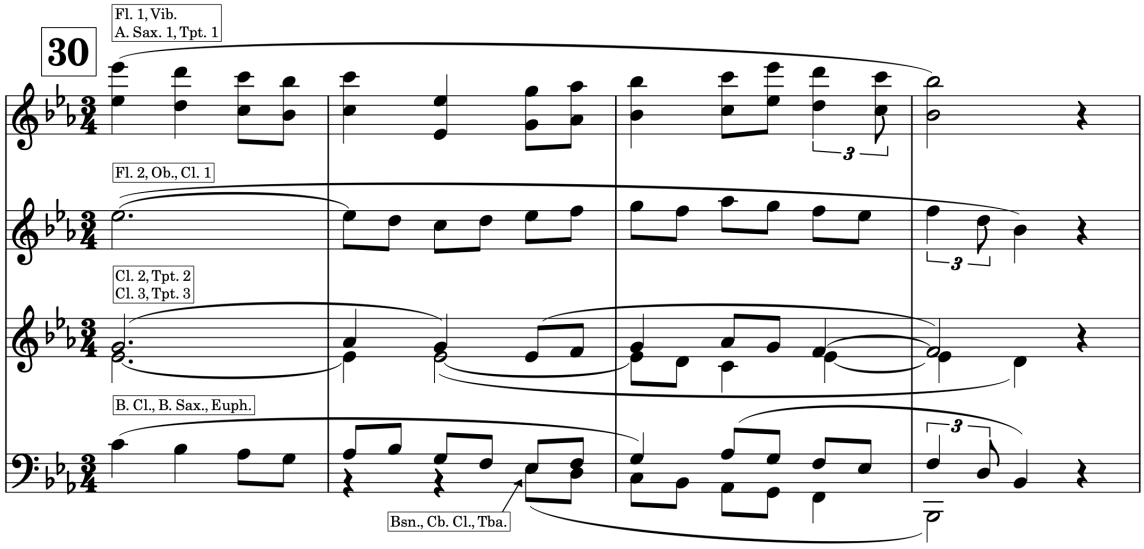
As this rendition of the melody concludes, it slows, softens, and settles into a murky deceptive cadence (m. 35, A♭ to Cmin11). The tempo slows to 60 bpm as a solo oboe takes over the melody (m. 37). The sense of a slowing pace is accentuated by a harmonic gesture in m. 38 that repeats in m. 39, similar to the repeated measure in mm. 28-29. The melody finishes off in *tutti* flutes and oboes.

When this melody cadences at m. 41, the tempo picks up once again, and a transition (mm. 41-44) takes us to a section of E♭ minor. The transition is based on the E♭ drone from the beginning of *All My Heart*, and the recurring ascending quarter notes. And this time there are twelve (!) ascending quarter notes that serve as an extended anacrusis connecting to the alto saxophone solo that begins at m. 45. Markowski suggests that perhaps this alto saxophone solo is a more "youthful" version of its former baritone self.

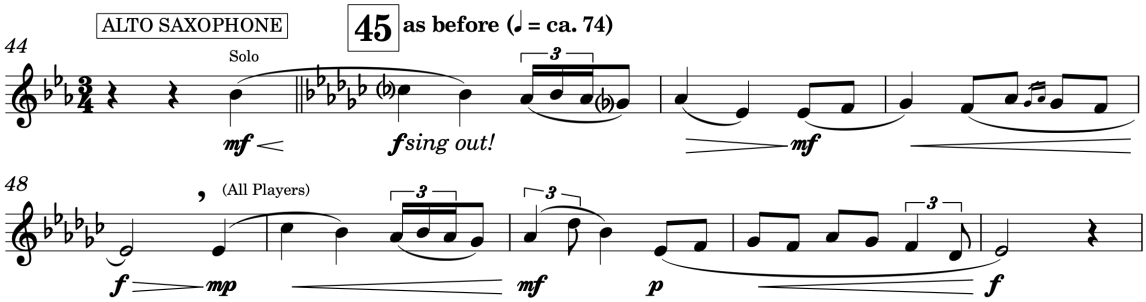
The E♭ minor section begins with that saxophone solo, a new melody that is reminiscent of and loosely based on materials of previous melodies [Ex. 4, mm. 44-52]. The accompaniment here is thinly scored, yet majestic, consisting of primary and parallel chords, with bits of accompaniment moving in and out. The presence of E♭ minor gains strength as the melody is taken by all of the 1st alto saxophones along with the 1st flutes, amidst increasing activity in the percussion section (m. 48).

We have been treated to beautiful sustained lines for roughly three minutes now: all *legato*, all the time (with the exception of some of the percussion parts), so that when the winds *crescendo* in m. 51 into a very *marcato forte* bass line in m. 52, it demands our attention.

Ex. 3, mm. 30-33, "lush counterpoint in the inner parts."



Ex. 4, mm. 44-52, "a new melody."



"...notes of duration always need to be 'going somewhere,' phrases require implied increases and decreases in intensity including and beyond what composers notate..."

These *marcato* eighth notes are a signal, proclaiming the arrival of G♭ Major in a section marked "joyously" [Ex. 5, mm. 53-61]. All of the winds (less the trumpets for now) play *forte* as in a massive chorale of powerful and unapologetic chords. Meanwhile, a new melody sings through in the piccolo, flutes, oboe, clarinets, and 1st alto saxophone, and outlined in the glockenspiel. This melody begins similarly to the alto saxophone solo from m. 45; but while the alto saxophone plays a descending fourth in m. 50, the woodwinds at m. 54 invert the interval to an ascending 5th, creating an exhilarating sensation. (Compare mm. 45-46 in Ex. 4 to mm. 53-54 in Ex. 5.) The trumpets come in with their own ascending quarter note motive at m. 56.

"Joyously" indeed!: the intimate, affectionate warmth of *All My Heart* up to this point is here loudly proclaimed for all to know and hear. In discussing the derivation and development of the melodies in *All My Heart*, Markowski says that this is the "most developed variation of the tune, furthest removed from the original." This bold and broad gesture winds down at m. 60, with a dramatic *decrescendo* on a B♭ suspended chord that Markowski marks "relax." The martial figure in the tympani that propels the chorale section continues through the *diminuendo.*

A solo flute enters as the key returns to E♭ Major (m. 62), and the tempo slows a bit (back to the original tempo). This is the original melody, from m. 3. At m. 68, a solo trumpet joins the solo flute to assist in completing the melody, and moving into a transition similar to the one at m. 41. The series of suspensions over a pedal tone at m. 69 come from the m. 41 transition, as does the ascending quarter-note motive that enters at m. 69. This second transition is twice as long as the one at m. 41, and there is a new addition: a series of ascending dotted half notes incorporated to heighten tension (beginning in the 1st alto saxophone, 1st horn, 3rd trombone, and euphonium). Be true to tempo here: the original transition at m. 41 sped up a bit, but here the original tempo is maintained.

The original melody returns one last time at m. 77, expressed a little less elaborately in the oboes, 1st alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, 1st trumpet, horns, euphonium, and in the marimba. While the melody is less ornate here, there is a lot of other stuff going on: a B♭ pedal point, further expansion of harmonic suspensions, and a lovely, winding new countermelody in the flutes and 1st and 2nd clarinets. The piccolo enters, and some of the low brass punch out descending *marcato* eighth notes similar to the ones in m. 52, as the entire ensemble *crescendos* to ***ff*** —and abruptly cadences.

The clarinets and trumpet carry the melody on briefly ("stoically, strong!), but the alto saxophones and horns interrupt via a stirring sequence of descending pitches (m. 84-85), while the tenor trombones, euphonium, and chimes bring back the ascending quarter note motive one last time. Amidst all this, the woodwinds add flourishes of trills and *glissandos* to

Ex. 5, mm. 53-61, "joyously."

help conclude this stanza and bring us to one final chorale statement.

For his final melodic statement in *All My Hear*t, Markowski returns to the "joyously" theme from m. 53. Formerly in the short-lived G♭ Major, this stanza is now firmly rooted in E♭ Major, and the accompaniment is starker: simpler big, broad chordal gestures to accompany the tune (mm. 87-93), with a huge climactic point at m. 90. As the woodwinds complete the melody, the tenor saxophone, 1st trumpet, horns, and euphoniums burst in with a bold echo of a cell of the melody [Ex. 6A and 6B, melody in m. 89 and imitation in m. 93].

Ex. 6A, m. 89, "melody" (Picc., Fl., Ob., Cl., A. Sax.)

Ex. 6B, m. 93, "imitation" (T. Sax, Tpt. 1, Hn., Euph.)

This final grand melodic statement devolves into a sequence of unexpected harmonies over a continuing E♭ pedal: E Major!, A Major!, C Major!, and then... a *subito piano* diminished chord in the flutes, clarinets, vibraphone, and marimba, with a ***mp*** descending stroke of the mark tree.

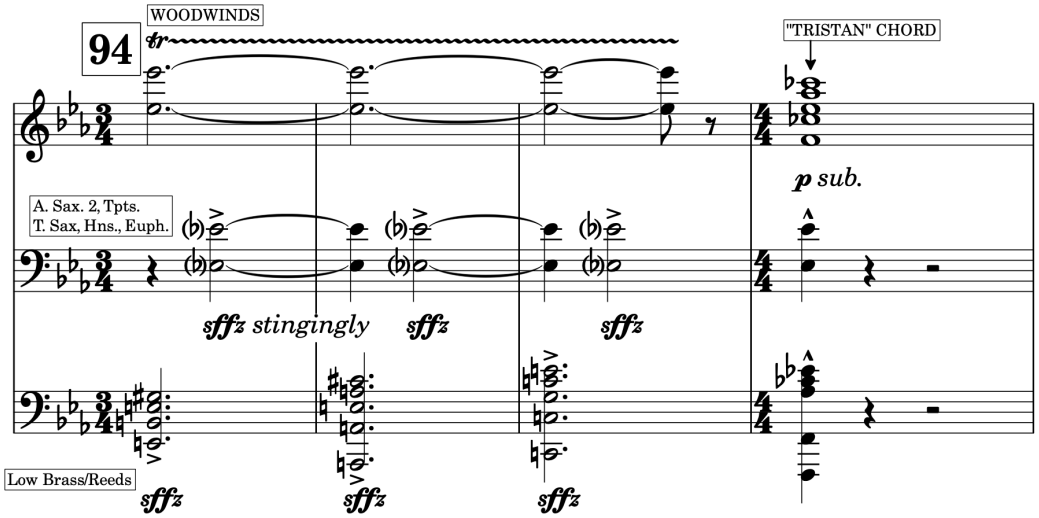
Since Markowski, in his own way, has destroyed harmony with these chords, what else to follow with but the Tristan chord [Ex. 7, mm. 94-97]. The piece ends with a final E♭ chord, spiraling from *piano* to *fortissimo*, and capped with a sweeping quarter note gesture to finish. (Observe the accent and the *tenuto* mark!)

A word about the tympani and snare drum parts at m. 94, and the tympani again at m. 98: Be sure that your players understand that these rhythmic figures are from the melody, and that they should be played as if they carry the weight of the entire piece.

All My Heart seems to be all about melody. But it is as much about texture as it is about melody. It is also as much about what's in our musical hearts as it is about what's in all of these notes and rhythms. May we play *All My Heart* with all the heart we can muster!

DR. MARC R. DICKEY has been a member of the faculty of the California State University, Fullerton School of Music since 1988, leading the instrumental music education teacher training program throughout his tenure. He served as Director of the School of Music from 2005-2017. Dr. Dickey also conducted the CSU Fullerton Symphonic Winds and University Band for many 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 guest conducted and adjudicated bands and orchestras from 25 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, and the nation of Vietnam. He is one of the youngest conductors to have been awarded the NBA's Citation of Excellence.

Ex. 7, mm. 94-97, "destroyed harmony" and "Tristan chord."



For Erin, Messyface, & Domino